



# RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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## TUESDAY, 2 JUNE 2015

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The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

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

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

### ASSENT TO BILL



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

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

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

Date of assent: 1 June 2015

“A Bill for an Act to amend the Financial Accountability Act 2009, the Parliamentary Service Act 1988, the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 and the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal Act 2013 for particular purposes”

This Bill is hereby transmitted to the Legislative Assembly, to be numbered and forwarded to the proper Officer for enrolment, in the manner required by law.

Yours sincerely

Governor

01 June 2015

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 1 June 2015, from His Excellency the Governor to the Speaker advising of assent to a bill on 1 June 2015 [\[468\]](#).

## VACANCY IN SENATE OF COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

### Message from Governor



**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, on 21 May 2015 I wrote to inform His Excellency the Governor that Joanna Lindgren had been chosen by the Legislative Assembly to hold the place in the Senate of the Parliament of the Commonwealth rendered vacant by the resignation of Senator Brett Mason. I have received correspondence from His Excellency advising that he has certified the appointment of Ms Lindgren to His Excellency the Governor-General. I table a copy of the correspondence.

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 22 May 2015, from His Excellency the Governor to the Speaker, advising of his certification of the appointment of Ms Joanna Lindgren to the Senate [\[469\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 22 May 2015, from His Excellency the Governor to His Excellency the Governor-General, advising of his certification of the appointment of Ms Joanna Lindgren to the Senate [\[470\]](#).

## REPORTS

### Auditor-General



**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I have to report that I have received from the Auditor-General two reports: report 18 for 2014-15, *WorkCover claims* and report 19 for 2014-15, *Fraud management in local government*. I table the reports for the information of members.

*Tabled paper:* Auditor-General of Queensland: Report to Parliament No. 18: 2014-15—Results of audit: WorkCover claims [\[471\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Auditor-General of Queensland: Report to Parliament No. 19: 2014-15—Results of audit: Fraud management in local government [\[472\]](#).

## PRIVILEGE

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

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, on 21 May 2015 the member for Mansfield wrote to me alleging that the Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Multicultural Affairs had deliberately misled parliament on 20 May 2015 when she stated—

In the first six months, the LNP abolished civil unions ...

In his email the member for Mansfield stated—

The Relationships Act 2011 as amended during the LNP government provides for the registration of relationships, regardless of the gender of those involved, known colloquially as civil unions.

On the basis of the information provided to me, it appears that the minister and the member for Mansfield hold different opinions about whether a registered relationship under the Relationships Act 2011 is the same thing as the civil partnership or civil union as previously provided for under the Civil Partnerships Act 2011. I note that there are differences between the two pieces of legislation. For instance, the Relationships Act 2011 removes the option for couples to hold a ceremony before a notary and witnesses, previously available under the Civil Partnerships Act 2011.

Given the differences in opinion about this matter, any potential misleading of the House could at best be a technical one. On this basis I have decided that the matter does not warrant the further attention of the House via the Ethics Committee and I will not be referring the matter. I table the correspondence in relation to this matter.

*Tabled paper:* Email, dated 21 May 2015, from the member for Mansfield, Mr Ian Walker MP, to the Speaker regarding alleged deliberate misleading of the House by the Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Hon. Shannon Fentiman [\[487\]](#).

## PETITIONS

The Clerk presented the following paper petition, lodged by the honourable member indicated—

### Lockyer Valley, Water Infrastructure

**Mr Rickuss**, from 7 petitioners, requesting the House to direct the Minister for Water Supply to publish in local newspapers the mechanics of how the alluvial groundwater in the Lockyer Valley is replenished and why the installation of significant water infrastructure in the valley has been unable to prevent further stress to the groundwater system [\[473\]](#).

The Clerk presented the following paper petition, sponsored by the Clerk in accordance with Standing Order 119(3)—

### Gas Industry, Rebates

25 petitioners, requesting the House to make provision for increasing the rebate for reticulated AGL gas to match the current rebate for electricity [\[474\]](#).

The Clerk presented the following e-petitions, sponsored by the honourable members indicated—

### Schools, Signage

**Ms Pease**, from 47 petitioners, requesting the House to take all action necessary to cause the increase of 'school zone' signage with the use of painted road signs and flashing school zone signs [\[475\]](#).

### Upper Mount Gravatt, 1-5 Cremin Street

**Mr Walker**, from 203 petitioners, requesting the House to take all action necessary to delete condition three of the Concurrence Agency Response from the Department of Transport and Main Roads with respect to the development at 1-5 Cremin Street, Upper Mount Gravatt [\[476\]](#).

Petitions received.

## TABLED PAPERS

### PAPERS TABLED DURING THE RECESS

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

22 May 2015—

[457](#) Overseas Travel Report: Report on an overseas visit by the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Sport and Racing (Mr Byrne) to China, 16-21 April 2015

[458](#) Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee: Report No. 3—Portfolio subordinate legislation tabled between 25 November 2014 and 12 January 2015

[459](#) Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee: Report No. 3—Local Government and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015

[460](#) Finance and Administration Committee: Report No. 3—Payroll Tax Rebate, Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015

25 May 2015—

[461](#) Finance and Administration Committee: Report No. 3—Payroll Tax Rebate, Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015—Erratum

[462](#) Finance and Administration Committee: Report No. 3a—Payroll Tax Rebate, Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 [incorporating erratum tabled on 25 May 2015]

27 May 2015—

[463](#) Agriculture and Environment Committee: Report No. 3—Subordinate legislation tabled between 28 October 2014 and 26 March 2015

28 May 2015—

[464](#) Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee: Report No. 82—Inquiry on strategies to prevent and reduce criminal activity in Queensland, government response

[465](#) Education, Tourism and Small Business Committee: Report No. 2—Subordinate legislation tabled between 15 October 2014 and 26 March 2015

1 June 2015—

[466](#) Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee: Report No. 59—Inquiry into Coastal Sea Freight, government response

[467](#) Finance and Administration Committee: Report No. 4—Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015

#### STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

The following statutory instruments were tabled by the Clerk—

Major Events Act 2014—

[478](#) Major Events (Townsville 400) Regulation 2015, No. 27

[479](#) Major Events (Townsville 400) Regulation 2015, No. 27, explanatory notes

Queensland Building and Construction Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2014—

[480](#) Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 28

Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 28, explanatory notes

Building and Construction Industry Payments Act 2004, Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act 1991, State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999—

[481](#) Queensland Building and Construction Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2015, No. 29

[482](#) Queensland Building and Construction Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2015, No. 29, Explanatory Notes

Building Act 1975, Sustainable Planning Act 2009—

[483](#) Building and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2015 No. 30

[484](#) Building and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2015, No. 30, explanatory notes

#### MINISTERIAL PAPERS TABLED BY THE CLERK

The following ministerial papers were tabled by the Clerk—

Minister for Transport, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade (Ms Trad)—

[485](#) Report by the Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade (Ms Trad), pursuant to section 432 of the Sustainable Planning Act 2009, in relation to the Ministerial Call In of a development application by Wanda Ridong (Gold Coast) Development Pty Ltd at 36-44 Old Burleigh Road, Surfers Paradise (the Jewel development)

[486](#) Report by the Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade (Ms Trad), pursuant to section 432 of the Sustainable Planning Act 2009, in relation to the Ministerial Call In of a development application by Wanda Ridong (Gold Coast) Development Pty Ltd at 36-44 Old Burleigh Road, Surfers Paradise (the Jewel Development), Annexures A-C

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

### Greyhound Racing Industry

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.36 am): Like all Queenslanders, indeed like all Australians, I was appalled at the sickening allegations and undeniable photographic evidence uncovered earlier this year in relation to our greyhound racing industry. The allegations of animal cruelty, of widespread overbreeding and euthanasia of dogs, and in particular the allegations that live animals were used in the barbaric and repellent practice of live baiting, turned our stomachs and sent shivers down our spines.

These are vile allegations. They are among the most upsetting we have ever witnessed against innocent animals and, damningly, against those people charged with the responsibility of caring for the animals at the centre of their industry. In many ways it taints this industry not only for alleged past practices but also into the future. In fact, the perception of the industry may have been dealt a terminal blow, particularly by the exposure of the horrific practice of live baiting.

Once this evidence was aired, my government instituted a commission of inquiry into the greyhound industry. Yesterday we became the first state to receive the advice of the commission. Today we become the first state to act. Yesterday I received the final report of this commission, which was presided over by widely respected QC Mr Alan MacSporran, and today I table the report for the parliament.

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Greyhound Racing Industry Commission of Inquiry: Final report, 1 June 2015 [\[488\]](#).

Mr MacSporran has delivered to government a damning report which demands the greyhound industry and the racing industry clean up its act. My government is more than willing to help this industry to do that, as I will outline. Mr MacSporran's recommendations demand that integrity is restored to this industry and that public confidence, which has been dealt a significant blow, particularly by allegations that live animals were used to bait dogs, be restored.

The commission's report highlights shocking details about the greyhound industry—details which cannot be ignored. Among the most confronting findings, Mr MacSporran uncovered evidence that between 2003 and 2013 more than 24,200 greyhound pups were born but only 16,968 were named and registered with Racing Queensland. That means that more than 7,200 pups—30 per cent of all of these animals—are unaccounted for.

Over the same period, 1,462 greyhounds were registered as retired when the actual number should have been as high as 8,500, meaning that 7,000 animals are unaccounted for. The average number of greyhounds which die after being retired is 76 per cent. In 2013 alone, 74.4 per cent of retired animals were reported as euthanased while 6.8 per cent were reported as dead, but many of these deaths simply could not be explained. Mr MacSporran's final report contains 15 recommendations in response to the fact that he found the racing industry's efforts to self-regulate have been a failure. His report shows Racing Queensland has operated in an environment in which it could not adequately assess and deal with the risks to integrity and animal welfare. His report shows this industry has dismally failed those animals it relies on for considerable profit.

My government has acted swiftly on the findings of Mr MacSporran's inquiry. In particular, we have acted immediately on the report's raising of significant concerns around the performance of the current CEO of Racing Queensland, Mr Darren Condon. Accordingly, I have asked my Minister for Sport and Racing to take immediate action in this regard. Today I have instructed the minister to write to Mr Condon asking him to show cause why he should not be removed from office. Mr Condon now has five days to respond. In the meantime, Mr Condon will be stood down on full remuneration, as legally required, pending the outcome of the show-cause process. An interim administrator will be seconded to Racing Queensland to ensure that day-to-day operations of racing are not jeopardised whilst this process occurs.

Ultimate responsibility for the conduct of Racing Queensland lies with the board of that organisation. The Queensland All Codes Racing Industry Board has obligations under the Racing Act as the peak control body for the industry. Further, the Queensland Greyhound Racing Board has obligations to the greyhound industry, including managing Racing Queensland and upholding confidence in that sector. As Mr MacSporran said yesterday, it is clear that Racing Queensland has failed, and that starts with the boards. Today I have directed the minister to abolish all of the boards associated with the racing industry in Queensland—namely, the Queensland All Codes Racing

Industry Board, the Queensland Greyhound Racing Board, the Queensland Harness Racing Board and the Queensland Thoroughbred Racing Board. Today we are starting with a clean slate. We have appointed Mr Ian Hall from KPMG to advise on implementation of interim administrative arrangements and to ensure effective ongoing management of Racing Queensland.

One of the most significant recommendations proposes revising the structure of the Queensland Racing Integrity Commission by establishing a new statutory authority to oversee the integrity of the entire racing industry. This new authority would be distinct from Racing Queensland and not be part of the Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing. Mr MacSporran makes further recommendations around current breeding incentive programs and changes to licensing arrangements for owners and trainers to require verification of greyhound information and thorough records in relation to training and other activities. Importantly, the report recommends that there is a more accurate, consistent program of monitoring dogs from birth to maturity to ensure that no animal will be able to disappear off the map. These recommendations are now under active consideration by my government. All Queenslanders want a racing industry that is based on integrity and proper animal welfare, not one that is characterized by cruelty, dishonesty and at best dubious regulation and in an environment in which there is a failure of simple compliance measures. My government will deliver that. Anyone who has taken part in acts of animal cruelty will be thoroughly investigated by police and will be brought to justice.

As a final note, the very fact that we are having an open discussion about this industry is thanks to Animal Liberation Queensland and Animals Australia prompting a joint police and RSPCA investigation followed by a hard-hitting report from the ABC and *Four Corners* which exposed the evidence which led to the commission. Today I place on record my thanks to my government, to the RSPCA and to the Queensland police, and to the animal welfare groups for their action. I also thank the ABC for the fearless, uncompromising journalism that *Four Corners* continues to deliver.

### Greyhound Racing Industry

 **Hon. WS BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Sport and Racing) (9.44 am): Yesterday the Premier received the MacSporran commission of inquiry report. It is clear that self-regulation of the racing industry has failed. It is clear that Racing Queensland has let down the industry. The task for government now is to intervene and restore and boost confidence for the future of the racing industry. We will deliver certainty and assurance for the entire racing industry so that there is still a bright future ahead. I want to assure the House and more broadly the industry that I want to see all three codes of racing thrive in this state well and long into the future. It is clear in reading the MacSporran commission that, for this to occur, there will need to be significant changes to the way we all do business.

There is no comfort to be found in the commission of inquiry report. However, the government must now seize the moment and do all that we can to return public confidence through implementing greater integrity into the core of the racing industry. As the Minister for Sport and Racing, I am determined to use this opportunity of the MacSporran commission of inquiry to strengthen all three codes of racing. I want to restore and maintain public confidence in all three codes. I will ensure that the punters and participants alike go on enjoying and benefiting from all three codes of racing. The first step is to start with a clean slate. The activities and failures of the past must be left behind and a new and brighter future for the industry established. As the Premier has just announced, that process has started today. On Thursday the Governor in Council will receive a recommendation for all board members of Racing Queensland to be terminated in line with the recommendation of the MacSporran commission. Further, I have this morning issued a show-cause notice to the CEO of Racing Queensland before making a determination about his position. The MacSporran commission made specific references to the CEO and his conduct and appreciation of the role. I will not prejudice the decision making that will come following the show-cause period for the CEO. I think the commission report speaks for itself.

We have also ensured that operational duties are maintained by placing KPMG inside the organisation as of today so that there will be no lapse in day-to-day management of the industry. These actions are about ensuring continuity of service and operations whilst putting integrity back into Racing Queensland. The government is currently considering the recommendations of the inquiry. We have accepted MacSporran's report in principle and are acting to implement recommendation 2 immediately. I will have more to say about the full response and implementation of the reforms in the near future. This is a government that will act in the best interests of the industry. We will make the industry of racing stronger and we will restore public confidence in it. I particularly want to place on

record my appreciation of Mr MacSporran QC and his team at the commission. Further, the joint QPS-RSPCA task force has done a great service to this state and, frankly, to the industry through their diligence and determination to shine a light in dark places. They deserve special recognition and their task is ongoing. I will continue to update the House and the public on our response to the commission in the weeks ahead.

### Great Barrier Reef

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef) (9.48 am): Late last Friday night the World Heritage Committee of UNESCO released its draft decision on whether or not to list the Great Barrier Reef as World Heritage in Danger. I am pleased to report that the draft decision is a positive one. There are no references to the reef being listed as in danger and in fact the committee has praised Queensland and Australia for how we responded to the committee's concern about the state of the reef. The UNESCO draft decision is a strong endorsement of this government and its policies on protecting the reef.

**Mr Seeney** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Callide, if you persist I will issue a ruling under standing order 253A and you can leave the chamber.

**Dr MILES:** The UNESCO draft decision is a strong endorsement of this government's policies on protecting the reef and the progress that we have made already in implementing these commitments. We came into government with a plan to reverse the decline in the health of the reef, to boost its health and to build its resilience so that generations to come will be able to enjoy its extraordinary natural wonder.

The draft decision singles out and welcomes key policies of the Palaszczuk government, such as its goal to improve the quality of water running into the reef by reducing run-off pollution by 80 per cent; the reversal of the plan to dump capital dredge spoil from the proposed Abbot Point expansion onto the reef and the commitment to ban the dumping of capital dredge spoil in the whole World Heritage area; and the confirmed commitment to protect greenfield areas by restricting major new port developments in and adjoining the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage area by limiting capital dredging for the development of new or the expansion of existing port facilities to within the existing port limits of the four major ports, excluding the Fitzroy Delta, North Curtis Island and Keppel Bay from future port development.

The Leader of the Opposition tweeted about the draft decision on Saturday and, of course, we welcome his interest. However, he and those others opposite seem to be under the delusion that this result had something to do with the previous government. These policies that UNESCO singled out—the policies that it cited as the reason for its draft decision—are not the policies of the LNP. The LNP opposed these policies. These are the policies that the Labor Party took to the election. These policies were announced by the Premier during the election campaign and for many voters they were the reason they voted Labor. It is a good thing for the reef that they did. This week, the milestones continue. Tomorrow the water science task force will meet for the first time, commencing its vital work to make recommendations on how to achieve that 80 per cent reduction in pollution run-off by 2025.

The UNESCO draft decision is still subject to a formal decision to be made at the World Heritage committee meeting next month. The Deputy Premier and I will personally attend the meeting to report on our continued progress and press the case that our plan for the reef is sound and that our commitment to delivering the plan is absolute.

### State Planning Laws

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade) (9.52 am): We promised Queenslanders that we would listen to them to ensure that our new state planning laws are sensible, well structured and easy to follow and that is exactly what the Palaszczuk Labor government is doing. Last week, I released the directions paper titled *Better planning for Queensland*, which charts a strategic course for reforming our planning system and is designed to improve the livability, sustainability and prosperity of our state. I now table a copy of this document for the benefit of the House.

*Tabled paper:* Better Planning for Queensland—Next Steps in Planning Reform Directions Paper, May 2015 [[489](#)].

Our consultative approach to planning reform will bring together the community, industry and local councils to guide the development of the new planning act. The directions paper shows the Palaszczuk Labor government's different approach to the key elements of the new legislation proposed, particularly around openness, transparency, accountability and genuine community participation. Unlike the former LNP government's approach, we believe that you can deliver a more efficient system that supports investment and jobs for Queenslanders but we do not believe that it has to be at the expense of community participation in planning. We have listened to stakeholders and in response we are focused on enabling better design outcomes, improving plan-making arrangements, streamlining development assessment processes and fostering a positive culture in planning practice.

We will ensure that residents will have a strong voice in the decisions that affect their neighbourhoods and their communities where they live, work and play. We will also ensure that local governments will have the support they need to implement this new legislation and we are committed to working closely with the LGAQ and mayors on our reform agenda. We will ensure that project applicants benefit from fair and practical planning processes with consistent outcomes.

Our system will give confidence and certainty to investors and the development and construction industries. Our directions paper has been endorsed by the Planning Institute of Australia, which welcomed the new statutory guideline for community engagement, and the Property Council of Australia, which said that it delivered much needed certainty for industry. As well, the Urban Development Industry Association said that it supported the government's reform objectives.

As a government, we will now take this directions paper to a series of workshops being held around the state to gather further input. We will follow this up with a planning summit in July ahead of the new legislation being introduced into parliament later this year. We will then continue to work closely with councils by providing tools, training and guidance materials so that they can transition to the reform planning system.

We are putting Queensland on track to have the best planning and development assessment system in the nation. Our reform agenda will be more than legislative change; it will also involve a range of holistic measures aimed at improving planning for the places and people of our state, including innovative technology, a positive culture and more capacity building. Critically, it will be one built on genuine consultation and engagement that delivers social, economic and environmental outcomes for all Queenslanders.

## WorkCover

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (9.56 am): I rise today to inform the House of the continuing strong performance of Queensland's workers compensation scheme. The strong performance of WorkCover can be attributed to the previous Labor government's 2010 workers compensation legislative reforms, which are now being realised. It is because of those reforms that the scheme is on a very healthy financial footing.

Furthermore, today I can announce that the WorkCover Queensland board will maintain the average premium rate at \$1.20 per \$100 in wages paid for 2015-16. This will be the lowest average premium rate of any state in Australia. This is a great result for Queensland business, particularly for those businesses that get a competitive advantage when they trade interstate.

It is evident that the 2010 amendments were successful in addressing the increasing costs of claims, particularly the disproportionate increase in common law claims that WorkCover was experiencing at the time of the amendments. For the period 2009 to 2014, the scheme experienced a 15 per cent reduction in the number of common law claims lodged. In addition, the average annual cost of a common law damages claim has reduced by 10 per cent. The combination of these two improvements has resulted in significant savings to the scheme. Over the same period, there has been a 15 per cent reduction in the number of new statutory claims and a 15 per cent reduction in the incidence of serious work related injuries requiring more than five days off work.

I would also point out that the harsh and unfair common law amendments that were introduced on 15 October 2013 by the previous LNP government are only now starting to flow through in claims data. Injured workers have approximately three years to make common law claims and, on average, approximately 4,000 claims per year are received. The unfairness of the LNP's workers compensation scheme is not being seen yet, because many of the claims have not been lodged. Queensland businesses are also becoming safer, with fewer serious injuries and fatalities. This reduction in injury rate has a flow-on effect to common law lodgements, that is, if workers are not being injured, common law claims will reduce.

As well as being safer, Queensland workplaces are returning more workers back to work after injury. Over the period 2010 to 2014, the return-to-work rate for injured workers increased from 94.3 per cent to 96.3 per cent. That is a fantastic result for workers who are able to maintain dignity and independence after a workplace injury and employers are able to retain the skills of knowledge of workers, which leads to more productive businesses.

The 2010 reforms have achieved and continue to deliver ongoing savings and improvements to Queensland's workers compensation scheme. This was all achieved without attacking the basic entitlements and rights of workers. This is in stark contrast to the 2013 common law amendments that sought to achieve scheme savings by removing the benefits and entitlements of workers.

Under the previous government, the parliament's Finance and Administration Committee conducted a 12-month inquiry into the operation of Queensland's workers compensation scheme. After considering all the arguments for and against imposing an impairment threshold on common law access, the committee considered that a threshold should not be imposed as the extent of the 2010 amendments in addressing the increase in common law claims had yet to be fully realised.

The committee further recognised that imposing thresholds on accessing common law rights would improperly remove rights from one group of citizens that are available to other citizens. Contrary to the view of the committee, on 15 October 2013 legislative amendments made by the former government introduced a greater than five per cent threshold entitlement to seek damages for an injury sustained by a worker. Just like the broader public, the previous Newman LNP government did not listen to the considered view of the parliamentary Finance and Administration Committee. The considered 2010 reforms that were worked through with representatives of employers, lawyers and workers have provided the foundation to maintain the average premium rate at \$1.20 as a result of the reduction in common law claims. I personally spoke to the chair of WorkCover to ensure that he and other board members were fully aware of the Palaszczuk government's proposed changes to the workers compensation scheme, including the proposal to remove the five per cent threshold. They have since determined that the \$1.20 premium rate can be maintained.

Despite claims by those opposite that their 2013 changes were the reason for the premium reduction, premiums will not now skyrocket because the scheme is healthy due to the good stewardship of Labor governments over the last two decades. This government is committed to restoring fairness to Queensland's workers compensation scheme and to Queensland workers generally—fairness to both workers and employers. This revelation from the WorkCover board is good news for business.

### Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (10.00 am): On Friday I had the opportunity to sit on the panel of the Improvers, a Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service initiative that engages local health workers to pitch ideas that will modernise our health system. The Improvers is an annual staff innovation program and a cornerstone of the Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service's strategy to engage staff. To judge these awards I sat alongside Queensland Health's Acting Director-General, Dr Michael Cleary, Gold Coast Hospital and Health board member Colette McCool, Gold Coast urologist Dr Scott McClintock, the editor of the *Gold Coast Bulletin*, Cath Webber, and radio host for *Hot Tomato*, Sean 'Flan' Flannery. Held in front of a packed crowd of more than 200 colleagues, 12 finalists presented their visions for service improvement with five winners sharing almost \$200,000 to help turn their bright ideas into reality. This included \$100,000 awarded to Glen Knuth, who works with oral health, to purchase a 3D printing and scanning machine, a statewide first. This technology will accelerate the production of prosthetics which will considerably reduce waiting times and increase productivity as all the prosthetics are currently handmade.

I also announced Queensland Health funding for the Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service to purchase a sensory-motor active rehabilitation training arm, otherwise known as a SMART arm. This was pitched by the rehabilitation team of Ashlea Walker, Kate Thompson and Sonya Shrimpton and is a Queensland innovation developed in Townsville and Queensland owned and made. I want to thank the Gold Coast Health executive for encouraging people who know best how we should run our hospitals and health services to participate in these innovation awards.

While I was at the Gold Coast I also announced that \$8 million of the \$30 million pool that the Palaszczuk government has made available to health services across the state to address waiting lists will go to the coast to provide additional specialist outpatient appointments, perform additional elective surgery and increase access to endoscopy procedures. Of Gold Coast Health's \$8 million

share, more than \$1.2 million will be used to expedite care for people waiting longer than clinically recommended for an outpatient appointment with an ear, nose and throat, urology or colorectal specialist. This means that nearly 2,000 people on the Gold Coast will receive medical attention quicker than they would have under the previous government.

I also took the opportunity on the coast to look at the waiting list and see how many people have been waiting longer than clinically recommended for a specialist outpatient appointment. The answer is 6,396 people. That is over 6,000 people on the Gold Coast who would have been ignored under the former LNP governments wait-time gimmick. I also took the opportunity to see how many ready-for-surgery patients on the coast have been waiting longer than clinically recommended for elective surgery. In other words, the people who could have been 'guaranteed' their surgery under the LNP's failed wait-time program. The answer is zero, nought, nobody. Zero is precisely the number of people on the Gold Coast who would have benefited from the LNP's wait-time gimmick. It would have been a meaningless guarantee—like guaranteeing that the Pacific Ocean is to the east of the Gold Coast or that the sky is blue. At the same time, over 6,000 people waiting longer than clinically recommended for an outpatients appointment would have been completely ignored by the member for Southern Downs and all of the LNP members on the Gold Coast.

### Tourism Industry

 **Hon. KJ JONES** (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games) (10.04 am): I rise to inform the House that today the new Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner and first direct Etihad Airways flight from Abu Dhabi will touch down in Brisbane. This marks the start of a new era for Etihad Airways in Queensland. The luxury airline will operate daily nonstop flights between Brisbane and Abu Dhabi, signalling a strong vote of confidence in Queensland tourism. The Palaszczuk government welcomes the arrival of flight EY484 and applauds Etihad's commitment to Queensland.

By offering direct flights every day of the week and shorter travel times, Queensland is now more accessible to visitors from the Middle East, Africa and Europe. This is a massive vote of confidence in Queensland as a holiday destination for international travellers. Queensland is in a strong position to attract more international visitors and in turn grow our tourism economy and boost local jobs. The Middle East is still an emerging market with around 20,000 visitors to Queensland each year. However, this number is expected to grow with the new direct route from Abu Dhabi providing more than 1,600 inbound seats into Queensland every week.

### Gold Coast Integrated Resort Development

 **Hon. AJ LYNHAM** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (10.05 am): The Palaszczuk government is proud of its record to date in pursuing economic growth and jobs in balance with environmental and community interests. We have many examples, one of which is the ASF Consortium proposal for an integrated resort development at the Gold Coast. In March this year the proposal to develop Wavebreak Island was suspended. This was yet another election commitment that this government has delivered on. But we are also committed to job growth and that is why we have continued to work closely with ASF Consortium to identify other readily available Gold Coast sites for an integrated resort development. As they said in their own statement to the Australian Stock Exchange last Friday—

ASF Consortium and the Queensland Government have today reaffirmed their commitment to work together to create significant jobs and investment into Queensland through identifying positive solutions to move the Integrated Resort Development (IRD) project forward.

Whilst the evaluation of the proposed project on Wave Break Island was suspended earlier this year, ASF Consortium and Government will work together over the next few weeks with the view to ASF Consortium presenting a new proposal for Government consideration as soon as practical.

Local Project Director Tim Poole said that Government has committed time and resources to establish a framework for a new project that delivers on the original IRD economic and environmentally sustainable outcomes.

Furthermore, ASF goes on to say—

From the outset of this process, through our consultation with the City of Gold Coast and the business community, we have understood the urgency to bring immediate short and long term jobs to the region.

'We stand by this commitment through delivering an alternative proposal consistent with the desired economic and environmental outcomes, and in constructive engagement with the Government, City of Gold Coast and the community,' said Mr Poole.

The Palaszczuk government is committed to projects that will create jobs and generate growth on the coast. Any project proposal will obviously need to meet all the standard requirements for major projects, including environmental assessments and public consultation. We value ASF's commitment to Queensland and its respect for our processes, the environment and the community. I am confident that the end result will be a development that will have the potential to enhance significantly the Gold Coast's ability to attract international tourism and investment, particularly from Asia.

### Vehicle Registration

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy and Water Supply) (10.08 am): Much has been said in recent times about vehicle registration fees. The previous LNP government planned to end the three-year registration freeze and had no plans to continue it if re-elected. In fact, their own 2014-15 budget confirms exactly that. They included an increase in registration fees in their forward estimates not once but twice—in their budget and again in their midyear fiscal and economic review. It is hypocritical and mischievous for the LNP to suggest otherwise.

As members would be aware, a 3.5 per cent fee change will apply to registrations in Queensland in line with the government's indexation policy. It is important to note that from 1 July Queensland will remain the third cheapest state in Australia for medium four-cylinder family vehicles such as the Toyota Camry. We all know the LNP's record on cost-of-living expenses in Queensland. The Palaszczuk government looks after vulnerable Queenslanders who are doing it tough. That is why we have introduced new payment schemes, including the option to pay registration fees every three months. That has been achieved within the first three months of this government and is something that the previous government could not achieve in three years. The payment scheme will be available for cars, motorcycles and trailers, giving motorists the option of an all-in-one direct debit package.

This new scheme is one way of offering families options to manage their budgets and save. It makes sense to be able to roll registration into family budget planning without waiting for six- or 12-month notices. As part of the introduction of this new option, the Palaszczuk government is also reducing the surcharge for six-monthly registration fees from 1 July 2015. The introduction of those changes is part of our drive to continually improve the services we offer Queenslanders.

### Tropical Cyclone Marcia

**Mr SPEAKER:** I call the Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Multicultural Affairs. Minister, I anticipate that we will finish ministerial statements at 10.12 am.

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (10.10 am): I rise to talk about the work being done to rebuild the community in Central Queensland following the devastating impact of Tropical Cyclone Marcia. Visiting the region last week for community cabinet, I was pleased to see that people seem to be turning a corner. However, the recovery will take time and concerted investment to rebuild the region.

In the weeks immediately following the cyclone, we provided over \$5 million in Immediate Hardship Assistance grants to nearly 30,000 people, along with \$1.2 million in household grants to help people purchase basic items to set up their homes again. However, Tropical Cyclone Marcia damaged so much more than bricks and mortar. The emotional toll is high and the community has been deeply affected. That is why the Palaszczuk government is giving five Central Queensland local government regions \$5.1 million for counselling and support for residents affected by the cyclone. That funding will ensure support is available to help people through these difficult times. However, we believe more funding is needed.

The Australian and Queensland governments jointly fund the Community Recovery Fund under category C of the Commonwealth and state Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements. The \$5.1 million is less than the Palaszczuk government requested to undertake this important work to help people and communities get back on their feet. Therefore, the Queensland government has gone back to the federal government to seek to convince it to recognise the actual cost of what it will take for councils and NGOs to deliver the support these communities require. I echo the comments of the member for Rockhampton about the need for category D funding, which the Queensland government has also requested.

## ABSENCE OF MINISTER

 **Mr HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.12 am): I wish to advise the House that the Minister for Housing and Public Works and Minister for Science and Innovation is absent from the House today as she is attending the funeral of a family member. The member for Toowoomba South has formally agreed to be paired for this absence.

## COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

### Membership

 **Mr HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.12 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That in accordance with section 81A(1) of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 the member for Dalrymple, Mr Shane Knuth, be appointed to the Committee of the Legislative Assembly as the representative of the crossbench, chosen by the crossbench as their nominee.

Further, I table the letter advising of the nomination as required by the act.

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 2 June 2015, from the member for Mount Isa, Mr Rob Katter MP, the member for Cook, Mr Billy Gordon MP, and the member for Dalrymple, Mr Shane Knuth MP, to the Leader of the House, Mr Stirling Hinchliffe MP, nominating the member for Dalrymple as the crossbench member on the Committee of the Legislative Assembly [[490](#)].

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

## NOTICE OF MOTION

### Disallowance of Statutory Instrument

 **Mr EMERSON** (Indooroopilly—LNP) (10.13 am): I give notice that I shall move—

That part 15 of the Transport Legislation (Fees) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2015, subordinate legislation No. 25 of 2015, tabled in the House on 19 May 2015, be disallowed.

## NOTICE OF MOTION

### Portfolio Committees, Reporting Dates

 **Mr SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (10.14 am): I give notice that I shall move—

That this House notes the emerging abuse of the committee system by the Palaszczuk government and sets the reporting date of 14 September 2015 for:

1. The Health and Ambulance Services Committee's inquiry into the Mental Health (Recovery Model) Bill, referred by the House on 5 May 2015.
2. The Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee's inquiry into the Liquor and Fair Trading Legislation (Red Tape Reduction) Amendment Bill, referred by the House on 6 May 2015.
3. The Agriculture and Environment Committee's inquiry into the Sugar Industry (Real Choice in Marketing) Amendment Bill, referred by the House on 19 May 2015.
4. The Health and Ambulance Services Committee's inquiry into the Health Legislation (Waiting List Integrity) Amendment Bill, referred by the House on 19 May 2015.

ensures all parliamentary committees meet at 9 am on Wednesday morning of each sitting week as the time set aside for committee business.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

 **Mr SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.14 am): This government is a little over 100 days old and already it has given up listening to Queenslanders. Over the past couple of weeks, from this government we have seen active repudiation of the concerns of many Queenslanders in many areas. Indeed, only last week we heard the Premier completely dismiss the concerns of the business community with regard to failing business confidence in Queensland. That also was the statement from the Premier a couple of weeks earlier when the Chamber of

Commerce and Industry Queensland said a similar thing. The government has also given up listening to Queenslanders about growing concern over the influence of union bosses on the government. In Queensland we see a government of union bosses by union bosses for union bosses and the people of Queensland are the big losers in that particular process.

I remind people of the growing concerns of public servants, who have raised these matters. Over the past week, the husband of a trainee paediatrician told me that his wife is most concerned about her information being given to union bosses. The other day I was in the electorate of Nanango where I spoke to a public servant who works within the Department of Natural Resources. She is similarly concerned about her information being given to union bosses.

If the people of Queensland and Australia are concerned about their metadata being handed over, how concerned will they be when their personal data is handed over to CFMEU bosses? That is when they will have a major concern as it is not overall oblique information, but it is information that is specifically related to the circumstances of a public servant. In the past couple of weeks, we have seen the distribution of a range of information from various Public Service bosses in the Department of Education and Training, encouraging people to join unions in Queensland.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I rise to a point of order.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order, members. Pause the clock.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** Last sitting week in the House, we had a ruling about matters being canvassed that are the subject of a bill that is before the House and, indeed, a bill that we will see debated during this week, as was ruled during our last sitting week. I ask for your guidance to the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Thank you. I call the Leader of the Opposition and ask you to make sure not to do that.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. As everybody is aware, this relates to the policy already translated into the community; it has absolutely nothing to do with the legislation before the parliament. I have a notice from the Department of Justice and Attorney-General and a LASN directive relating to the Ambulance Service, which is the most de-unionised workforce in Queensland where only 30 per cent of members are members of unions.

*Tabled paper:* Email, undated, to LASN managers from Mr Nathan Williamson, Acting Executive Director Corporate Services, Queensland Ambulance Service, Department of Health, regarding the Queensland government policy outlining its commitment to union encouragement [491].

*Tabled paper:* Open letter, undated, from Dr Simon Blackwood, Deputy Director-General, Office of Fair and Safe Work Queensland, Department of Justice and Attorney-General, regarding the Queensland government's policy outlining its commitment to union encouragement [492].

We have compulsion from this Labor party and these people to join those unions—

*(Time expired)*

### Elective Surgery, Wait-Time Guarantee

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (10.18 am): In this chamber on 19 May, in a debate concerning elective surgery management in Queensland, the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Southern Downs, made a number of claims. First, he stated that at the change of government the number of people who were waiting for their surgery longer than clinically recommended was 'reduced to 73'. That statement was incorrect. Departmental records show that on 1 February 2015 the number of people ready for surgery waiting beyond the clinically recommended time was 324.

Second, in the same debate the member for the Southern Downs stated that the program 'was a \$500 million program and it was properly costed; the money was there'. As the member for Southern Downs would know, as the former treasurer and member for Clayfield would know and as the member for Caloundra, a former cabinet minister, would know, expenditure of half a billion dollars would require cabinet or Cabinet Budget Review Committee approval. The *Queensland Cabinet Handbook* states—

Ministers should ensure there is no announcement of policy initiatives or expenditure commitments which have not been given Cabinet authority or, where appropriate, Governor in Council approval.

The member for Southern Downs said 'the money was there'. He said, 'This program was a \$500 million program and it was properly costed; the money was there.'

The Department of Health has advised my office that there is no record of a \$500 million allocation for this program. The member for Southern Downs has been in this place for a quarter of a century now. He should understand the discipline of government and the rules of this parliament.

Today I call on the Leader of the Opposition to release all cabinet, Cabinet Budget Review Committee and any other cabinet committee documents that authorised the establishment of the former LNP government's wait-time program and the allocation of the \$500 million to fund that program as stated by him in this House on 19 May 2015. I have written to him today to formally make this request. I table a copy of my letter to the Leader of the Opposition.

*Tabled paper:* Letter, undated, from the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services, Hon. Cameron Dick, to the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Lawrence Springborg MP, requesting the release of all cabinet, CBRC and other cabinet committee documents that authorised the establishment of the former LNP government's wait-time program and the allocation of \$500 million to fund the program [493].

This is a simple request for the Leader of the Opposition to comply with and I look forward to the prompt disclosure of the documents.

### Treasurer

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (10.21 am): It is clear that this inexperienced government and this clumsy Treasurer's handling of the economy are having a disastrous impact on business confidence. Instead of behaving like the state's chief financial officer, we have had the bumbling amateur magician—fumbling with a coin trick he has been practising since he was a boy. Then he criticised the federal budget, but said it is not actually that bad and he is asking for more detail.

Who will ever forget the classic rookie error—fiddling the figures to claim Queensland was in recession. This howler has been met with a chorus of condemnation from some of Australia's brightest economic minds, including the federal Treasurer, the Queensland Chamber of Commerce and Industry and other major business groups.

In the words of Mark Ludlow from the *Financial Review*, the Treasurer's comments spectacularly backfired. He stated—

It has only given the jitters to an already edgy business community. They fear risk-averse new Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk is keeping the economy in a 'holding pattern' with no new big infrastructure projects ...

The latest Sensis survey of small and medium businesses shows confidence has slumped in Queensland since the election of this government. Under the LNP, attitudes and confidence in Queensland were the highest in the country. After just three months under Labor, attitudes had dropped 30 points—down to the second lowest level in the country. There we have it! Queensland leading the nation under the LNP and in one quarter under Labor we are now battling South Australia for the bottom spot.

More concerning than the actual results from the actual survey conducted by Sensis was the Premier's response to them. What did the member for Inala say? As the Leader of the Opposition said, she dismissed the report and its findings. She flat out rejected it. She chose to ignore what the business community is telling her. She had exactly the same response to last month's CCIQ Pulse Survey of Business Conditions which showed business conditions were at the lowest level in a decade. Is it any wonder that businesses in Queensland have no confidence in this Premier when she flat out refuses to listen to what they are telling her. Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland general manager of advocacy, Nick Behrens, has called on the Palaszczuk government to be positive about the state's economy.

Instead, we have a Treasurer who cannot explain the prospective changes to government ownership of GOCs, government owned corporations. We have a Treasurer who, according to the *Courier-Mail* today, is rewriting the rules to support his union mates. The question is: who is supporting him? It is clear the people of Queensland do not have any faith in him. Now it looks like his own party do not believe in him.

The clock is ticking. We have six weeks until the budget is handed down. There are six weeks for the Treasurer to show his hand on how he is going to drive down debt without raising taxes and charges. Let us hope he gets the training wheels off in time to do this or we risk Queensland becoming the economic laughing-stock of the nation.

The first decision that we saw from this government in terms of increasing taxes and charges was the doubling of the CPI rate for car registration. It really is not good enough.

### Tropical Cyclone Marcia, Exceptional Circumstances Funding

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade) (10.24 am): I think the opposition Treasury spokesperson has just indicated his inexperience here in the chamber today when talking about the increase in registration fees which those opposite set in the budget themselves.

Let me turn to something that is very important to Central Queensland. Following Tropical Cyclone Marcia the Premier asked the Prime Minister to support communities that were affected by the disaster with a detailed proposal for \$198.5 million in NDRRA category D exceptional circumstances funding. This request was to be funded fifty-fifty by the state and the Commonwealth for recovery projects for the worst affected areas of Rockhampton, Livingstone, Banana and North Burnett.

The Prime Minister has now advised the Queensland government that the Commonwealth government has only agreed to cost-share just \$27.75 million of the \$198 million requested. Tony Abbott's letter said that the overall impact of Tropical Cyclone Marcia is not of an exceptional nature compared to Tropical Cyclone Oswald or Tropical Cyclone Yasi. I think the people of Rockhampton and Yeppoon would disagree. Severe Tropical Cyclone Marcia was certainly of an exceptional nature to them.

The Queensland government supported the Livingstone and Rockhampton councils' request for \$78.5 million in iconic projects to help their communities back on their feet, just as has happened in other disaster affected communities in the past. The Commonwealth has not approved one single dollar for this important project. We asked for \$21 million for an agricultural recovery package to assist farmers who were severely impacted. The Commonwealth approved just \$750,000. We are asked for \$15 million for an environmental recovery package. The Commonwealth has approved just \$7 million. We requested \$80 million for a betterment fund to make local roads more resilient. The Commonwealth approved just \$20 million.

We have been on the ground listening to those most in need. They deserve much better than the Tony Abbott government.

### Great Barrier Reef

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (10.27 am): Last Friday night we saw yet another decisive triumph for common sense when it comes to the protection and management of the Great Barrier Reef—a triumph of common sense over fraud; a longstanding campaign of fraud levelled against the people of Queensland and the Great Barrier Reef. I take a moment to congratulate federal environment minister, Greg Hunt, who stood up and took seriously this threat to the Great Barrier Reef and the threat to this state's reputation. He worked in partnership to come up with sensible policy and legislative amendments and solutions that we could put in place. He stood up to the fraudsters like Greenpeace and WWF once and for all.

I congratulate Julie Bishop, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and her ambassadors George Mina, who worked with the World Heritage Committee, and Peter Woolcott, the Ambassador for the Environment. I congratulate Tony Roberts from the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection and his team for all the work they did.

On the Friday we saw praise for the efforts of the former LNP government. I congratulate former premier Campbell Newman for his foresight to restore honesty and openness when it comes to the management of the Gladstone harbour. The people of Gladstone worked with us to restore openness and transparency when it comes to the management of the Gladstone harbour.

I congratulate the member for Buderim for his management of the national parks along the Great Barrier Reef, for the investment towards the control of the crown-of-thorns starfish and for his work alongside me and BHP on Raine Island. I congratulate the member for Callide for his efforts around throwing out the previous Labor government's mishmash of railway lines and ports up and down the length and breadth of the Queensland coast. He consolidated the ports into four key ports along the Queensland coast adjacent to the Great Barrier Reef. We are likely to see legislation re-introduced into this House that copies the legislation that the member for Callide introduced into this House.

I thank the industry and the conservation groups who worked with us on producing Reef 2050, a product that was all but done for the election and was released shortly afterwards. What was Labor's contribution to the Great Barrier Reef? Well, let us remember. They are the mugs that put us

under the attention of UNESCO in the first place by building three LNG plants in the World Heritage area. What LNG plants? Those three big LNG plants on Curtis Island. If those opposite want to play politics with the reef, they better get some runs on the board because at the moment Guy Sebastian's Eurovision diplomacy has done more to prevent the endanger listing of the reef than they have. If you want to take credit for saving the reef, Minister, you have to do more than just put it in your ministerial title.

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### Public Servants, Personal Information

 **Mr SPRINGBORG** (10.30 am): My question without notice is to the Minister for Industrial Relations, and I ask: given that it is exactly 20 days since a policy was introduced that allows for the personal details of government employees to be handed over to union bosses—and I gave some examples of that earlier today—can the minister identify how many public servants have had their personal details submitted to union bosses?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. As I mentioned earlier in relation to these same matters being canvassed by the Leader of the Opposition in his private member's statement, this was a matter that you made a very clear ruling about during our last sitting. You made determinations that this was a matter that was subject to a bill that was put before the House and was likely to be debated in the very near future. Indeed, we know that when we consider the *Notice Paper* this is a bill that will be debated this week. So I would suggest to you, Mr Speaker, that this is something that you may wish to give guidance to the Leader of the Opposition about and perhaps ask him to move on to a better question.

**Mr SPEAKER:** My understanding is that the question is in relation to policy. It is not in relation to the bill. As long as the answer does not go to the bill and deals only with the policy, I am happy to allow the question. I call the minister.

**Mr PITT:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. In answering this question, as per your previous ruling, I think it is important to note that your ruling allows the asking of the question but not necessarily my fulsome response because it does relate to a clause directly related to a bill before the House. So in that regard I will do my very best to not offend the standing orders.

Let me reiterate the comments that we made in the last sitting of parliament when the opposition leader and several others opposite tried to suggest that there is some kind of conspiracy here, some kind of new approach being taken in this state. Honestly, when you really start looking at the very poor Young LNP demonstration—can you call it a demonstration where there were three people?

**Ms Trad:** No.

**Mr PITT:**—out the front of the Executive Building, those opposite are very clearly focusing on—

**Mr STEVENS:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. It is under standing order 118 on relevance. What the minister is talking about has nothing to do with the question, which was about the policy and the number of people who have been advised already about providing their details.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Thank you, member for Mermaid Beach. I call the minister.

**Mr PITT:** Again, those opposite do not like to hear about when their own failed demonstrations backfire. That demonstration was all about the privacy matters that the opposition leader is raising. It is exactly what we are talking about. Frankly, those opposite are again trying to create a problem out of nothing. As I said previously, the former Bjelke-Petersen government was the government that talked about 'no card, no start'. In fact, this policy about union encouragement and allowing people's information to be made available to people is absolutely clear. When it comes to the—

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I appreciate the long lead-in by the relevant minister. But my question was very specifically about the number of people who have had their information handed over to union bosses since the implementation of the policy. As these documents that I have tabled this morning indicate, the last dot point states, 'Provide details of new employees to the relevant union subject to relevant policy principles.' It has nothing to do with legislation.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Leader of the Opposition, it is not an opportunity for you to make a speech. I ask the minister to come back to the relevance of the question under standing order 118.

**Mr PITT:** Mr Speaker, I am finding it difficult to answer the member's question because what it relates to—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr PITT:** Those opposite need to grow up. They ask the questions but they do not like the answers. The question relates to a bill before the House. The only reason we have a policy directive in place is that we are having to go through a process of changing the legislation to ensure that the damage that was done by the previous government in a range of industrial relations areas is going to be fixed. So it does relate to the bill. What I would like to talk about, which I am unable to talk about because the bill is before the House, is the way those opposite carried on in the committee hearing on that bill which relates directly to this matter of privacy.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order, members! Minister, if you have answered the question, perhaps you would like to resume your seat.

**Mr PITT:** No, I am happy to answer this. Those opposite continue to talk about this as some kind of conspiracy that this information is being provided to unions. I want to quote from a decision of Fair Work. This talks about union membership. It says—

All new employees covered by this agreement shall, upon induction, be given access to an application form and other appropriate literature to assist employees to decide whether to join the SDA.

**Mr STEVENS:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. It was a simple question requiring a simple answer in relation to numbers that have been provided. He has failed to answer the question.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Minister, I draw you back to the question. If you are not able to specifically answer it, resume your seat.

### **Industrial Relations, Legislative Reform**

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** My second question is also to the Minister for Industrial Relations. I refer to the charter letter received from the Premier which directs the minister to create an industrial relations legislative reform group comprising of 'government, union and academic representatives', and I ask: can the minister advise why this reform group excludes business employers?

**Mr PITT:** This gives me a great opportunity to show just how inept those opposite are when it comes to talking about public sector industrial relations. Here is a little bit of a lesson for the opposition leader and anyone else over that side who is willing to listen. What we are dealing with in Queensland—and because we ceded most of our powers to the Commonwealth under the Fair Work Act—is essentially there are no business employers that relate to public sector industrial relations in this state, because guess what? It is about public sector industrial relations. We are the employer.

Right now we are dealing with a bill on which we have engaged extensively with the Local Government Association of Queensland as the first round. We will be engaging with other stakeholders as well. This is a core group of people that mostly relates to those people representing public sector workers. So it should come as no surprise whatsoever when we took a suite of industrial relations reforms to the election that we will be implementing those with the reference group that has the most direct relationship with public sector employees. Just because those opposite do not actually understand what consultation means—because they spent three years not listening to anyone except themselves—we know that this group will be a great sounding-board for the way that we will be implementing our policies and undertaking a full review of the industrial relations framework here in this state.

The Premier's charter letter is very clear, and that is exactly what we are doing. If those opposite wish to try to concoct something out of nothing, as we have seen from the member for Surfers Paradise when it came to gross state product in the state accounts figures, they can go right ahead. But ultimately we have a group who will be providing advice to this government. The difference between this side of the House and that side of the House is that we listen. We consult with people. Of course we will also be implementing our election commitments. That is also something that might come as a shock to those opposite, because guess what they did? They promised the world at the 2012 election and then delivered on next to nothing. They broke promises left, right and centre.

It was a shameful act by those opposite trying to fool Queenslanders before the 2012 election, promising they were going to deliver some kind of nirvana or utopia in Queensland. What they did is attack Queensland's public servants. Those opposite have all of this so-called care for public sector

workers in this state, but what did they do? They sacked 24,000 of them. They used to belittle public servants and public sector workers every opportunity they had, and all they did for the entire time was denigrate them in office. We are turning that around. They will see plenty of opportunities on this side of the House where we will be implementing our policies, because that is what Queenslanders expect from a government—

*(Time expired)*

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Before calling the member for Springwood, I inform members that students from the Park Ridge State School in the electorate of Logan are in the gallery.

### Tourism Industry

**Mr de BRENNI:** My question is directed to the Premier. Will the Premier please outline the measures the government is putting in place to encourage South-East Queenslanders to travel to drought affected areas?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for Springwood for the question. Last week I was delighted to attend Winton with the Minister for Tourism and the member for Mount Isa to launch the outback tourism campaign. What we want to do is help drought affected families. Previously the minister and I had been to Charleville and Barcaldine to visit properties around those regions. The families said to me that the best way they believe people can help families who are going through the impacts of drought is to come out and enjoy what the outback has to offer.

I was very pleased to announce this outback tourism campaign. It is a \$500,000 campaign. I understand, Minister, that it is the first branded outback tourism campaign that we have seen in Queensland for over a decade. My government is prepared to act to do everything we can to assist. I would like to urge families living in South-East Queensland with the school holidays coming up to pack up your bags, take the family out west and enjoy the hospitality that the west has to offer.

Whilst in the outback I had the pleasure of meeting a group of western mayors, along with the minister and the member for Mount Isa. They discussed with me a range of issues they wanted to bring to my attention. What struck me as quite alarming was that they told me that over the past three years they had not met either the former premier or the former deputy premier. I found that absolutely alarming. The party that says it represents the bush did not take the time and effort to actually meet with families. It should not come as a surprise because I was having a read of something called the *Borbidge Sheldon Election Review*. On page 5 it states—

Over the term, the opinion emerged that the government predominantly was focused on the south-east corner. Regional communities and the grass roots members in the provincial cities, regional and rural—

**Mr STEVENS:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. What is the point of order?

**Mr STEVENS:** Mr Speaker, under standing order 118, I fail to see the relevance of this dissertation to the question the member asked.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I do think it is relevant. I refer the member for Mermaid Beach to standing order 62. I think it falls within that ambit.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Let me finish where I left off—

Regional communities and the grass roots members in the provincial cities, regional and rural electorates came to the view that although regional cabinets were held in selected cities and were represented by members of parliament in the party room the south east corner was favoured.

This report makes for some very interesting reading. What we have seen very clearly from the former LNP government is basically what we have been saying for three years: they were out of touch, they failed to listen and they failed to represent the needs of Queenslanders.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I just made a minor error. That was the wrong standing order I quoted.

### State Finances, Credit Rating

**Mr LANGBROEK:** My question without notice is to the Treasurer. I refer to the charter letter received from the Premier. Will the minister confirm that the five-page charter letter fails to mention the critical economic goal of regaining the state's AAA credit rating?

**Mr PITT:** I appreciate the question from the shadow Treasurer and Deputy Leader of the Opposition. Our charter letter, which the Premier has given to each of the ministers in the Palaszczuk government, will be a very good guide to what we will be trying to achieve during our time in office. It covers a range of matters. I am very proud to have not just the Treasury portfolio but also the important areas of employment, industrial relations, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships. There is a range of things in the charter letter. I encourage the member to continue to look at our charter letter because he might seek some guidance about how he might construct some policy from opposition given that those opposite abandoned their plans two days after the election and now have no plans for Queenslanders.

Much has been said about what has happened in Queensland with regard to the credit rating. We know that we received a downgrade from a AAA credit rating under a previous government at a time when we had a global financial crisis and unprecedented natural disasters in this state which saw a combined revenue writedown of around \$9 billion. Those opposite were doing everything they could to get the AAA credit rating back, but that included damaging the economy.

**Mr Nicholls:** You went bust in a boom—best terms of trade in a generation.

**Mr PITT:** They cut so hard, so deeply and so quickly into the Queensland economy in rural communities and communities up and down the coast that it hurt our domestic economy. That is what the state final demand figures clearly showed, going from positive territory above eight per cent to minus 3.5 per cent under those opposite. It was only our exports, thank goodness, that were keeping us going at one stage, because that was a very important point.

**Mr Nicholls:** What are you relying on?

**Mr PITT:** I take those interjections from the member for Clayfield, the wannabe shadow Treasurer. What we know is that he decides to flip-flop between figures as he sees fit. He did that on unemployment figures. He did it on state final demand, state accounts figures and gross state product. He selectively chose and cherrypicked figures as it suited him. They even went to the point of not releasing several figures. When it comes to a AAA credit rating in Queensland, we have always said it is something that is desirable. It is absolutely desirable to have. Thanks to the federal Labor government and its work in having a AAA credit rating with the three major ratings agencies, we have lower borrowing costs currently in Queensland than we did the last time we had a AAA credit rating. That is a very important statistic.

We will not try to get a AAA credit rating back at any cost. Under that lot, for three years they damaged the Queensland economy and the cost was all about the cost to Queenslanders, their families and their communities. That is their legacy. There will be more to say about the way they concocted figures and the way they treated our economy. It is a shameful record, and all of this will be aired in due course.

### **Rockhampton, Community Cabinet**

**Mrs LAUGA:** My question is to the Premier and Minister for the Arts. Will the Premier outline to the House how last month's community cabinet in Rockhampton went and what leaders spoke about while in the region?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** It was my pleasure to take our cabinet out to the regions once again to visit the electorates of Keppel and Rockhampton for our second community cabinet. My government will be a listening government. We are determined to listen to the views of the community and to act. I think we all would share the community's sentiments that they were deeply impacted by Tropical Cyclone Marcia earlier this year. I remember touring some of the impacted areas and visiting families who lost their livelihoods and their homes. It was some small measure that my cabinet was able to go there to see how families were coping. Whilst we were there I was able to make some announcements which will benefit the local community. I would like to thank the mayors of both Rockhampton and Livingstone shire councils for their help in rebuilding the resilient community and helping those families get back on their feet.

My government was also able to announce \$5.1 million for ongoing counselling. We know that families have been deeply impacted. They are going through a lot and we need to make sure that we continue the supports even though the cyclone has passed. I was pleased to announce with the Minister for State Development \$1.5 million for the foreshore development, thanks to the member for Keppel and her strong advocacy. That \$1.5 million will go with some extra funding from the state government and the council to ensure that we can generate some jobs in that local community, and that will transform the foreshore of Yeppoon.

We thought a way of helping out with the recovery efforts in Rockhampton and building that community spirit was to announce an NRL football game. Thanks to the strong advocacy of the member for Rockhampton and the minister, we are able to deliver that for the Rockhampton region and we look forward to participating in that in the very near future. We were also very happy to announce with the mayor of Rockhampton over \$1 million for the Rockhampton waterways clean-up. I was able to see firsthand the impacts there. We need to get those waterways cleaned up so that there will not be any impacts into the future.

Once again, these are small projects, but they are creating jobs in the local communities. Being an open and transparent government, we are also able to answer questions—something that was missing under the former LNP government, when I understand the former premier refused to answer questions from the floor. In fact, I enjoyed taking the questions and listening to what the community had to say. I was very pleased to be there. I say thank you very much to the Rockhampton and Yeppoon communities for having us there.

### **Unions, Access to Ministers**

**Mr WALKER:** My question is to the Premier. I refer to yesterday's publication of ministerial diaries that confirms that the number of one-on-one meetings between union bosses and ministers now totals 71, and I ask: is preferential access by union bosses consistent with Labor's signed pre-election pledge to treat everyone equally and not give favourable access or influence?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I would like to thank the member for Mansfield for the question. We are happy to meet with anyone, whether they are a member of the community—as we do with our community cabinets—the business community or the union movement. We are happy to meet people from small business as well. So we are more than happy to honour that commitment. I have encouraged my ministers to have an open-door policy, to be out there and to be engaging with Queenslanders.

Unlike the former LNP government, when we go through the review—and I am very pleased to discuss the review today. Members opposite might not like what they hear. We heard the reports from former premier Rob Borbidge and Joan Sheldon that undoubtedly the leadership of the former government contributed to the election loss. Campbell Newman may no longer be here, but other people who sat around that cabinet table are still here. The member for Southern Downs sat around that cabinet table making decisions.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Premier, I bring you back to standing order 118 and relevance, please.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Mr Speaker, they did not listen to Queenslanders; it is in the review. It is highly relevant.

The same people are running the opposition. It is the same LNP that did not listen to Queenslanders and here they are coming in here wanting to talk about whether or not my government has open access to people. I have had a look through the Leader of the Opposition's diary as well. He has been having quite a number of QForum events. Do members remember the QForum events? I understand they are paid events. As Premier, I have not attended any paid events under this term of government. According to their diary, QForum events are happening more often than—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr Cripps** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order, members. Member for Hinchinbrook, I cannot hear the Premier and she is closer than you are.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** This report talks about integrity and accountability. Where is the integrity and accountability? Where were they when we lowered the donation thresholds? They were nowhere to be seen. They want to talk about integrity and accountability. We have Jarrod Bleijie and his boot camp report by the Auditor-General. That is when we talk about integrity and accountability. I would encourage everyone to have a read of that—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Premier, I ask you to refer to the member for Kawana by his correct title, please.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Member for Kawana, sorry, Mr Speaker.

**Mr Bleijie:** Read the Health report. You haven't read the Health one, have you?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Have they read this report? That is what I ask them. Have they read the LNP report? That says it all.

### Natural Disasters, Recovery Assistance

**Mr PYNE:** My question is of the Deputy Premier. Will the Deputy Premier please update the House on any developments in relation to the use of day labour in disaster recovery work?

**Ms TRAD:** I thank the honourable member for Cairns for the question. This issue has been a significant issue, particularly for some regional councils. We know that Queensland councils stand ready with their workforce to help assist in the recovery and the reconstruction efforts post disaster. We know that the Cook shire has for some time been lobbying both the state government and the federal government to come on board and relax the NDRRA arrangements to enable their workforce to participate in the reconstruction efforts post Tropical Cyclone Nathan. What has occurred is the Palaszczuk Labor government has written to the responsible Commonwealth minister, Minister Keenan, on a number of occasions: first on 23 February, then on 23 March and then on 29 April. But have we received a response in relation to this government's request representing disaster affected councils throughout Queensland to allow us jointly to relax the NDRRA arrangements to allow those councils to use their workforce in the reconstruction efforts? No, there has not been a response. The Queensland Reconstruction Authority also conducted an independent review of the use of day labour hire. What it found was that councils using their day labour hire actually saved the Commonwealth and the state somewhere in the vicinity of \$160 million because they use their workforce expeditiously and can get on top of the reconstruction and recovery efforts that local communities need.

The Commonwealth has refused to engage cooperatively on this issue and they have left local councils out to dry. In fact, only recently the Cook shire mayor, Peter Scott, asked me to make representations again on his behalf and the Commonwealth has ignored those representations. What has happened is that 28 workers from the Cook Shire Council have been made redundant because the Commonwealth refused to listen to local communities, refused to listen to the Queensland government, refused to care about those communities that have been disaster affected, particularly when one considers their response to the category D funding application, which I have spoken of previously in this House. There is no doubt that the Abbott Liberal government at a national level is looking at walking away from the NDRRA arrangements that have served this state well. Let me tell honourable members that we are unprepared to roll over like the previous Newman government did on this issue. We will fight them tooth and nail. We will stand with councils and we will make sure that there is no net loss to Queensland.

### Queensland Government Union Encouragement Policy

**Mr EMERSON:** My question is to the Minister for Industrial Relations. I refer the minister to the recently released Queensland government union encouragement policy, and I ask: can the minister confirm if application of this policy excludes employees of state government owned corporations and state government statutory authorities such as the Public Trustee, the Information Commissioner and the Children's Hospital foundation?

**Mr PITT:** Members opposite are on the same track yet again; they are talking about something that is a matter before the House and so it is difficult for us to talk about this. Can I correct a few things. We have had those opposite who are members of the committee talking about this issue of privacy. They have raised it in the media; they have raised this as an ongoing issue. What we see from those opposite is essentially bordering on hysteria.

It is nonsense to suggest, as those opposite have, that in any way, shape or form the government is recruiting for unions. That is what those opposite are trying to suggest, and it is fundamentally wrong. They are trying to make a problem out of something that did not exist under the previous government and will not exist now under this government. There is no personal information or private details being passed on, Mr Speaker. Embarrassingly, when the LNP could not get the answers they wanted out of the committee process, they turned to the House yet again to try to prosecute this argument. I am assuming that this issue around privacy and information handling as it relates to union encouragement is obviously focus group testing well. Whichever spin doctors they are using, whether it is the people at Crosby Textor or whomever it may be that is doing their work for them—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Minister, could I ask you to make sure your answer is relevant. I understand the question relates to encouragement policies for government owned corporations and statutory bodies.

**Mr PITT:** Mr Speaker, I thank you again for your guidance. The member for Indooroopilly is asking questions around what exemptions are in place. I will get the full details to the member in terms of what the exemptions are or are not, but this is all part of a plan by those opposite to try to

make some link that is greater than the historical links that we have with the broader union movement in Queensland. They spent three years denigrating public servants, and now they wish to be the guardians of public sector workers and their privacy matters. The privacy commissioner has confirmed that the policy as it exists, as well as what legislation may be debated in this House, certainly are not contravening any privacy matters and that is the most important point. All they are doing is flogging a dead horse. They are trying to make an issue out of something that does not exist and never did exist until it came up in LNP focus group testing as a significant issue.

They will try anything to try to discredit the government, but Queenslanders see through it and the Public Service sees through it. Public sector workers are happy that they will be getting entitlements and conditions back which will give them the protections they need against a government and probably at some stage—although it is terrible to say—a potential future conservative government. That is the concern. We have to have these protections in place to deal with bad governments, and that is exactly what those opposite were when they were sitting on the treasury benches.

### State Finances

**Ms HOWARD:** My question is of the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer please advise the House of the state budget position left by the former government?

**Mr PITT:** I thank the member for the question. As has often been remarked upon, she is doing a fine job in Ipswich.

You do see a lot of things and find out more information when you take over government and you get a chance to talk to Treasury. What we do know is that the LNP's approach to budgeting was similar to their approach to economic management. When it came to the expenditure side of the equation, let us talk about a few things. The former treasurer, the member for Clayfield, programmed cuts to service delivery in this state in real terms over the forward estimates by not budgeting for growth funding for service delivery. That is shameful, and the Leader of the Opposition, the former health minister, would know too well what that meant because he would have been in cahoots with the member for Clayfield.

The Leader of the Opposition would know that there is a shortfall of several hundreds of millions of dollars when it comes to the health growth funding that is required to maintain current service levels over the next four years. That is a shameful indictment on those opposite, who obviously thought that they were going to win the election and that their 'magic pudding' of asset sales was going to fund everything. They had not even allocated the appropriate amount for health growth funding. This will be laid bare when this transparent government provides a real budget that delivers on services to Queenslanders, and I hope those opposite take notice that that is what we will be presenting.

When it comes to tourism, we know that under the former member for Currumbin the Tourism budget was slashed nearly in half, from \$100 million down to \$60 million. Those opposite claimed that tourism was one of their four pillars, yet they were going to halve funding for Tourism in this state. We discovered a capital shortfall in Education. The real expenditure on schools and school maintenance was set to fall from 2015-16 onwards. There was no real funding for infrastructure. The projects they were spruiking were all reliant on the proceeds of asset sales. They were banking on money they did not even have and assuming that Queenslanders would vote for their ridiculous policy. There was no attempt to make up for the shortfall that we are going to see in terms of the National Disability Insurance Scheme, which is all about the federal Abbott government rationing the Medicare levy that we have all been paying into since July 2014. Of course there is no accounting whatsoever for the \$18 billion of cuts that we will have to deal with in this state because of the Abbott government's cuts to Health and Education over the forward years. This is very concerning because, unlike those opposite, we on this side of the House will stand up to the Commonwealth. We will stand up for Queensland and present a budget that will be about real service delivery that does the job instead of talking about it.

### Hospital and Health Service Boards, Union Membership

**Mr McARDLE:** My question is to the health minister. Can the minister confirm that, as well as the government's union encouragement policy, independent hospital board chairs have been directed that they must nominate union members to Queensland hospital and health service boards?

**Mr DICK:** No, Mr Speaker, I have not given a direction like that to the board chairs. What I have said to board chairs is, 'Work with your employees. Work with the workers who deliver health services in Queensland.' I regularly meet with the chairs and I last met with them a few weeks ago. One of the things that we talked about was working with union consultative committees in the workplace because, strange as it may seem to the members opposite, if we work with, and listen to, employees we get a better health system.

I seriously do not understand the obsession with union bashing by those members opposite. They had three years of union bashing and what happened? How did that go, members opposite? How did three years of union bashing go: bashing workers and their representatives; taking 4,800 workers out of the health system, 1,800 nurses and midwives—how did that go for you? It is no surprise that hospital and health services should work with workers and union representatives, because if you address problems at the workplace level you sort out problems, you get things done and you get hospitals in particular working better. This is no surprise; it is actually good governance, good public administration and a sensible way to run the Public Service.

We are not afraid of running an effective Public Service. I remember the meeting I had with senior executives in my department, and they volunteered to me that the culture in the Department of Health was a culture of fear.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr DICK:** They might laugh, but it was a rule of fear because you were either on their team or you—

**Mrs Frecklington** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** If I call the minister, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I would ask you to allow the minister to answer. Member for Nanango, your voice is very loud.

**Mr DICK:** That is what they wanted, and we will listen to many voices. We will listen to workers and their representatives, as I did at the Gold Coast. It was a great example because the hospital and health service listened to clinicians, physios and occupational therapists coming up with great ideas for the hospital to make our health system work better. I want to acknowledge Ian Langdon, the chair of the Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service, and all of the team down there including Ron Calvert, the chief executive. What a great initiative and what great leaders who are willing to listen to their employees, their clinicians and their staff to get hospitals working better, and that is the sort of health system we need in Queensland.

### **Elective Surgery, Waiting Times**

**Miss BOYD:** My question is to the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services. Will the minister advise the House of any progress the government is making in tackling surgery waiting lists for Queenslanders?

**Mr DICK:** I thank the member for Pine Rivers for her question. Making sure patients get their surgery on time is a priority for our government, but we are not going to go into gimmicks, like those opposite, and make false promises to Queenslanders for political purposes. We want people to get their surgery within certain times and we do not want a system that works that has a process that has exemptions. With all of the exemptions that the members opposite had for their supposed wait-time guarantee, the guarantee would not have worked. Because of the exemptions it was a worthless guarantee. So we have set tough interim targets that we expect hospital and health services to deliver on, but we think they are sensible because they do not include those exemptions.

Of course, those Queenslanders waiting for an outpatient appointment were ignored by the former health minister and now Leader of the Opposition. There was no place in the system for the 100,000 Queenslanders waiting beyond clinically recommended time for an outpatient appointment. Our interim targets are: 98 per cent for category 1 patients to receive their elective surgery within clinically recommended time; and 95 per cent of category 2 and category 3 patients to receive their elective surgery within clinically recommended time. Importantly, those interim targets will not be subject to exemptions that applied under the former government.

I can inform the House that as of 1 May this year the percentage of ready-for-surgery patients treated within the clinically recommended time was 99.6 per cent for category 1 patients, 98.3 per cent for category 2 patients and 99.8 per cent for category 3 patients. What a great demonstration of the service delivered to Queenslanders by our clinicians, by our nurses, by all of our hospital staff to deliver those outcomes. That is a positive start, but I am under no illusions that achieving and continuing to achieve those targets will remain very challenging and those results will vary over time.

One thing we will guarantee to Queenslanders is that we will not make them empty promises, like members opposite did. For example, they had a promise that people would get their surgery on time but only if there were enough specialists and if they had already seen a specialist. But if there are 100,000 people waiting to get in to see specialists then it is not much of a guarantee. Their program would have affected less than one per cent of people while ignoring the 100,000 patients waiting beyond clinically recommended time.

Queensland needs a health system that works for the many and not for the few. That is what we will deliver and that is what we are delivering: 99.6 per cent for category 1 patients, 98.3 per cent for category 2 patients and 99.8 per cent for category 3 patients. We are delivering on the ground, not making meaningless guarantees.

### Electricity Prices

**Mr POWELL:** My question is to the Treasurer. In the Premier's charter letter the minister was instructed to 'request the QPC as its first task to conduct a public inquiry into electricity pricing'. Given that the government's first 100 days have already passed, can the minister explain why the QPC has failed to hold its first public hearing?

**Mr PITT:** I thank the honourable member for the question. For those who do not know the acronym, the member is referring to the Queensland Productivity Commission. Labor made an election commitment to ensure we had a body which would be able to look at lifting the economic productivity of our state. Of course, it is about ensuring it looked at a range of different matters, one of which, quite correctly identified by the member opposite, relates to electricity pricing and processes in this state. The member would be aware that we are looking at a range of things in terms of dealing with electricity pricing and ownership of electricity assets—a merger process.

The first thing to note is that we have kept our electricity assets in public hands. Those opposite wanted to sell them off. The second thing is that the former government conducted a range of inquiries—lots of reviews. We get criticised for conducting reviews. They conducted a range of reviews, but there is only one review that counts and that is the one we saw released just this week. I am sure that will be of great interest to the member, looking at plenty of his colleagues, as it mentions a range of problems.

Getting back to the question, we vowed that within the first 100 days we would establish the Queensland Productivity Commission, and we have. We will soon be announcing the chair of that commission. Then that work will be undertaken. We will be doing that work. It was not about holding a public hearing; it was about establishing this body to understand exactly how we could influence the very complex area of electricity pricing to give as much hope as possible to Queenslanders to see a stabilisation or even a reduction in their electricity bills.

Unlike those opposite, we did not go to the election promising to reduce electricity prices. They promised that they would save Queenslanders \$120 each year—not \$120 over the term but \$120 each year. Was that a false promise? I cannot say the other way, but it may well have been a false promise. I will give the House a bit of a history lesson. There should have been an attachment in the LNP review. I have here a document that pledges to reduce the cost of living and that refers directly to a price reduction of \$120 a year. Under those opposite we saw electricity prices go up by 43 per cent, or over \$400. That is far from the promise they made to Queenslanders. That is the point.

When we look at what has happened over the past three years in Queensland and we read the review of the former premier and the former treasurer, Mr Borbidge and Mrs Sheldon, we see quite clearly that those opposite did not listen and that, basically, they promised too much and delivered very little. That is a very simple equation. That is not what this government is about. We will deliver on our election commitments, and when we do we will tell everyone on the opposite side just what we are doing.

### Education, Capital Works Funding

**Mr MADDEN:** My question is to the Minister for Education. Will the minister update the House on capital works funding in the Education portfolio?

**Ms JONES:** I thank the honourable member for the question. I know that the member for Ipswich West is just as passionate as I am when it comes to delivering the schools and the infrastructure we need in Queensland. He believes what I believe, which is that it does not matter what part of Queensland you go to school in—I see the member for Townsville nodding—you deserve

access to the best quality facilities the government can afford. We are very passionate about that. After all, the Labor Party is the party of education and we will always fight for fair and adequate funding for education.

When I became the Minister for Education I went through the budget and looked at some of the issues that arose under the former government. When I started scrutinising the capital works budget I found a black hole. That black hole was created because of the deal that was done by Treasury, over the head of the education department and the former education minister, for a PPP which front-loaded capital spending. That means that, of the \$300 million or so we spend annually on capital works, over one-third goes directly into making those PPP payments for schools. Do members think there are any schools being built outside South-East Queensland? There are not.

There are a couple of things that I have read in the report that, as the honourable the Premier said, they got absolutely spot-on. I think Mr Borbidge and Mrs Sheldon should be acknowledged for the work they did in pointing to this fact. The former LNP government in Queensland did focus on the south-east corner and neglected the vast majority of Queenslanders and Queensland schools. To enter into a deal which does not deliver one new school outside of South-East Queensland is a very good example of exactly what Borbidge and Sheldon were talking about.

So members can imagine my surprise that the Leader of the Opposition, who was party to this deal when he was in cabinet, joined the honourable member for Toowoomba North and put out this tweet—

Joined @TrevorWattsLNP & Wilsonton Campus P&C reps—@QLDLabor needs to fund indoor arts & sports facility

That is what they are calling for. I know that one of the other recommendations was that they should be doing more social media.

**Mr Mander:** And your point?

**Ms JONES:** The point, member for Toowoomba North, is that there was no funding committed under the previous LNP government to build that facility—none, zero, zip. It is about time that you and the Leader of the Opposition started being honest—

**Mr Bleijie:** He is not the member for Toowoomba North; he is Everton. You've got the wrong person.

**Ms JONES:** I am not talking about him; I am talking about the leader.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Minister, through the chair, please.

**Ms JONES:** I will finish with this point. I know that Borbidge and Sheldon said that they should start using social media better, but how about this hashtag: #tbh, to be honest.

(Time expired)

### Leasehold Property Valuations

**Mr COSTIGAN:** My question is to the Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines, and I ask in the presence of some good people here today in the gallery from the Capricorn Coast: can the minister advise if he has been in contact with the Minister for Tourism regarding valuations for a number of tourism leasehold properties, including those on Great Keppel Island?

**Dr LYNHAM:** I thank the member for his question. No, I have not been in consultation with the Minister for Tourism about any valuations on Great Keppel Island. But I assure him that Great Keppel Island is a jewel in the Great Barrier Reef that is well supported by its strong local member, the member for Keppel. It is also supported by the Minister for Agriculture and member for Rockhampton. I also remind those opposite that we do support private sector investment because that is where jobs are created, and private sector investment on Great Keppel should be encouraged. Those opposite did not give them a casino licence; they gave them nothing. I do not know why those opposite are probing about this when they gave them absolutely nothing. At least when we went up there on our community cabinet we consulted with the people of Great Keppel Island. We advised them that if a casino licence should become available then it may be open for consideration for that licence to go to another process and they are free to bid for that particular licence. We support Great Keppel Island. We support—

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Minister, one moment. I would be pleased if there are no further interjections across the floor. Minister, it sounds to me like you have answered the question. Would you like to resume your seat.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Dr LYNHAM:** Mr Speaker, I just want to point out before I resume my seat—

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order, members! Allow the minister to continue before he resumes his seat. I am listening.

**Dr LYNHAM:** Those opposite made the decision—those opposite.

### Great Barrier Reef, Shipping

**Mr CRAWFORD:** My question is to the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef. Will the minister outline to the House what the government is doing to avoid another shipping disaster in the Great Barrier Reef like *Shen Neng 1*?

**Dr MILES:** I thank the member for Barron River for his question. I know he is passionate about protecting the reef and about the jobs of his constituents who rely upon it. *Shen Neng 1* was a Chinese ship that on 3 April 2010 veered more than 10 kilometres outside a shipping lane and ran aground on Douglas Shoal. The accident caused the largest known damage to the Great Barrier Reef by a ship. It gouged a three-kilometre long, 400,000 square metre scar in and around Douglas Shoal. It left a four-kilometre long oil slick and toxic antifouling paint embedded in the shoal and the sea floor. Even now, recovery in coral and algal growth is slow as a result of the contamination from antifouling paint. In federal Senate estimates last month the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority revealed it did not have the necessary funds to repair the damage caused by this disaster. The Premier has said that the wreckers should pay and that we do not want to see anything like this happen again, and I am sure all Queenslanders agree. We made an election commitment to reduce the risk of shipping in the reef's waters by working with our Commonwealth counterparts and the International Maritime Organization to develop a new vessel class ensuring bulk goods carriers travelling in the World Heritage area meet stringent safety codes. We will additionally work with the Commonwealth government and the North-East Shipping Management Group to agree upon safety codes for bulk goods carriers in the World Heritage area.

Given that I have been asked about our reef policies, let me also respond to some of the more outrageous claims made by the member for Glass House. I note that he must not have actually read the draft decision, so I will table it for him today. The decision says that the measures that represent significant progress are the 80 per cent target including additional funding—Labor's policy; restrictions on new port developments—Labor's policy; and restrictions on dumping of dredge spoil—Labor's policy. I table that draft decision so that the member for Glass House can actually read it.

*Tabled paper:* World Heritage Committee of UNESCO: Draft Decision: 39 COM 7B.7, regarding whether to list the Great Barrier Reef as World Heritage in Danger [\[494\]](#).

Let me also for the benefit of the member for Glass House table the letter that the government received from the assistant director-general for culture at UNESCO, who said—

I wish particularly to commend the Queensland Government for the commitment it has made to enhance the ... Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability ...

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 5 May 2015, from the Assistant Director-General for Culture, UNESCO, to the Premier and Minister for the Arts, Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk, and the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef, Hon. Dr Steven Miles, regarding the commitment to protect the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage property [\[495\]](#).

*(Time expired)*

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Before calling the member for Redlands, I inform members that students from Park Ridge State School in the electorate of Logan are in the gallery.

### Cleveland-Redland Bay Road, Upgrade

**Mr McEACHAN:** My question is to the Minister for Main Roads, and I ask: can the minister advise if the Palaszczuk government intends to deliver on much needed road upgrades for Cleveland-Redland Bay Road?

**Mr BAILEY:** I thank the honourable member for his question. I have responsibility for 33,000 kilometres of roads across this state. I do not recall that specific road, but I am happy to find the details for the member and to inform him subsequently.

### **Palaszczuk Labor Government, Fire Services**

**Ms GRACE:** My question is to the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services. Will the minister inform the House how the Palaszczuk government is going about boosting front-line fire services and how these efforts compare to the previous efforts in the portfolio?

**Mrs MILLER:** I thank the member for Brisbane Central for her question and also thank her for supporting the fireies in her community. As we all know, firefighters perform some of the most important and some of the most dangerous duties in our community. They save lives, they save property and they are called upon to risk their own lives day in and day out to keep Queenslanders safe—just like our heroic swiftwater rescue teams last month when they plunged into the thundering rapids around the Caboolture area to rescue people in grave danger. Where would we be without our firefighters? Sadly, the LNP failed to show even the most basic respect for our hardworking fireies. Over the last three years under the LNP government, the Campbell Newman government went out of its way to pick fights with the fireies. It cut their funding back and it failed to deliver enough firefighters to keep up with Queensland's growing demand for front-line services, and the figures speak for themselves. Whilst Campbell Newman was Premier, Queenslanders got just 134 new firefighters. That is almost half the number of the new firefighters we employed when we were last in government. What a disgrace! All the LNP was interested in was how hard and how fast it could cut back the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services budget.

In stark contrast, we went to the election with a commitment to boost front-line services for Queenslanders, and I am proud to report to the House today that we are delivering on that commitment. Since the election of the Palaszczuk Labor government, we have delivered 42 new firefighters for Queensland. That is nearly one-third of the total number employed by the LNP during its hopeless three years in government. But that is not all: our government is on track to deliver by early September another 69 new firefighters to the front line and that is because that is what we do when we are in government. We deliver the services that matter to Queenslanders. We have recruits ready and raring to go across the state. That is more than double what the LNP was able to deliver during its entire three years in government. The Palaszczuk Labor government is committed to keeping Queenslanders safe. Our government is very proud of our firefighters and we on this side of the House will continue to do everything we can do to look after them and to keep Queenslanders safe.

### **Trinity Inlet**

**Mr LAST:** My question is to the Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland. I refer to the minister's charter letter received from the Premier, which instructs the minister to identify the Labor government's—and I quote—North Queensland infrastructure priorities. I ask: can the minister outline what the Labor government's top North Queensland infrastructure priorities are and whether they include dredging the Trinity Inlet at Cairns?

**Mr SPEAKER:** The minister has one minute.

**Mrs O'ROURKE:** I thank the member for the question. In my role as the Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland, I will be working very closely with the North Queensland community on looking at and delivering infrastructure projects. Obviously, with regard to our election commitment, currently our main focus is working on the Townsville stadium. At the moment the department is working on putting the business case together, which will be available before the end of the year and which will outline how we are going to be processing that.

I say to the member to rest assured that the North Queensland community is very excited about working with the Palaszczuk government on delivering on the election commitment for the stadium and is very keen to communicate with us with regard to further infrastructure projects. We will be having those conversations.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. I understand that there are no private members' bills to be introduced today so we will proceed to matters of public interest. I call the Leader of the Opposition.

## MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

### Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

 **Mr SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.31 am): Earlier this morning we saw more fumbles, stumbles and inexperience from the Treasurer of Queensland. Indeed, when he stood up to answer a question in relation to the involvement of the private sector in the government's industrial relations reform group, he said that there was no need for that, because it did not involve anyone in the private sector. I would just like to quote the full paragraph of the minister's charter letter, where he is instructed to establish the industrial relations legislative reform reference group comprising government, union and academic representatives to undertake a comprehensive review of Queensland's industrial relations laws and tribunals and provide advice to the government by December 2015 for industrial relations reform. As we have already seen, there is great concern among members of the business community about industrial relations reform, which this government has introduced, that either impacts upon them directly or indirectly. Indeed, I remind the Minister for Industrial Relations that, when it comes to union right of access and the notification time—

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I rise to a point of order. Madam Deputy Speaker, this is very clearly one of the things that is a matter that is before the House in relation to the Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, which is to be debated imminently. So I suggest that you give some guidance to the Leader of the Opposition and remind him of the standing orders in relation to anticipation.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Farmer): Order! I remind the opposition leader to stay away from the matters under consideration.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** Madam Speaker, then I would like to touch on outpatients and expose the nonsense from the Minister for Health in the parliament this morning. Certainly, it is very clear that there is a large raft of legislation which this government directly impacts, including potentially that piece and also other pieces around tribunals that oversee WorkCover in Queensland, which has a direct impact on private sector employees and employers, and which is subject to the intervention of this particular government. There is no doubt about that. So it is completely wrong for the minister to stand up in this place and imply for one moment that there is no interest from the private sector with regard to any legislative reform and that it relates only to state government employees. That is clearly and patently not the case. The Minister for Industrial Relations knows that full well and it is about time he fesses up to it.

Also, in this place this morning we heard a lot being said by the Minister for Health. He talked about a reign of fear and terror. The only fear and terror that I am aware of in the Department of Health is that being felt by the Minister for Health himself. When he became the minister, his very first action was to put the keypad back on his door so that he could be kept safe from the department. His next action was to commandeer one of the fridges. I do not know what he is going to do with that. Maybe he is going to hide in the fridge if they break through the door. That is what we have seen from the Minister for Health. Not only that, if you are a ministerial or departmental person, you have to make an appointment to go into the office. The closed door policy that is in place today from this minister is absolutely extraordinary.

The other thing is that he stood opposite and completely tried to revise the world. He said that he had just made a visit to the Gold Coast. Hopefully, it was a good visit for him; it probably was not such a good visit for the people who work within Queensland Health. He indicated that he had done a cursory overview of the number of people who were waiting too long for their surgery and to see if our wait-time guarantee would be of any benefit. It would be a benefit if it were in place because it would ensure that the zero long waits on the Gold Coast could continue. When we took over government in Queensland, 107 people on the Gold Coast were waiting longer than recommended for surgery. As at the end of March this year, because of our hard work, that figure was down to zero. The important thing about having a surgery wait-time guarantee is to make sure that those patients who do not have their surgery on time can have the comfort that, if it cannot be provided at that public hospital, it will be provided at another hospital. When we came to government in Queensland, 3,552 people were waiting longer than recommended for their routine dental appointment. As of last year, that figure was zero. The minister mentioned nothing about that.

He also indicated some concern that he has found belatedly with regard to surgical outpatient appointments. He did not have the same concern when he was last in this place prior to what was an involuntary sabbatical. In 2006 in Queensland, 120,000 people were awaiting outpatient appointments. When the LNP came to power, that figure was 232,000. Indeed, it was going up by 15 per cent a year. The minister had none of those concerns.

Let us also look at what happened on the Gold Coast. At the end of 2013, when the LNP really started to address the issue of outpatient appointments on the Gold Coast—and it is extremely important to understand this—9,200 outpatients were waiting more than 12 months for their appointment. Fast-forward to 2014, in the space of one year that figure had gone down to 2,471—a 73 per cent reduction in just under 12 months. And it was not under the Labor Party!

This is a briefing note that the minister himself should dig up in his department. Maybe if he took the keypad off his door and came out of the fridge that he commandeered he might be able to look at what happened. This briefing note was prepared by the Department of Health for then premier Anna Bligh. It might have been around the time when we had Stephen Robertson, Gordon Nuttall or one of the other many failed Labor Party health ministers of the time. It is very instructive to read what it said in relation to the Gold Coast. This briefing note is dated 26 February 2007. It says that, in relation to an informal audit of the Gold Coast hospital regarding the number of outpatients down there—

This informal audit at the Gold Coast Hospital showed that as of May 2006 there were 7497 patients awaiting SOPD appointments, with 2373 (approximately 32%) being in categories classified on the predicted waiting times as 'Never'.

They were actually marked by the Labor Party government—2,373 of those people—as never being seen and to never be seen. Where was the Minister for Health when we had not only these hidden waiting lists under Labor—which were published when we came to power in Queensland—but also 2,373 long-suffering individuals marked to never be seen under the Labor government of the day? This is a party that pretends to stand up for the downtrodden and those who do not have a voice. These people were never to be given a voice. They were to be hidden.

When I became the minister one of the first briefing notes I got from my director-general was very, very clear. He said to me, 'Minister, do you want to take this particular outpatient waiting data to cabinet?' Members know stuff is taken to cabinet so it is not released for at least 20 years. I said, 'No, we are going to do something novel for the Labor Party, we are going to release that information publicly.' We were not only able to deal with the dental long waits, but also able to deal with the cochlear long waits, the ophthalmology long waits through the hard work of the government and refocusing its resources. We were then able to bring in the Southern Hemisphere's first surgery guarantee, which this government did not have a mandate to throw out. Those opposite did not go to the election saying they were going to do that. I doubt that any Queenslanders voted to get rid of the surgery wait-time guarantee. Also, for the first time in living memory we started the process of arresting the growth in outpatient waiting lists in Queensland. It went up from 120,000, in the government's own briefing note in February 2007, to 232,000 when the government changed around five years later, and was actually pegged back by 4,000 in the time that we were in government.

It is about time that the Minister for Health stops being a pretender and starts to face up to the fact that his government put these long-suffering souls on waiting lists that were never, ever going to be seen. In relation to endoscopy on the Gold Coast, people were routinely waiting a couple of years. By the time we finished there were very few people waiting more than six months. In the Wide Bay area it has gone from two years to around about one month. That is a record of proper health service administration.

### National Palliative Care Week



**Ms LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (11.41 am): Last week was National Palliative Care Week. On Friday I had the pleasure of representing the Premier at the Palliative Care Queensland Thanksgiving Service at St John's Cathedral, along with His Excellency the Hon. Paul de Jersey, Governor of Queensland and Patron of Palliative Care Queensland, Dr Julia Wootton, President, Palliative Care Queensland, and Peter and Gabrielle Quilliam of Hummingbird House Children's Hospice. Palliative Care, or end-of-life care, are those healthcare services aimed at meeting the health needs of people, including infants and children, whose life expectancy is anticipated to be shortened as a result of known life-limiting conditions and where the primary intent of care may have shifted from life prolongation to a focus on quality of life.

End-of-life care helps those with an advanced, progressive, incurable illness to live as well as possible until they die. It enables the supportive and palliative care needs of both patient and family to be identified and met throughout the last phase of life and into bereavement. It includes management of pain and other symptoms and provision of psychological, social, spiritual and practical support.

National Palliative Care Week seeks to raise awareness of palliative care services and their importance in our community and encourage Australians to have the difficult conversation about end-of-life care. The topic of this year's National Palliative Care Week was 'Dying to talk; talking about dying won't kill you', aimed at challenging the taboo that remains in Australian culture to discussing issues of death and dying. I am standing here today to do my part to challenge this taboo, and in so doing it is my hope to both acknowledge and honour the many outstanding health professionals and volunteers who work in this field and to contribute to the discussion on the importance of palliative care services across our community. Last week Professor Patsy Yates, President of Palliative Care Australia, said—

All Australians will be touched by death, as a friend, as a family member and as a member of a community—we owe to all Australians to help them achieve the best death possible.

I have already shared in this House that both of my parents were diagnosed with life-limiting illnesses in their forties. My father passed when I was 20 years of age and my mother when I was 28. Both of my parents were fortunate enough to be referred to palliative care services when their disease progression transitioned from curative and life-prolonging interventions to comfort focused care. I say 'fortunate' because this meant that my father remained at home for as long as possible and was then cared for in a hospice environment until his death. Far from being clinical, the hospice was a warm and relaxed environment that we as family members were invited to treat as our home. In my mother's case, she received outstanding in-home support from Karuna Hospice allowing us to care for her at home until health complications made it impossible to do so. After this time, she received specialist palliative care in a dedicated palliative care hospital ward. This dedicated ward was different from mainstream wards. The rooms were larger, allowing family to stay. In fact, staying was actively encouraged. After all, time spent together was precious and respected as such.

The palliative model of care provided not only for the complex physical issues that were associated with advanced disease progression but also the emotional and spiritual needs of my mother, while also caring for our family. This sort of holistic care is not possible in a mainstream medical environment. We were encouraged to have open and honest conversations about dying, to be informed about her choices and preferences: where it would happen, who would be with her and what would provide comfort. My mother had an advance health directive and her death was as she had wished it.

I know that palliative care services are imperative because I have experienced them in a very personal way. I am very grateful to be a member of a government that is providing funding certainty to those organisations who provide such essential services. The recent announcement by the Minister for Health of \$20 million over three years to fund eight non-government organisations that provide essential palliative care services, including the Karuna Hospice, will allow them to get on with the job of providing the best palliative care services to Queenslanders rather than fighting from year to year to secure funding. This announcement, along with an extension of Queensland's palliative care helpline, PalAssist, to ensure patients, families and carers have access to immediate advice and emotional support 24 hours a day, seven days a week, is about ensuring that people confronting a terminal illness receive the high standard of care they deserve. But there is, of course, more to be done.

I thank the minister for these investments and for the launch of Queensland's Statewide Strategy for End-of-Life Care 2015, which recognises the pivotal role of individuals being empowered to undertake advanced care planning and the role of all health professionals in the identification of patient needs and supporting the delivery of high-quality end-of-life care. It provides a blueprint for hospital and health services to work collaboratively and responsively to drive implementation of the strategy. Health and hospital services have been given great autonomy to individualise how they meet the needs of their respective communities, and I call on them to do so with great care.

Palliative care services and support are not about death but, rather, the life that one has left. They make a tremendous difference to the journey that patients and their families take towards the end of life. The value we as a community place on life is reflected in not only the attention we place on birth but also the dignity we afford death.

## State Finances

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (11.46 am): I want to speak about the budget strategy and also refer to comments this morning by the honourable Minister for Education about capital works in the education portfolio. I inherited a situation where there was no planning for schools in Queensland beyond ad hoc planning.

**Ms Grace:** Oh, rubbish!

**Mr LANGBROEK:** It is true, member for Brisbane Central. We set up the Queensland Schools Planning Commission. We have built 11 schools. There were no schools opened in 2014 because of the lack of planning by the former Labor government. The current health minister, Cameron Dick, the member for Woodridge, was the responsible minister for education at the time. The big drain on the capital works budget that is happening at the moment is partly because of the lack of planning for Brisbane State High. We are now having to build at a cost of \$60 million to \$70 million out of the \$300 million capital works budget. That is what the Minister for Education needs to deal with now. Tell the people in the electorate of Toowoomba North that they did not deserve the school that was built at Highfields. Tell the people in the member for Coomera's electorate that they do not deserve the 10 schools that are being built in their area or the schools in the other growing areas north and south of the city. It is a bit rich to get a lecture from a Labor government whose planning was so poor there were no schools opened in Queensland in 2014. It does take a few years to plan for schools.

Let us deal with the issues of the day. We heard from the Treasurer this morning that it is just a month until the Palaszczuk government's first budget. By their own admission, the Premier and the Treasurer, the budget is the line in the sand. It is the point at which this government stops pointing the finger elsewhere for its own failures and starts accepting some responsibility. It is a budget that will illustrate whether this government will live up to its word and deliver on its key election promises. First and foremost is the promise to pay down debt. Labor promised to pay down debt by \$5.4 billion over six years. Labor's economic and fiscal strategy, released during the last election, shows an accumulated debt pay-down of \$2.084 billion over the forward estimates. The LNP will be watching closely to make sure Labor delivers on this promise, although there are serious questions as to how this debt pay-down can be delivered.

As we on this side of the House have been saying for a long time, you cannot spend the same money twice. Diverting revenue from one source to another will not achieve a reduction in debt without finding savings elsewhere. Where are the savings going to come from, Treasurer? Even assuming you can pay down debt using the same money twice, the Treasurer is facing a huge hole in the revenues of Ergon and Energex thanks to the Australian Energy Regulator's preliminary determination for the 2015-20 regulatory period. This will require cost savings to be made at those businesses and it will mean lower dividends coming back to the government. We believe that revenues at those businesses could be down by as much as \$450 million per annum. That represents a huge hole that the Treasurer will not be able to plug or hide from. That is not the only hole that has emerged in this budget. The Treasurer's signature policy to merge the electricity businesses has been routinely criticised at every turn as having the potential to further drive up power prices. The ACCC is not buying it and energy markets are not buying it. This plan does not stack up. Of course, the Treasurer is relying on the savings from aggregating those businesses from 2015-16 onwards. To expect that the merger savings will be realised next year is a pipedream. It ignores the significant up-front costs of merging businesses together should that proposal even get through. It also ignores the fact that, with the no-forced-redundancy provision, the savings from aggregating the businesses are well into the out years. Quite clearly, the major planks of Labor's debt reduction strategy are rotting.

What else do we know? We know that the Treasurer has promised to match the LNP surplus this year. The *Brisbane Times* has stated that when the Treasurer made that commitment he vowed to maintain a general government net operating surplus over the economic cycle, promising to match the LNP's much touted return to surplus next financial year. For the benefit of the House, the LNP left office forecasting fiscal surpluses over the next three years. The fiscal surplus in 2015-16 was forecast to be \$331 million. That is a real surplus, as recommended by Queensland Treasury. I refer the Treasurer to the 2012 fiscal reform blueprint where Treasury clearly recommends adopting the fiscal balance as the primary budget measure. That is the difference between the LNP and Labor: we do not tell Treasury what measure we are going to adopt; we take their advice and act. The Treasurer wants to weaken Queensland's fiscal principles and that means more debt and more deficits. It is in Labor's DNA.

The budget must also restore some confidence, a lot like the federal budget did. I hope that the Treasurer has learned from his mistake in talking down the Queensland economy. The budget is a key test of the promise to lead an open and accountable government. We will be holding the government to account.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Farmer): Order! Before I call the member for Mackay, I welcome another group of students from Park Ridge State School in the electorate of Logan.

### **Endeavour Foundation Workshop; Housing for the Disabled**

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (11.52 am): Recently I had the opportunity to visit the Endeavour Foundation's workshop facility in Mackay to witness firsthand the brilliant outcomes being achieved. Fifty-nine local people living with disabilities are employed at the workshop. Their work varies from applying eyelets and twine to tags supplied to the mining industry and constructing pallets and crates through to inventory control technology, packaging and the retail of safety products. While touring the workshop and speaking with the workers, I saw a level of productivity and standard of both operations and product that would be the envy of any workplace. Those opportunities are made possible through the hard work and tireless dedication of the Endeavour Foundation staff and volunteers. At present, the foundation employs 10 staff at the Mackay facility who are supported by regular volunteers and 59 disabled workers. At the conclusion of my visit, I gained a genuine sense of the great work that was being done at the workshop and I was inspired by the possibilities that lay ahead—enormous and exciting possibilities to grow business, to generate income, to provide training and education, and, perhaps most importantly, to improve the quality of lives of some of the most courageous, hardworking, willing and yet vulnerable people in our community.

Unfortunately, there is one other pressing issue facing some disabled people in Mackay, which is the issue of housing. It is a real hurdle to find suitable accommodation when living at home is no longer an option. I will tell the House about Johnny, a neighbour of mine who is a supported worker at the Endeavour Foundation workshop. He has had an intellectual disability since birth. For many years his father has been trying to get Johnny a placement in supported group accommodation. Johnny wants to live independently from his father. He will need support with meals and the general organisation of his day, for example, choosing what to wear and help with crossing roads, and also assistance with finance. In recent years his father, Neil, has not been in the best of health and is concerned that he will not find a placement before he is no longer able to take care of Johnny. After a number of years the only placement offered is a four-day-a-week living arrangement in Bowen. At best, Bowen is a two-hour drive from Mackay. I do not know where Johnny is supposed to live for the other three days of week and he would also need to give up his employment with the Endeavour Foundation, from which he gets so much pleasure.

The Palaszczuk government is committed to providing elderly parents with greater certainty about where their adult children with disabilities will live when they can no longer care for them. I have heard firsthand from many families in Mackay that there is a chronic housing shortfall for people with disabilities. I know that my parliamentary colleagues the Minister for Disability Services and the Minister for Housing have written to the federal government and Minister Fifield to raise concerns about the severe shortage of housing for people with disabilities so that we can come up with options for elderly parents of adult children with disabilities, as well as options for young adults with disabilities who want independence. Those elderly parents want to know that their children are going to be cared for when they pass.

The Abbott government, like the state LNP, is threatening the true intent of the NDIS by failing to assure Queensland and the rest of the states and territories that it will address critical housing concerns. The federal LNP budget failed to address the chronic housing shortage for people with disabilities. The sad reality is that \$700 million per year from the DisabilityCare fund—the extra Medicare levy for NDIS—was earmarked to be spent on disability housing, but the Abbott government will not say if or when it will be released. Can members imagine the growth in the construction industry with that type of investment and the possibilities of public-private partnerships? It would create thousands of jobs and benefit the broader Queensland community.

*(Time expired)*

### **Toowoomba Second Range Crossing**

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (11.57 am): I rise on a matter of public interest relating to the Toowoomba Second Range Crossing. As people in this House would know, the Toowoomba Second Range Crossing has been a passion of mine for a long time before I got into politics. It has

actually been a passion of people named Watts for over 150 years as the first member for Toowoomba, John Watts, stood in this place and said that we need a better range crossing. Over the years, different governments have done things about the range crossing. In 1964, the Nicklin government upgraded the current range crossing to four lanes. That was a 25-year plan to relieve pressure on the road. We then fast forward to 1989 when in Toowoomba pressure was mounting for an upgrade of the facility. Unfortunately, in 1989 we had a Labor government under then premier Wayne Goss, who, unlike former premier Nicklin, was not interested in Western Queensland or starting a discussion about a second range crossing, so the range crossing became more dangerous, more difficult to cross and clogged with traffic. Increasingly, the road through Toowoomba saw more and more B-double traffic as the wealth of Western Queensland was carried to the port down our main street.

Then we come to former premier Peter Beattie, who talked about what he was going to do for Queensland. People were agitating for a second range crossing. In fact, during Beattie's time in office the federal member, Ian Macfarlane, organised funds to purchase the land. The land was bought but, without support from the Queensland government, the project was unable to progress. It did not progress whilst Peter Beattie was in power. His minister for Western Queensland, Kerry Shine, was unable to gain any interest in the Toowoomba second range crossing project, much to his frustration. Kerry Shine was often quoted in the papers about different ideas and concepts for generating interest in the project, but there was no interest from the Labor government.

Anna Bligh also showed no interest in the project. As we all know, the member for Clayfield, the former treasurer, came to Toowoomba and made the announcement that \$321 million would be available from state government funds to go with the federal government's 80 per cent funding and the road project would get underway. There was a plan, the plan was published and there was a time line for the plan.

I congratulate the current roads minister, Minister Bailey, on the fact that he is the first Labor minister to show any interest or make any significant announcement about the second range crossing. Unfortunately, it was an announcement about a delay until August, but it was an announcement. The people of Toowoomba appreciate the announcement because at least they know that there is something happening and the 1,800 jobs that will be generated from this project will still come to Toowoomba. People know that the project will happen. I thank the minister for making that statement. It was about a delay, but at least we know the project is still happening.

There are couple of other issues that I would seek advice on from the minister. There is a lot of talk in Toowoomba about a cutting. There is a lot of nervousness among the people north of my electorate with regard to how they will get to Toowoomba if a cutting is put in place and what provisions there will be for those people to travel down that road.

One particular problem relates to the travel arrangements of children from that area who travel to school on a school bus. They have to travel to town because there was no high school at Highfields. That is something that we fixed. Students in years 9, 10, 11 and 12 obviously still have to travel to town. A 10- or 15-minute diversion would mean that about 1,000 children a day would miss the start of school or we would have to rearrange the entire bus timetable to allow them to get to school on time. That is not to mention the impact on the tens of thousands of people travelling the New England Highway to get to Toowoomba.

It is a very important project. It is something that Ian Macfarlane has passionately pursued and that I have passionately pursued. With the help of Warren Truss and members of the former LNP government, this is a project that is finally being undertaken for the people of Western Queensland. Again, I thank the minister for showing some interest. I hope his interest in the future is not announcing further delays, but I appreciate the update.

### **Springwood Electorate, Environment**

 **Mr de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (12.02 pm): In Springwood there are over 1,000 hectares of forests and parks. Almost a quarter of the Springwood electorate is made up of natural green space. It is no wonder there are many concerned locals keen to explore this new Palaszczuk Labor government's progress on our election commitments to protect our environment.

Recently two Springwood locals, Hannah McQuitty and Taylah Bruce, arranged a delegation to the Springwood electorate office. They came to hold me to account to the commitments that our government has made. I welcome this level of examination because, if nothing else, it will make sure that we are a government different from the one that we were elected to replace.

After that meeting I did some research. I looked into our progress and that of the previous government as well. I searched but did not find any evidence of local action by the previous government. There was not a single mention of plans to enhance Daisy Hill Forest or protect the vulnerable species that live there. There was nothing about access or facilities for the locals who enjoy it. I did a search of *Hansard* looking for a position, a comment, a mention by my predecessor and in three years there was not a single utterance of the words 'environment', 'conservation', 'koala', 'mountain bike', 'horserider' or 'bushwalker'. There was no objection to the LNP's laws that undermined scrutiny on environmental protections. In probably the clearest display of being out of touch with our community, it was the LNP government that slashed solar energy programs in a community where nearly every second household has a solar panel on their roof.

This Palaszczuk Labor government does care about the local, state and global environment. That is why we have moved quickly to save the reef and the nearby wetlands from the impacts of capital dredge spoil dumping. We have set ambitious targets for reducing nitrogen run-off by up to 80 per cent and sediment run-off by up to 50 per cent in key catchment areas. We are acting to clean up the water in and around the reef. This was a key election promise. That is why we committed \$100 million over five years to water quality initiatives.

We promised to protect the Great Barrier Reef and that is what we are delivering. The draft decision of the World Heritage Committee to not list the Great Barrier Reef as in danger is a great outcome for Queensland and a testament to the strong policies of our government. I place on record my congratulations to the Minister for the Great Barrier Reef on his progress to date.

I also promised to deliver action on the environment locally. I committed to a local action plan to protect Daisy Hill Forest because I understand that the forest is at the heart of the Springwood community's way of life. I will fight to protect it. That is why launching community consultation around this project at the anniversary of the Daisy Hill Koala Centre on the weekend made sense.

It was a Labor government that built the Daisy Hill Koala Centre in 1995. It was a Labor government that refurbished it in 2009. On the weekend it was a Labor government that helped celebrate its 20th anniversary. We also took the significant step of declaring koalas would soon be listed as vulnerable across the entire state. Just like we have done with making our decisions about the Great Barrier Reef and renewable energy, our government has put science at the centre of our decision-making. We respect the opinion of the species technical committee, an independent panel of scientists, to lift the conservation status of the koala.

My community is blessed to host two great parks within its boundaries—the Daisy Hill Conservation Park and the Springwood Conservation Park. They are precious natural and community resources just like the Great Barrier Reef. But, just as with the reef, we must act to ensure that they do not become a victim of their success and carefully manage their increasing popularity. Recent figures show over 1,000 mountain bikers hitting one of the trails in just one weekend. There is strong community commitment to protecting this place. This is clearly recognisable with the hundreds of hours of time that volunteers devote to maintaining the forest and its trails for the enjoyment of everyone.

Credit is due to those volunteers. Credit is due to activists like Taylah and Hannah who invested their time into reef and marine advocacy. The truth is that this week's UNESCO decision would not have happened without the efforts of people like Taylah and Hannah who have worked tirelessly to educate the community about the risk facing the reef and generate public support for bold policies like banning the dumping of capital dredge spoil in the World Heritage area.

I know that our community recognises Daisy Hill as a precious natural and community resource. This Labor government has already demonstrated that we are well on our way to delivering on our commitments, including those on the environment, in our first three months. That is why last Sunday served as another important step in delivering on those commitments as I initiated stage 1 of community consultation around the Daisy Hill action plan—a community effort that can deliver real benefits to our communities for decades to come. I welcome every member of the Springwood community taking part in this consultation process. They can do so through my website at [www.mickdebrenni.com.au](http://www.mickdebrenni.com.au).

### Tourism Industry

 **Mrs STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (12.07 pm): Tourism is vital to Queensland and the LNP knows that. It contributes \$23 billion to our economy, supports over 53,000 businesses—mostly small ones, I might add—and employs some 240,000 Queenslanders. So it would be reasonable to expect it to feature in the Palaszczuk government's first three months document. But just how many times did

the word 'tourism' rate a mention? Five—and two of those were photograph credits; credits to Tourism Queensland. Labor even got that wrong. Tourism Queensland has not existed since 2012 when the LNP merged Tourism Queensland and Events Queensland.

The other three mentions of the word are all in one sentence under the heading 'Commonwealth Games leadership'. The Auditor-General recommended in his report a revised governance structure for the games be implemented with single, whole-of-games program delivery accountability and the requisite authority over individual project governance arrangements. I doubt this model is what he had in mind.

Labor's *Growth for tourism guarantee* election documents state that there will be a tourism cabinet subcommittee. Yet the first three months document has no mention of this. Instead, there is a dual tourism and Commonwealth Games committee, not two dedicated entities as we were led to believe. The Premier would have us believe this new tourism and Commonwealth Games committee will ensure Queenslanders capitalise on jobs, investment and new tourism opportunities. Labor is big on gestures, symbolism, reviews and new names for things but totally incompetent when it comes to action—even media articles highlight business angst with regard to the Palaszczuk government's go slow, no plans, no vision. The Treasurer says we are in a recession and the tourism minister refers to our proud tourism industry as the 'Leaning Tower of Pisa'.

Within the first 100 days of the LNP government we had set up the whole-of-government initiative called DestinationQ—a proper and meaningful tourism cabinet committee, chaired by the tourism minister, with membership including the then deputy premier, who made tourism a state interest for the very first time, and the ministers for education and employment, transport and main roads, parks and sport, local government, and the arts, and the ability to call on any minister for advice and content that would assist tourism.

Within the first 100 days we established the Attracting Aviation Investment Fund and the Tourism Investment Attraction Unit and held the first tourism conference in Queensland for some 27 years. DestinationQ took place in Cairns and was oversubscribed such was the interest. A formal agreement was signed with QTIC, recognised as the industry's voice, and some 32 items assigned to various departments to deliver within 12 months.

The first three months—now, that is a creative name for the government's efforts, isn't it? If they are not playing revenge payback politics, they are being different for different's sake. The Premier says she is proud of her government's significant achievements—but, my, that is a big lend of the word 'significant'! Steven Wardill's article on 20 May refers to five meaningless initiatives: adding Great Barrier Reef to a minister's title; the Commonwealth Games Cabinet Committee; establishing the Productivity Commission; re-engaging conservation groups; and cutting cabinet size. It also lists initiatives which would have happened anyway, and there are many examples of Labor taking credit for the LNP's hard work from my previous portfolio and that of other former ministers. There is no mention of drive tourism despite domestic tourism making up 80 per cent of total tourism figures. Ecotourism opportunities will be crucified under green tape. And who could forget Minister Jones's track record in the environment portfolio pre-2012—a disaster, to put it mildly.

Under integrity and accountability we find the investigation of the greyhound racing industry. Rather than conduct a commission of inquiry, the government and the minister dithered by announcing a review which, considering the level of allegations, was impotent as witnesses could not be called and it had limited powers. I commend Alan MacSporran QC for calling for a commission of inquiry and for his thorough and professionally presented report. The LNP supports actions that will ensure the abhorrent practice of live baiting in the greyhound industry is stamped out once and for all. Mr MacSporran's report demands the industry clean up its act via a raft of recommendations to address overbreeding and the sickening practice of live baiting.

Three hundred and forty-two submissions painted a very dark picture of an industry that has brought shame upon itself and betrayed public confidence. The report stated that self-regulation failed on two fronts—safeguarding animal welfare and integrity within the industry. The LNP will be following events closely, and I shall be writing to the minister to seek regular briefings on the progress of the recommended reforms and I trust my request will be looked upon favourably. The government has moved swiftly all right: members of the Thoroughbred Racing Board have this morning received a phone call from the minister's office and been sacked. I am told that this is the first communication they have had with the minister since he was sworn in. So much for consultation!

## Queensland Economy

 **Ms GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (12.12 pm): Following the first quarter of the Palaszczuk government, it is important to note that the majority of people in Queensland, business and workers, believe that our vision to return Queensland to strong economic growth is heading in the right direction. The last Queensland election was fought in a relatively weak economic environment brought about by the actions of the previous LNP Newman government. During the election campaign, many businesspeople I spoke to in the electorate of Brisbane Central complained how tough business conditions were—people were not spending, businesses were closing, and empty retail and office spaces were at their highest levels. Unemployment in Queensland had climbed to a rate from six per cent to around seven per cent, giving Queensland the highest unemployment rate on mainland Australia. Also, the Newman government's betrayal of public servants' jobs saw the slashing of thousands of positions with cuts that went too deep, too fast and were bereft of any strategic intention.

Business knows only too well that a lazy, easy management plan is to cut jobs, sell assets, cut investment in your people such as training and development and have no vision for sources of growth to replace a weaker sector such as mining investment. Unfortunately, this is exactly what we got from the previous government—a government going nowhere and doing nothing. The Newman government was full of spin and great at talking Queensland down—I remember the Greece comments—and blaming anyone but themselves.

For example, I have recently had business and residents in Spring Hill incensed over a blatant misleading newsletter by the local BCC LNP councillor, which I table, blaming the closure and sale of the Main Roads department in Boundary Street—wait for it—on the Bligh government.

*Tabled paper:* Document titled 'Spring Hill Community News', by Cr Vicki Howard, Councillor for Central Ward [\[496\]](#).

The truth is that the public servants were relocated and the building sold in 2013 under the Newman LNP government, but the spin and misinformation is being continued by their mates in the BCC.

Those opposite's only vision was to sell income-producing assets, to build a BaT tunnel that we now learn was nothing more than an impossible dream—but, of course, ditched Australia's best rated infrastructure project, the Cross River Rail—and to arrogantly govern in a combative style of fear and loathing that even affected interstate migration to Queensland. Queensland's low rate of interstate migration was because people had nothing to come here for, and it is pleasing to note that Queensland is now slowly recovering in this area from the lows of the previous government. As a result, housing and building approvals were at dismal levels, particularly in the regions, and when people are fearful of their jobs, incomes and futures, they clearly do not spend. Tourism was slow—our Great Barrier Reef, the jewel in the crown of Queensland, was under pressure—and, other than projects previously started under the Labor government such as the export of LNG, there was little investment in mining and infrastructure. Is it any wonder that after one term of the arrogant LNP Newman government the Palaszczuk government was elected on the back of a positive economic and political agenda.

Despite what those opposite say, Queensland's economy has strong fundamentals and this government is ready to partner with investors, to be commercially focused and to strive to capture sustainable growth and jobs. This is the message I want to send to the electorate of Brisbane Central and to the community in every corner of our state. To achieve this vision, we need the Commonwealth government to also become a serious partner—one that is willing to invest in job-creating infrastructure and economic development in Queensland without the need to sell our assets.

It is vitally important that the federal government comes on board now that Queensland's economy is starting to show some very positive signs after three years of stagnation under the previous LNP Newman government. Here are a few examples of what Queensland has been doing. We topped the business confidence of any Australian states in April. We recorded the strongest real retail growth of any mainland state in the March quarter at nearly two per cent. Dwelling approvals in Queensland rose three per cent in March—up 27 per cent on the same time last year—to \$1.59 billion. Queensland merchandise exports were up 10.9 per cent to \$11.4 billion in March. We added 5,300 full-time jobs and, as reported last year, business and community confidence is at its highest level—up almost 20 per cent from the low one per cent positive reading posted in the previous January quarter just prior to the election. This is what Queenslanders want. This is where we are heading. We are doing everything to ensure this great state—

*(Time expired)*

## Electricity Industry

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (12.17 pm): I rise this morning to join with the shadow Treasurer to speak about some of the clear holes that are emerging in Labor's budget strategy. Again, I would like to highlight some of the problems that have emerged in this space, particularly as they relate to energy, because quite clearly Labor's two main debt reduction promises are tied to reforming the government owned corporation sector and both of those promises simply do not stack up.

The first of those promises was to achieve some \$150 million annually in savings by merging the five electricity businesses into two. That was the Treasurer's big plan to save money—more likely the Treasurer's big plan to significantly inhibit competition in the electricity market. We know that the ACCC has serious concerns regarding the merger of the power generators CS Energy and Stanwell. I note that in the Treasurer's diary he met with representatives of the ACCC in April. I think it is important to highlight what ACCC chair Rod Sims said following that meeting, because it shows the ACCC still has significant concerns with what Labor is proposing.

Mr Sims went on Steve Austin's morning program on ABC. Steve asked him whether his concerns about the power merger leading to higher prices still remained following that meeting. Here is what Mr Sims said—

I don't change what I said earlier and that's why we're putting a lot of effort into talking to the Queensland Government to make sure this issue gets addressed properly.

He went on—

Look, we're discussing with the Queensland Government about the two generators. As I say they must be 60-70% of the generation in Queensland. We obviously have concerns about those two coming together.

Perhaps most importantly he said—

We're very concerned whenever governments step in to try and protect their revenues because the losers are consumers.

The Treasurer's key debt reduction plan could leave Queenslanders paying more for their power. The member for Mulgrave is also relying on savings from merging these businesses from the 2015-16 financial year onwards. Let us contemplate that for a second. The Treasurer is assuming that he can work through the significant concerns the ACCC has and push through this merger in time to get savings this coming financial year. Of course, Labor's modelling ignores the significant up-front costs of merging these businesses, which have been previously estimated at \$170 million a year. The modelling behind the figure of \$150 million a year has never been publicly released so we do not even know if it stacks up at all.

To be honest, the Treasurer does not even know how much he is meant to be saving from merging the energy businesses. Last sitting week he said that he expected savings of \$440 million over the forward estimates from aggregating the energy businesses. Labor's economic and fiscal strategy shows savings of approximately \$565 million from merging the energy businesses over the same period or \$407 million over the next three years. The Treasurer is clearly confusing himself and it is not a good sign for the coming budget.

The second part of Labor's debt reduction plan which does not stack up is the plan to use two-thirds of the dividends from government owned business to pay down debt. As has again been highlighted here today, you cannot spend the same money twice. Directing cash from one purpose to another will not reduce debt. If the Treasurer is going to live up to his promise to pay down debt, he will have to find savings in another area. Secondly, the forecast revenues from these businesses has dropped dramatically following the Australian Energy Regulator's preliminary decision at the end of April for Ergon and Energex. The Treasurer has been forced to acknowledge that this has left a hole in his budget strategy. In response to a question I asked on the topic last week he said—

The member for Glass House is quite right: the AER determination shows that there is going to be a reduced yield by those two energy businesses ...

But the Treasurer failed to outline what impact this would have on his budget strategy or promise to pay down debt. All he could say was 'wait and see'. I can assure the Treasurer we are watching very closely. We know that the revenue of these businesses is down around \$450 million a year, and this will have an impact. We also know that the Treasurer has refused to rule out stripping even more dividends out of these businesses. Again last week he was asked whether he had plans to take more dividends, and again he refused to answer the question. Does the Treasurer have plans to return to a 95 per cent dividend take, as occurred previously under Premier Beattie? This is a decision that could have disastrous consequences for the long-term viability of these businesses, and

the Treasurer should step up and rule it out now. Queenslanders should be concerned because every move the government has made in the power space to date has been a disaster, and worse still it could leave everyday families paying much, much more.

### Queensland Economy

 **Mr WHITING** (Murrumba—ALP) (12.22 pm): I rise today to bring to the attention of the House the rise in consumer confidence in recent months in Queensland. A great example of the growing consumer confidence in the Queensland economy is the announcement of a major addition to the Westfield suite of retail buildings at North Lakes, which lies at the heart of the Murrumba electorate. Westfield will build a \$110 million megamall at North Lakes. I welcome it and look forward to seeing it alongside Ikea. The megamall project will deliver an extra 159 local businesses into our community and, most importantly, it will mean an extra 700 jobs.

In looking at rising consumer confidence in 2015, it is no wonder that a major player in retail such as Westfield is prepared to make a substantial investment in our state. North Lakes is an outstanding community, and this project means that our community will be in a great position to take advantage of the growing economic confidence in our great state under the Palaszczuk government.

Let me outline the economic indicators we have recently seen. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, we have the strongest real retail growth of any mainland Australian state in the March quarter. Queensland consumer confidence has hit an 18-month high in May according to the Westpac-Melbourne Institute Survey of Consumer Sentiment. Queensland recorded the second highest rise in consumer confidence of any Australian mainland state. The National Australia Bank survey showed that Queensland's trend rate for business confidence was plus five points in April.

The ABS figures show how Queensland's housing sector is getting stronger. New dwellings investment in Queensland increased in the March 2015 quarter to the highest level since February 2008. Investor housing finance for the purchase of existing dwellings totalled \$4 billion in the March quarter. Investor finance commitments for the construction of new dwellings rose to \$625 million. It is clear that this consumer confidence is being reflected in the real estate industry.

I talked with Gina Wells, the principal of Raine & Horne at Burpengary-Narangba, the day before yesterday. The agency has had a record two months selling 42 properties worth \$16 million in sales. It is booming, as she says. Add to this the news that McDonald's has announced a major investment that will create up to 3,000 new jobs in Queensland. The investment will pump around \$55 million into the Queensland economy. Contrast this growing consumer confidence with the dire economic outlook in the last six months of the Campbell LNP government. We know on this side of the House that this plunge in economic confidence we saw in that time was no surprise. The cuts to jobs and services by the Campbell Newman LNP government had a big impact on consumer confidence. When you rip 24,000 jobs out of the economy, you send consumer confidence downward at a rate of knots. When people are fearful about whether they will have a job tomorrow or wonder if they have to be the sole breadwinner or if they have to look after one of their kids in the household when he loses his job, they stop buying.

Consumer confidence was weakened by these cuts to jobs and services, and this came home most forcefully to me when I was doorknocking in North Lakes during the campaign. On one street I talked to a woman whose company supplied medical products to neonatal units in Queensland Health. Her company's business had been halved due to funding cuts. Queensland Health had cut back on buying them due to funding cuts. Two streets away was a woman who worked for a company that provided linen to Queensland Health. Queensland Health had drastically reduced how much linen they purchased due to cuts. She told me about 40 per cent of their staff had been let go as a result of this.

**Mr Watts:** They were running so well last time you were in government.

**Mr WHITING:** I will tell you what worked really well for you guys—the first Hockey budget. It was a shocker and it evaporated consumer confidence overnight. The first Hockey budget hit the local real estate market hard. The week that it was brought down buyers stopped coming through the door. They stopped buying houses. Like coffee shops, real estate agencies are an immediate barometer of consumer confidence. If your policies make people fearful for their job, they will shut their wallets and walk away. Thankfully, the latest indicators show that consumer confidence in Queensland is increasing under the Palaszczuk Labor government. I congratulate the Premier and the Treasurer, who are focused on growing the economy and growing jobs in this great state.

**PAYROLL TAX REBATE, REVENUE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT  
BILL**

Resumed from 27 March (see p. 236).

**Second Reading**

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (12.27 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I thank the Finance and Administration Committee for its report tabled on 22 May 2015 regarding the Payroll Tax Rebate, Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. I also thank those who made submissions to the committee about the bill and those who appeared as witnesses as part of the committee's inquiry. This bill does many things. Notably, this bill allows for the delivery of the government's election commitment to provide a 25 per cent payroll tax rebate for apprentices and trainees, and this bill enacts our election commitment to restore high standards to the plumbing industry.

The payroll tax rebate measure will provide an incentive to employers to hire apprentices and trainees, and will tackle youth unemployment by opening up secure jobs and training opportunities for young Queenslanders. It will also help us to develop a highly skilled workforce to support the strong pursuit of economic growth for Queensland in coming years.

The government's allocation for the rebate of \$45 million over three years is forward looking and is an investment in the future of Queensland. As it is estimated that businesses eligible for the payroll tax rebate employ more than half of Queensland's private sector workforce, this measure will benefit not only employers and the apprentices and trainees they employ but also the broader economy through reduced expenses. This bill also removes ambiguity over who may install water meters. Through ensuring that after a transition period only licensed plumbers are able to do so, this bill restores the high safety standards that this work warrants. I note that, while the committee was unable to reach agreement on all issues, including whether to recommend the bill be passed, the government members accepted that the bill should pass. Further, the committee agreed upon five recommendations which it considered would enhance the practical operation of the amendments and ensure that stakeholders' concerns are addressed. I am pleased to table the government's response to the committee's report.

*Tabled paper:* Finance and Administration Committee: Report No. 3, 55th Parliament—Payroll Tax Rebate, Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015, government response [\[497\]](#).

In tabling the government's response, I am confident that I can remove any residual concerns for any of my fellow members of parliament in supporting the passage of the bill. Honourable members will recall from my explanatory speech upon the introduction of the bill on 27 March 2015 that the bill amends the Criminal Law (Criminal Organisations Disruption) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2013, the Duties Act 2001, the Environmental Protection Act 1994, the Financial Accountability Act 2009, the First Home Owner Grant Act 2000, the Payroll Tax Act 1971, the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002, the Taxation Administration Act 2001 and the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 for particular purposes. Four of the committee's five recommendations relate to amendments to the Duties Act 2001 to give effect to the concession for agreements for the transfer of exploration authorities under certain resource sector farm-in agreements. I turn to those first.

The committee's first recommendation is for Queensland Treasury to undertake an education and awareness campaign, providing a detailed explanation about how the farm-in concession operates. I am pleased to accept that recommendation. As outlined in the government's response to the report, once the amendments are passed, the Commissioner of State Revenue will engage with industry to develop and deliver an appropriate education and awareness campaign at the earliest possible opportunity. As the committee anticipates in its report, I agree that this approach will further clarify the scope and operation of the concession, as requested in industry submissions to the committee. This, in turn, will ensure that industry and, in particular, the junior exploration sector, which the concession seeks to benefit, can operate with certainty as to the availability of the concession when negotiating their arrangements.

The committee's second recommendation is for Queensland Treasury to prepare and publish a public ruling confirming the administrative approach to the qualifying criteria for the farm-in concession requiring the spending of a stated amount under the agreement. Again, I am pleased to accept this recommendation to ensure taxpayer certainty on this issue. As tabled in the government's

response to the committee report, the commissioner will develop and publish this ruling as soon as possible after the amendments are passed and will consult industry in doing so. The ruling will include clear examples of the types of agreements which will qualify for the concession where a dollar amount is stated or able to be calculated by reference to objective and ascertainable evidence. It will also provide examples of solely milestone or outcome based agreements, which will not qualify for the concession.

The committee's third recommendation was that I consider issues raised by the Queensland Law Society as to whether an amendment to section 84G(1) of the Duties Act 2001 is warranted to ensure that the meaning of that section, as articulated in the explanatory notes, is clear. I have confirmed that the Office of State Revenue remains of the view, following consideration of the issue raised with the committee, that no further amendment is required to make it clear that section 84G deems the type of dutiable transaction for a farm-in agreement to be an agreement for transfer. OSR has consulted the Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel in forming this view. I am, therefore, satisfied that no further amendment is required.

The final recommendation by the committee relating to the farm-in concession was that I consider stakeholder views about extending the 30-day notice provision for proposed section 84L of the Duties Act 2001 to cater for circumstances where disputes may arise between the parties as to whether the circumstances giving rise to the notice requirement have occurred. A 30-day lodgement period is the standard period under the Duties Act 2001 for parties to lodge with the commissioner materials required for assessment. Section 84L requires provision of a notice by the farmee to the commissioner and lodgement of the farm-in agreement within 30 days after a farmee under an up-front farm-in agreement fails to spend all or part of the exploration amount. The question of whether there has been a failure to spend all or part of the exploration amount is a question of fact. As the obligation to notify rests with the farmee, that party is well positioned to determine whether this has occurred.

A range of existing notification obligations exist across Queensland's revenue legislation, requiring notice from a range of taxpayers. Examples are provided in the government's tabled response to the report. Factual disputes could exist as to whether the circumstances requiring many of these notifications have occurred; however, it does not mean that the parties are unable to comply with the notification requirement. They would merely indicate the existence of the dispute in giving notice. I am satisfied that there are no issues with the existing notice provisions in relation to the ability of parties to comply where there is a dispute as to the existence of circumstances for giving notice. On this basis, I am also satisfied that section 84L will likewise be able to apply in that scenario without amendment. However, as indicated in the government's tabled response to the committee's report, the Commissioner of State Revenue will undertake education and awareness with stakeholders on this issue and will publish further guidance if required.

Finally, the committee recommended that consideration be given to investigating additional methods of increasing employment opportunities for apprentices and trainees. I note the committee heard that some stakeholders consider the government's 25 per cent payroll tax rebates on trainees and apprentices could go even further, which is of course a great endorsement of the measure. As a result, the committee recommended that consideration be given to investigating even more ways of increasing the employment opportunities of apprentices and trainees. It is important to note that the proportion of businesses eligible for the rebate does not, by itself, reflect or capture the scale of benefit the apprentice and trainee rebate will provide. Larger businesses, by definition, employ a greater number of people per business than small businesses. In fact, national data indicates that more than 50 per cent of the private sector workforce is employed by businesses employing 20 or more employees. Therefore, while the proportion of Queensland's small business employment may differ from that nationally, it is estimated that businesses eligible for the payroll tax rebate employ more than half of Queensland's private sector workforce.

The Queensland government is acutely aware of the important contribution made by small business to the Queensland economy and employment. The payroll tax rebate represents just one—but an important—part of the government's Working Queensland plan, aimed at creating greater business confidence and generating jobs. Other specific measures to support apprenticeships and trainees include ensuring 10 per cent of workers on major government projects are apprentices and trainees and establishing Jobs Queensland, an industry led body tasked with advising the government on current and future skills demand and long-term workforce planning, and skills investment.

The government's commitment to job creation as one of its core policy objectives to lead Queensland to a more prosperous and inclusive future includes a range of initiatives aimed at helping all businesses and improving employment outcomes through skills and training. The four-year Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative is a substantial investment in this area, helping connect people to training and employment that will benefit them throughout their career. As part of the Queensland government's commitment to job creation, the government will continue to investigate additional measures to increase the employment opportunities of apprentices and trainees.

In addition to the committee's recommendation addressed above, the committee did not agree on the proposed amendments to the Criminal Law (Criminal Organisations Disruption) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2013, the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002 and the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008. I note that the committee considered these proposed amendments but did not make any recommendations in relation to them.

The amendments to the Criminal Law (Criminal Organisations Disruption) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2013 are to further delay the commencement of certain provisions that have not yet commenced for a period of 12 months, from 1 July 2015 to 1 July 2016. The provisions that would amend the Electrical Safety Act 2002, the Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act 1991 and the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 would add a significant regulatory burden to the granting of certain occupational licences. Implementing these provisions would cause substantial delays in processing licence applications and renewals, potentially restricting Queenslanders' ability to commence or continue to earn a living in their licensed occupation. Delaying the commencement of these provisions will allow the government task force reviewing all legislation targeting organised crime to consider how the legislation could be amended, improved or replaced to ensure that organised crime across the state is effectively dealt with.

The bill also amends the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002 and the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 to implement the government's election commitment to ensure that only fully licensed and qualified plumbers can install water meters in Queensland. The issue of who may install water meters has been contentious for over a decade, with ambiguity in legislation leading to much debate about the need for a licence when undertaking this kind of work. The previous government chose to resolve this ambiguity in favour of water service providers. On 13 May last year, it made amendments that allowed persons authorised by a water service provider under the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 to install water meters, regardless of whether they were licensed plumbers. This amendment was met with significant opposition from the plumbing industry, who raised concerns about the effect this amendment would have on public health and safety. In particular, stakeholders such as the Master Plumbers' Association of Queensland and the Institute of Plumbing Inspectors Queensland noted that the use of unlicensed persons could lead to a greater risk of cross-contamination.

Unlike the previous government, this government has heeded the concerns of industry and, in its election commitment to restore high standards in the plumbing industry, undertook to ensure that the installation of water meters was returned to the hands of fully qualified and licensed plumbers. This bill delivers on that commitment. It removes an exemption from offences in the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002 which currently allows an authorised person who is not a licensed plumber to install a water meter. It also amends the definition of plumbing work to make it clear that installing a water meter requires a licence. These amendments will remove the ambiguity around who may install water meters and in doing so the bill will go a long way to restoring the confidence in Queensland's plumbing laws which was eroded under the previous government.

Of course, Mr Speaker, the government recognises that all parties need time to adjust to legislative changes, and the bill makes provision for a two-year phase-in period, which will ensure there is minimum disruption to the industry and consumers while the new arrangements are introduced. Water service providers will have time to make all the necessary preparations, including upskilling their existing employees or procuring the services of a licensed plumber. This transitional period is supported by a range of water industry stakeholders, including the Queensland Water Directorate and Queensland Urban Utilities.

I would like to clear up some confusion today around these components of the bill. I absolutely reject any notion that these measures are included in the bill as part of my involvement in an internal union ballot or some factional dispute conspiracy theory. Any suggestions that this is the case are absolutely false. Have I praised the Plumbers Union of Queensland for its advocacy on behalf of plumbers in Queensland? Absolutely. It was this kind of advocacy, as well as that of the Master

Plumbers' Association of Queensland, that led to the development of Labor's policy in opposition. We want to deliver higher professional standards and stronger consumer protection in the plumbing industry and that is what these laws are all about.

In relation to water meters, this reinstatement of the requirement for licensed plumbers is supported by the state's peak industry body, the Master Plumbers' Association of Queensland, as well as the Plumbers Union. This is a longstanding policy commitment that was made in 2014 by Labor while in opposition. Our proposed laws address serious concerns raised by Queensland's plumbing industry about the impact on public safety resulting from the previous LNP government's legislative changes. Unlike those opposite, we will not compromise on consumer safety.

This is an omnibus bill that incorporates a range of legislative amendments that are the responsibility of a number of ministers. The majority of the amendments reflect the Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill that was introduced by the member for Clayfield in late 2014. In relation to concerns raised around remote communities and their access to plumbers, the fact that a community is remote does not change the standards for public safety. These communities are already required to engage plumbers to do all other forms of plumbing work. We continue to look at ways to support and encourage the licensing of tradespeople in remote communities. In fact, requiring a more highly qualified worker to install water meters provides opportunities to develop the skills and increase the future employability of local tradespeople in remote areas. There will be a two-year transitional period to allow the industry appropriate time to adjust to the new arrangements and to ensure business continuity while the changes are implemented. What a sigh of relief compared to the chaos we have seen over the last three years.

These amendments are nothing new. On 6 May last year, over a year ago, I indicated to this House—

The bill will also amend the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002 to enable 'authorised persons' appointed by a water service provider to install certain water meters. As the minister correctly picked, this is our main area of concern. We will be opposing these elements of the bill and we will repeal those provisions upon returning to government. Labor recognises that plumbing is an important skill, requiring years of training to obtain the necessary qualifications. That is because plumbers do important work. It is very easy to take for granted that when we turn on our taps clean water comes out, but in many places around the world that is not the case.

We could not have been more open and up-front than that. We indicated our intention over a year in advance while in opposition and, of course, we are now sticking to it. We have consulted with industry on this bill. We have listened to the committee and we are delivering on what we promised to do. We are in no way fast-tracking the bill or elements of it. The bill has been considered by the committee and given more consideration than we had often seen under those opposite. In terms of any fast-tracking a certain section relating to the plumbing industry, if those opposite would like to have a look at our election commitment, it was to do these things within our first 100 days in office, which is exactly what we are doing. I thank the committee for its detailed consideration of the bill and I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (12.44 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Payroll Tax Rebate, Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I thank the committee for their comprehensive report of 95 pages. The committee is led by the member for Bulimba and the member for Coomera as the deputy chair. I know they have had a significant amount of legislation to deal with in the 55th Parliament, but it is a comprehensive report and on behalf of the parliament I want to thank them for their work.

I note what the honourable minister had to report in terms of tabling the government's response. There are five recommendations, four of which relate to the Duties Act. The fifth recommends that the minister consider investigating additional methods of increasing the employment opportunities for apprentices and trainees. That concerns the payroll tax rebate, and I will deal with that recommendation later in my contribution.

This is an omnibus bill that, as we have heard already from the minister in his introductory speech, amends the following acts: the Criminal law (Criminal Organisations Disruption) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2013; the Duties Act 2001; the Environmental Protection Act 1994; the First Home Owner Grant Act 2000; the Financial Accountability Act 2009; the Payroll Tax Act 1971; the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002; the Taxation Administration Act 2001; and the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008.

The purpose of the amendments include: the provision of a payroll tax rebate on the wages of apprentices and trainees; giving support to electronic conveyancing in Queensland; providing legislative support for the duties concession on farm-in agreements; delaying the commencement of

the provisions aimed at excluding motorcycle gang members from working in certain licensed occupations; requiring plumbers to install water meters; and a number of other administrative amendments.

I note that many of these provisions were introduced by the former treasurer and member for Clayfield, who is here beside me in the chamber, and that is a bill that has subsequently lapsed. There are some significant changes with the addition of the amendments to the Criminal Law (Criminal Organisations Disruption) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2013 and the amendments to the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002 and the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008, which the Treasurer has just referred to, and we will not be supporting those elements of this legislation. I will focus on those aspects of the bill that were not in the original Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 before turning to those amendments that have remained the same.

First and foremost is the change amending the Payroll Tax Act 1971 to give effect to the Labor Party's election commitment of a payroll tax rebate for apprentices. In introducing this legislation the Treasurer said—

This government recognises that apprenticeships and traineeships provide a great employment pathway, particularly for young Queenslanders. This in turn contributes to the development of a highly skilled workforce to permit delivery of projects to ensure Queensland's economic growth into the future.

But quite clearly this bill does not go far enough, and quite patently the majority of businesses in Queensland will not receive any benefits from this commitment. I note the Treasurer's comments in his second reading speech that, whilst it will not be the majority of businesses who benefit, the businesses that are going to benefit make up the majority of those who actually employ apprentices and trainees. I would like to make the point that the previous LNP government's commitments in this area were to give employers who were not necessarily caught under the payroll tax provisions a \$6,000 incentive to put on an apprentice. That was \$36 million for 6,000 and it was fully subscribed. On the advice that I received as the responsible minister at the time there is no doubt that, when you look at all the statistics, those sorts of incentives would lead to a spike in employment of apprentices and trainees. My concern is that the rebate in this bill is only payable to those businesses that pay payroll tax in Queensland.

The current payroll tax exemption threshold is \$1.1 million, having been lifted by the Treasurer from \$1 million under the previous Labor government. That was certainly acknowledged as something that, as business has mentioned, is a tax on jobs. Whilst there were things that we would have liked to progress at a greater rate, we were unable to do so because of our commitment to responsible fiscal management.

We certainly made a 10 per cent increase to the payroll tax concession to make it \$1.1 million. The important issue when it comes to the rebate as it is affected by this bill is that this rebate is only available to businesses that have payrolls above \$1.1 million and therefore have a payroll tax liability. As the committee noted in its report, the CCIQ highlighted in its submission that at present only 11,000 Queensland businesses are required to pay payroll tax. As I understand it, there are about 400,000 businesses in Queensland, and the CCIQ estimates that only three per cent of businesses will be eligible to benefit from this commitment. Essentially, this bill ignores 97 per cent of Queensland businesses. Remember that many of those businesses had taken up our LNP government's commitment of 6,000 apprenticeship and traineeship rebates of \$6,000 and as such the program was fully subscribed. So we doubled that as part of our Jobs of Tomorrow promise at the election campaign.

**Mr Pitt:** And slashed Skilling Queenslanders for Work. And you talk about skilling and training.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** I can hear the Treasurer speaking about Skilling Queenslanders for Work. That is a significant commitment that the government has made—duplicating, I note, the federal government commitment in its budget of last week as it has put over \$300 million into those sorts of training packages. Sorry, they are not training packages. Skilling Queenslanders for Work was actually duplicating federal provisions, so I am glad to see that the federal government has listened to our exhortations. Whilst this state was spending over \$100 million on Skilling Queenslanders for Work, the federal government, in its budget of last week, has returned \$300 million into this area.

I acknowledge that the state government is putting money into Skilling Queenslanders for Work. The important thing is that many of those programs did not actually lead to real jobs. They were leading to people getting better qualifications and skills that would enable them to get the job.

**Mr Pitt:** Did you read the Deloittes report?

**Mr LANGBROEK:** I did read the Deloitte report, which said that it would return \$7 for every dollar spent. We came in with a commitment to maximise the use of our dollars, to make sure they went where we were trying to get real results in apprenticeships and traineeships. No-one could question that giving rebates of \$6,000 each, a program which was fully subscribed, had a better benefit than doing something in the area of federal government responsibility, in the area of Skilling Queenslanders for Work. Queensland was the only state that was doing that at the time. Whilst Queensland was spending \$100 million a year on it, South Australia or Victoria was spending \$6 million on similar programs. Yes, they were tough decisions.

The important issue is that this bill ignores 97 per cent of Queensland businesses. The CCIQ submission to this bill states—

... with only a minor proportion of Queensland's business community eligible to benefit from this payroll tax rebate initiative, the opportunity to meaningfully impact apprentice and trainee numbers is significantly diminished ...

CCIQ's comment is that Queensland's small business community stands ready to also assist in providing our State's youth an entry into the workforce, if only offered incentive to do so.

As I have already mentioned, they had taken up our government's offer of \$6,000 with great gusto and the program was fully subscribed. That is why it formed an important tranche of our commitments for Jobs of Tomorrow, which we took to the last election.

It is clear when looking at the recommendations of the committee that this simply does not go far enough. The government's own policy of only giving it to businesses that are required to pay payroll tax has led to the recommendation of the committee that the Treasurer referred to, which states—

The Committee recommends that the Minister consider investigating additional methods of increasing the employment opportunities of apprentices and trainees.

Let us contrast what we are seeing from this Labor government with what the LNP offered at the last election. We took to the election a policy that would have enabled small businesses right across this state to take on more apprentices and to employ more Queenslanders. First and foremost, we pledged to increase the payroll tax exemption threshold by \$100,000 every year for the next three years—

**Mr Pitt:** You did not deliver that when you were in office.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** The reason we did not is the situation we inherited from those opposite. That is always the case. It is always about inputs from the Labor Party. We were going to take the threshold from \$1.1 million to \$1.4 million.

The important issue is that under the previous Labor government the payroll tax threshold was \$1 million. We made it \$1.1 million. That is what the LNP was and is about: lowering payroll taxes for small businesses. This would have reduced the number of businesses having to pay payroll tax in Queensland. Instead of paying payroll tax, these businesses would have had more money to reinvest in their businesses or been able to employ more people. It would also have had the flow-on effect of reducing the payroll tax liability for medium sized businesses with payrolls above the exemption threshold.

A significant issue that is raised often with those of us in parliament is the exemption threshold being reached through bracket creep, as it were. The commitment, which was strongly backed and supported by Queensland's business community, was fully funded and factored into the budget. That is an important point. This money was built into the budget. Tax relief for small business was built into the Queensland budget, yet what did the Labor Party do? The Treasurer is here in the chamber and he is quite proud of it. It canned this promise. It has taken these cuts away from small business. In the words of CCIQ, which represents all small business across the state—

Lifting the payroll tax threshold was designed to address two flaws with the tax.

Firstly, because of wages creep many small businesses were inadvertently growing into having to pay a tax on giving their existing employees a job.

Secondly, many small businesses are presently structuring their workforces to sit just under the threshold. By lifting the threshold we are allowing those small businesses to grow their workforces.

By walking away from lifting the threshold 4,000 jobs are now jeopardised—20,000 Queensland small businesses will directly lose from the Queensland Labor announcement.

It is interesting to reflect on this point. At the same time that the federal government is easing the tax burden on business to stimulate activity and boost confidence, the Labor Party in Queensland is making it tougher for them. It is slashing tax cuts that were factored into the budget to pay for its

uncosted election commitments. Instead, Queensland businesses are getting a tired, old commitment that is just a rehash of an old policy that existed under Andrew Fraser and Anna Bligh—a policy that does nothing to help almost 400,000 businesses across Queensland.

The Labor Party is essentially relying upon three per cent of the business community to do the heavy lifting with regard to apprentices and trainees. With reasoning like this, is it any wonder that business confidence has dropped so sharply since the Palaszczuk government's election? The recent CCIQ pulse survey showed—

**Mr Pitt:** Why don't you talk about the NAB survey or the Westpac survey? You never refer to more than one survey.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** If I can hear the interjection I am happy to decide whether or not I will take it, but I cannot when the Treasurer is mumbling over there half-heartedly. I am happy to take the interjection and say that all of the Queensland business surveys to which I am referring are ones that literally refer to Queensland businesses. The Treasurer is referring to a survey that I think was taken after the federal budget in which people actually said that they had an increase in confidence because of the federal budget and because of the small business tax concession.

**Mr Pitt:** Wrong. Wrong on both counts.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** The important issue is that the policy being given effect to by the Treasurer does not help about 400,000 businesses across Queensland. The CCIQ pulse survey, which the Premier has said she rejected, shows that business conditions have dropped to their lowest levels in a decade. The Sensis Business Index of last week also shows a huge drop in confidence amongst Queensland businesses. In the last quarter of 2014, under the LNP, Queensland was leading the nation. After one quarter of this government we have dropped 30 points, to the second lowest in the country. I think the only state behind us is a seven per cent state, that is, South Australia. This drop in confidence is a direct result of Labor's anti small business policies.

Let us look at the apprenticeship pledge. We want to consider other policies that we took to the last election. They were fully funded and factored into the budget. As I have mentioned, the \$91 million Jobs of Tomorrow package would have helped about 26,000 young Queenslanders get into work. I have mentioned that part of that package was \$36 million to double the apprenticeship pledge. It was a hugely popular program. It provided employers with up to \$6,000 for each additional apprentice taken on. I think we started in about July last year and it was fully subscribed by September. We initially announced 6,000 placements under the scheme but made the decision to double it to 12,000 due to its popularity. As I have mentioned, this initiative was open to all businesses across Queensland, no matter how big or small. It was an incentive to say that if you took on a new apprentice—it could not be based on your apprentice numbers in previous years; it had to be an extra one—if you provided a pathway to a high-skill trade for a young Queenslander, we the government would support you. We gave businesses that extra incentive to employ young Queenslanders. It is exactly the type of initiative Queensland businesses are crying out for.

Again I refer to the submission made by representatives of the CCIQ as part of the committee's consideration of this bill. It states—

... CCIQ strongly supports the provision of incentive payments to employers to encourage them to take on an additional apprentice, trainee or cadet.

Despite this policy being fully funded and factored into the budget, despite this policy gaining wide support amongst Queenslanders, Labor again shelved it. It is no coincidence that the LNP's policy is closely aligned with what the small business community actually wants, because we actually listened to them and their concerns and implemented policies that we knew would stimulate growth. As I have mentioned, measures that have been put forward by the current Labor government and which are in this bill ignore 97 per cent of the Queensland business community.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.30 pm.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** The point I was making before the lunchbreak was that the measures being put forward by the current Labor government are measures which ignore 97 per cent of the Queensland business community. It is interesting for us to look at how much businesses might expect to receive under this new rebate. Working out one's payroll tax liability can be quite complex, but the Office of State Revenue, OSR, website provides a brief explanation of how businesses might be able to calculate their rebate under this bill. A business with a payroll tax liability of \$10,000 will stand to save less than \$600 under Labor's scheme. Under the LNP's scheme any business stood to receive up to \$6,000 as an incentive to take on a new apprentice and under the ALP's scheme a small portion of businesses could save approximately \$600. So the contrast is stark. Whilst any tax relief is

welcome, for a business making the decision whether to employ a new apprentice, this scheme has marginal benefits. It is interesting that the ALP costings document released before the election shows that it was planning to save \$255 million from abandoning the staged increase of the payroll tax limit at which payroll tax would kick in from \$1.1 million to \$1.4 million. Therefore, it had booked a saving of \$255 million.

It is obvious that there will be nothing like that expenditure on this program and the concern is that the payroll tax rebate misses the mark. It will not have any meaningful impact on increasing apprenticeship numbers in Queensland. In fact, it is a carbon copy of something that former treasurer Andrew Fraser brought in in about 2010 or 2011 in the 53rd Parliament and it did not make a difference then. When I was the minister for education, training and employment and had briefings about what makes a big difference to employers in terms of putting on new apprentices and trainees, it was the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd government that stopped rebates after one budget and stopped them particularly quickly. Immediately after that the rebates, which were valued by employers and then they were gone, meant that those numbers started to drop significantly. That is why we had a significant election commitment in the lead-up to the 2012 election that we would create another 10,000 apprenticeships and that is why \$6,000 each was an important part of that, which was well taken up last year. I am very concerned about the fact that the payroll tax rebate that is part of this bill misses the mark and will not have a meaningful impact on increasing apprenticeship numbers, as I have mentioned. It is especially concerning because Labor was elected on a mantra of jobs, jobs, jobs, but it does seem that it is intent on increasing payroll taxes on small businesses despite the fact that small businesses employ more than one million Queenslanders.

It is obvious, as I have already mentioned in my contribution, that the committee does not have any faith that the payroll tax rebate will in any meaningful way improve the employment outcomes for young Queenslanders, and that is evident from recommendation No. 5 in the committee report, which states—

The Committee recommends that the Minister consider investigating additional methods of increasing the employment opportunities of apprentices and trainees.

I would put it to the House that there was a way of increasing employment opportunities and that was new apprenticeships at \$6,000 each in terms of a rebate to employers. Given that the first tranche was fully subscribed very quickly, it would have been a great way to get more people into employment—something this government has said that it is going to do but has yet to prove that it is going to do it. That is why the committee made the recommendation for the Treasurer to investigate ways of doing more, because the payroll tax rebate is simply not enough. It did not make a difference in 2010-11 and I am concerned it will not make a difference in 2015-16.

I turn now to the Criminal Law (Criminal Organisations Disruption) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2013 dealt with in clauses 3 and 4. The Criminal Law (Criminal Organisations Disruption) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2013 extended the previous government's commitment to prevent criminal motorcycle gangs from participating in or unduly influencing legitimate business activities in particular industries. Among other things, amendments were made to a number of acts to prevent identified participants in criminal organisations from obtaining or holding a licence, permit or authority as provided for under various industry acts—the Electrical Safety Act 2002, the Liquor Act 1992, the Motor Dealers and Chattel Auctioneers Act 2014, the Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act 1991, the Racing Act 2002, the Second-hand Dealers and Pawnbrokers Act 2003, the Security Providers Act 1993, the Tow Truck Act 1973, the Weapons Act 1990 and the Work Health and Safety Act 2011.

The commencement of amendments to the Electrical Safety Act 2002, the Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act 1991 and the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 was originally deferred until 1 July 2015 to allow sufficient time for the government to consider the outcomes of the federal government's Royal Commission into Trade Union Governance and Corruption. This bill proposes delaying the commencement of these provisions for another 12 months until July 2016. I note that there was a difference of opinion on the committee with regard to this amendment. Page 10 of the committee report states—

The Committee did not agree on the proposed amendments to the *Criminal Law (Criminal Organisations Disruption) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2013*.

The non-government Members of the Committee indicated their concern with the amendments to delay for a further 12 months certain not yet commenced amendments in the *Criminal Law (Criminal Organisations Disruption) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2013*. The non-government members of the Committee were of the view that while the legislation remains in place the provisions provided for in that legislation should be enacted. They noted that the government has indicated they will avail themselves of the opportunity to conduct a review of the legislation later in the year; however, in the interim the non-government Members of the Committee are of the view it is appropriate for the provisions remain in place lest their delay predicate or influence the outcome of the review.

Given there was a significant difference of opinion on the committee with regard to this amendment, it gives us a chance to reflect on the actions taken by the LNP in the 54th Parliament to stop the influence of criminal motorcycle gangs. As a member from the Gold Coast—I note that the member for Broadwater is here and will no doubt speak on this particular issue given that she is a member of this committee, as will the member for Coomera, whom I understand will not be taking the same direction in terms of the specific interest from his perspective as deputy chair of the committee—the LNP did take a strong stance in this area in our geographic part of the state. Being the member for Surfers Paradise, it had become obvious in the years leading up to us coming into government in 2012 that we needed to take effective action to effectively police the bikies. That is why we introduced other legislation to remove their influence in certain licensed trades in not only my electorate of Surfers Paradise but also Broadbeach and other parts of the coast—the massage industry, locksmiths, tow trucks, tattoos and the proliferation of drugs throughout the nightclub industry and throughout general society leading to things like extortion and, in fact, violent incidents happening in our suburban streets on the Gold Coast.

They were the sorts of things that were happening and they were happening because there were not enough police resources and we believed that the legislation needed to be changed. I note that over the years in this place the member for Mermaid Beach has made these points a number of times. One only has to look at the statistics—and they are publicly available—of the number of people who can be identified as being members of bikie gangs. I think the total number was about 1,600 and up until now about 1,100 of those members have been charged with various offences, and significant offences, and numerous charges. They are the things that led us to the amendments in the legislation that we brought in that were supposed to come into effect in 2015 and which this bill will delay for another year. The members of the opposition are concerned about whether the new government is as committed as is the LNP to ensuring that links to bikies are removed from workplaces and that their influence wanes.

We have had acknowledgement by jurisdictions in other states about the effectiveness of our legislation and our strong response to the concerns that came out after that September 2013 incident at Broadbeach in my electorate. Our subsequent reaction to that event has meant that these bikie gangs have moved elsewhere. Last week, in a significant court case in Southport—not covered by the legislation that we had brought in—an offender was found not guilty. As he walked out of court he said, 'I can't wait to get out of this state back to Victoria,' which is where he had moved to. The people of the Gold Coast would say, 'Good riddance. We're glad that he is not on the Gold Coast anymore' as he was identified as being part of a criminal gang. Any watering down of the legislation that this government is now reviewing would be viewed very dimly by the people of the Gold Coast. They are greatly concerned that those criminal elements will come back into their community. That affects the people who live in our suburban streets where some terribly abhorrent activities have occurred and it gives people concern for both their safety and their children's safety as well as the safety of people visiting the Gold Coast. We are very concerned that this provision in the bill is a delaying tactic to make sure that the provisions are never enacted. Even the department in its response to the committee emphasised the following—

... the delay in commencement of the ... act will allow for the government's review of these provisions to occur, including—  
and this is very salient—

an assessment of whether these provisions are required.

The opposition puts it to the government that these amendments are required. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. The jurisdictions in New South Wales and Victoria have said that these are not the sort people whom they want to be welcoming to their states. South Australia as also seen the strong deterrent effect of our legislation and they do not want to see bikies coming to their state. We are certainly happy to be rid of them and we think it is imperative that we make sure that they are not employed in those areas that I identified, which are covered by those other acts. In that regard, I note that the non-government members of the committee had a view that was different from that of the government members.

As evidenced by many of the government's actions taken since coming to government, we know that the government is beholden to the unions. In relation to the provisions of this bill, the government's actions could be linked to union influence, because many of the industries that are subject to this new legislation are heavily unionised. I turn to the amendments to the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002 and the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008. I note that today in the media a lot has been said about these amendments. I note the *Courier-Mail* article titled 'Union deal taps water pressure', which discusses the amendments in this legislation and whether they have been fast-tracked as some sort of factional deal between the Treasurer and the head of the Plumbers Union, Brad O'Carroll. This morning, the Treasurer came into this place and gave an explanation about these matters. He reassured the House that there is no connection between the faction that he represents and this particular union and its representative. All I would say is that that information did not come to light because of the opposition's great forensic abilities. So it begs the question as to whether the Treasurer is being done over by someone on his own side.

The article makes these statements—

Labor insiders have accused Mr Pitt of trying to pass the laws in time to boost Mr O'Carroll's re-election prospects before the ballot closes this weekend.

The article quotes Mr O'Carroll as saying—

Yes we did get what we wanted.

As I say, the Treasurer has already come in this morning and reassured the House that the two events have no connection at all. All I would say is that he doth protest too much.

**Mr Hinchliffe** interjected.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** I say to the Leader of the House that this has not come from our side. Therefore, the Treasurer must be being done over by someone on his own side. So when government members stand here and argue for the changes, perhaps using quotes from members of the Plumbers Union, they should keep that information in mind.

The background to these changes go back to a bill that was introduced by the LNP government in 2014 that removed the discrepancy between the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008, the WSA, and the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002, the PDA, relating to the lawfulness of certain persons installing water meters. Section 35(1) of the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act provides—

A service provider may install, or approve the installation of, a meter ... on infrastructure supplying water to premises.

The act states further—

The meter is the property of the service provider even if it is installed inside the boundary of the premises.

The act empowered an authorised person to read, maintain or replace a water meter. At the same time the Plumbing and Drainage Act required that plumbing work, which was defined as 'installing, changing, extending, disconnecting, taking away and maintaining plumbing' must be undertaken by a person holding a plumbing licence. It is an offence under the Plumbing and Drainage Act to undertake plumbing work without a licence. Section 121 of the Plumbing and Drainage Act provides for certain exemptions to this offence. The 2014 bill sought to rectify this discrepancy by amending section 121 of the Plumbing and Drainage Act to include an offence exemption for—

- (e) the installation, and any work relating to the installation, of a relevant water meter by an authorised person under the Water Supply Act, section 35.

The amendments before the House mean that the installation of a water meter is plumbing work that can be performed only by a licensed plumber. Although groups such as the Plumbers Union were in favour of these changes, other stakeholders were not. The LNP is concerned that these amendments could increase costs for Queensland families, particularly for people living in rural and remote parts of the state. The LGAQ's evidence showed that in many areas within Queensland people do not have access to licensed plumbers. That could lead to significant costs placed on people living in those areas because of the requirement to get a plumber to undertake such work.

Interestingly—and I know the member for Coomera, the deputy chair of this committee, will go into this matter in more detail—there is no evidence that this provision in the Plumbing and Drainage Act needs to be reversed, except for the question that it is a payback for the Plumbers Union. Since this provision was introduced, there have been no specific examples of the installation of a water meter being done in such a way that risked health and safety. I note that New South Wales and Victoria already have provisions in their legislation that mean that people do not have to be a licensed

plumber to install a water meter. I am not aware of any issues arising out of the situation in those states that the committee would have taken into consideration to say, 'It is time to change this provision.'

I refer to the submission made by qldwater, which states—

The policy objective clearly supports the re-establishment of a protected market for plumbers for work which is more appropriately managed by water service providers. It has been developed under the false premise of improvement to public safety. By adopting this position, the Queensland Government is ignoring industry best practice in Australia and internationally.

This is not the opposition saying this; it is qldwater. It is saying that the principles of this provision in the bill have been developed under the false premise of improvement to public safety and that we are ignoring industry best practice in Australia and internationally.

**Mr Cripps:** Why would they be doing that?

**Mr LANGBROEK:** I take that interjection. I say to the member for Hinchinbrook that I think it is obvious.

I also want to refer to the following comments of the general manager of advocacy of the Local Government Association—

The justification for the change to the current legislation as claimed by the industry relates to ensuring high standards are achieved through the engagement of fully qualified and licensed plumbers. But what is the public interest to be secured here? Frankly, we are not sure there is any.

...

Whilst the association is aware of claims about a risk to public health if water meters are not installed by licensed plumbers, the LGAQ and its partner organisation, qldwater, believe any risk to be non-existent given current legislative requirements associated with drinking water quality. At no time in this debate has it ever been established that the current arrangements have resulted in adverse outcomes impacting on public safety, water quality or water supply security. Indeed, the examples of cross-connections and incidents involving the installation of water meters put forward previously were during a time when only licensed plumbers were permitted to do the work. In the current environment, both authorised persons and licensed plumbers are expected to have the same high standards of work, with the former receiving specific training and more frequent experience in regard to installing meters.

As we have already asked a number of times, are the amendments to the Plumbing and Drainage Act as identified in this bill being made for another reason? Is this another example of the new Labor government making good on a promise to their union mates? They are ignoring the potential increase in costs to Queensland families, particularly those Queenslanders living in rural and remote parts of the state.

I want to turn now to what are, from the opposition's perspective, the non-contentious parts of the bill. The amendments to the Environmental Protection Act 1994 are an LNP commitment not yet brought into legislation. These amendments to the Environmental Protection Act allow for the cancellation of transitional environmental programs, TEPs, or temporary emissions licences, TELs. They are changes that were previously flagged by the former LNP government. The changes are well explained in the explanatory notes. I note in the committee recommendations that the industry has no issues with these amendments. TEPs are a tool available under the Environmental Protection Act 1994 which allow a transitional period for environmental authority holders not operating in accordance with their licence to reach or return to compliance with their approval. TELs are a tool available for authorising in an emergency situation what would otherwise be unlawful activities, such as urgent releases of water from tailings dams during flood events. There is currently no power in the Environmental Protection Act 1994 to cancel a TEP or a TEL in the event of changed circumstances even if it would result in enhanced environmental outcomes or the approval is no longer required. There is a very specific example in the explanatory notes in relation to the copper smelter in Mount Isa extending its life beyond 2016 under a TEP.

**Mr Cripps:** Well done, Andrew Powell!

**Mr LANGBROEK:** Exactly. Congratulations to the former minister for environment, Andrew Powell, the member for Glass House. The smelter operates under a TEP that authorises operating parameters different from the environmental authority during a transitional period. It is comprehensively explained and supported. The LNP will not be opposing these aspects of the bill.

I turn now to other changes in the bill which mirror the legislation introduced in 2015. The Taxation Administration Act is amended to support electronic conveyancing for transfer duty in Queensland. Further amendments to the Taxation Administration Act 2001 provide for the payment of interest on refunds to taxpayers by the commissioner resulting from a reassessment giving effect to the commissioner's decision on an objection. This will bring Queensland in line with all other states and territories and provide fairer treatment of taxpayers by compensating them for the loss of use of

their funds while their objection is being determined. It will also ensure consistency with existing provisions for the payment of interest on refunds arising from court or tribunal decisions and orders. There is also a minor amendment to the Taxation Administration Act 2001 which corrects a cross-reference.

The Financial Accountability Act 2009, which Madam Deputy Speaker will remember from our time on the public accounts committee when she was last in this place, is amended so that it reflects modern financial management practices and streamlines certain procedural matters. Specifically, the amendments will increase the number of administrative powers that the Treasurer is able to delegate to officers within Queensland Treasury and the Queensland Treasury Corporation; clarify the ability of the Treasurer to enter into derivative transactions on behalf of the state and when this is appropriate; allow a non-public servant to be a department's head of internal audit; clarify that a department does not enter into a derivative transaction if it merely takes over the administration of a derivative transaction; require the appropriate minister to be given a report on, and to monitor, derivative transactions administered by the department—a department administers a derivative transaction if it enters into the transaction or if it takes over the administration from another department; and specify the requirements when ownership of a company moves between departments.

The First Home Owner Grant Act is amended to ensure that the statutory discretion given to the Commissioner of State Revenue to vary the period of or exempt an applicant from the residence requirements which form part of the eligibility criteria under the First Home Owner Grant Act 2000 can be exercised at any time. This amendment benefits applicants and will apply retrospectively in accordance with existing administrative arrangements. This is an interesting amendment. I think many of us have had constituents who were not always aware of the requirements under the First Home Owner Grant Act about their residence requirements and have been caught out and sometimes appeal. This is something that deals with that particular issue.

Amendments in relation to the Duties Act 2001 are the subject of four of the recommendations of the committee. The Treasurer has tabled the government's response to those. The amendments to the Duties Act 2001 provide an appropriate transfer duty and administration framework to support the introduction of electronic conveyancing as enabled in Queensland through the provisions of the Electronic Conveyancing National Law Queensland Act 2013. Other amendments to the Duties Act 2001 give retrospective legislative effect to a number of taxpayer beneficial administrative arrangements. These amendments provide a transfer duty concession for resource sector farm-in agreements as defined, correct the operation of a transfer duty exemption in section 145 of the Duties Act 2001 so that it also applies to land vested under statute law in the state for a purpose specified under that section and extends the vehicle registration duty exemption available to charitable institutions by reducing the period that charitable institutions must use a vehicle for a qualifying exempt purpose to nine months. Further amendments to the Duties Act remove redundant provisions and update an example for the calculation of vehicle registration duty to reflect current transfer duty rates.

I note the committee's recommendations as they relate to the amendment regarding the transfer duty farm-in agreements. Some concerns have been raised through the committee process from different stakeholders regarding these arrangements. As I have already mentioned, I note that the Treasurer has tabled the government's response where recommendations 1 and 2 are accepted and there is a significant response from the Treasurer to the recommendations and especially recommendation 4. These changes are quite technical and detailed and I would be interested to hear the Treasurer's comments in consideration in detail as to how he is going to adopt the committee's recommendations or if he wants to expand on the tabled government response which we have only just received.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Grace): Order! Honourable members, Mr Speaker has advised that there is a photographer from the *Courier-Mail* who will be taking photos in the chamber this afternoon, so make sure you all look okay.

 **Ms FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (2.57 pm): As the chair of the Finance and Administration Committee, I rise to speak in support of the Payroll Tax Rebate, Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015, which was introduced to the House on 27 March 2015 by the Treasurer, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships.

This is an omnibus bill which proposes amendments to the Criminal Law (Criminal Organisations Disruption) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2013, the Duties Act 2001, the Environmental Protection Act 1994, the Financial Accountability Act 2009, the First Home Owner Grant Act 2000, the Payroll Tax Act 1971, the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002, the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2002 and the Taxation Administration Act 2001.

This is a very eclectic bill with the purpose of its amendments including the provision of a payroll tax rebate on the wages of apprentices and trainees, an election commitment of the Palaszczuk government; giving support to electronic conveyancing in Queensland; providing legislative support for the duties concession on farm-in agreements; delaying the commencement of provisions aimed at excluding motorcycle gang members from working in certain licensed occupations; requiring the installation of water meters to be carried out by licensed plumbers, also an election commitment of the Palaszczuk government; and a number of other administrative amendments.

This was another one of those instances where, although there was genuine goodwill from all members of the committee to examine the issues in the most thorough manner possible, nevertheless we were unable to reach agreement that this bill should be passed. Government members supported the bill and recommended that it should be passed; non-government members supported all but the proposed amendments to the Criminal Law (Criminal Organisations Disruption) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2013, the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002 and the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008. However, we did agree on five recommendations that we considered would enhance the practical operation of the amendments and ensure that a range of stakeholder concerns were addressed and I look forward to speaking briefly about these shortly. I thank the Treasurer for his consideration of these recommendations and for accepting three of the five, and I acknowledge his rationale regarding the remaining two. I thank all the committee members: the deputy chair and member for Coomera and the members for Barron River, Stretton, Broadwater and Condamine for their hard work. The bill required what was at times quite complex consideration and I acknowledge the determination of all members to critically address the issues at hand.

I also thank the many submitters who contributed to our examination of the bill. I want to read out all their names because we were very grateful for their commitment to informing the committee. They were the Queensland Resources Council, the Master Builders Queensland, Total GLNG Australia, the Queensland Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Queensland Law Society, Australian Mining and Exploration Companies Queensland, Urban Utilities, the Master Plumbers' Association of Queensland, the Local Government Association of Queensland, the Plumbers Union of Queensland, the National Retailers Association, the Queensland Water Directorate, Mount Isa Mines Ltd, All Trades Queensland, Hintercoast Plumbing & Gas and Incitec Pivot Ltd. I thank the officers from the Department of Housing and Public Works, the Office of Fair and Safe Work Queensland, Queensland Treasury, the Department of Energy and Water Supply and the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection. The willingness of all of those who appeared before the committee to produce detailed submissions and, in many instances, to follow those up with further information in response to our queries in a prompt and considered manner was greatly appreciated by committee members.

I go now to some but not all of the details of the bill. As members will note, the committee's report was comprehensive and provides extensive background on each of the amendments proposed. I wish largely to discuss those amendments that have attracted most comment either from stakeholders during the process of the inquiry or from other sources. I go to the Duties Act 2001. There were several parts to this and I have to say that this was one of the sections of the bill that most exercised our minds.

Clause 15 relates to the new transfer duty concession for farm-in agreements. The background to these amendments was the announcement in January 2012 that exploration authorities would be made liable to duty. Following a submission from the Queensland Resources Council and the Office of State Revenue, in the 2012-13 budget later that year the then government announced that a concession would be provided for farm-ins. Some in this House may be unclear what a farm-in agreement actually is. For those who are not familiar with it, it is a contract signed between two parties where the farmor refers to the person or persons to whom an exploration authority has been granted with all the necessary approvals under a relevant act and the farmee is the other party with the specified interest in the exploration authority.

This section of the bill seeks to include concessional treatment for agreements for the transfer of exploration authorities under certain resource sector farm-in agreements to assist in the exploration and development of exploration authorities in Queensland. It recognises the risks to return on investment for exploration activity and seeks to support the junior exploration sector in particular. The amendments look to define the farm-in agreements that are eligible for the concession, though relief is available through the concession only for those farm-in agreements that are most commonly used in the sector. That is the key phrase: most commonly used as, as the committee discovered, there are a number of possible permutations of those agreements and a number of possible ways in which they could be interpreted without more explicit guidance.

These amendments are not in place to provide an exemption or concession for, and cannot possibly predict, all possible farm-in arrangements, nor are they in place to provide a general exemption for transfers of exploration authorities. Transfer duty is levied on a range of transactions, including both agreements between parties for the transfer of dutiable property as well as the subsequent transfer of that property. The categories of dutiable property include resource production tenures such as mining tenements and petroleum authorities. Agreements in transfers of these had been subject to duty, but resource exploration interests were not included as dutiable property.

In early 2012, Queensland Treasury undertook consultation on the possible concessional treatment for farm-in agreements and this marked the beginning of what has been a very long process for the resource and exploration industries, which involved a concessional model being proposed, consulted upon and approved and, in June 2013, a public ruling being published. At the beginning of this process, Queensland Treasury acknowledged that farm-in agreements could be entered into in a variety of ways and that, from a practical perspective, the industry needed certainty in determining when an agreement would be dutiable and how duty should be calculated. Although the public ruling went some of the way towards achieving this, the purpose of this legislation is to now provide that ultimate reference point for the exploration industry.

However, despite the legislative framework that will be available for the industry if the bill is passed, it is the committee's view that there is still much to be done in terms of education and the building of relationships to ensure all parties understand the others' positions. Some of our strong recommendations to the Treasurer in the committee's report were about what we consider to be the primary role of Queensland Treasury in this regard. I think it would be fair to say that these particular amendments drew most comment from stakeholders and that they were among the most vexed of the issues that the committee had to consider in this bill.

Issues raised by stakeholders included a general desire to see the administrative complexity of the bill revisited to reflect existing industry practice and for potential ambiguities in the bill to be reduced. More specific concerns included—and this is by no means an exhaustive list of concerns—potential inconsistencies with the public ruling, a desire to see the definition of 'farm-in' expanded, for the concession to apply to pre-grant and hybrid agreements, to allow pro-rata application of the concession, to extend 14-day notification requirements, to use antiavoidance rather than noncompliance measures regarding any breach, and concerns around the 30-day notification requirement after the expenditure completion date and the committee made a specific recommendation that this issue be considered further.

After detailed consideration of stakeholder concerns, the committee was satisfied on most counts that we would support amendments proposed for the Duties Act. However, it was clear to us that much of the heavy lifting that needs to be done is outside the legislative framework and, in fact, many of the issues point to a need for Treasury to more adequately communicate with stakeholders how the concession on farm-in agreements operates, how the concession is aimed at benefiting the majority of stakeholders and the practical implications of the alterations proposed by stakeholders that would significantly increase the compliance burden for all stakeholders should these amendments be accepted. It was for those reasons that the committee made its recommendations around Queensland Treasury undertaking an education and awareness campaign and publishing a further ruling, and we again thank the Treasurer for accepting those recommendations. Consensus and collaboration are hallmarks of the Palaszczuk government and government members of the committee were very keen to ensure that this approach is also taken in this instance.

Proposed amendments to the Payroll Tax Act 1971 arise from the Palaszczuk government's election commitment to encourage the hiring of more apprentices and trainees. Our policy was designed to promote jobs training and make it more affordable for employers to employ apprentices and trainees, which is why these amendments allow that employers who employ trainees and apprentices will receive a payroll tax rebate of 25 per cent on the wages of each apprentice or trainee

hired. This commitment is delivered through extending the application of provisions introduced by the former Labor government providing apprentice and trainee wage rebates for the 2009-10 to the 2011-12 financial years. As amended, the provisions will now also apply for the 2015-16 to the 2017-18 financial years and mean a commitment of \$45 million over three years. Unfortunately, under the LNP government unemployment was the highest it had been in Queensland for 11 years and that is why creating jobs is such a priority for this government. Encouraging employers to hire apprentices and trainees means that workers will develop valuable skills, it will provide job opportunities and it will benefit the Queensland economy. In 2012 the Newman LNP government abolished the payroll tax rebate for apprentices and trainees and did not commit any additional resources to skills and training until 2014-15, which left it very late to avoid a skills shortage.

Labor recognises that apprentices and trainees provide a great employment pathway, particularly for younger Queenslanders. The on-the-job training and mentoring that employers provide to apprentices and trainees will help us develop the highly skilled workforce of the future. These amendments will have two benefits. They will encourage employers to hire apprentices and trainees and reduce an employer's payroll tax liability.

It was pleasing to note that the majority of stakeholders were in favour of these amendments, although the CCIQ urged the government to expand the initiative. As the Treasurer noted earlier, this is in itself an endorsement of the initiative and the government members accept this compliment graciously.

It was on the basis of the CCIQ's feedback that the committee made another of its recommendations. That was for the minister to consider investigating additional methods of increasing the employment opportunities of apprentices and trainees. I was very pleased to see that the minister accepted this recommendation. In doing so, the minister pointed out that the broad range of initiatives being implemented under Working Queensland highlights the government's commitment to growing the economy, reducing the unemployment rate and creating real and sustainable jobs for Queenslanders.

In his speech to the House today, the Treasurer has flagged some of the initiatives that are already in train. The government is extending its commitment to having 10 per cent of the workforce comprised of apprentices, and this is to include government owned corporations as well. Other initiatives include Jobs Queensland and the magnificent Skilling Queenslanders for Work, which we know from the Deloitte Access Economics report is returning \$8 for every dollar invested. I look forward to many more of these positive initiatives to support the Queensland economy.

Already the Queensland economy is showing some positive signs. Queensland housing approvals rose in March to be up 26 per cent in 12 months. Queensland led the nation on retail trade growth in the March quarter. Queensland merchandise exports were up by 10.8 per cent to \$11.4 billion in the March quarter. We recorded an increase of 5,300 full-time jobs in Queensland in April. Typically, this still was not good enough for the member for Surfers Paradise, who mentioned several things that the LNP was going to do in the skills and training context but never did because it was someone else's fault. If he were really concerned about the Queensland economy, he would be rejoicing at the positive signs that are there for all to see.

I would like to go on to the amendments to the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002 and the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 about which there have been the most ridiculous statements made in the House today. I will restate up-front something that I stated when the committee started considering this bill when it was first referred to it—that is, that I actually received a donation from the Plumbers Union during the election campaign. I would like to make that very clear. I remember the member for Coomera having a bit of a chuckle and saying to me, 'Di, I am sure that when the Plumbers Union made that donation to you they would not have known that Labor was going to be in government and you were going to be chairing the Finance and Administration Committee that would consider the legislation around the issue of licensed plumbers installing water meters.' We had a bit of a chuckle about that. I am putting it out there so everybody is very clear on that.

I will go through a few matters contained in this bill and then read a press release from the Master Plumbers' Association today that shows how ridiculous a number of the statements of those opposite are in their quest to union bash on every occasion they can possibly dredge up, whether it is relevant or not. These amendments address a longstanding issue for the plumbing industry which arose from the ambiguity created upon the introduction of the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 and the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002 relating to the lawfulness of certain persons

installing water meters—in particular, whether a licensed plumber was required by law to install a water meter or whether this could be undertaken by an authorised person appointed by a water service provider.

On the one hand the water safety act provided that a service provider was allowed to install or approve the installation of a water meter on infrastructure supplying water to premises. It empowered an authorised person to read, maintain or replace a water meter. On the other hand, the Plumbing and Drainage Act required that plumbing work was defined as installing, changing, extending, disconnecting, taking away and maintaining plumbing.

The former state development, infrastructure and industry committee, in considering the Water Supply Services Legislation Amendment Bill, noted that the acts could not be easily read together and that it could be argued either way that a person needs a plumbing licence to install a water meter or that an authorised person can perform this work. These amendments will ensure once and for all that the installation of water meters is to be performed by a licensed plumber. The Labor Party made a commitment to this some years ago.

Clause 74 amends the definition of plumbing work. Clause 73 contains the transitional provisions which provide for an authorised person to have a two-year transitional period in which they may continue to install relevant water meters.

I believe the majority of stakeholders were pleased that these amendments would clarify the ambiguity around the installation of water meters. Queensland Urban Utilities advised that they were pleased with the clarification of the ambiguity and the two-year transitional period. The Master Plumbers' Association and the Plumbers Union supported the amendments.

There was disagreement across stakeholders regarding the impact of the poor installation of water meters and to what degree poor installation may have been occurring. Queensland Urban Utilities provided the committee on the one hand with figures on the number of customer complaints relating to potentially faulty water meters and the Master Plumbers' Association on the other hand advised that many cases of cross or poor connections go unreported. Alarming, some of the examples provided pointed to potentially significant public health risks.

There was significant discussion about the concerns of the LGAQ whose view was that the amendments could pose significant costs and delays for people in localities where plumbers do not exist. They also talked about the costs for a remote council in hiring a licensed plumber from the nearest regional centre.

The committee did not agree on these amendments. The government members had several views in particular. We believe that even one instance of a health and safety issue arising with potable water in Queensland was one instance too many. The LNP may be quite prepared to play Russian roulette with people's health, but we on this side of the House are not. The Master Plumbers' Association media release states—

The World Health Organisation has declared plumbers to be the most important frontline health workers around the globe for their contribution to the delivery of clean water and the removal of waste.

...

'Plumbing is a licensed trade for the right reasons, we need only point out the legionella outbreak at the Hervey Bay Hospital, Wesley Hospital, the Hong Kong SARS outbreak, cholera, typhoid and many other occurrences of disease outbreak that directly result from poorly installed or maintained plumbing and drainage systems ...

We believe that the issues raised by the LGAQ are acknowledged, but they point to a broader issue about the need for training plumbers in remote and rural areas. We were very pleased to talk to representatives from the Torres Strait Island Regional Council and hear from them that they have employed two plumbers and four apprentice plumbers. We believe this is a solution. I wholeheartedly support this bill.

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (3.17 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Payroll Tax Rebate, Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. I take the point made by the member for Bulimba when she said that we had conversations in the committee about various contributions to various people. She indicated that it would in no way, shape or form sway her decisions in relation to this matter.

A little while ago I was looking at the introductory speech of the bill where the Treasurer and Minister for Industrial Relations said, 'This government made a commitment at the recent election to restore high standards in Queensland's plumbing industry.' He went on to say that they 'will realise this election commitment by requiring the installation of water meters to be performed by licensed

plumbers'. We will be the only state in Australia where only licensed plumbers will be required to install water meters—the only state in Australia that is going backwards in time. But I can assure you, Madam Deputy Speaker, as evidenced by the front page of the *Courier-Mail* this morning, as can be seen, the Treasurer was well and truly in bed with the Plumbers Union. They knew what side their bread was buttered on. That was most certainly the case.

First of all, I acknowledge the secretariat and the other members of the committee. There was some interesting debate in the committee and interesting questions were asked across the various witnesses that came along. I will just briefly talk about one area, and that is the apprenticeships and payroll tax issues. I commend the Minister for Industrial Relations for confirming that they do have a few other things on foot as far as increasing the number of apprentices and trainees in the state of Queensland is concerned.

Let's make a comparison. I know the Deputy Leader of the Opposition made this comparison a little earlier but it is worth talking about again. This is from the Queensland government's Office of State Revenue document titled *Incentive rebate—apprentices and trainees*. The typical expectation is for \$600 to go back to an employer, and that is limited to 11,000 businesses in the state of Queensland. So they will get \$600 for bringing on an apprentice. Let's compare and contrast that with the 414,000 businesses that we have in the state of Queensland and the \$6,000 that 6,000 of those businesses were able to take advantage of when the LNP was in government. May I say that it was our intention to increase that number by a further 6,000 in this coming term. Sadly, the businesspeople of Queensland and the apprentices of Queensland did not get that. It is going to be restricted to 11,000 businesses and it is going to be \$600—\$600 versus \$6,000. There is a big difference in the incentives there.

I now want to talk about the plumbing issue, which is the issue that I took particular interest in because of the toing and froing that we saw between the two sides of the argument, if you like—those that wanted to go backwards in time, and that was the Labor government and the unions, and those that wanted to go forward in time and think about the people of Queensland in relation to a common-sense approach and a modern approach to the idea of installing water meters. In February 2014, Mark McArdle made the point—

The bill amends the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002 to clarify that authorised persons can be appointed by a service provider to install water meters on the service provider's infrastructure, in addition to licensed plumbers.

So it was in addition to licensed plumbers. It is an option. You could bring a licensed plumber in if you so chose. He went on—

These authorised persons will need to have appropriate training or expertise and must be competent to undertake the work safely and mitigate risks to public health.

That says it all really. That is exactly what has been happening. The evidence points to that, and I will talk about evidence in a little while. A media release from the honourable Mark McArdle at that time stated—

The legislative changes have also resolved long-standing confusion in the industry by clarifying that a service provider's authorised person can install primary water meters.

So it was to clarify legislation brought in by the previous Labor government that caused confusion. The situation back then was to sort out the mess and confusion that was made by the other side of the House. Interestingly, again going back to that time, the Department of Health provided advice to the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee in relation to this particular bill. The allegations that they were responding to were 'concerns regarding the potential impact on public health and possible inconsistencies with the regulatory approach adopted by other Australian states and territories'. They stated—

The Department of Health has investigated these concerns and concluded that there is no evidence that the proposed changes would have an adverse impact on public health, nor be out of step with the regulatory approach by other jurisdictions.

We asked the question and they came back and made those statements. Interestingly, talking about the health implications, they stated—

It has been argued that permitting use of appropriately trained water industry workers will 'significantly exacerbate' the risk of contamination of drinking water ...

And they go on to debunk that. The Plumbers Union did not provide any information on this, but I note going further the discussion about cross-connections between drinking water and recycled water. Once again reading from the response by the Department of Health, they stated—

Examination of incident reports from both Gold Coast Water's Pimpama-Coomera scheme and Unitywater's dual reticulation schemes in SEQ over the past few years has shown that cross connections have resulted from work performed both by licensed plumbers and other non-licensed personnel ...

So their examination has established that licensed plumbers and non-licensed personnel have been the people who have made the mistakes. I will come to that in just a moment. It may very well be that the training of plumbers may give us an answer to the reason why they have made those mistakes. They continued—

... these incidents are rare and there have not been sufficient incidents to draw generalised conclusions concerning risk.

Then we go on to other jurisdictions. Once again, I quote from the response to the last committee by the Department of Health—

Advice from the Water Services Association of Australia (the peak industry body for the urban water industry) confirms that Queensland is currently the only jurisdiction in Australia that restricts installation of water meters to licensed plumbers. In all other jurisdictions water meters may be installed by either the relevant water service provider or by a licensed plumber.

There is the confirmation. They did the work back in 2013 and 2014. They have come back and said, as their last words—

The Department of Health therefore supports—

or supported then—

the proposed changes.

There it is. There is the evidence. The evidence was listened to. The changes were made and we moved forward from there.

On another subject, I heard the argument from the Plumbers Union in particular that we do not have enough plumbers in the state and things of that nature. I suggest to the Plumbers Union that, if we were to take this particular aspect of water industry work away from plumbers, perhaps they would then be able to get on with the more important and certainly complex aspects of plumbing—that is, of course, plumbing new homes and doing the work that they would normally do.

Coming back to the evidence, the LGAQ talked about the issues that they were being confronted with, and the committee was being confronted with, that were derived from the unions. The LGAQ said—

At no time in this debate has it even been established that the current arrangements have resulted in adverse outcomes impacting on public safety, water quality or water supply security. Indeed, the examples of cross-connections and incidents involving the installation of water meters put forward previously were during a time when only licensed plumbers were permitted to do the work.

So it was either a licensed plumber doing the work or someone doing the work illegally, not a properly trained or properly overseen or experienced water meter installer doing the work. It was either someone who was doing it illegally or a plumber making the mistake. All of that material was brought forward by the LGAQ and others. It goes on. I will not spend time on it, except to point out that the LGAQ made the point, and a very strong point, in one of their submissions and they gave an example—

Should the changes proceed as proposed, councils that do not currently employ a licensed plumber would be required to employ one at tremendous expense. An example of the nature of this expense was found after speaking with the CEO of Barcoo Shire Council. They have a plumber on contract from Toowoomba who works 3 weeks on and 2 weeks off at a cost of \$100,000 per annum salary. However, the costs of a Council vehicle, accommodation, and other expenses makes the full cost closer to \$200,000 per annum.

The LGAQ talks about various other things. It makes the point once again that the Department of Health stated it was not aware of a single drinking water quality incident—all of which must be reported—that can be attributed to meter installation by either licensed or unlicensed persons. So no-one could find any issues with regard to all of those things that had to be reported.

What about the impact as outlined by Queensland Urban Utilities on employees? The chief executive officer of Queensland Urban Utilities provided a written submission that noted approximately 28 employees or contractors would be affected by these changes. The QUU would incur additional transitional costs of at least \$1.4 million and an annual cost increase of \$1.7 million. The cost per customer connection would increase by approximately \$150. As such, the QUU sought an implementation time frame of up to five years.

All of these costs and issues were raised as a major issue and something that the Treasurer had to bring into this House in the first 100 days, as is evidenced, if I recall rightly, in his speech so we could fix this problem. What problem? There was no problem. I note also that Urban Utilities has advised that it currently services 557,000 properties in its geographic service territory. As part of that service, it reads 518,877 active water meters. How many complaints has it had? There have been 89. From 518,887 meters it received 89 complaints in 2013-14 and in 2014-15, 146 complaints. Its submission states—

... Queensland Urban Utilities is obliged to comply with strict regulatory obligations which include compliance with drinking water quality standards under the statutory mandated drinking quality management plan.

They have a process that they go through to deal with all of those issues that are brought to their attention. When I say 'all of those issues', I am referring to 146 this financial year and 89 last financial year. They talked about one issue that was brought to the attention of our committee by the unions. It was to do with the Airportlink and an error in the way something was plumbed. We do not know whether it was a plumber inside Airportlink who did it, but it certainly was not Urban Utilities that caused the problem. It was most definitely Airportlink contractors who made the mistakes in that particular case, and they just wanted to debunk that issue.

The MPAQ in their submissions and in the conversations we had with them talked to us about the Gold Coast. Gold Coast Water recorded at least eight cases of cross-connections in the Pimpama-Coomera area. That area is part of my electorate. It is a beautiful area. It is the fastest growing area in Queensland. In fact, it is probably the fastest growing area in Australia. I would suggest there was something awry going on there because it was not, as it turned out, a properly qualified and trained person who had created the problem. It was someone other than that. Granted it was not a plumber, but it also was not a properly qualified individual either. It was possibly someone who was trying to run a scam in plumbing their house so it looked like potable water was going to the house, but they had switched the pipes over.

What, in fact, is happening is they are getting potable water to the house but it is coming through the A-class water meter. The A-class water meter is, in fact, plumbed to the other side so the end result is that they are getting free water. Recycled water is free of charge. There is no charge for it at all. People were perhaps making the decision to switch their meters over, quite illegally—nothing to do with a registered, properly trained individual; nothing to do with a plumber. People were just switching them over to try to save a few bob on their water bill.

The MPAQ talked about the Gold Coast, something that happened in Moreton Bay, something that happened in Brisbane and the airport tunnel in 2010, 2011 and January 2012. All of these things occurred well before this legislation was brought in. There is not one single piece of evidence from any plumber across the state or from anyone in the unions to establish that a mistake has been made by properly qualified and trained individuals—not one.

The Plumbers Union sent us some information. To paraphrase, they said the plumbing industry was strongly opposed to the changes in the first place due to the many risks associated with performing this type of work if performed by an insufficiently trained person. We agree. If they are insufficiently trained, do not let them do the work. But they are sufficiently trained. They are adequately trained. There are training modules available, and I will come to that now.

The evidence that I have been reading from the previous committee and this one suggests that the fitting of water meters is an optional module for plumbers. They do not have to do that module. Let us follow that through. We could argue that not all plumbers in Queensland are qualified to fit water meters because they have not done that particular module. Yet that module is available to them and to other people who will be properly and sufficiently trained in the fitting of those meters. I put it to the House that the evidence supported leaving things in place, not changing what we had. All of the positive evidence came through to support that. The evidence to go back to the past only came from the unions and was accepted by those opposite.

 **Mr PEGG** (Stretton—ALP) (3.38 pm): I rise to speak in favour of the Payroll Tax Rebate, Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. These amendments will serve to provide a payroll tax rebate on the wages of apprentices and trainees, provide support to electronic conveyancing in Queensland, give legislative support for the concession on duties on farm-in agreements and provide a requirement for plumbers to install water meters with a two-year transitional phase-in period.

This omnibus bill amends the following acts: the Criminal Law (Criminal Organisations Disruption) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2013, the Duties Act 2001, the Environmental Protection Act 1994, the First Home Owner Grant Act 2000, the Financial Accountability Act 2009, the Payroll Tax Act 1971, the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002, the Taxation Administration Act 2001 and the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008.

Today I want to particularly focus on the provisions that support the introduction of electronic conveyancing, derivative transactions, the training of apprentices and trainees, and water safety by ensuring that water meters are only installed by licensed plumbers. I also intend to speak about the provisions that enable a person from outside the Public Service to undertake the role of head of internal audit.

This bill amends the Duties Act 2001 to support the introduction of electronic conveyancing in Queensland. This will mean that there will be an electronic alternative to the face-to-face process with which anyone who has ever worked as an articulated clerk, such as myself, would be familiar. There will be an alternative to this face-to-face process. This will mean that there will be a shared electronic workspace for the parties to a land transaction and their finance providers. This will enable the parties to submit their documents to the titles office electronically and for the parties to interact in their offices and not physically at the titles office. As advised by the Treasurer, this will involve electronic transfer forms, digital signing and transfer of duty endorsement and lodgement via an electronic workspace with the Registrar of Titles.

Electronic conveyancing has a number of benefits. The key aspect is that electronic conveyancing will provide convenience for consumers. It will also provide convenience for legal practitioners in this particular area. The settlement of property transactions will be able to take place without the need for cheques and without the necessity for settlement meetings. Fees and duties can also be paid without the potential for cheque or mail delays. We have had e-lodgement in Queensland courts for some time and electronic conveyancing is clearly another step along the road of technological advancement.

I also want to speak about the amendments to the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002 and the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008. These amendments will ensure that we have high standards in the plumbing industry in this state. We need high standards in the plumbing industry in Queensland, and I am very proud to be part of a government that has a clear commitment to the restoration of high standards in the plumbing industry in this state. We need high standards in plumbing to ensure the health and safety of the community and also for environmental protection.

**Mr Mander:** No evidence.

**Mr PEGG:** I take that interjection because there is evidence. In its submission, the Master Plumbers' Association of Queensland outlined to the committee the training that plumbers are required to undertake. Plumbers undertake a four-year apprenticeship that is recognised Australia-wide. They are required to cover 64 units of competency that encompass the entirety of the trade of plumbing.

**Mr Whiting:** Sixty-four units.

**Mr PEGG:** That is right, 64 units and four years of training. This means that a licensed plumber is qualified in the installation, maintenance and replacement of water meters and can also deal with any problems caused by installation. Of course, the qualifications of plumbers extend beyond water meters and encompass the entire water supply system. These tradespeople have a job which involves a focus on ensuring the system of water supply is safe for human consumption. That is a very important job that affects all Queenslanders. Plumbing is a very important trade. It is also important to remember that plumbing is a licensed trade.

The amendments to the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002 and the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 will deliver high standards in the plumbing industry. These amendments will deliver on the election commitment to require the installation of water meters to be performed by a licensed plumber. Clause 73 amends the definition of plumbing work to make it clear that plumbing work is inclusive of installing a water meter as part of a service provider's infrastructure for the purpose of measuring the volume of water supplied to the premises of the infrastructure. These amendments were supported by both the Master Plumbers' Association of Queensland and the Plumbers Union Queensland.

During the committee hearing we heard about an example from the Master Plumbers' Association of Queensland in which a water meter was replaced by an unlicensed plumber. While he replaced the meter expeditiously, after the meter was installed there was no water in the kitchen,

bathroom or toilet due to debris coming down the line. The submission from the Plumbers Union of Queensland highlighted safety concerns with the current legislative arrangements. In their submission, they said that they had been advised of numerous incidents ranging from electrocutions, leaking and wrongly placed meters to major cross-connections such as that which occurred at the Pimpama wastewater treatment plant. We heard from the Plumbers Union regarding concerns about cross-contamination of water supply that has taken place due to work undertaken by unlicensed plumbers. The committee was provided with a number of examples of incidents where supply was compromised.

We were also provided with statistics from Queensland Urban Utilities about the number of customer complaints regarding faulty water meters for the last two financial years. In the 2013-14 financial year there were 89 complaints. This figure rose to 146 complaints relating to faulty water meters in the 2014-15 financial year. Clearly, there is an upward trend here of complaints regarding faulty water meters. This is a clear safety issue. Even one instance of a health and safety risk arising in relation to potable water is one incident too many. Unfortunately, there have been 146 complaints regarding potentially faulty meters.

I believe that it is incumbent on all of us in this place to protect the health and the safety of the people of Queensland—to protect their health and safety at work, to protect their health and safety at home and to protect the health and safety of Queenslanders at all times. There was anecdotal evidence to suggest that there are also issues that potentially go unreported. An example of this is mud in pipes, which can cost consumers and also inconvenience them. If licensed plumbers are undertaking this installation work, these health and safety issues are less likely to occur.

Incorrectly installed water meters do not just cause property damage and threaten health and safety. They can also cause stress and financial hardship, especially when innocent people are being pursued for massive water bills that were caused through no fault of their own.

Earlier this year two of my constituents asked me for help. They are a local retired couple who have lived in my electorate for many years. They do not have much money and they get by on the pension. My electorate has the highest number of people in the state who speak a language at home other than English. Like many people in my local area, for these particular constituents English is not their first language. They were very upset, stressed out and worried that they had received a water bill for over \$2,300. That is over \$2,300 for a couple on the pension. Suddenly their water bills started showing a massive increase in consumption, even though they had not changed their ordinary use of water at the property. Certainly there is only a limited amount of water that an elderly, retired couple could use in their house.

They tried hard to resolve the matter themselves, directly with Queensland Urban Utilities. This process commenced over a year ago when they called Queensland Urban Utilities about a massive increase in consumption of water at their premises. Following an inspection, it was found that there was no water passing through the meter at the time of the inspection so there could be no leaks at the property. At this time they found that the daily average usage of water at this house was just over 400 litres per day. This amount seemed high to them and they contacted Queensland Urban Utilities about not being able to even read their own water meter. A representative of Queensland Urban Utilities came out and replaced the meter and the final reading taken showed that the daily consumption of water had increased from just over 400 litres per day to over 5,000 litres per day. The resulting bill was in excess of \$2,300. That is an amount that my constituents cannot pay. Not only can they not pay, but they will not pay out of principle.

**Ms Grace:** It would have been cheaper to get a licensed plumber, wouldn't it?

**Mr PEGG:** That is very true. In fact, these constituents have informed me that they will go to jail if they have to. Whilst I am sure it will not get to that stage, it highlights the sense of injustice that people feel when they are accused of something they did not do or when they receive bills that they did not properly incur. These people are good, hardworking people, but they are now being hounded for a bill for water that they did not actually use. They feel like they are being treated like criminals.

This retired couple are very distressed about this large bill they have received. They were provided with a copy of the Queensland Urban Utilities' concealed leaks policy. This policy spells out who is responsible for concealed leaks on either side of a water meter if and when they occur. However, my constituents do not believe that the problem was caused by a concealed leak. They believe that it is likely that, in fact, this is a case of a faulty water meter or, potentially, a faultily installed water meter. This matter has been referred to the Ombudsmen for further investigation and hopefully they can get to the bottom of what has occurred. Whilst this couple do not have the capacity

to pay, they are prepared to fight, despite the time, effort and stress that it has placed on them. I have to ask this question: how many Queenslanders have just been paying the bill for incorrectly installed meters?

How many people decide that it is too much hassle to fight a water bill that looks unusually high? How many people are too busy with kids, school and work to fight a water bill that is too high? How many people are paying too much due to incorrectly installed water meters? I think it is important to ask: who has paid the price of the former government chipping away at the noble trade of being a plumber? Who is paying that price? In this case, it is the people of Queensland. This is why we should ensure that the installation of water meters is done properly by trained professionals.

There is a transitional provision in the bill which means that a person who is presently authorised by a provider of water services to install water meters is able to continue to undertake this work for a period of two years. At the conclusion of the two-year transitional period this work can only be undertaken by a licensed plumber. This phase-in period will enable time for adjustment to the new arrangements. The phase-in period will also enable those councils in rural and remote areas to invest in the training of licensed plumbers. This will be a sound investment by local councils in not only ensuring the health and safety of their communities, but also providing for the provision of plumbers in rural and remote areas.

We should not compromise on health and safety, no matter where anyone lives in this great state. We should support the principle that those who are employed within the industry have the correct qualifications. This transition period, this two-year window, will enable those people who are currently installing water meters to receive the appropriate training and develop the requisite skills to become licensed plumbers. Our committee did not reach agreement on this particular aspect of the bill. These amendments will restore high standards to the plumbing industry. These amendments will implement an election commitment from the government. These amendments will both improve professional standards and also increase consumer protections. These amendments should be supported on that basis.

I also want to talk about the aspect of the bill that will support apprentices and trainees. This bill will deliver on the election commitment of the government to provide a payroll tax rebate for apprentices and trainees. Supporting apprentices and trainees will ensure that Queenslanders have the skills for the future. We need to tackle youth unemployment. I have said before that youth unemployment is far too high in my local area. This bill will provide an incentive to employers to hire apprentices and trainees. This will help to tackle youth unemployment by delivering secure jobs and training and skills opportunities for young Queenslanders.

I support a Queensland with strong economic growth. To support strong economic growth and ensure that we have the skills for the future in this state we need a highly skilled workforce. Just yesterday one of the schools in my electorate visited this place. Over 90 students visited Parliament House, and it was great to see so many young people here. Earlier today we saw students from another school, and I believe it was the Park Ridge State School in the electorate of Logan. These young people are the future of Queensland. We need to support young people in this state, and to do that we need to give them the opportunities to gain skills and training so that they can make a contribution. I am proud to be part of a government that has made a real commitment to skilling Queenslanders. I am proud to be part of a government that has made a real commitment to supporting a highly skilled workforce. The allocation of \$45 million for this rebate looks to the future. This provision is an investment in the future of Queensland.

This rebate is not the only measure that supports jobs in Queensland and the Working Queensland plan. Other initiatives that will support apprentices and trainees under the government's Working Queensland plan include making sure apprentices and trainees make up 10 per cent of workers on major projects and the establishment of Jobs Queensland. Jobs Queensland is a body that is industry led and will provide advice to the government on skills demand, both now and in the future. It will also have a focus on long-term planning and investment in skills.

I am very proud to be part of a government that has a clear focus on jobs. To achieve this necessitates job creation by identifying the growth industries of the future and making sure that we have a skilled workforce in order to meet this demand. This initiative complements the government's Skilling Queenslanders for Work program, which has been proven to deliver real opportunities for Queenslanders. An independent evaluation has demonstrated that each dollar spent on Skilling Queenslanders for Work generated nearly \$8 in return. That is a great return in anyone's language. I

am very proud to be part of a government that is investing in skills and training and has a real focus on job creation. We need to keep supporting jobs. We need to keep focusing on job creation and skills. These amendments to support apprentices and trainees will do just that.

This bill also amends section 86 of the Financial Accountability Act to replace a requirement on departments to report on derivative transactions and a minister to monitor derivative transactions that are administered by a department. The purpose of this amendment is to provide the flexibility for departments and ministers when responsibilities or processes change. These changes to processes and responsibilities can occur as part of the normal operations of the government. The amendment will enable the appropriate minister and department to monitor and report the derivative transactions that it administers. A department may administer a derivative transaction that is taken over from another department or one that it has entered into itself.

Under the legislation as it currently stands, the reporting has to be undertaken by the department that entered into the derivative transaction and the monitoring undertaken by the minister of that particular department. A department could potentially enter into a derivative transaction, and the actual project that the derivative transaction relates to could be transferred to another minister or the function to which the derivative transaction relates could be transferred to another department. It is important in this particular circumstance that the new minister and the new department should be responsible for the reporting and monitoring of this particular derivative transaction when it has occurred. This example demonstrates that, due to machinery of government changes or changes in ministerial responsibility, the responsibility for a derivative transaction can shift over time. This is especially the case where large infrastructure projects are concerned, as these can be administered over a long period of time.

I also want to speak about the amendments that will enable a non-public sector employer to be a department's head of internal audit. This bill will amend section 78 of the Financial Accountability Act to enable a non-public sector employee to be a department's head of internal audit, or HIA. A department's head of internal audit is required to undertake certain responsibilities under the legislation such as identifying deficiencies in risk management, evaluation of the financial and operating systems of a department and reporting processes. The responsibilities required of this particular role mean that the person appointed to the position of head of internal audit should hold minimum qualifications such as a CPA or chartered accountant.

When the head of internal audit was initially recognised in legislation, departments in general had in-house internal audits that were well resourced. Over time, some departments have reduced their internal audit units by either completely outsourcing the internal audit function or having a co-sourced internal audit function. These changes have meant that some departments have identified that they may not have an employee who is suitably qualified to undertake the head of internal audit role.

As I said at the beginning of my speech, this bill will serve to provide a payroll tax rebate on the wages of apprentices and trainees, provide support to electronic conveyancing in Queensland, give legislative support for the concession on duties on farm-in agreements and provide a requirement for plumbers to install water meters with a two-year transition period.

I want to thank all members of the Finance and Administration Committee for their hard work, particularly the chair, the member for Bulimba. I also want to thank all the committee staff for their hard work. Madam Deputy Speaker, I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (3.58 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Payroll Tax Rebate, Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 as a member of the Finance and Administration Committee. The bill amends the Payroll Tax Act 1971; Duties Act 2001; Taxation Administration Act 2001; First Home Owner Grant Act 2000; Financial Accountability Act 2009; Criminal Law (Criminal Organisations Disruption) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2013; Environmental Protection Act 1994; Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002; and Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008.

Clause 2 of the bill would delay for 12 months some of the amendments in the Criminal Law (Criminal Organisations Disruption) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2013. These amendments were aimed at excluding outlaw motorcycle club members from working in certain occupations covered by the act. The government has announced that a task force, headed by Mr Michael Byrne QC, which will report to the government by 30 November 2015, is being established to review the current act. Whilst the government members of the committee supported the delay, the LNP believe that the current legislation should be enacted whilst it remains in place.

We are of the belief that to not enforce the current legislation may influence the outcome of the proposed review. There are already reports of outlaw motorcycle gangs looking to re-establish themselves in Queensland, and any softening of laws that would encourage them to return will be opposed by this side of the House.

Clauses 6 to 14 of the bill make amendments to the Duties Act 2001 to include the introduction of electronic conveyancing in Queensland. Conveyancing has traditionally been completed by the parties involved and their solicitors appearing at the titles office. Electronic conveyancing will allow these documents to be lodged electronically at the titles office from an office or from home, saving both time and expense. To counter any possibility of error or fraud, all data will be submitted and transmitted between each subscriber and person participating in the transaction in real time, with verification of data returning at each stage to ensure the document details are accurate.

Queensland Treasury and Trade stipulated that, as electronic settlement is untested in Queensland, transfer duty endorsement on an ELN will only be allowable for residential conveyance transactions. This will be an alternative to the current process, not a replacement. Anyone wishing to operate in the traditional way can continue to do so. With much of our business being conducted electronically today, adjustments to legislation similar to this will occur from time to time. The committee supports these amendments.

Clause 15 seeks to make changes to the Duties Act 2001 to include concessional treatment for agreements for the transfer of exploration authorities under certain farm-in agreements in the resource sector. In January 2012 the government announced that exploration authorities would become dutiable. Following a submission from the Queensland Resources Council and industry consultation by the Office of State Revenue, the government announced in September that a concession would be provided for farm-in agreements.

Queensland Treasury undertook preconcession consultation on the possible concessional treatment for farm-in agreements from February 2012 to August 2012, receiving submissions from the Queensland Resources Council and the Australian petroleum and production authority, and liaised with other states on the concession provided in their jurisdictions. The Office of State Revenue then developed a concession model reflecting the predominant farm-in practice as advised by the industry.

During the committee hearings some of the submitters expressed concern over the administrative complexity of the bill and stated that they believed some of the provisions risk stifling the exploration activity that the concession was designed to promote. The committee believes that there is a need for better communication and consultation with stakeholders. Stakeholders require access to information that is written in plain English and is easy to comprehend. Much of the confusion is due to a lack of understanding and knowledge. It was pleasing to hear the minister acknowledge that when he spoke to the bill earlier.

Clauses 47 to 51 make amendments to the Environmental Protection Act 1994 to allow for the cancellation of transitional environmental programs or a temporary emissions licence. Transitional environmental programs are used when an environmental authority holder is not operating in accordance with their licence and allows a transition period to reach or return to compliance. There are currently no provisions to cancel an approval for a transitional environmental program when the operator and the administering authority have agreed on other measures to achieve compliance or the licence is no longer required.

Transitional emission licences are used in emergency circumstances such as the urgent release of water in flood situations. These licences are intended to be used for only a short period and only for a specific purpose or circumstance and can be cancelled if they are misused. However, there is no provision to cancel a transitional emission licence when it is no longer required and other measures are available to comply with the Environmental Protection Act. Industry supports these changes, as does the committee.

Clauses 64 to 67 make amendments to the Payroll Tax Act 1971. These amendments were part of the Labor Party campaign to increase the uptake of apprentices and trainees and included a payroll tax rebate of 25 per cent on wages paid by an employer as part of an incentive scheme for any new apprentices or trainees employed. Whilst the attempt is commendable, those who lodged submissions and the committee felt that the scheme as it stands is too restrictive. The rebate will only be accessible by businesses that have a wages bill of over \$1.1 million and are subject to payroll tax.

Currently only 11,000 businesses in Queensland pay payroll tax. This represents three per cent of the business community in the state. This is a statistic the Chamber of Commerce and Industry noted in its submission, in which it stated—

... with only a minor proportion of Queensland's business community eligible to benefit from this payroll tax rebate initiative, the opportunity to meaningfully impact apprentice and trainee numbers is significantly diminished, with the State Government relying on this demographic alone to increase their intake of apprentices and trainees.

Furthermore, the chamber noted that the previous government's scheme of a \$6,000 payment for hiring an apprentice or trainee was fully subscribed, resulting in 6,000 new apprentices. This amendment will only be able to be utilised by three per cent of the business community. The committee recommended that the minister consider investigating additional methods that would increase the opportunities for involvement by industry.

Clauses 71 to 74 and 84 to 87 make amendments to the Plumbing and Drainage Act. In 2014 the former LNP government introduced into the House a bill allowing a trained qualified person other than a plumber to install a water meter. The amendments proposed in this bill would reverse that decision such that all water meters would need to be installed by a qualified plumber. This amendment was supported by the Master Plumbers' Association and the Plumbers Union, who cited safety and water contamination issues. When they were asked by the committee for some examples of where problems had occurred, several cases were presented to the committee. Interestingly, all occurred before the 2014 amendments were enacted.

The Local Government Association of Queensland expressed concerns over the availability of qualified plumbers, particularly in regional centres, where in some cases plumbers would have to be brought in from other areas at additional expense simply to install a water meter. With the recent gas boom in the west, many towns have been left with very few or no local plumbers as they have gone to work in the CSG industry. The Local Government Association of Queensland said that it was unaware of any cross-contamination issues resulting from water meters being installed under the act as it currently stands. Qldwater noted in its submission that the policy clearly supports the re-establishment of a protected market for plumbers for work which is more appropriately managed by water service providers. It has been developed under the false premise of improving public safety. It is very hard to argue against that assumption. The committee, in my view, heard no evidence that would in any way necessitate the amendments being proposed in this bill.

 **Mr CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (4.08 pm): I rise today to speak in favour of the Payroll Tax Rebate, Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, currently before the House. As a member of the Finance and Administration Committee of the 55th Parliament I am delighted to stand to speak in support of this bill. The Treasurer, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships introduced the bill on 27 March 2015 and the bill was referred to the Finance and Administration Committee.

The committee conducted a public departmental briefing on the bill with officers from Queensland Treasury, the Office of Fair and Safe Work Queensland, the Department of Housing and Public Works, the Department of Energy and Water Supply, the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection and the Office of the Treasurer. In order to better understand the bill and matters relating particularly to the subject of farm-in agreements and the duties tax, the committee held an additional private meeting with Queensland Treasury officers so that we could better understand the bill. This bill is of a similar nature to the lapsed Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 that was referred to the former Finance and Administration Committee in the 54th Parliament and our committee recognised that some of this work had already been undertaken. The committee conducted a public hearing as well as sought additional written information from various stakeholders.

The bill will amend the following acts—the Payroll Tax Act 1971, the Duties Act 2001, the Taxation Administration Act 2001, the First Home Owner Grant Act 2000, the Financial Accountability Act 2009, the Criminal Law (Criminal Organisations Disruption) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2013, the Environmental Protection Act 1994, the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002 and the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008. The bill covers these multiple areas and, like others before me, I will try to move through them one at a time using the relevant clauses as a logical guide. Clauses 3 and 4 refer to amendments made to the Criminal Law (Criminal Organisations Disruption) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2013 to delay for a period of 12 months legislation that was aimed at excluding motorcycle gang members from working in particular licensed occupations including those covered by the Electrical Safety Act 2002, the Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act 1991 and the Work Health and Safety Act 2011.

Reviewing and addressing organised crime in Queensland is something that this government is committed to. The Attorney-General has reaffirmed this through a task force to review various 2013 legislation. However, this bill concentrates specifically on the concerns of the Treasurer in which he describes potential delays in processing licence applications and renewals. Any benefit arising from the implementation of the legislation will be outweighed by the cost to workers in restricting Queenslanders' ability to commence or continue to earn a living in their current licensed occupation.

Clauses 6 to 14 focus on amending the Duties Act 2001—namely, the introduction of electronic conveyancing in Queensland. In short terms, this amendment allows for the introduction of the ability to perform conveyancing without the requirement for representatives to attend in person at the titles office, but of course the present system remains as an option, essentially giving us two systems that can operate. The committee was satisfied that the proposed amendments provide the appropriate framework to support the introduction of electronic conveyancing. This is simply just a sign of modern times and I think anything that we can do as law-makers to make processes simplified for Queenslanders is a good thing.

Clause 15 refers to the transfer duty concessions for farm-in agreements. This clause seeks to make amendments to the Duties Act 2001 to include concessional treatment for agreements for the transfer of exploration authorities. This will assist with the development of exploration authorities throughout Queensland. The discussions on farm-in agreements and the duty date back to 2011-12 with various statements and various ideas, but generally it all moved in one direction—that is, we needed to provide a framework to support what is referred to as the junior exploration sector and the small operators who are out there without the large scale backing, either financially or by multinational offices and advisers. It is always good to back the little bloke, the small industry, the small crew who have an idea, a truck, a small budget and the opening to make something good. The subject of farm-in agreements is something that most Queenslanders have little or no knowledge of. You never read about it in the news. It is unlikely to be on the front page and most likely will be in the financial section of the newspaper, but this is an important part of Queensland. This is one of our biggest industries.

In January 2012 the government announced that exploration authorities would be made liable to duty. The objective at the time was to raise additional state revenue of around \$30 million per annum. Following submissions from the Queensland Resources Council and with consultation with the Office of State Revenue, the government announced in September 2012 that a concession would be provided for farm-in agreements. During this parliament's committee hearings and submissions on this bill, there appeared to be some concerns or misunderstanding as to how the process works. In reality, unless you work in the Treasury field, sometimes it can seem like they are speaking a different language. Our committee had a further hearing with Queensland Treasury just so that we could actually try to get our heads around exactly what a farm-in agreement was, what a farmor was, what a farmee was and how it all worked together. I challenge anyone to have a good understanding of that without jumping onto Wikipedia or Google on their iPhones. Essentially, as I said before, this is about providing the junior exploration companies with the ability to be able to get out there and do the work that they need to do and as a government obviously we need to get behind them and support them. The committee spent hours on this area and in the end there was consensus reached that this was the right amendment, but we also agreed—and we heard the Treasurer talk about it earlier—that the sector needs some degree of education and in particular the junior exploration companies so that they can spend more time out in the field and less time on their iPhones trying to research what it is that they have to do from a compliance perspective so they can work with Treasury.

The next section of the bill refers to clauses 47 to 51 in relation to amendments to the Environmental Protection Act 1994 to allow for the cancellation of transitional environmental programs, or TEPs, or a temporary emissions licences, known as a TEL. In brief, a transitional environmental program is a tool which allows for a transitional period for environmental authority holders not operating in accordance with their licence to reach or return to compliance and a TEL, a transitional emissions licence, is a tool that is available for authorising emergency situations which would otherwise be unlawful. An example given in the explanatory notes is the release of water from a tailings dam during flood events. Clauses 47 to 51 outline that the current provisions provide for the TEL or the TEP to occur and that they allow for the TEL or the TEP to be amended, but what they do not allow for is for either of them to be cancelled due to them no longer being required or the holder of the approval has decided on other measures to achieve their compliance with the Environmental Protection Act. Feedback to our committee from the Queensland Resources Council was positive and it stated that feedback to it from its sector was that the amendment was of benefit. Therefore, the committee had no issues with the amendments.

Clauses 52 to 58 refer to changes to the Financial Accountability Act 2009 and deal with some procedural matters in respect of Treasury and the delegation of powers by the Treasurer to the appropriate officers inside Queensland Treasury. The committee was satisfied with these amendments and noted that they were essentially of an administrative nature. Clauses 59 to 61 refer to the First Home Owner Grant Act 2000 and the capacity of the Commissioner of State Revenue to vary the period of, or exempt an application from, the residence requirements which form part of the eligible criteria. The committee was informed that the applicant for a first home owner grant must occupy the home to which the application relates as the applicant's principal place of residence for a continuous period of at least six months. The proposed amendment will allow the commissioner to give an approval or exemption at any time, even if the period to which the approval or exemption relates has ended. During the committee hearings there was much interest in the definition of a new home and discussion as to the ruling around whether a relocatable home should be considered the same as a new home. However, we felt this was not inside the scope of this bill nor of this committee. Clauses 62 to 70 refer to implementing the government's 2015 election commitment of providing a payroll tax rebate for apprentices and trainee wages. To quote the Treasurer—

This government recognises that apprenticeships and traineeships provide a great employment pathway, particularly for young Queenslanders. This in turn contributes to the development of a highly skilled workforce to permit delivery of projects to ensure Queensland's economic growth into the future.

This commitment will deliver a 25 per cent payroll tax rebate on the wages of apprentices and trainees funded over three years in addition to the existing exemption for apprentices and trainees. Irrespective of the location, the message is the same. Whether it is from jobseekers or employers, at present employment opportunities and employment assistance is paramount in Queensland.

Clauses 71 to 74 of the bill amend the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002. I accept that we have had quite a bit of discussion in relation to this part of the bill from those who have spoken before me. In 2014 the former government introduced a bill in relation to this matter. It found that an ambiguity existed between the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002 and water supply act 2008 as to who installed water meters in Queensland. Section 35(1) of the water supply act 2008 provides that a service provider is allowed to install or approve the installation of a water meter whereas the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002 required that plumbing work defined as 'installing, changing, extending, disconnecting, taking away and maintaining drainage' must be undertaken by a person holding a plumbing licence. Under the Plumbing and Drainage Act, it is an offence to undertake plumbing work without a licence. In 2014, a report of the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee noted that the two acts could not be read easily together and that it could be argued either way that a person needs either a plumbing licence to install a water meter or that a person need only to be authorised to perform this work.

Essentially, clauses 84 to 87 of this bill make the same changes to the water supply act 2008 and amend the definition of 'plumbing work' to make it clear that the installation of a water meter is defined as plumbing work and can be performed only by a licensed plumber. Through the committee's hearings, discussions and submissions the following was observed: plumbers, as well as the Master Plumbers' Association of Queensland and the Plumbers Union Queensland, supported the idea of qualified plumbers installing water meters. Queensland Urban Utilities advised that it was pleased that the bill—

... clarifies that the role of a plumber relates to meter installation and not to repair, maintenance or replacement of a meter.

The LGAQ claimed that the amendments will have an impact on councils and water service providers. It argued that in some rural and regional council areas there are no or few licensed plumbers who are either employed by the council or in the private sector. The issue of a plumber shortage in our regional, remote and rural areas is certainly one of great concern to me. The electorate of Barron River borders the massive electorate of Cook to the north, which comprises some of Queensland's most remote regions. The committee was presented by the LGAQ with a map and a chart listing Queensland councils. That chart spelt out how many plumbers existed in the various shires and councils of Queensland. The chart was quite alarming to look at with respect to some of the regional areas. I want to focus on one area in which we were able to cross-reference the data, the most remote council located at the top end at the Torres Strait. The submission accompanying the chart provided by the LGAQ explained that there was one plumber in the Torres Strait Island Regional Council. However, when the committee interviewed the council on another matter—

**Miss Barton:** Between one to 10. Four and a half—

**Mr CRAWFORD:** I will take that interjection. The map that the LGAQ provided said one to 10 and then there was an additional chart attached to that in the same submission from LGAQ that listed that there was one plumber in that council. The question was asked of the Torres Strait Island Regional Council by the member for Coomera—and I think he beat me to the question by a couple of seconds. He asked—

How many plumbers do you have?

The response was—

We have two full-time plumbers who are employees at the moment. We also have four apprentice plumbers and all of those four apprentices live and work in the outer Torres Strait Islands.

Two plus four equals six. Where does the LGAQ get one? Six is not one. So I cannot rely on a chart which was clearly proven to be incorrect by the first council that we spoke to, which we selected randomly. Therefore, I can only regard the evidence given by the LGAQ as being unreliable.

But let us look past all of that. Let us look at the opportunities and what is right for Queensland and that is right from our workers. Why train someone to fit water meters when you can have them trained to perform a whole range of plumbing roles to the benefit to council, the benefit to the employees and the community? That all makes sense. I was flicking through some of the submissions that we had received and I saw one that came from a plumber by the name of Brad Morris. In that submission he states—

As a plumber it is positive to see that this government is proposing to overturn the legislative amendments made by the previous government regarding water meters.

Plumbers like me protect the health and safety of the community in Queensland every day and it is so important that the installation of water meters must be performed by a fully qualified and licensed plumber. Legislative changes were made in 2014 which removed this requirement allowing water service providers to engage an authorised person (not a plumber) to install water meters.

He then went on to say—

Any work to do with the quality of our water supply and the health of our Queenslanders needs to be handled by licensed plumbers.

A plumber can do more than just install water meters. So why should we train them just to do that? A plumber can do things like read drawings and specifications to determine the layout of water supply, waste and venting systems; detect faults in plumbing appliances and systems and correctly diagnose their causes; install, repair, maintain domestic, commercial, industrial plumbing fixtures and systems; locate marked positions for pipe connections, passage holes and fixtures in floors and walls; measuring, cutting, bending, threading pipes using hand tools and power tools and machines; joining pipes and fittings together using soldering techniques, compression fittings, threaded fittings and push-on fittings; testing pipes for leaks using air and water pressure gauges; an awareness of legal regulations and safety issues; and ensuring that safety standards and building regulations are met. Why would those opposite oppose training people to this higher standard? Our remote communities need these people. There are benefits to having qualified plumbers on staff not only through the pride of employing and training a young person to have a trade that could take them on for the rest of their career but also as they benefit the community around them and the employer through having an employee or group of employees who proudly call themselves plumbers. We do not train mechanics to merely be qualified to replace the differential of a 1986 Ford Falcon. We train them to be a motor mechanic—a mechanic who uses their skills and qualifications on Datsuns, Peugeots, Ferraris, Commodores—and I could go on forever. Their training provides employment opportunities. Our workers living in these remote areas of Queensland need opportunity. That opportunity will be provided to them by this Labor government. This amendment to the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002 and the water supply act 2008 will ensure that water meters are installed by a licensed plumber. That will not only benefit locals and local government but also grow our workforce of qualified tradespeople, which will be a positive benefit to Queensland.

Finally, I refer to the following statements of the Master Plumbers' Association of Queensland—

The repeal of this section of the Bill will restore high standards in the industry ... Plumbers undertake a nationally recognised four year apprenticeship covering 64 units of competency ... prior to acquiring their plumbing licence; this qualifies them not only to install, maintain and replace water meters safely, but to deal with any installations issues.

Let us be the only state in Australia that requires licensed plumbers to install water meters. That is something that I support, that is something my colleagues support and, therefore, I support the bill.

 **Miss BARTON** (Broadwater—LNP) (4.28 pm): I rise to contribute to the Payroll Tax Rebate, Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. At the outset, as a member of the Finance and Administration Committee, I acknowledge the work that was done by the chair, the member for Bulimba, and also the work of the deputy chair, the member for Coomera, and, of course, the work of the other members on the committee, the members for Condamine, Stretton and Barron River.

The committee was able to table a report and whilst we were not able to come to a conclusion as to whether or not we would make a recommendation about the passage of the bill, I think it is a testament to the work of our committee and our strong belief that it is the role of the committee to truly assess and make inquiries into the legislation and the pros and cons, so to speak. I acknowledge the great work of the secretariat who have again done a fantastic job in supporting the Finance and Administration Committee in putting together a report that all members of the committee can be proud of, despite the differences we may have had on a few issues. I think it is also important to note that there are issues raised by submitters and in the committee report where members were able to reach consensus and I think it shows just how well the committee system does work.

As highlighted by other members of the committee in the debate, we had a public briefing from the department as well as a private briefing to seek some further clarification. We also held a number of public hearings with witnesses from various sectors. I thank not only those across the community who took the time to make submissions to the committee but also those who took the time to appear at either the departmental briefings or the public hearings. I am sure that all members of the committee appreciate that they had taken time out of their schedules to make themselves available to the committee and provide evidence to us.

As has been highlighted by both the Treasurer and generally members of the committee, this is indeed an omnibus bill. It is one that amends the Payroll Tax Act 1971, the Duties Act 2001. The Taxation Administration Act 2001, the First Home Owner Grant Act 2000, the Financial Accountability Act 2009, the Criminal Law (Criminal Organisations Disruption) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2013, the Environmental Protection Act 1994, the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002 and the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008. I do not intend in my contribution in the House today to canvass every single issue that has been raised by this particular piece of legislation, nor do I intend to canvass every issue that has been addressed or raised in the committee report, however there are just a few things that I would like to touch on in my contribution.

First and foremost I want to talk about the changes to payroll tax and the rebate that is being proposed in this legislation. I am sure that all members of this House would agree that payroll tax is essentially a tax on jobs. At the end of the day what we should be doing is trying to encourage businesses to employ more people and to create opportunities for people right across Queensland, whether they are young people looking for their first job, apprentices or trainees or whether they are qualified people who are going for their 10th job. I think we all agree that what we should be doing is creating an environment for business within which they are able to create opportunities for Queenslanders who want to work. Payroll tax is indeed a tax on jobs. That is why it was really heartening for me as a member of the previous government to support the former treasurer and member for Clayfield in the work that he did in raising the threshold in relation to payroll tax. The LNP understands that if we can create an environment within which it is easier for business to do business then that is indeed a great thing.

We are very proud of the work we did in the last term of government putting together the Jobs of Tomorrow package. That package was all about helping young Queenslanders get into work. As a young person myself I appreciate just how important that is. Coming from the Gold Coast I appreciate just how important it is for the school leavers of today that we create opportunities for them tomorrow. The Jobs of Tomorrow package was an incredibly important package put together by the previous government that was all about getting Queenslanders into work. There was an incentive of \$6,000 for businesses to make sure that there were apprenticeship placements. It started out as placements for 6,000 people and the program was so incredibly popular it had to be doubled and extended to 12,000.

At the end of the day, what this Labor Party government is proposing to do is take away the tax cuts that were being offered to businesses in Queensland. I think it is a great shame that the government would want to take away tax cuts that are being offered to businesses in Queensland. As highlighted by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and my good friend and colleague, the member for Surfers Paradise, there are approximately 400,000 businesses in Queensland. Of those, 11,000 have a payroll tax liability. The proposed amendments that the Treasurer has put forward today will only be of benefit to businesses that have a payroll tax liability, which means that the Treasurer is ignoring 97 per cent of businesses across Queensland. I think that is an absolute disgrace.

What we should be doing is making it easier for business to employ people, not ignoring the significantly vast and great majority of them. I am sure that my colleagues on this side of the House would agree that we need to support all businesses in this state, not just the three per cent who have a payroll tax liability, particularly when the previous government and the previous treasurer worked so hard to make sure that there were fewer businesses that had a payroll tax liability. As said by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, there are many things that we could be doing to make sure that we can encourage more Queenslanders into work and to make sure that businesses are able to offer more opportunities for apprentices and trainees and more opportunities for Queenslanders to get into work generally.

I also want to touch on the changes to the Criminal Law (Criminal Organisations Disruption) and Other Legislation Amendment Act. One of the key reasons I do not support these changes is that I do not think that it is appropriate that this House anticipate the outcome of an inquiry that the government has announced. I have no idea what the result of that inquiry will be. I would like to hope that the government has no idea what the result of its independent inquiry will be. At the end of the day, there will be one and I do not think it is appropriate that this House anticipate what the outcome of that inquiry will be and move to stop amendments coming into force that are part of a suite of reforms and legislation that is currently law in this state.

We have seen time and time again that the Liberal National Party has taken a tough stance when it comes to organised crime in this state and when it comes to criminal organisations. In particular, as I represent an electorate on the Gold Coast, I appreciate just how important it is that we take this tough stand. I am sure that my colleagues, the members for Burleigh, Albert, Southport, Mermaid Beach, Surfers Paradise, Currumbin, Coomera, Mudgeeraba and Gaven, appreciate just how important this suite of reforms is to make sure that we continue to support Queensland and Gold Coast families and make the Gold Coast a tourism destination that people want to come to.

The amendments that are being proposed by the Treasurer as part of this omnibus bill show how little the Labor Party care about keeping Queensland safe. The LNP has a clear track record when it comes to law and order in this state. As I say time and time again, the LNP has shown its dedication to keeping the streets and the people of the Gold Coast safe. Labor has clearly indicated that it does not want to have a tough stand when it comes to law and order and is simply seeking to anticipate and pre-empt the outcome of what is supposed to be an independent inquiry. I am sure that all members of this House, as well as all residents of the Gold Coast and across Queensland, would be very gravely concerned to hear that the government is pre-empting the outcome of what is an independent inquiry into organised crime in this state.

I also want to touch on the changes to the Plumbing and Drainage Act and the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act. Any suggestion that comes from the other side of this House that members of the LNP do not care about water safety is an absolute furphy. I think it is incredibly offensive to the former minister for energy and water supply, the honourable member for Caloundra, who worked incredibly hard in our term of government to make sure that Queenslanders had access to reliably and well-installed water meters at a reasonable cost.

At the end of the day, as highlighted by the member for Coomera, if this legislation is passed Queensland will be the only state in Australia that requires plumbers to install water meters. There are a number of reasons that this is a problem, not least of which is the impost that it will have on the cost of living for families. In particular, it will have a significant impact on regional Queensland. I will table this diagram for the benefit of the House.

*Tabled paper:* Map, provided to the Finance and Administration Committee by the Local Government Association of Queensland during the inquiry into the Payroll Tax Rebate, Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015, showing the number of plumbers per local government area [\[498\]](#).

**Mrs Frecklington:** They don't care about regional Queensland.

**Miss BARTON:** I take the interjection from the member for Nanango: they do not care about regional Queensland and they do not understand regional Queensland. The members of the LNP will continue to stand up in this House for the interests of regional Queensland. This diagram was given to us by the Local Government Association of Queensland. It illustrates how many plumbers there are in the different local government areas of Queensland. In Queensland there are 15 local government areas where there is not one qualified plumber. I repeat: in Queensland there are 15 areas where there is not one qualified plumber. Also, there are a significant number of local government authorities, which effectively make up Western Queensland, where there is between one and 10 plumbers.

I appreciate that there is a role for plumbers to play. I appreciate that it is important that we have qualified plumbers to do the things that plumbers should do. However, that does not necessarily mean that we need qualified plumbers to install water meters in the state. As highlighted by the member for Coomera, those who are able to install water meters are qualified to do so. We do not have any Tom, Dick or Harry coming in off the street to install water meters. There are people who are well qualified to do the job and can offer a service to the people of Queensland, and that is particularly important for regional Queensland.

I note that when the committee was discussing this, the member for Condamine spoke about his local community. Of course, the member for Condamine very proudly represents a regional part of Queensland and is a very strong advocate for the issues faced by his electorate. The member for Condamine said that often you will find that those who live in regional Queensland simply do not have access to a plumber, do not have the time to wait for a plumber to come from another part of Queensland or, more often than not, are capable of doing the job themselves. I think the member for Condamine said that he has never hired a plumber in his life. I am sure that the water quality at the property of the member for Condamine is absolutely fantastic, because the member for Condamine is capable of discerning between one coloured pipe and another coloured pipe and is able to make the right connections.

At the end of the day, that highlights the significant impact this will have on regional Queensland, and particularly Western Queensland. This diagram shows that the south-east corner is well availed of plumbers, but there are significant parts of regional Queensland that simply do not have the availability of plumbers. The impost and extra cost that this will have, not only on families but also on local government agencies, is one that we cannot ignore, particularly when we are talking about the impost that it will have on regional Queensland. I am sure that the shadow minister for agriculture will agree, especially given that so much of Queensland is in drought at the moment. The member for Gregory speaks passionately about Western Queensland and the impacts of the drought. I am sure that both the member for Nanango and the member for Gregory would agree with me that it is incredibly important that we do all we can to support regional Queensland.

The impost we are talking about here is quite significant for regional Queensland when we consider that large parts of it are serviced by between one and 10 plumbers. As we are talking about areas of Queensland that are larger in mass than the entire state of Tasmania, it is incredibly significant. We are talking about people who are already doing it tough. In relation to another bill that will be coming before the House this week, the committee has been told by a lot of local government authorities just how difficult it is when families are doing it tough and the councils have to ensure that rates are paid on time, and so on. The last thing that we need to do is put an extra impost on Queensland families, and particularly families in rural and regional Queensland.

As I said, the committee agreed on some parts of the bill, such as on e-conveyancing and the things that relate to farm-in, farm-out. I have to say, you learn something new every single day. I will be the first to admit that when I first saw the word 'farmor' I thought this was about farms. I am incredibly indebted to my colleagues on this side of the House who pointed out that it is not about farms; it is about the important resources industry in Queensland. It is about ensuring that we are able to encourage small exploration companies to take on a possible opportunity and that we can enable them to do so.

As I am talking about encouraging and enabling, I will finish by returning to the payroll tax issue. It is so important that we do everything we can to encourage all businesses across Queensland to hire new employees, and not just the three per cent that have a payroll tax liability. We need to support the small and medium enterprises right across Queensland, whether in my electorate or your electorate. Every single member of this House has small and medium enterprises that want the opportunity to put Queenslanders into work but do not have a payroll tax liability.

At the end of the day, this Labor government is stripping away the tax relief that they were given. The Labor government is taking away tax cuts that were there for businesses in Queensland. Personally, I think that is an absolute disgrace because we have an opportunity to create jobs and grow business, and it is unfortunate that in this state the Labor Party does not seem to want to do that. All the Labor Party wants to do is focus on a very small percentage of businesses in the state and ignore 97 per cent of the others. That is a great shame, because it is going to have significant impacts on Queensland for the next three years. I urge all members of this House to really think about what that means for the 97 per cent of businesses that are not going to get any tax relief from this government. This government is ignoring those businesses because they do not have a payroll tax liability.

Again I thank my colleagues on the committee and the secretariat, which has done a fantastic job in working with us to enable us to table a report in this House. I look forward to seeing how the debate progresses.

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (4.47 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Payroll Tax Rebate, Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. I thank the members of the committee for their work on this bill, particularly my electoral neighbour and chair of the committee, the member for Bulimba, who is renowned in the electorate for her hard work, which shows up again in this bill. I support the objectives of the bill to provide a payroll tax rebate on the wages of apprentices and trainees, its changes that will support electronic conveyancing and its amendments to the Duties Act, the First Home Owner Grant Act 2000, the Payroll Tax Act 1971 and the Taxation Administration Act 2001 to ensure their proper operation.

It gives me great pleasure to speak in support of a bill that demonstrates that the Palaszczuk government is serious about implementing its election commitments. This bill will give effect to the election commitment to provide a payroll tax rebate on wages of apprentices and trainees. For me personally, one of the most distressing aspects of the election campaign was the number of young people whom I met who were either unemployed or underemployed. Those young people and their families were extremely distressed by the very high youth unemployment rates, which is in the high teens in my electorate. Those families told me that they were looking for a government that would not just support young people to get any job but also assist them to gain real skills to build a career over their entire working lives.

During the election campaign and since being elected I have spent much time meeting with and listening to small business owners. One of the key questions I like to ask is: what do you need our government to do to help you employ just one more person? For many employers, the response often comes back to their desire to support young people at the start of their careers by being able to offer them apprenticeships and traineeships.

Employers that I deal with do not simply view their business operations through the narrow prism of earning a return on their investment. This is very important for them, but they also frequently discuss the obligations they have to build our community. They not only want to provide a good service but also want to provide good and stable employment and assist with training and development.

Assisting employers to create employment has benefits for the prospective employees, but it also greatly assists the employers, many of whom face real capacity constraints when it comes to expanding their businesses. Employment creation of this nature will have multiplier effects in the entire economy. We will increase the skills of the workforce and there will be follow-on effects as newly employed workers gain the confidence to consume additional goods and services.

I started my career as an on-the-job trainee. I commenced my work as a student nurse at the Royal Brisbane Hospital, combining classroom periods with on-the-job training. These latter periods were the times when I had to show up on time, present myself well, deal with real people, be accountable for my actions and build the technical skills necessary to do my job. So while I was getting a formal education about the technical aspects of my career, I was also getting a real life education about what it takes to be a productive employee.

Like many young people at the end of high school I did not feel that a tertiary education was right for me. Apprenticeships and traineeships give young people an alternative pathway into employment. This pathway set me up for a lifetime of productive work. It also gave me time to mature and allowed me time to turn to tertiary education when I felt I was ready. We must continue to support young people who want to access these types of opportunities. This bill allows us the opportunity to do this.

It is with these two groups in mind—young people and small business owners—that I support this bill. This bill will provide real incentives for employers to take on apprentices and trainees. It does this in a way that minimises implementation costs. This bill builds on a model that was introduced by a former Labor government in 2009 and is thus very familiar to Queensland employers.

The fact that this program will create employment is backed up by the submission of the National Retail Association. It is their submission that these payroll tax incentives will encourage employers to increase the number of apprentices and trainees they engage, increasing the levels of employment, particularly amongst young workers. I thank the National Retail Association for their thoughtful contribution and their ongoing work advocating for such an important part of our economy.

The Palaszczuk government is serious about creating employment in this state. We know that government needs to work together with employers to create real opportunities in our communities. We know that governments can and must play a role in stimulating our economy. The Palaszczuk Labor government has listened to small business owners and knows that they want this type of support so they can increase the capacity of their businesses and make a real contribution to developing the workforce of Queensland.

This bill also amends several other pieces of legislation to allow for their proper operation. There are many aspects covered by this legislation, but all will lead to greater efficiency and productive gains. For example, the amendments to the Duties Act 2001 and the Taxation Administration Act 2001 will support the introduction of electronic conveyancing in Queensland. This is a change that will allow this area of operation to join the modern world. The amendments to the Environmental Protection Act will provide certainty for the continued operation of the copper smelter in Mount Isa past 2016. This change again demonstrates that the Palaszczuk government is serious about protecting and creating jobs in Queensland.

We took a commitment to the election to restore high standards in the plumbing industry. The amendments to the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002 and the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 will do just that. It is another example of the Palaszczuk government delivering on its election commitments. The amendments will return the state to a situation where only licensed plumbers can install water meters. This important change recognises how important it is to have a fully qualified and licensed person undertaking work of this nature.

I too have a professional background where I require a licence to operate. I am sure many people walk into a hospital and see nurses doing tasks that they think they might be able to undertake themselves such as handing out a few pills. There is so much skill and knowledge that goes into this simple task and the consequences of getting it wrong are so serious that it would be very foolish to allow anyone to perform this task without proper training and licensing. It simply cannot be used as an excuse that we do not have enough people in a particular area to allow us to drop our standards.

It is interesting that we are accused of not understanding the regions by somebody who lives only 30 minutes from my electorate which is only 10 minutes from this House. We have many people on this side of the House who live in regional areas and understand the issues facing regional areas. What next, if we cannot get appropriately qualified doctors and nurses then we will simply let anybody pick up the tools and do those jobs? I do not think that we would seriously consider that and we should not seriously consider that in this place.

Anything related to plumbing can have a devastating impact if not managed properly. It is only natural that we should require licensed people to do this type of work. Unlike the previous government, we do not rush things through without listening to the people. We have listened to people and set up sensible, transitional arrangements that will allow the sector time to adjust to the new legislative arrangements. The industry will have two years to allow for this adjustment period. This is yet another example of the Palaszczuk government listening to the community.

This bill does a number of things that will greatly benefit Queensland. It provides real incentives for employers to create traineeships and apprentices. It will do something real about dealing with youth unemployment. It amends a range of legislation in a manner that improves efficiency and productivity. It meets our commitments to restore high standards in the plumbing industry in a manner that demonstrates that we listen to the community. For this reason, I commend this bill to the House.

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (4.57 pm): I rise to speak on the Payroll Tax Rebate, Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I rise to speak on only a few aspects of the bill. There are amendments in the bill before the House that the new government has introduced that alter work done by the previous government. A couple of aspects of the bill concern me greatly, even more so now that I have sat in the House and listened to the sheer diatribe of the members opposite.

The two aspects of the bill that I am going to briefly touch on are the 97 per cent of businesses across Queensland that are ignored by the bill and the amendments to the Plumbing and Drainage Act which ignore Queensland families living in rural areas. Simply because a member's electoral boundary might be 50 minutes from this House does not mean that the boundary stops there. Unfortunately, not all of our regional seats take only 15 minutes to get across.

In relation to small business, this bill pretends to stimulate an uptake in apprentices and trainees being hired by small businesses by offering a rebate in payroll tax. That is great but, unfortunately, we need to look at the clauses in the bill and not just be brainwashed by what your notes say. This rebate is only accessible to the businesses who have an annual wages bill of over

\$1.1 million. That represents only three per cent of businesses in this state. What about all of the other small businesses, particularly those in my electorate? I do not think if I included all of the businesses in my electorate there would be one in that three per cent category. What about those businesses who would really like to hire an apprentice or who would really like to hire a trainee but simply cannot afford to because they fall outside of the steep parameters set by those opposite, by the Labor government?

Our former government listened to the business community. We introduced policies like the \$91 million Jobs of Tomorrow package. While the minister is over there, I should remind him that the electorate of Nanango goes all the way over to past Highfields, where he was the other day apparently opening the 'first ever' energy museum in Queensland. I hate to tell him that the Tarong Energy centre in Nanango has been there for many years. As the minister for that illustrious area of Tarong, he should know not to tell the statewide media that he is opening the first ever energy centre when my electorate actually already has two. I think the minister should look into those regional seats that are outside of the CBD of Brisbane and he might learn a little bit more about it, but I do divert.

Like I said, we introduced policies like the \$91 million Jobs of Tomorrow package, which would have helped out over 26,000 young Queenslanders get into work. Part of this package was the hugely successful and popular apprenticeship pledge, which offered employers up to \$6,000 for each additional apprentice taken on. It was so popular that the initial 6,000 placements were doubled by the LNP government to 12,000, and the fully funded initiative was open to all businesses no matter how big or how small.

In my Nanango electorate, some 20 small businesses took up that apprenticeship pledge. The Grand Old Crow Hotel in Crows Nest in the southern part of my electorate took on the apprenticeship pledge to help them employ a new apprentice chef. All About Refrigeration and Airconditioning in Kingaroy took on a new apprentice in refrigeration. MJ Cannon Transport in Crows Nest again took on a metal fabricator. Reno Worx in Kingaroy took on a cabinet-maker. They would not have been able to do it without that \$6,000 help. Tiler Alexander Bollen at Meringandan West took on a wall and floor tiling apprentice. I know many more small businesses who had also hoped to take up the pledge, but it seems those opposite have simply canned it.

In contrast, under this bill a business with a payroll tax liability of \$10,000 will stand to save less than \$600 under this new scheme. Compare that to the \$6,000 apprenticeship pledge incentive and you can see the stark contrast. The LNP understands business. We listen to business and we work with them—the mums and dads, the families and the partnerships running great small businesses right across the state, not just right here in the CBD of Brisbane.

At the federal level, I am pleased that the Abbott government is easing the tax burden on small business. Just last week I had Lawrence Springborg attend a small business forum in my electorate all because they wanted to hear about how the federal budget was going to benefit their business, because it is a sad fact that they are getting no joy and absolutely no love out of the Labor government at all. They are only making it tougher for them.

I also wanted to quickly touch on the amendments to the bill in relation to the Plumbing and Drainage Act. The LNP government introduced a bill into the House which removed an ambiguity between the acts relating to who is permitted to install water meters. The act empowered an authorised person to read, maintain and replace a water meter than a licensed plumber. The amendments being debated today will reverse this decision, meaning—and we are not talking about plumbing in a house—that the installation of a water meter is plumbing work that can be performed only by a licensed plumber.

The negative impacts on the families in my electorate of this change are just incredible. It ignores the potential increase in plumbing costs to people who live in areas that do not have plumbers. I note that the member for Broadwater quite clearly listed all of the regional areas that do not have licensed plumbers residing in their areas.

Since the legislation from the LNP government was passed, there have been no specific examples of the water meter installations being done in such a way that risked any form of health and safety. It seems that Labor are either introducing change for change's sake, or perhaps they are making good on their promise to their union mates. Whatever the reason, it is not in the interests of common sense and it is certainly not in the interests of the wider community. I refer to the submission made by qldwater, which states—

The policy objective clearly supports the re-establishment of a protected market for plumbers for work which is more appropriately managed by water service providers. It has been developed under the false premise of improvement to public safety. By adopting this position, the Queensland Government is ignoring industry best practice in Australia and internationally.

The LGAQ stated—

At no time in this debate has it ever been established that the current arrangements has resulted in adverse outcomes impacting on public safety, water quality or water supply security. Indeed, the examples of cross-connections and incidents involving the installation of water meters put forward previously were during a time when only licensed plumbers were permitted to do the work. In the current environment, both authorised persons and licensed plumbers are expected to have the same high standards of work, with the former receiving specific training and more frequent experience in regard to installing meters.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this bill on behalf of my constituents, and I will continue to highlight the issues which affect regional communities because, unfortunately, there is much learning to be done by the members sitting across from me in this House.

 **Mr FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (5.06 pm): I rise in support of the Payroll Tax Rebate, Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. I will start by commending the members of the Finance and Administration Committee for their hard work on this particular bill. As we have heard today, it is an omnibus bill, which is particularly large in fact, in regard to the many amendments of the particular bills that have been explained today—the Criminal Law (Criminal Organisations Disruption) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2013, the Duties Act 2001, the Environmental Protection Act 1994, the First Home Owner Grant Act 2000, the Financial Accountability Act 2009, the Payroll Tax Act 1971, the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002, the Taxation Administration Act 2001 and the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008.

These amendments include provisions of a payroll tax rebate on the wages of apprentices and trainees; giving support to electronic conveyancing in Queensland; providing legislative support for the duties concession on farm-in agreements; delaying the commencement of the provisions aimed at excluding motorcycle gang members from working in certain licensed occupations; requiring plumbers to install water meters; and a number of other administrative amendments. All of these amendments are based on our election commitment to provide a suite of necessary changes in Queensland.

The committee received 18 submissions and spoke with numerous stakeholders during the course of its inquiry, which was held on Wednesday, 6 May. The government members accepted that the bill should pass. However, non-government amendments considered that they could not support some of the amendments proposed in the bill. The committee made five recommendations—and we have heard the government's response from the minister today—which will enhance the practical operation of the amendments and ensure that stakeholders' concerns are addressed.

During the committee's deliberations the committee no doubt could not reach an agreement on whether to recommend that the bill be passed, but it did reach a consensus agreement on the proposed amendments to the Duties Act 2001, the Environmental Protection Act 1994, the Financial Accountability Act 2009, the First Home Owner Grant Act 2000, the Payroll Tax Act 1971 and the Taxation Administration Act 2001.

The committee did not agree on the proposed amendments to the Criminal Law (Criminal Organisations Disruption) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2013, the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002 and the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008, and those reasons have been outlined in the committee's report. The cost of the implementation of the payroll tax amendments is to be funded through a \$45 million allocation over three years. This is expected to be sufficient to cover the estimated reduction in payroll tax revenue over the 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18 financial years.

There is not a lot of time today to go through each and every amendment, so I am just going to focus on a few of these, firstly, the amendment to the First Home Owner Grant Act 2000, which is covered by clauses 59 to 61. The legislation is to be amended to ensure that the statutory discretion that is given to the Commissioner of State Revenue to vary the period of, or exempt an applicant from, the residence requirements which form part of the eligibility criteria under the FHOG Act can be exercised at any time.

The Masters Builders expressed some concerns about the application of the definition of 'new home' in the act. The department responded to that concern, indicating that when the First Home Owner Grant changes were made to remove the availability of the grant for what are classed as existing homes and limit it to only new homes, changes were made in relation to those definitions. In particular, previously there were provisions that related specifically to what are classed as 'relocatable homes' in determining the policy parameters of those amendments. It was decided that relocatable homes were not new homes.

The department also indicated that prior to 2012, the FHOG was available for new and existing homes and a contract for the purchase of a relocatable home was treated as a contract to have a home built. However, when the FHOG was restricted to new homes only and the Great Start Grant,

this particular provision in the FHOG Act was removed. The committee no doubt was satisfied that the amendments to the First Home Owner Grant Act 2000 were appropriate. The committee found that the purpose of the First Home Owner Grant is to develop new housing stock and it agreed that, whilst substantial work may be undertaken on relocatable homes, it does not increase new housing stock as part of that process. The committee no doubt agreed that the definition was appropriate, given the stated purpose of the act.

As we have heard before in this chamber, recently released ABS figures over the last quarter have pointed to an increase in the construction of new homes, units and apartments in Queensland. According to the ABS data, the construction of new homes rose strongly, by 27.2 per cent, in the March quarter to \$1.59 billion, the highest level since the June quarter of 2010. This was also accompanied by the construction of new medium to high density dwellings, which continued to trend upwards to 16.1 per cent over the year. With these amendments to the First Home Owner Grant, no doubt this will lead to ABS figures further increasing.

With respect to the amendments to the Payroll Tax Act 1971, the Treasurer, in introducing the bill, indicated that this government recognises that apprenticeships and traineeships provide a great employment pathway, particularly for young Queenslanders. Fellow speakers from this side certainly expressed that view while doorknocking or communicating with their electorate during the campaign period. We heard firsthand of the need for job creation, particularly in this space. As an incentive to employers to hire apprentices and trainees, the government's election commitments included the introduction of a 25 per cent payroll tax rebate on the wages of apprentices and trainees funded over three years in addition to the existing exemption for apprentice and trainee wages.

Interestingly, during the inquiry the committee heard from the National Retail Association, who explained that the proposed payroll tax rebate is likely to encourage retailers and service industries in Queensland to engage more apprentices and trainees during the three-year period in which this incentive will apply. They said during the inquiry—

This will assist in increasing levels of employment in Queensland—particularly of younger workers—and in the NRA's view, will improve the quality of services provided by those employees once they complete their apprenticeship or traineeship. This can only have positive effects on businesses employing those workers and on the Queensland economy in general.

The last time that I was involved with the National Retail Association in a former career they employed employees in Aldi, Supercheap, Coles and Woolworths. We are talking about major employers that employ major groups of employees, whether they be trainees or apprentices. We are talking about thousands and thousands of jobs and thousands and thousands of opportunities for those businesses. Just the other day I was talking to the CEO of the National Training Group, Chris Zorzo, who indicated that in his line of work 1,450 jobseekers and current employees have been trained in Certificate III in warehousing and logistics and in administration. No doubt in the future this initiative that the Palaszczuk Labor government has put in place will enhance their opportunities to gain traineeships in warehousing and logistics and in administration as well. As the interest grows and also as the information is filtered out into the communities, no doubt employers and training organisations will get greater opportunities to have this incentive rolled out and to make improvements for their particular employees.

In closing, the other amendments that I want to touch on briefly are the amendments to the Criminal Law (Criminal Organisations Disruption) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2013. No doubt this is a matter that at some stage should come before the committee that I chair, the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Community. I think it is proper to hold this in place and to consider the views of the stakeholders and also the Attorney-General's task force. No doubt that task force will hand down a summary of the effect on this particular area, so it does not force or cause complications with this particular aspect of this payroll tax bill in the future.

*(Time expired)*

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (5.16 pm): I rise to speak on the Payroll Tax Rebate, Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. I will go through all of the pertinent points of the bill that are relevant to me and things that I feel strongly about. Firstly, the payroll tax rebate is an interesting scheme. It is good to have those incentives in place for the apprentices, and we could debate the level of the threshold of payroll tax. However, I do not want to spend time doing that this evening because I want to talk about creating industry and opportunities for these apprentices, and that ties in with the issue of copper smelter emissions, which I will come back to.

I will move on to my next point regarding this bill, which is the changes to the Plumbing and Drainage Act and the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act. When those changes were made during the last parliament we voted against them and I moved an amendment. I believe that there

should be a place reserved for those skilled plumbers and that we should be promoting their use out there in the industry. In some cases there may be costs involved, including in some parts of my electorate. However, I think the benefits of creating the space for workers with the proper skills to do those jobs is a more important imperative.

Part of the drive to make that change some 12 or 18 months ago was that it is now so commonplace in government policy to regulate everything. Now we seem to want to deregulate. I think it was due to those free market ideologies that come through all the time that took place here. People say there is too much regulation. However, there is a good reason we have that regulation and that is that we want to preserve our tradesmen and our skills base in Australia, and that is a value that I support.

While we did not support the changes when they came in during the last parliament, we will be supporting these changes. The only issue we have—and the member for Dalrymple will be talking about this—is that if those changes are going to be made we would advocate that they be made sooner rather than later. Having a two-year transition would allow time for those people who have entered the market and have a business plan in place that may be associated with having non-qualified plumbers. If they have two years to build on that business plan, that is going to be more disruptive to the market. We would advocate a policy of doing that sooner rather than later.

With regard to the introduction of electronic conveyancing for transfer duty, I do not think that is going to have a huge impact, but I can see efficiencies for the industry that I used to work in as a property valuer. People will still have the option to do a hard copy or paper settlement. I do not know why, but I would probably prefer that myself. I am probably a bit of a dinosaur in that respect, but I will say a young dinosaur. I see that as an improvement, so that is something we support.

I am of the belief that legislation for farm-in agreements was something the previous government conducted in an administrative way already, so doing that makes sense to me and would add some value to the way that we are managing the mining industry. In Mount Isa particularly at the moment there have been more opportunities with our smelter and infrastructure. There are smaller miners popping up around the place and Glencore are now doing more business with those smaller miners, so there could be more opportunities in this space and we could see more activity in the north-west minerals province, so that part of this bill may have some practical application. I really hope it does, because that will mean more activity in my area.

We support in principle the occupational licence checks on tradies that are contained in the Criminal Law (Criminal Organisations Disruption) Act. It was too intrusive and I fundamentally disagreed with the impingement on people's rights, so we will be supporting that change.

The most important issues I would like to address are the amendments to the Environmental Protection Act that allow for the cancellation of transitional environmental programs, TEPs, and temporary emissions licences, TELs. Before I begin I would like to acknowledge and express my gratitude to the member for Glass House, with whom I worked in the previous parliament. It is also important to acknowledge that the Premier's team has brought this into parliament now and is bearing the political cost of pushing this through. It is a credit to both sides of this parliament that they have taken the bull by the horns on this issue which is so vitally important to industry, not just in my patch but right across the corridor from Mount Isa to Townsville. It was no surprise to me that, after the election when I met the new member for Townsville, he was very interested in the impact this would have on the copper refinery in Townsville because if the copper smelter in Mount Isa closes the copper refinery closes. It was no surprise to me that he took a great interest in that, so I am very grateful to both sides for making this a reality. This means a great deal to the people of Mount Isa.

As a result of changes to the Mount Isa Mines act, there was a crackdown on emissions, and at the time it was something I was heavily opposed to. After it came in and upon reflection, some people from the mines said they thought it was a good thing because they had to tighten up on their emissions and work a bit harder on things. They put more air monitoring stations around the place, but it soon became apparent that it at some point it would no longer be viable. We are getting down to almost two kilometres underground now and it is becoming more difficult for Mount Isa Mines to make a profit. With the copper smelter all the pressure is on costs, and that added burden meant it shut down. If you follow that through, the sulphur off the copper smelter in Mount Isa is currently captured to make sulphuric acid, which is sold back to the phosphate mine that employs about 800 people a couple of hundred kilometres from Mount Isa. Hardly any of those people who are employed are from Mount Isa; most of them are from Townsville and Brisbane.

They are one of the biggest phosphate producers in the Southern Hemisphere. They buy the sulphuric acid that takes the sulphur off the copper smelter, which is a good environmental outcome, to produce fertiliser at the fertiliser plant. If you shut the copper smelter down they will not get their acid from the copper smelter, so they will have to get it from Canada or somewhere else. If you care about the environment, there would be a carbon footprint of burning diesel to get that acid from overseas all the way back out to Mount Isa again. It does not make sense. Once you shut the copper smelter down you are not sending copper anodes out of the smelter to the coast; you are sending in four times the bulk concentrate on the roads and on rail. It is going to clog up our arteries and it will not leave any space for other mines to cart their ore back to Townsville. If it is clogged up, more diesel will be burned to get it back to the coast—because there is four times the bulk—where it is invariably going to be burned in a dirtier smelter in China, which is where it will go. If we do not do this today the copper smelter will definitely shut down next year, and four times the bulk concentrate will go all the way to China. That would leave a much bigger carbon footprint as a result of it being burned, and it is guaranteed to be a much dirtier smelter over there pumping fumes up into the atmosphere. With the intention of improving the environmental outcome, inadvertently it became worse.

But that has been rectified here today and we are very grateful for that. I would reiterate that this is not just about Mount Isa; it is as much about Townsville. There are some 150 jobs at the refinery in Townsville and 300 skilled jobs. The Mount Isa copper smelter is in the top two of the largest copper mining and smelting operations left in Australia. They have developed world-breaking technology that they have marketed overseas, but if you shut the smelter down you will lose those skills and that expertise. If we lose that smelter it is a big thing because that will ruin the viability of other small mines in the area who cannot afford their own smelter.

It is a great thing we are doing here today. I am very appreciative of the government for making this happen. People in Mount Isa should be very happy that we now have the opportunity to keep our doors open and keep the mine going—a business that was voted the most significant business in 150 years of Queensland's history.

*(Time expired)*

 **Mr BROWN** (Capalaba—ALP) (5.26 pm): I rise today in support of the Payroll Tax Rebate, Revenue and Other Legislation Bill 2015. My electorate of Capalaba has been hit hard by the economic downturn over the last few years, and the lack of a coherent job creation strategy from any level of government has not helped either. Youth unemployment in Redlands is a serious issue, and it is similarly serious for those who are midcareer and who have been laid off or made redundant in this economic downturn. For these two categories of people, retraining and reskilling for a new career is one of the few viable options they have to get themselves back into work.

Unfortunately, business confidence has been severely knocked around by the policies that have come out of this place in the last term under the LNP. But we did not come here to accuse; we have come here to repair the damage. Business needs to know that they are a welcome part of fixing our economy. This proposal currently before the House will see a 25 per cent payroll tax rebate on the payroll of another staff member for businesses taking on apprentices or trainees. This is an incentive for companies like Aussie Concrete Products on the border of my electorate. They are a large and growing operation supplying concrete sleepers for garden retaining walls which employs over 60 locals in my area. They are an innovative and growing business. I look forward to going back there in the coming weeks to visit the trainee placed with a local placement program called Project Booyah, which is run by the Redlands PCYC—

**Mr Crandon:** A great project started on the Gold Coast!

**Mr BROWN:** That is correct; I will take the interjection. I acknowledge the great work that the program does and where it was started: down on the Gold Coast!

This rebate will provide an extra incentive for Aussie Concrete Products to take on more trainee staff—particularly young people—to supply a growing domestic industry. It is stories like this that give me hope for the future of the economy in my community despite the recent downturns. It tells me that there is a role for government and the community sector to work with business to multiply opportunities for those who do not have a place in our labour market at the moment.

With youth unemployment at 14 per cent and rising, and participation at 65.3 per cent, it is projects like this that will give people the confidence to re-engage successfully with the labour market. This bill is a timely measure that will provide real incentives to employers to hire apprentices and trainees. Not only does this bill go part way to addressing the youth unemployment mess that has been left by those opposite; it also goes towards us developing a highly skilled workforce that is equipped to adapt with the ever-changing economy while the government pursues a strong agenda of economic growth over the coming years.

At this point I note the support of my friends at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry. At the committee's public hearing Ms Lawless stated—

We recognise that a highly skilled workforce is essential to business success, and apprentices and trainees are particularly important for Queensland small businesses.

I would also like to note the contribution from our mates at the National Retail Association, in particular the written submission from the CEO, Mr Trevor Evans. It states—

The NRA submits that the proposed payroll tax rebate of 25% on wages paid by its Queensland members to apprentices and trainees is likely to encourage retailers and service industries in Queensland to engage more apprentices and trainees during the three year period over which this incentive will apply. This will assist in increasing levels of employment in Queensland—particularly of younger workers—and in the NRA's view, will improve the quality of services provided by those employees once they complete their apprenticeship or traineeship. This can only have positive effects on businesses employing those workers and on the Queensland economy in general.

This bill does many things. However, most important is the measure I have been addressing. The government's allocation for the rebate of \$45 million over three years is forward looking and an investment in the future of our great state.

In addition to the rebate, I am pleased to note that other measures to support apprentices and trainees under the government's Working for Queensland plan include ensuring 10 per cent of workers on major projects are apprentices and trainees, and establishing Jobs Queensland. This industry led body will advise the government on current and future skills demands and long-term workforce planning and skills investment.

In my campaign for election I fought hard for the youth in my local area. During the campaign I met small business owner Paul McMullin, who runs Smart mechanics at Thorneside. Being a long-term resident of the area, Paul was doing the right thing by locals by employing apprentices from the surrounding suburbs. However, this came to a grinding halt when his young apprentices could no longer go to TAFE at Alexandra Hills as the course was cut. Unfortunately for Paul, he could no longer work closely with teachers from the local TAFE to give our youth a great opportunity to learn a trade, which we all know is so valuable in this modern-day economy.

We on this side of the House listened to our local communities and campaigned along with those who could not sit back and watch their TAFE system be dismantled, ready for sell-off. We heard the message loud and clear when it came to our local communities and their demands to ensure our youth had a future, and we committed \$34 million towards the Rescuing TAFE package. Commitments like the TAFE rescue package, Skilling Queenslanders for Work and the bill before the House demonstrate to Queenslanders that we take seriously the job of finding opportunities for our youth and that we are committed to seeing this task through. I acknowledge the work of the Treasurer in bringing this bill before the House and acknowledge the work of the committee. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (5.34 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Payroll Tax Rebate, Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. We opposed the previous legislation brought into parliament on 6 May 2014. I will restate what I said at the time I opposed that legislation. I am happy to see that the minister is changing things back, particularly in the area of licensed plumbing. In 2014 I said—

The Queensland plumbing industry, including major stakeholders such as the Plumbers Union Queensland, the Master Plumbers Association of Queensland and the Institute of Plumbing Inspectors Queensland, and licensed plumbers across Queensland are concerned that these proposed changes will have disastrous effects for the plumbing industry. These concerns include increased risk to public health and safety and the consequences of further deregulation of the water service industry, leading to increased costs for consumers and the destabilisation of the plumbing trade. We are very concerned about what the minister is proposing here because it means that unauthorised persons can put in meters and not those who have undertaken four years of hard work and training whilst being paid low wages to develop the skills, the technology and the knowledge of how to install water meters. We are not just talking about water meters in households but major buildings and major operations. These projects may also involve electricity issues which could mean the possible electrocution of people who are doing this work. Therefore, those people must be trained in this field. It is important to note that most apprenticeships are for four years in order to do diesel fitting, painting and other trades. Allowing someone who is not qualified to do the same work is a great threat to those who put themselves through training and TAFE. This goes against everything that this state has done in order to provide the appropriate training to all tradespeople right across Queensland.

The amendments relate particularly to the installation of water meters. KAP has a long-held view that the installation of a water meter is plumbing work that should only be performed by a fully qualified licensed plumber. We support the move to restore high standards to the Queensland plumbing industry by requiring the installation of water meters to be performed by fully qualified licensed plumbers. We also strongly oppose the former LNP government's decision to create exemptions that allow unauthorised persons appointed by a service provider to install a relevant water meter.

Although we support the decision to reverse the exemptions, the KAP is disappointed by the slow response to transition this work back to fully qualified licensed plumbers under the government's bill. The bill inserts new section 205 into the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2001, which provides unauthorised persons with a two-year transitional period in which they may continue to install relevant water meters provided certain preconditions are met. I can understand the government's intent in relation to that, but I believe that two years is a little too long for that transition. I believe there was a six-month transition period associated with the 2014 legislation but it will take two years to transition back. I believe a more rapid response is needed to mitigate the risks pointed out by the plumbing industry peak bodies in 2014.

With regard to payroll tax, the 25 per cent rebate is a great incentive for employers to engage trainees and apprentices. I think this will benefit the plumbing industry and other industries right across Queensland.

As I said, I opposed the changes made by the previous legislation. I believe that the change back will create a more accountable system and give the plumbing industry a bit of a confidence boost, especially in rural and regional Queensland. I do know one plumber who has left Western Queensland because it is difficult to find work out there. When jobs are taken away from plumbers, plumbers will be lost from rural and regional areas. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (5.39 pm): It is a pleasure to rise to speak in support of the Payroll Tax Rebate, Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. Yesterday was the 100th anniversary of the swearing in of the TJ Ryan Labor government—a great Labor government which fought for workers' rights, social justice and economic development. In the tradition of the TJ Ryan Labor government, I am very happy to support this bill because, in TJ Ryan's tradition—a man who had to fight years of Tory rule in Queensland and to clean up the mess left by a conservative government—I, too, am pleased that we have the opportunity today to clean up the mess left by three years of conservative government rule in Queensland.

**Mrs Frecklington** interjected.

**Mr RYAN:** It is good to hear the member for Nanango pipe up. Given that we are talking about leaks and plumbing, I note recent leaks reported on Crikey on 27 May which said in respect of the member for Nanango being considered a possible Deputy Leader of the Opposition that the member for Nanango is overplaying her hand if she thinks the party will call on her to fulfil the deputy's role. Given that we are talking about leaks, perhaps the opposition needs some licensed plumbers to stop those leaks.

**Mr CRANDON:** I rise to a point of order.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Hart): Order! Pause the clock. Member, take your seat.

**Mr CRANDON:** I ask you to rule on relevance in relation to the speech that we are hearing from the member for Morayfield.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** There is no point of order. Please remain relevant to the long title of the bill, member for Morayfield.

**Mr RYAN:** I am speaking about licensed plumbers and licensed plumbers might be useful in the opposition offices over the next couple of weeks to stop the leaks. With respect to licensed plumbers, I am very pleased to see some of the restoration contained in the amendments in this bill in respect of licensed plumbers. We are talking about a licenced trade—like electricians, like lawyers, like financial planners, like doctors—when it comes to licensed plumbers. The amendments in this bill restore some sensibility when it comes to ensuring that that essential work that is done in our neighbourhoods and that is done on our footpaths is done by licensed people. These are people who the World Health Organization says are the front line in the fight for clean water and effective sanitation. They are the front line in that they ensure that all of that essential infrastructure is

connected appropriately and properly. In the Moreton Bay region there have been a number of instances that demonstrate the importance of needing licensed plumbers. For years irregular plumbing work has been carried out by unlicensed plumbers when it comes to the water supply network in the Moreton Bay region. For instance, we see downpipes connected to sewerage mains. We see the integrity of the purple pipe reticulated recycled water network in the Caboolture area being undermined. Without those licensed plumbers keeping their eyes on that essential infrastructure network that—

**Mr Crandon** interjected.

**Mr RYAN:** We are seeing the importance of having licensed plumbers in that area to ensure the integrity of that network is maintained, and that is why the essential plumbing work that is the consideration of this bill needs to be carried out by licensed plumbers. They understand the work, they understand the network, they train for years to do it and it is important that they ensure the integrity of that network is maintained and that where irregular work has been done it is quickly identified and rectified. As the World Health Organization says, plumbers are the front line when it comes to the supply of clean water and effective sanitation. Of course, the Master Plumbers' Association also emphasises the importance of having licensed plumbers performing that very essential infrastructure work in our communities.

In the tradition of TJ Ryan and his commitment to economic development, I also see economic development being a key priority in this bill, particularly the efficiencies that may be associated with the amendments relating to electronic conveyancing amendments.

**Mr Rickuss:** Was he your great-grandfather or something?

**Mr RYAN:** No. Some people say that there is a bit of a family resemblance when it comes to TJ Ryan and myself, but my moustache-growing capabilities are nowhere near the moustache-growing capabilities of TJ Ryan, as members of this House may remember from many years ago.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member, please direct your comments through the chair.

**Mr RYAN:** In the tradition of economic development, I note that the electronic conveyancing amendments contained in this bill will create some additional efficiencies and will reduce errors. In fact, I remember my very early days as a law graduate with the firm then known as Allens Arthur Robinson and me being asked by my supervising partner, who was then the staff partner of the Brisbane office, Alf Pappalardo, to do a conveyance for his property. Of course, being a young law graduate being asked by a very senior commercial partner in a very big national law firm, you get a bit nervous about doing the conveyance for your boss, so anything to help reduce errors and create efficiencies in the conveyancing—

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Mr RYAN:** It was a very nice block in the western suburbs. In fact, he was very happy with the work of that law graduate. If Alfio is out there listening, I do remember that first experience with conveyancing in Queensland. The point is that these amendments will create some efficiencies and they will reduce errors and those young law graduates who are doing work for senior commercial partners in national law firms will breathe a sigh of relief. The other people who may breathe a sigh of relief as well are the clients of those practitioners because hopefully through those efficiencies and hopefully through reducing those errors and by embracing that technology we will in turn produce some results where there is greater client satisfaction and hopefully greater value and more competitive pricing for clients. So I welcome those amendments associated with electronic conveyancing.

I quickly want to touch on the payroll rebate for apprentices. Today we have heard members of the opposition throw around a lot of numbers during this debate on the proposed amendments for the payroll rebate for apprentices. I guess I would like to quote some numbers as well. A number which we often heard during the last election campaign was 32,000, and that was the number of fewer apprentices over the period of the Newman government—32,000 fewer apprentices in Queensland over the period of the Newman government. Another number is the number zero, and that is the rebate that the former Newman government provided to employers to incentivise them to employ apprentices. There is also another number and that is 100 per cent, because that is the perception of how many Queenslanders the former government did not listen to when it came to stimulating the economy and creating additional employment opportunities for apprentices. These proposed amendments, which will reintroduce the former Labor government's 25 per cent payroll tax rebate on wages for apprentices and trainees, will create additional incentives for employers to employ

apprentices and trainees, and it is much needed. After three long years of limited opportunity for apprentices and trainees under the former Newman government, my community will welcome those additional incentives for businesses. There are many young people in my community who have struggled to find apprenticeship opportunities who will welcome these amendments and who will be encouraged by the incentives that will be provided to employers offering those opportunities. This is good legislation which, in the tradition of TJ Ryan 100 years ago, creates economic development opportunities, enhances workers' rights and protects those issues associated with social justice. I am very pleased to support the bill and I encourage all members of the House to do the same.

 **Mrs STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (5.49 pm): I rise to make my contribution to the debate on the Payroll Tax Rebate, Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015, introduced into the House by the Treasurer on 27 March and referred to the Finance and Administration Committee, which tabled its report on 22 May. I note that this committee did not reach agreement on the passage of all elements of this bill. As stated in the explanatory notes, the policy objectives will be to amend the Payroll Tax Act 1971, the Duties Act 2001, the Taxation Administration Act 2001, the First Home Owner Grant Act 2000 and the Taxation Administration Act 2001. The bill will also make amendments to five other acts.

Today, my intent is to address those aspects of the bill that relate to payroll tax rebates for apprentice and trainee wages, but before I do I would like to echo the sentiment of my colleagues and in particular the honourable member for Surfers Paradise with regard to law and order reviews and plumbing legislation. Their comments made very good sense. The bill seeks to introduce a 25 per cent payroll tax rebate on the wages of apprentices and trainees funded over three years in addition to the existing exemption for apprentice and trainee wages. I acknowledge the CCIQ's submission to the committee and its comment—

... it is important that businesses receive government support and incentives to maintain and build a skilled workforce.

However, the CCIQ also recognises the limitations of this initiative, in particular, that only 11,000 Queensland businesses are required to pay payroll tax, which equates to some three per cent of all businesses. As the lead voice of small business in Queensland, the CCIQ has its fingers on the pulse of small businesses and their owners and operators.

I am very proud to belong to the LNP, a party that recognises Queensland's 400,000 small businesses as the backbone of our four-pillar economy, representing 95.6 per cent of all businesses and employing half of the state's private sector workforce and 38 per cent of the state's total workforce. As the shadow minister for small business prior to the 2012 election, I travelled our great state extensively and heard firsthand from countless businesses about the issues that affected them the most, what it was they felt prevented them from employing more staff and what were the barriers to growth and business longevity. I took with me a simple survey that asked business owners to jot down these issues and the results received showed that the overwhelming elements of concern were payroll tax and cumbersome, unnecessary red tape and compliance requirements. That is why, leading into the 2012 election, the LNP committed to raising the payroll tax exemption threshold from \$1 million to \$1.6 million to create over 4,000 jobs.

However, after coming into government and realising the enormity of the \$80 billion debt that was left by Labor, the LNP re-evaluated the time frame for that target. In July 2012, the LNP government increased the payroll tax exemption threshold from \$1 million to \$1.1 million. As a result, 10,000 more employers were exempt, taking the total to 90 per cent of Queensland employers exempt from payroll tax.

The LNP gets small business. It is in our DNA. As I look around this chamber, I acknowledge that many LNP members have a small business background. After leaving the Public Service as a nurse, for 20 years I ran my own communications consultancy. Together with my husband I owned a small medical practice for 28 years. We know what it is like to deal with red tape, to support staff and their families with stable jobs and to work long and unpredictable hours.

The LNP went into the 2015 election pledging to increase the payroll tax exemption threshold progressively to \$1.4 million by 2017. In 2012 it also made a commitment to cutting red-tape regulation by 20 per cent by 2018, which would save businesses around \$425 million per year. As the former minister for small business in an LNP government, I am pleased to be able to say that, at the end of 2014, we had removed over 9,400 regulatory requirements and progressed more than 500 specific red-tape-reduction initiatives. I challenge those opposite to continue our efforts in cutting red tape and to restore confidence in the sector.

The LNP is committed to getting out of the way and out of the pockets of small business and letting business get on with what they do best. On the other hand, Labor is known for burdening our hardworking mum-and-dad small businesses with copious layers of red tape. In the past, Labor has not shown itself to be the friend of small business but, with this bill, it now has a chance to rectify that by expanding the payroll tax exemption threshold to \$1.4 million and making a genuine commitment to cutting red tape.

The changes made in 2014 ensured that businesses with an annual payroll tax liability of less than \$20,000 now need to lodge payroll tax returns only twice a year rather than monthly. This practical measure affected 7,000 Queensland businesses, saving more than 40,000 hours in administration and about \$2 million in costs each year.

In his introductory speech the Treasurer acknowledged that apprenticeships and traineeships provided a great employment pathway and I support that assertion wholeheartedly. That is why the LNP announced a \$36 million injection into Queensland's apprenticeship system. Under this initiative, employers would be paid \$6,000 per apprentice for additional apprentices taken on. This proposal was warmly welcomed by the CCIQ and the wider business community. In the Currumbin electorate alone, 10 businesses took up this pledge, with 33 apprenticeships within weeks of it being announced. I note that this initiative was fully subscribed, resulting in 6,000 new apprentices. I would like to congratulate the former minister for education and employment for that initiative. We pledged \$86 million to deliver an extra 10,000 apprenticeships by 2018 and we were well on our way. I urge the Palaszczuk government to make this a priority through its term. The LNP also streamlined the apprenticeship and traineeship system in Queensland, with over 60 policies and procedures reduced to just 18.

A thriving economy needs a skilled workforce that requires collaboration with employers to work alongside government to support our apprenticeship sector. In its submission the CCIQ made the following comment—

Queensland's small business community stands ready to also assist in providing our State's youth an entry into the workforce, if only offered incentive to do so.

Under the LNP, proactive steps were being taken to provide incentives to the business community and I hope that those opposite will do the same. But if we have a look at their record, it does not look promising. Prior to the 2012 election, Labor had been in government for 18 out of 20 years, suffocating small business under copious layers of red tape and regulation—92,000 pages of it. CCIQ reports indicated that the cost of this red tape and regulation to the Queensland economy increased from \$4.8 billion in 2007 to a staggering \$7 billion in taxes, fees and other charges in 2011. The LNP's reductions in green tape alone saw businesses save \$6.18 million in annual fees. Let us not forget the \$372 million industry waste levy, courtesy of Kate Jones—a hugely unpopular tax on industry that hurt the bottom line for our small businesses, costing a small cafe around \$3,200 a year—which we abolished within 100 days of coming to office. Now, it seems absurd that a minister, who deliberately imposed extra taxes onto struggling small businesses, would be handed the very portfolio that she showed such utter contempt for. No wonder small business is worried that this minister is in the role.

I note that the committee made five recommendations. In particular, I draw the attention of the House to recommendation 5—

The Committee recommends that the Minister consider investigating additional methods of increasing the employment opportunities of apprentices and trainees.

The committee report mentions the ALP's Working Queensland plan, which will make it mandatory that 10 per cent of workers on major projects are apprentices or trainees. In 2014, the LNP announced the Queensland Government Building and Construction Training Policy, which regulated work on government construction projects, providing opportunities for new apprentices and trainees while also supporting skills acquisition for those already employed in the construction industry. The LNP also went to the 2015 election with the Jobs of Tomorrow plan.

Governments do not create jobs; small business drives them and also innovation. Small business are the doers. Government has a role to play as the enabler, not the strangler. It needs to breed confidence, not fear and loathing. If the Palaszczuk government is genuine in its desire to work with small businesses to create jobs and does not want to be tarred with the same brush of past years, it will work with this vital sector and not against it and not bully it to please its union mates.

Debate, on motion of Mrs Stuckey, adjourned.

## COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

### Portfolio Committees, Referral of Auditor-General's Reports

 **Mr HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (6.00 pm): I seek to advise the House of determinations made by the Committee of the Legislative Assembly at its meeting today. The committee has resolved, pursuant to standing order 194B, that the Auditor-General's report to parliament No. 17 of 2014-15 titled *Managing child safety information* be referred to the Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee; the Auditor-General's report to parliament No. 18 of 2014-15 titled *WorkCover claims* be referred to the Finance and Administration Committee; and the Auditor-General's report to parliament No. 19 of 2014-15 titled *Fraud management in local government* be referred to the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee for consideration.

## MOTION

### Portfolio Committees, Reporting Dates

 **Mr SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (6.00 pm): I move the motion of which I gave notice, but I move it in an amended form and that has been circulated in my name. The amended form of the motion deletes the first 16 words, the first half of the first sentence. So I move—

That the reporting date of 14 September 2015 be set for:

1. The Health and Ambulance Services Committee's inquiry into the Mental Health (Recovery Model) Bill, referred by the House on 5 May 2015.
2. The Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee's inquiry into the Liquor and Fair Trading Legislation (Red Tape Reduction) Amendment Bill, referred by the House on 6 May 2015.
3. The Agriculture and Environment Committee's inquiry into the Sugar Industry (Real Choice in Marketing) Amendment Bill, referred by the House on 19 May 2015.
4. The Health and Ambulance Services Committee's inquiry into the Health Legislation (Waiting List Integrity) Amendment Bill, referred by the House on 19 May 2015.

And that the House ensures all parliamentary committees meet at 9 am on Wednesday morning of each sitting week as the time set aside for committee business.

**Mr Hinchliffe:** It's nice to see you being nice.

**Mr SEENEY:** I am trying to be conciliatory. I am trying to make this parliament work, Leader of the House. I have a particular interest in the committee system, as the member would know. I have a particular interest in ensuring that the committee system in this House works well because the committee system in this House was an initiative that was put in place by a bipartisan committee of very senior members of the House who came together and agreed that we should have a committee system to provide a function in this place that is not provided by an upper house. In my view the committee system has a huge potential to serve the people of Queensland well. Some of the members who were part of that committee that set up the committee system served many years in this place, people like Robbie Schwarten and Judy Spence. All of us shared the same goal of ensuring that we had a committee system that worked well.

So it does concern me when I see issues arise that would indicate that the committee system is not performing the function those members who designed the system, and the members who were in the House who supported it, designed it to perform. What this motion is about tonight is to primarily set some reporting dates for four private members' bills that were introduced into this place and are languishing in the committee system because a reporting date was not set. I do not want to get into a finger-pointing exercise, Leader of the House. I do not want to get into an exercise to question why those reporting dates were not set. The fact is that the reporting dates were not set and these private members' bills are languishing in the committees.

It is paramount that the committee system serve the purposes of allowing examination of private members' bills every bit as expeditiously as it does for allowing the examination of government bills. Some of the government bills that have been considered by the committees in this term of parliament under this government have been considered in very short time frames, very short time frames indeed given some of the content of the bills. What this motion does tonight is to set very reasonable time frames for the consideration of the private members' bills. In fact, to give the

committees until 14 September 2015 is a very reasonable time frame for the consideration of the private members' bills that have been brought into this House by both members of the opposition and members of the crossbench.

By removing the first half of the first sentence of the motion, by removing any contention from the motion, I would expect that there is no longer any reason for the government to oppose it. There is no reason to oppose it. Let us all reflect the bipartisanship that was evident in this House when we put the committee system in place to ensure that the committees work and they work properly.

**Ms Grace** interjected.

**Mr SEENEY:** There was bipartisanship. The committee system was put in place when the Labor Party was in power, member for Brisbane Central, and it was designed to ensure that all members of the House had an opportunity to have their bills considered in a way that gave the Queensland public an opportunity to have an input and to make submissions on those bills. This is essentially what this motion is about tonight, with the exception of the last paragraph which is about reflecting the intent of the parliament that Wednesday mornings are set aside for parliamentary committees. We made some major changes to the sessional orders of this House to ensure that every member of the House had an opportunity to participate in committee business without detracting from their duties in the parliament. We set aside that block of time on Wednesday morning to make sure that every member could serve on a committee and not be disadvantaged by being absent from the House. It is important, I think, that today's committees provide that opportunity, that the committees of this parliament meet at the time that was designated by the parliament for committee business and that is the Wednesday morning of the sitting weeks. Of course committees can meet at other times if they so choose, if the workload they have is such that it so demands. By being conciliatory, by being reasonable with amending this motion, I expect the government can support it.



**Mr HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (6.05 pm): I move the following amendment—

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

'the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee to report on the Liquor and Fair Trading Legislation (Red Tape Reduction) Amendment Bill; the Agriculture and Environment Committee to report on the Sugar Industry (Real Choice in Marketing) Amendment Bill and the Health and Ambulance Services Committee to report on the Health Legislation (Waiting List Integrity) Amendment Bill;

Notes that in relation to the Mental Health (Recovery Model) Bill, the Health and Ambulance Services Committee has resolved to defer its consideration of this bill until a government Mental Health Bill 2015, proposed for introduction in September 2015, has been introduced to enable it to consider both bills together and report its findings to the House; and

Notes that parliamentary committees meet at a time most suitable to conduct their inquiries, noting that committees other than portfolio committees have regularly met at times other than Wednesday morning.'

The report-back date for private members' bills is six months from the date the bill is referred to a portfolio or other committee unless another time is fixed by the House or the Committee of the Legislative Assembly. The relevant provision, standing order 135A(b), notes that the Committee of the Legislative Assembly shall monitor and review the operation of committees, particularly the referral of bills to committees, and where appropriate vary the time for committees to report on bills or vary the committee responsibility for a bill. In addition, standing order 136(1) on portfolio committee reports notes that a portfolio committee must finally report to the House on a bill within six calendar months of the bill being referred to it or by such other time as fixed by the House or the Committee of the Legislative Assembly.

If the opposition were unhappy with a proposed report-back date they could have raised this in the CLA. It is, in fact, the CLA that sets the default report-back date on these occasions. If the member for Callide understood the standing orders in the manner that he attests and claims to, he would know that movers of private members' bills can write to the CLA to specify a report-back date or to raise this at CLA meetings.

Standing order 136(2) also makes it clear that the CLA may vary the time for report for any bill. The member for Callide should also be aware that prior to that a mover can specify a report-back date in their reference. Indeed, that is precisely what Labor and the now Premier did when in opposition. They followed due process and proper procedure, not like the cavalier cowboys opposite.

More importantly, this motion as put by the member for Callide would have no effect on when any of these bills would be debated in the House. These bills were referred between 5 May and 19 May. With a report-back date of six months from referral, committees would have reported back between 5 and 19 November 2015. The sessional orders provide that the private members' bills

cannot be set down for debate until three months after the report-back date. This would have been between 5 and 19 February 2016. Even with a new report-back date of 14 September the bills could not be debated until 5 to 19 December, but the last sitting date for 2015 is set down as 3 December. So even with the new date the bills could not be debated.

I am absolutely committed to being conciliatory, as is, obviously, in his unusual attempts, the member for Callide so I am happy to accept the 14 September date as proposed by the member for Callide for those private members' bills to which a committee has not made a determination about how they wish to treat the management of that bill.

Just as we saw in the last sitting period when the Speaker ruled the motion moved by the opposition out of order because it offended the standing orders, this once again shows the lack of knowledge of the standing orders by the opposition and, indeed, the member for Callide. He claims to be an expert on these things, but gets it wrong when the test comes.

I remind the former deputy premier that these are the very same standing orders that applied in the last parliament. Perhaps the member either has had a sudden bout of amnesia or is demonstrating ignorance of the very rules he has claimed to have supported previously. In fact, when I looked at the duration of report-back times and periods for the initial referral of private members' bills of the ALP, the KAP and Independent members of the 54th Parliament, as well as bills that lapsed when the parliament was prorogued prior to the last election, the overwhelming majority were six months from the date of referral, consistent with the standing and sessional orders. I table this information for the members of the House.

*Tabled paper:* Duration of the initial referral for private members' bills for the ALP, KAP and Independent members of the 54th Parliament [499].

That further underscores our argument that both Labor in opposition and the crossbench understood and used the system appropriately. If it is good enough for Labor, both in opposition and in government, then it should be good enough for the LNP in opposition as well. It also goes to show that the system is indeed working well. I remind the member for Callide that, with the exception of the PCCC, there are an equal number of opposition members of parliament represented on parliamentary committees. Presumably, they will have agreed to the parliamentary reporting dates. Perhaps the member for Callide is just being mischievous and is trying to waste our time. I hope that is not the case. I urge members to support the amendment.

*(Time expired)*

**Mr SPEAKER:** I call the member for Coomera.

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (6.10 pm): Coomera, where heaven meets earth on the Gold Coast. It is the fastest growing electorate in the state.

I rise to support the motion moved by the member for Callide. I note a comment just made by the Leader of the House about the report-back dates and so on. In fact, the document that he has now tabled indicates that the mental health bill 2015 was proposed for introduction in September 2015. I am of the understanding that the Minister for Health wrote to the committee and said he was introducing that bill in July. I would like him to take that on notice and give consideration to the accuracy of the statement that he has made.

I am the deputy chair of the Finance and Administration Committee, which has already put three reports before the House. Right at the beginning, it was my intention to outline the appropriate role of the committee to the newer members of the committee and to rely on my record in the committee system of being fair and balanced in my role. I note that it is important for us all to remember this simple statement: the goal of the committee is to gather evidence from a wide range of witnesses from all sides of the issue, evaluate it and report to this House. That has not been my experience so far in our committee system under this government.

What have we seen? First of all, we have seen a government that tells its department what the policy is and then we find that the government department goes off, makes inquiries and looks for evidence to support that particular position. They only fully consult with those who are in agreement and they pay lip-service to others who have an interest in the matter. Our portfolio committees are following suit. To take a recent example from the Finance and Administration Committee, 13 unions and one over-arching union were consulted on a bill and the report has been presented to the House. However no councils—zero councils—were consulted. We managed to get the councils an invitation to the public hearings, giving them an opportunity to put a report to the committee, only after we walked out of the committee. We had to walk away from the committee, come back with some

motions and force those motions into the system, which were initially defeated by the government members, but finally the government members grudgingly agreed to allow the councils to be involved in the process.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I rise to a point of order.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Pause the clock. One moment, member.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** Mr Speaker, I seek your guidance. I trust that the honourable member is not disclosing confidential business of the committee?

**Mr CRANDON:** Confidential business of the committees?

**Mr SPEAKER:** I understand it has been reported on already. I call on the member to continue.

**Mr CRANDON:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I suggest that the Leader of the House read the rules. The opportunity is there for him to go back to the standing orders, which contain an introduction in relation to the role of committees. Part 7, chapter 32, under the heading 'Establishment of Committees, contains all the rules. He also has an opportunity to look at things such as this document. I did not see him in the room, but it gives some guidance to committees as to how portfolios can be developed and so on. I suggest that the member checks the rules for committees before he stands in the House and makes such comments.

We on this side of the House have done everything that we can to bring fairness to our committee system, but that has met with a great deal of aggression. We have had to fight to ensure that the committee system stands up for what it is meant to stand up for, which is to provide the people of Queensland with the opportunity to advise this House about their issues. That means all of the people; not just the unions, but all of the people in the state of Queensland.

 **Ms LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (6.16 pm): I rise to speak against the motion moved by the member for Callide. This is the first motion I have risen to speak to in this House. I am just sorry that it was not one of a more substantive nature. I cannot deny that this morning as I heard the member for Callide give notice of the motion that is before us tonight I was perplexed. I was perplexed then as to its premise and, after hearing him speak, I am none the wiser.

As chair of the Health and Ambulance Services Committee, I note that two of the four bills outlined in the motion are before my committee. It would seem by inference that the original motion as circulated by the member for Callide this morning, which made a spurious assertion of emerging abuse of the committee system, applies to my committee. I am not sure how my committee colleagues, the member for Greenslopes, the member for Buderim, my deputy chair the member for Mudgeeraba, the member for Thuringowa and the member for Moggill feel about this, but I for one was hurt.

**Honourable members:** Aww!

**Ms LINARD:** Thank you. We are all one happy family. I thank members for their sympathy.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order, members! Pause the clock.

**Ms LINARD:** I note, of course, that this motion has since been amended. This parliament has clear guidelines in regard to the conduct of committee business. I appreciate that, as a new member in this House, I have much to learn regarding the established rules and protocols of the House, but what I do know is that there are some resources to light the way and I have one right here. Let us go first to the matter of committee meeting times. Standing order 198 states—

(1) The date and time of the first meeting of a committee after its appointment by the House shall be set by the Chairperson.

...

(3) Subsequent meetings of the committee shall be set by the committee or may be called with notice by the Chairperson or their delegate.

My committee resolved to meet at 9 am on the Wednesday morning of each sitting week. That is a matter of public knowledge. However, I appreciate that that is not so for all committees. Some meet earlier and some meet on different and additional days. I do not believe that a time should be prescriptively applied.

I now turn to the second component of the motion before us tonight, which relates to reporting dates. Standing order 131, on page 31 for the benefit of the member for Callide, states—

- (1) If the question for the first reading of the Bill succeeds, then the Bill stands referred to the portfolio committee or other committee nominated by the Member who presented the Bill ...

Standing order 136, on page 32, follows on and clearly outlines the requirement of a portfolio committee. I quote—

- (1) A portfolio committee must finally report to the House on a Bill within six calendar months of the Bill being referred to it or by such other time as fixed by the House or the committee of the Legislative Assembly.

Alternatively, it states—

- (2) The Committee of the Legislative Assembly may vary the time for report for any Bill ... but must report such decision to the House ...

That was not done in regard to the Mental Health (Recovery Model) Bill, introduced on 5 May, nor were any of the appropriate and available processes used to vary the reporting time for the Health Legislation (Waiting List Integrity) Amendment Bill introduced in the House during the last sitting.

As no time was fixed by the House or the Committee of the Legislative Assembly, in accordance with standing order 136 my committee is required to report to the House by 5 November. At its meeting on 6 May my committee resolved to defer taking submissions and conducting hearings on the mental health bill until after consultation on the government bill has been undertaken. I table our public statements in this regard.

*Tabled Paper:* Health and Ambulance Services Committee webpage, printed 2 June 2015, regarding Mental Health (Recovery Model) Bill 2015 [\[500\]](#).

This was a resolution of the committee, a bipartisan resolution of the committee by nature of the equal representation present on that committee, and I ask: was the member for Callide by implication asserting this morning—I, of course, appreciate the member has now had a change of heart—when he gave notice of his original motion the opinion that the members for Mudgeeraba, Buderim and Moggill are also parties to this so-called abuse of our committee system? This motion in its current form—

**Ms Bates** interjected.

**Ms LINARD:** I have it right here. It seeks to bring forward the reporting date for the private members' bills to 14 September.

**Ms Bates** interjected.

**Ms LINARD:** Under standing order 211, I have not divulged the contents of that letter because it was committee business.

This motion, in its current form, seeks to bring forward the reporting date for the private members' bills to 14 September, but for what purpose? Under the sessional orders bills cannot be debated before three months have passed from the reporting date. This would make the first date for debating the bills 14 December. As the final sitting day for 2015 is 3 December, this means that the bills would not be debated until 2016, even with the earlier reporting date. This has the effect of simply cutting short the time that the committees have to consider the bills and for submissions and evidence to be received.

A strong, active system of parliamentary committees provides greater accountability by making the policy and administrative functions of government more open and accountable. The only misuse of the committee system and indeed the parliament's time is by the member for Callide, who has us debating a motion on a subject which is clearly provided for in the standing orders of this House.

 **Mr WALKER** (Mansfield—LNP) (6.21 pm): There has been lots of discussion around the standing orders tonight, but the bottom line is that if members go to standing order 136(1) they will find that the House can do precisely what the member for Callide is asking it to do. What that standing order says is that a portfolio committee must finally report to the House within six calendar months—it does not say that it has to take six calendar months—or such time as is, amongst other things, fixed by the House. It is quite possible, quite lawful, quite proper for us to, if we think the committees are not doing the right thing by default or otherwise, say that we want them to report earlier than that. That is quite clearly, simply, easily what the member for Callide is seeking.

I would suggest that that is an eminently fair thing to request of the House. I can make the point quite clearly by comparing the bills that have come within my ambit as shadow Attorney-General and the way in which they have been dealt with if they are a government bill and the way in which they have been dealt with if they are a private member's bill.

The bill that I have introduced and has been referred to a committee—the Liquor and Fair Trading Legislation (Red Tape Reduction) Amendment Bill—has had a long history. It has been through the liquor, gaming and red-tape-reduction expert panel. There has been extensive consultation on the bill with religious groups who are affected by a number of acts disappearing. Some 14 organisations were consulted. An exposure draft went out in October 2014. The original bill was introduced into this House in November last year. It is hardly a novel proposal before the House and yet the committee in question is unable to resolve to report to the House any earlier than November this year.

Compare that to legislation that has been introduced by the government. The legislation that I have had to deal with is the electoral legislation which was introduced on 27 March. The required reporting date for that legislation was 1 May. There was a total of eight days consultation with the public and then it was rammed through this House.

The next is the industrial relations legislation, which we will deal with this week, which was introduced on 7 May. The reporting date for that legislation was 1 June. That was totally farcical consultation, as the member for Coomera pointed out. Numerous unions were individually consulted on that legislation and yet none of the employers—the local governments involved; zero employers—were consulted on that legislation. That is a total farcical use of the committee system and a grossly short time frame for that committee to report.

The next is the work health and safety legislation, which is still to be dealt with, which was introduced on 7 May. It is due to be reported on by 6 July. There are extremely short time frames given for government legislation and maximum time frames given for legislation introduced by either opposition members or those on the crossbench.

That was not the intent when the new system for members to introduce private members' bills was introduced into this House. It clearly was not the intention that the government got the run on the rails to get their legislation through in quick time—in fact, lightning time—and for the maximum time to be taken for opposition or crossbench bills so they were not dealt with efficiently or effectively.

We have heard a lot of comment from those on the government side as to how this is a wonderful new age of consultation and enlightenment. As always, that has been the truth in words but not the truth in deeds. This is another example of that. It is fair and square and simple for all in this House to see. It is up to all of us in the House tonight to vote on this motion. It is up to the government, which is amending and opposing the motion, to think about the attitude they are taking and think about whether their deeds match the wonderful words that have been spoken about this new, wonderful world and change their minds and say that they want the system to work.

The time frames that have been sought by the member for Callide in his motion are not unreasonable. They still give the committees plenty of time to consider the legislation, to take evidence from those who want to appear before the committee and in due course to report to the House. The matter is fairly and squarely in the hands of members of the House. It can deal with this matter fairly and allow a reasonable time for opposition and crossbench bills to be dealt with or it can squash it. That is really the question before the House. I encourage support for the motion put by the member for Callide.

 **Mr RUSSO** (Sunnybank—ALP) (6.26 pm): I rise to support the amendment moved by the Leader of the House. This motion moved by the opposition is quite extraordinary. I will be addressing the second aspect of the motion relating to the meeting times for parliamentary committees. The Leader of the House has moved an amendment to the motion to provide that parliamentary committees meet at a time most suitable to conduct their inquiries, noting that the committees other than the portfolio committees have regularly met at times other than Wednesday morning. This is a fact.

Since the review of the parliament committee system in 2010 it has been the practice and convention that portfolio committees meet where possible on Wednesday morning. There are of course other times that it is necessary for the committees to meet, but that is the standard meeting time for those committees. The other parliamentary committees have had other practices since that time. The standard is that they do not meet on Wednesday morning, which is set aside for portfolio committees to meet.

Let us look at the CLA. The general practice throughout the last parliament was that the CLA met at 4 pm on the Tuesday of a sitting week. The Ethics Committee would usually meet at lunchtime on a Thursday but often met at other times—never or rarely, if ever, on a Wednesday morning. The PCMC and then the PCCC met usually on Friday morning, again not on Wednesday morning. So this recent conversion of the member for Callide to the view that all committees should meet on Wednesday morning is exactly that—a recent conversion.

But Wednesday morning is not suitable for all committees to meet. There are quite a few reasons for this, and the member for Callide well knows this. The first is that the members of most of the parliamentary committees are also members of portfolio committees. If they meet at the same time, those members would not be able to attend both their portfolio committee and their other parliamentary committee. Indeed, standing order 198(3) provides that meetings other than the first meeting of a committee shall be set by the committee or may be called with notice by the chairperson or their delegate. This is the reasonable, common-sense and democratic way for committees to conduct their business. Mr Speaker, as you would know, it is simply not practical for all committees to meet at 9 am on Wednesday of each sitting week.

The member for Callide has a real hide calling for this change. He is a member of the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee and as such would have a vote on when that committee is to regularly meet. It seems from this motion that he may not be happy with the democratic decision of that committee to determine its own meeting time and has attempted to run roughshod over the committee process. That is a tactic he regularly took in the previous parliament, but it is not one that he will get away with in this parliament.

Another reason it is preferable for non-portfolio parliamentary committees to meet on days other than on Wednesday morning is that there are a limited number of committee rooms and rooms suitable for the holding of committee meetings. The committee rooms here in parliament were set up when the previous government removed the previous opposition from the parliamentary precinct and sent them packing up the road to Mineral House. They then converted the vacant opposition offices into committee rooms. From the statements that have been reported in the media and attributed to the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Southern Downs, about the premises they now occupy, I think that might be a decision they now regret.

The difficulty is that there are not enough rooms for more committees to meet on Wednesday morning. There are insufficient Hansard reporters, recording equipment and other resources to allow for all committees to meet simultaneously on Wednesday mornings of sitting weeks. But we all know this is really just about the member for Callide and his membership of the PCCC—and not out of any new-found concern for parliamentary process or profound regard for integrity and accountability. Rather, we all know that the PCCC meets on Monday mornings and that the member does not want to have to travel to Brisbane early to attend these meetings. If he is trying to suggest—

*(Time expired)*

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

**AYES, 43:**

**ALP, 42**—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Byrne, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Donaldson, 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, Pyne, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Stewart, Trad, Whiting, Williams.

**INDEPENDENT, 1**—Gordon.

**NOES, 41:**

**LNP, 41**—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Costigan, Cramp, Crandon, Cripps, Davis, Dickson, Elmes, Emerson, Frecklington, Hart, 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.

Pairs: Enoch, McVeigh.

Resolved in the affirmative.

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

**AYES, 43:**

**ALP, 42**—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Byrne, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Donaldson, 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, Pyne, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Stewart, Trad, Whiting, Williams.

**INDEPENDENT, 1**—Gordon.

**NOES, 41:**

**LNP, 41**—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Costigan, Cramp, Crandon, Cripps, Davis, Dickson, Elmes, Emerson, Frecklington, Hart, 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.

Pairs: Enoch, McVeigh.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Motion, as agreed—

That the reporting date of 14 September 2015 be set for the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee to report on the Liquor and Fair Trading Legislation (Red Tape Reduction) Amendment Bill; the Agriculture and Environment Committee to report on the Sugar Industry (Real Choice in Marketing) Amendment Bill and the Health and Ambulance Services Committee to report on the Health Legislation (Waiting List Integrity) Amendment Bill;

Notes that in relation to the Mental Health (Recovery Model) Bill, the Health and Ambulance Services Committee has resolved to defer its consideration of this bill until a government Mental Health Bill 2015, proposed for introduction in September 2015, has been introduced to enable it to consider both bills together and report its findings to the House; and

Notes that parliamentary committees meet at a time most suitable to conduct their inquiries, noting that committees other than portfolio committees have regularly met at times other than Wednesday morning.

Sitting suspended from 6.39 pm to 7.40 pm.

## **PAYROLL TAX REBATE, REVENUE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

### **Second Reading**

Resumed from p. 952, on motion of Mr Pitt—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (7.40 pm): I rise to make a short contribution to the Payroll Tax Rebate, Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Whilst this is an omnibus bill and there are many elements to it, many of which, if not all, have been covered by the shadow Treasurer and member for Surfers Paradise, I want to spend my time focusing on two of them. One is of particular interest to me as the former minister for environment, and that is the amendments to the Environmental Protection Act. I was in the chamber just before the dinner break when the member for Mount Isa spoke about the benefits of these amendments for his community. It takes me back to a day earlier this year, 18 January, when we stood alongside the mayor of Mount Isa, the Hon. Tony McGrady, and the then member for Mundingburra, the Hon. David Crisafulli, and we announced that we would be drafting this amendment to ensure that more than a thousand jobs in Townsville and Mount Isa would remain in place.

**Mr Cripps** interjected.

**Mr POWELL:** I say to the member for Hinchinbrook that it was a very good day, a very hot day as I recall, standing there in the Glencore copper refinery in Townsville, but a very good day for the people of Townsville.

On 19 January an article in the *Townsville Bulletin* stated—

**MORE than 1000 jobs will be saved in Townsville and Mount Isa under an LNP pledge to change laws to allow mining company Glencore to extend their copper operations.**

Environment Minister Andrew Powell has promised to amend legislation to let Glencore renew its existing environmental licensing.

Glencore had previously announced its intention to phase out copper smelting and refining operations in Mount Isa and Townsville by the end of 2016 but after finding access to more copper concentrate—

as the member for Mount Isa pointed out this evening—

raised the prospect of continuing operations until 2020.

On that day I said that we would lock in Glencore's existing environmental gains in areas including air quality to allow the continuation of smelting and refining. It really only came about through the concerted efforts behind the scenes of the former member for Mount Isa, more prominently, the mayor of Mount Isa and former ALP member, Hon. Tony McGrady, and the then

member for Mundingburra, David Crisafulli. They were constantly in my ribs—I think it is quoted that way—about this issue, ensuring that we actually drafted this amendment. It is great to see that Labor has been forced to do the same. I find it rather ironic that they are introducing this amendment given that they were the ones who basically put Glencore on the path to shutting down its copper smelter and copper refinery come 2016 because of the onerous conditions they placed on it.

Glencore have made significant gains. More importantly, it is a case of balancing the environmental gains with the economic gains that Glencore offer. As the member for Mount Isa also pointed out this evening, not only is Glencore going to benefit from this, but the phosphate mining operation up the road, Incitec Pivot, is also going to benefit in terms of jobs because they take the sulphuric acid from the copper smelter at Mount Isa and use it as a raw material. So there is a gain all round for the Mount Isa community and for jobs in the state of Queensland.

It is interesting that this change will benefit environmental management more broadly across the state. When we got to looking at this issue when it was raised with us by Glencore, the member for Mount Isa and the then member for Mundingburra, the department and I had a really good look at it and we realised that there is a shortfall in the Environmental Protection Act. We get industries and companies to embark on transitional environmental programs, TEPs, or what are now called transitional environmental licenses, TELs, but we find that there is no capacity for us to cancel those, even by agreement. So this amendment is necessary for us to be able to cancel a TEP or a TEL, particularly by agreement, ideally when the company reaches the gains that they require. If other unforeseen circumstances also dictate, this provides the capacity for the department to negotiate with the company to ensure that they get the right outcome.

This will be a very sensible amendment. It certainly has the support of the LNP, given that it was our amendment in the first place. It has literally been carried over into the legislation. It will be a very good win for the communities of North Queensland, particularly the communities of Mount Isa and Townsville. I do want to pay particular respect and acknowledgement to the former members for Thuringowa, Mundingburra and Townsville, Sam Cox, John Hathaway and David Crisafulli, who fought hard for this to be here in the chamber this evening.

The only other matter that I briefly want to touch on is one that a number of my colleagues have touched on previously, and that is this ludicrous idea that those opposite us, the government, want to repeal changes—sensible changes—that we made to the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act and the Plumbing and Drainage Act just last year. I have listened to a number of speeches in the House, including from the member for Morayfield, who talked about downpipes and essential plumbing. Quite seriously, water meters are not classified as essential plumbing. They are a fairly simple instalment that can be put in place by someone who is suitably trained.

**Ms Grace** interjected.

**Mr POWELL:** I say to the member for Brisbane Central that this was brought forward by utility companies and local governments around the state because they saw it as an impediment to getting necessary utility work or water connections done. It was holding up construction and housing development and it was adding an unnecessary cost to residential consumers in particular as well as commercial consumers. What we see here is nothing more than payback for the support that the unions provided those opposite during the election campaign. I do not think I am the first to do so, but that is fairly evident in the headline on the front page of today's *Courier-Mail*, which states, 'Treasurer's "outrageous" new law to help key factional union ally exposes Labor's plumber cracks'.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Elmes): Order! Member for Glass House, no props, thank you.

**Mr POWELL:** This really has exposed what we have come to expect from those opposite—

**Mr Pitt:** Why don't you do some research?

**Mr POWELL:** I will take that interjection from the member for Mulgrave. If the member for Mulgrave had done his research, had read the committee's report, had seen the responses from the Local Government Association, had seen the responses from a number of local governments, he would know that this amendment that he is moving this evening is absolutely ridiculous, is unnecessary, is all about paying back his Plumbers Union mates and is not about passing on cost-of-living relief to the residents of Queensland. It is quite simple. I refer the member to the committee's report—

**Mr Pitt:** I've read the committee's report.

**Mr POWELL:** He has read the report? It is surprising that, having read the committee's report, the member opposite continues to persist with this crazy amendment. The LGAQ used the example of the Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council, which confirmed they pay \$60 per hour for a licensed plumber from Cooktown or Cairns. Typically, there is a three-week wait—and I am sure that, as he is also the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, he would be concerned about this—so the Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council batch a number of jobs at once. The council pays for all expenses and travel time on top of wages. For example, a three-day visit for a total of 24 hours would cost approximately \$2,900 including travel, meals and accommodation. If there is an urgent single meter installation it would cost in excess of \$300 for three hours labour plus expenses. Guess who is going to end up paying that cost: the ratepayers of Wujal Wujal.

**Mr Pitt:** Guess how many ratepayers there are there. There's not that many.

**Mr POWELL:** So you spread that across even fewer ratepayers. Again the member for Mulgrave has not done his own research. He has worked out that his own amendment is going to cost the ratepayers of Wujal Wujal even more because the rate base is not that great. He is imposing an unnecessary amendment on the people of Queensland just to appease his plumbing union mates. What we have seen tonight is a sham consultation and a sham excuse to make a legislative amendment under the guise of occupational health and safety when all of the excuses they have given relate to issues that, we here in the LNP do not disagree, require a plumber's attention. But this is certainly not one of those examples. It is a bad amendment and we will not be supporting it.

 **Miss BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (7.50 pm): I rise today to speak in support of the Payroll Tax Rebate, Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. This bill delivers on a Palaszczuk Labor election promise to provide a payroll tax rebate on the wages of qualifying apprentices and trainees. This is a Labor bill in the finest of traditions. My electorate is one that has had a sharp decline in good blue-collar jobs over the last three years. These are the kinds of jobs that support families; the kinds of jobs that enable people to plan for the future; the kinds of jobs that build lives. When these jobs go, they are hard to replace.

Labor in government has a great track record when it comes to supporting jobs growth. I recall a time when a Labor government under then premier Beattie promised a five per cent unemployment rate, and those opposite laughed at him. In fact, some who still sit opposite today laughed. Labor in government delivered jobs and employment to Queensland, and we can do it again. This bill is one of many measures the Palaszczuk government is taking to set us back on the right path—a path to employment and prosperity.

Education is the key to unlocking employment potential. Education is the key to building the economy of the future. In my electorate that takes the form of apprenticeships. The change to payroll tax set out in this bill adds to the already considerable benefits of operating a business in Queensland. Queensland already has the most generous payroll tax thresholds in mainland Australia. Queensland has the lowest payroll tax rates in the country. That is not to say that it is easy operating a business in Queensland; this is to say that we in this place recognise that it is hard and we are doing what we can to help.

I previously reported in this place about the good work that Biga Training does in my electorate, placing apprentices with employers who can pass on skills to the new generation. The Palaszczuk government is doing its part to ease the heavy lifting that Biga does in this regard by encouraging employers to take on more apprentices in the interests of our broader economy. This was an election commitment and we deliver. East Coast Apprenticeships is one of the largest employers in Pine Rivers. They are singing the praises of this initiative. Located in Strathpine, they are Queensland's largest independent group training organisation and, like so many in our community, they want to see further engagement for small and medium businesses to take on more apprentices. East Coast Apprenticeships sees this as a way to have better a skilled and more productive workforce into the future.

This bill changes our payroll tax system to enable a payroll tax rebate which will provide a boost to both employment and workforce participation in our economy. When an employer hires an apprentice or trainee, they will receive a payroll tax rebate worth 25 per cent. This is a \$45 million investment in our business capacity over three years. This bill will enable businesses to contribute even more than they currently do to our economy. This is an investment in our state's future capacity. I know this will make a real difference to employers.

For example, Q Tank in my electorate has manufactured rainwater tanks in Brendale for the last eight years. Under this initiative they will be able to take on an apprentice more easily—an extra hand for their business and an investment in their industry's future. Q Tank won new business of the year in 2008 and owner Toby Peacock won young entrepreneur of the year in 2013. Toby is a big fan of any initiatives that help business deal with payroll tax. In their view, without changes like these to payroll tax, it is a disincentive to employ more workers and a disincentive for growth.

Similarly, Springers Solar in Lawnton will be able to grow their business with this rebate and invest in the exciting renewable energy industry that is so vital to our state's future. Currently Springers Solar has 22 employees. They are supporting growth by hosting a work experience student from a local trades college. Apprentices are certainly within the realms of possibility for Springers Solar with a new payroll tax rebate.

Q Tank and Springers Solar are just two examples of the many businesses in my electorate that will benefit from this proposal and be able to take on an apprentice. An initiative like this can mean the difference between an apprentice being a viable option for a business or not. I am proud to be part of a government that is making it easier for businesses to get a fair go and invest in the skills of the future. I am proud to be part of a government which is not focused on just job creation but ensuring that there is something real and meaningful that is invested in skills, trades and lifelong qualifications.

This investment in providing careers—not just jobs—will pay dividends for our state and our state's people. When I think about these measures, I recall a hot afternoon late last year when I was doorknocking in Bray Park. I knocked on a screen door and found on the other side a man in a singlet and footy shorts, and in his hand was a stubby of XXXX with the twist top still on. I could tell just by looking at him that he had finished work and I thought that our conversation would be short-lived, but I was wrong. He opened the door, stepped out, and he, his beer, his little dog and I gathered around a table in his front garden and talked. There was a moment in our conversation that was very memorable to me. While I was deep in conversation he pulled me up for referring to jobs too much. I must have looked at him with a puzzled look because quite quickly he said, 'We don't need jobs, love; we need careers.' This really got me thinking: we do not need jobs; we do need careers.

I am immensely proud to stand in this place and know what Labor in government is delivering is not just jobs; it is careers and a sustainable future for Queensland, and we will be brighter and better for it. We are doing much more to create not only jobs, but careers. The Palaszczuk government's Working Queensland plan is a diverse suite of initiatives that are currently being rolled out. These initiatives highlight the government's commitment to growing the economy, reducing unemployment and creating real, sustainable jobs for Queenslanders—jobs of the future.

Our Working Queensland plan will ensure that 10 per cent of workers on major programs are apprentices or trainees, creating more opportunities for young people. The requirement of 10 per cent will also be extended to government owned corporations. In addition, Jobs Queensland is a roundtable authority that will be industry led and driven. It will advise on current and future skills demands and long-term workforce planning and skills investment. This program is \$40 million over four years.

On top of this, the suite of initiatives for job creation and stimulation also include Skilling Queenslanders for Work, which delivers \$8 back into our economy for every dollar spent, and Labor's Business Development Fund to assist in investment of joint ventures with start-up firms wanting to turn their ideas into products and jobs of the future—a \$40 million investment over four years. Labor will invest \$34 million over four years into our Rescuing TAFE policy. This will undo the devastation caused by cuts and sackings at the hands of those opposite. Queensland's Entrepreneurs of Tomorrow program will see an investment of \$2 million to support business development for home based businesses.

Under our government the benefits for business are great. However, it is clear the benefits for our young people will be even greater. In Queensland our youth unemployment rate is placed at 14 per cent, and this is unacceptably high. This payroll tax change will mean a new opportunity for young people in my electorate—an electorate where, like so many others, unemployment has been growing. It will mean that young people will get their foot in the door of our economy perhaps for the first time. With unemployment up and participation down, only Labor will deliver these kinds of reforms that will make a real difference in people's lives.

During the campaign I met many young people who were finding it impossible to get their foot in the door of the labour market. They had drive and they wanted to make a start in life, but the economy was stacked against them. In times like these our shrinking economy means it is hard for everyone, and it is hardest for those who have few or no skills to get a start. Many would jump at the chance of taking up an apprenticeship or a trainee spot if they could get one. This payroll change means that business can get on with the work of creating those opportunities. It levels the playing field for apprentices. It also levels the playing field of opportunities for our young people. It makes it easier to grow businesses, to take on new staff who can stay in the industries for years to come, and it builds our state's economy into the future.

In closing, I thank the committee for the work they have done on this bill in the short time they have had to consider it. I would also like to finish by saying that this is a Labor reform and it is in the best of Labor traditions. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (8.00 pm): I rise to speak in favour of the Payroll Tax Rebate, Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. I thank the committee for its fine work. The Palaszczuk Labor government went to the January state election committing to give payroll tax rebates for apprentices and trainees. This bill will see that commitment realised. This bill will also ensure that the plumbing industry is operating with high standards. This bill will amend Queensland's revenue legislation and other acts administered through the Treasury department to ensure their currency and proper operation.

During the LNP government's term in office the economy suffered, with the massive slashing of Public Service jobs. The Palaszczuk Labor government is about employing people and getting the economy moving in all parts of Queensland. Businesses need incentives to take on more trainees and apprentices. A well-trained workforce is the key to our economic future. We need highly skilled workers.

In my electorate of Mackay it is more important than ever for engineering businesses to be able to diversify to keep up with the ever-changing needs of the coal and sugar industries. Businesses need the support and incentives this bill delivers to be able to engage in training to upskill and develop a sophisticated workforce.

Now is the time to engage in training. It is too late to start developing a well-trained workforce when demand is high. We cannot rely on accessing overseas workers. Previous state and federal Labor governments have shown their support for training in the Mackay region with the funding of the Mackay Trade Training Centre and with the expansion of Central Queensland University's engineering centre.

With the passing of this bill, business will now have confidence to employ apprentices and trainees, with funded rebates for three years. I am pleased to support the previous redundant provisions in the Payroll Act 1971 exempting the wages of trainees being removed in this bill. There are new definitions inserted for certificate II traineeship and certificate III traineeship to reflect the current framework under which these qualifications are accredited. Businesses will be able to plan their workforce, with rebates for the wages paid for the financial years 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18. The rebate will be at 25 per cent of the amount calculated by applying the tax rate to the exempt apprentices' wages.

I have come across many young people who have set out to gain apprenticeships this year but, because of the lack of support in previous years from the previous LNP government, businesses did not have the support to put them on. Young people deserve a start in the workforce. Older workers deserve an opportunity to retrain and upskill as industries diversify or, in fact, some disappear. The Palaszczuk Labor government is about giving opportunities to grow business and to grow the workforce.

The bill will also ensure the high standards of the plumbing industry are maintained by requiring a licensed plumber to install water meters. It is very important to maintain a high-quality water supply. When Queenslanders travel to countries where drinking out of a tap will make them ill they realise the need to protect our water supply. The bill allows for a two-year transition period to allow persons currently authorised by a water service provider to continue to install water meters. This will give the industry time to adjust to the new regulations.

Through amendment of the Criminal Law (Criminal Organisations Disruption) and Other Amendment Legislation Act 2013 this bill will give certainty to the electrical industry by delaying for a further 12 months not-yet-commenced amendments aimed at preventing motorcycle gang members

from working in licensed occupations covered by the Electrical Safety Act 2002, the Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act 1991—formerly the Queensland Building Services Authority Act—and the Work Health and Safety Act 2011. Time is needed for these laws to be fully reviewed so the correct recommendations are implemented. During the review time, the workers who may be affected will be able to continue to earn a living and there will not be any confusion or delay with the issuing of licence renewals.

The new provisions will allow taxpayers to be paid interest on refunds that result from a reassessment giving effect to the commissioner's decision on an objection. This will compensate taxpayers, if their claim is successful, for the loss of the use of their funds while their objection is determined. The Palaszczuk Labor government is about fairness. This change will bring Queensland into line with other states and territories.

The bill will also reflect the modern world of business by introducing electronic conveyancing for land through the Electronic Conveyancing National Law (Queensland) Act 2013. Many people are time poor, and attending physical meetings for settlement at times adds another layer of complexity and time to a transaction. The provisions will streamline land conveyancing and recognise that the business world operates in an electronic sphere.

The bill also adopts the national framework provisions, bringing Queensland in line with the Electronic Conveyancing (Adoption of National Law) Act. The legislation will see web based hubs, called electronic lodgement networks, operated by ELN operators approved by the Registrar of Titles. Forms will be developed in the work space for transactions in the settlement process. The changes to the act with ELN will have unsigned transfers. This was previously not permissible. There will also be differences to the payment of duties. Changes to the act will ensure that revenue will not be lost. Under the use of the ELN, the payment of duties on the transfer of land can be made out of the settlement funds. Under the previous act, payment of duties was made at the signing of the transfer.

Under the current Duties Act 2001, certain exemptions for concessions may apply—for example, on a home attracting transfer duty home concession when a resident is transferred and the transferee occupies the residence as their principal place of residence. The new ELN process is untested, creating a need to protect and minimise the risk to revenue. ELN will only be permissible for cottage conveyance type transactions. Only the transfer duty home concession can be applied for, with all duty requirements met.

We all care about the environment and want to protect it. We also recognise the need for a business to be able to continue to operate when harm to the environment is not being caused. The current environment protection provisions do not match this fact. The amendments to the Environmental Protection Act 1994 allow for the cancellation of transitional environment programs and temporary emissions licences. This is currently not possible even when conditions under these two provisions are no longer relevant to the operation of the business and its impact on the environment. This amendment allows for strict regulations for limited cancellations. This brings a common-sense approach to the protection of both the operation of the business and the environment. I support this bill and commend the committee for its work.

 **Mr DICKSON** (Buderim—LNP) (8.10 pm): I rise to speak on the Payroll Tax Rebate, Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. This bill looks a lot like the bill that was introduced by former treasurer Tim Nicholls in November last year, the Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. I have no issues with the amendments that were introduced by the former treasurer that have been included in this bill. The former treasurer did a fine job. I do, however, have some serious concerns about the proposed amendments that relate to Labor's payroll tax rebate for apprentices promise. I think we can all agree that apprenticeships and traineeships provide a great employment pathway, particularly for young Queenslanders. But what Labor does not seem to grasp is that small and medium businesses create the majority of jobs for Queenslanders, and that is why it is so baffling that 97 per cent of businesses in Queensland are ignored by this bill. Labor should be working hard to make it easier to do business in Queensland, not stacking up red tape and regulation and failing to provide opportunities to 97 per cent of Queensland businesses to put on more apprentices and trainees through payroll tax relief. It is no wonder that business confidence in Queensland has dropped so dramatically low since the Palaszczuk government took over just three months ago, and rejecting that notion would be irresponsible. Business confidence will only rise when you take meaningful action, when you work alongside the business community and work out plans that have a meaningful, supportive impact on the business community.

The LNP's fully funded \$91 million Jobs of Tomorrow package would have seen an additional 26,000 jobs and training places created for young Queenslanders. Part of this package was \$36 million to double the Apprenticeship Pledge, a program that provided employees with up to \$6,000 for each additional apprentice taken on. This was a very successful program open to all businesses in Queensland, no matter how big or how small they were. It was an incentive that said, 'If you take on a new apprentice, if you provide a pathway to a high skilled trade for young Queenslanders, we will support you.' It was a meaningful way to give businesses that extra incentive to employ young Queenslanders. This policy was fully funded and factored in to the budget. This policy had wide support from the Queensland business community. The CCIQ in its submission stated—

... CCIQ strongly supports the provision of incentive payments to employers to encourage them to take on an additional apprentice, trainee or cadet.

What did Labor do? It shelved this policy. It started from scratch and came up with its own plan which now ignores 97 per cent of Queensland businesses. At a time when the federal government is easing the tax burden on small business across the country, Queensland Labor is making it tougher by shelving the LNP's fully funded small business package. Labor's payroll tax rebate sadly misses the mark, and it is unlikely to have a meaningful impact on increasing apprenticeship numbers throughout Queensland. It is a sad departure from the LNP's fully funded policy, a sad outcome for those Queenslanders looking for an apprenticeship and a sad outcome for Queensland businesses that were looking to take on more apprentices.

Those opposite say they have listened to Queenslanders, but when they introduce measures to ignore 97 per cent of the Queensland business community you wonder whom it is that they are listening to. But we did not have to wonder for too long. This morning we all saw the front page of today's *Courier-Mail* exposing the 'Treasurer's "outrageous" new law to help key factional union ally'. Hidden in this bill are amendments that will see that going forward only licensed plumbers can install new water meters. Why is this change required? What are the examples of water meters installed in such a way that it is risking the health and safety of all Queenslanders? I imagine there are not any. As a matter of fact, in its submission qldwater makes the following point—

The policy objective clearly supports the re-establishment of a protected market for plumbers for work which is more appropriately managed by water service providers. It has been developed under the false premise of improvement to public safety. By adopting this position, the Queensland Government is ignoring industry best practice in Australia and internationally.

In addition, the LGAQ's evidence shows that many areas in Queensland do not have access to licensed plumbers. This is why the LNP acted in 2014 to ensure that water utilities could use trained staff to install water meters, regardless of where you live. I have seen no evidence that the current arrangements have resulted in adverse outcomes impacting on public safety, water quality or water supply security. I urge the Treasurer to share these examples with the House if he can when he sums up. I am very concerned that by overturning this common-sense reform made by the LNP costs will increase for Queensland families, particularly for those living in rural and remote parts of the state. What the Labor government should be focused on is a plan for the economy and for jobs in Queensland. The proposed amendments have little to do with professional standards and consumer protection and will lead to increased costs for Queensland families and further red tape. It should be about jobs, jobs, jobs for all Queenslanders and not just jobs for union mates. I will not support these proposed amendments to the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002 and the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008.

If we want to talk about major plumbing in Queensland, let us talk about the failed Traveston Dam or the Wyaralong Dam that did not have pipes connected to it. That is what Labor was responsible for, destroying the state's economy and leaving us in the position where we had \$8 billion in local government debt and \$80 billion in state debt. That is what Queenslanders need to remember. This is the beginning of a diabolic move forward in Queensland one bit at a time, slowly pulling the state of Queensland down into a quagmire that it will find very difficult to get out of. Plumbers are the heart and soul of our community. Giving them a licence that they worked very hard for means that they can earn lots of money and bring that money home to their families and to their businesses, because we support business. We also support those people who have the qualifications to be able to deliver outcomes for all Queenslanders such as those that we allowed to deliver these services. Labor has a very, very long way to go and let us not forget: one vote makes a very big difference in this House.

 **Mr de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (8.17 pm): We are a government committed to jobs. We went to the recent state election with the Working Queensland jobs plan, a commitment to drive jobs growth in the state, and we are establishing Jobs Queensland and will employ more nurses and more teachers. We are renewing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander jobs partnership with the Queensland Resources Council and we are establishing Building Queensland. We have acted to save our tourism industry from potential ruin through decisive action on protecting the reef and protecting koalas. We have committed to maintaining jobs in health even while Tony Abbott takes a chainsaw to the Health budget. We have committed \$240 million to Skilling Queenslanders for Work to get 32,000 Queenslanders into work. We have started to restore job security for Queensland and local government employees and we are building our economy. Today we intend to deliver on a key election commitment to provide a 25 per cent rebate on the wages of apprentices and trainees for the 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18 financial years.

This is a significant and wideranging bill. I have heard compelling reasons to support all the elements of the bill from my colleagues, so I wish to focus on just a couple. The first element is the payroll tax rebate. This initiative represents a \$45 million investment into our economy and builds the skills needs of the future. As I mentioned, this is just one element of a suite of measures that is designed to encourage employment growth, to encourage business growth and to encourage business confidence. Our commitment to jobs is the core element of this government's strategy to build a thriving Queensland economy.

This is significant legislation that amends eight acts. The provisions of this bill seek to create efficiency and capacity in the Queensland economy. Apprenticeships and traineeships provide great pathways to meaningful jobs in key sectors of our economy and supporting apprentices and trainees in Queensland businesses means that young people can look forward to a good job and businesses can look forward to Queenslanders filling their labour supply needs. This bill provides much needed incentives to hire apprentices and trainees.

Although the wages paid to apprentices and trainees are already exempt from payroll tax, the rebate that we propose will be available in addition to that exemption and reduces the payroll tax for other employees. Importantly, the businesses that will benefit from this initiative employ more than half of the Queensland private sector workforce.

Under the former government, in some parts of Queensland we saw youth unemployment rise as much as 20 per cent. The focus on young people in this bill is warranted, with apprentices and trainees under the age of 24 making up 50 per cent of all of those employed as apprentices and trainees. For those under 44 years of age, which some in this place may consider young, they represent 90 per cent of apprentices and trainees. So this bill really is about our future. Apprentices and trainees make up a significant proportion of employed individuals in Queensland.

The National Centre for Vocational Education Research records statistics for the number of apprentices and trainees employed and engaged in developing their qualifications in Queensland. The most up-to-date estimate that was available to me is that, in the September quarter of 2014, the number of apprentices and trainees who were actively engaged in training in Queensland was 76,000. That is one apprentice or trainee for every 30 employed people in this state. Those apprentices and trainees are undertaking training in a variety of roles, with many being in traditional areas such as construction, engineering and process work but also many in fields such as management, program administration and telecommunications. Unfortunately, the National Centre for Vocational Education Research recorded a massive decline in the number of apprentices and trainees immediately after the election of the former LNP government. Between 2012 and 2013, we saw a decline in the number of apprentices and trainees in this state of 20,000. This reduction came on the back of relatively steady increases over the previous decade—going from 72,000 way back in 2004 up to 10,760 in 2012. Not the least responsible for this rapid decline was the axing of QBuild's apprenticeship program. Despite the former premier making an election promise to bring down unemployment and meet the skills shortage by training 10,000 extra apprenticeships over six years, this program was axed.

It may be worth reflecting on the decision to slash QBuild and with it a significant apprenticeship program and its contribution to jobs, in particular in regional Queensland. In that regard, I refer to comments made by the former member for Gregory. Mr Johnson said—

Since QBuild went off the radar, a lot of these contracts are now being awarded to outside people. I appeal to the ministers in question, especially the housing minister, to make certain that this flow is stemmed and that the local people become the sole operators for these contracts. We are losing families. We are losing businesses. We are losing people left, right and enter from the west.

QBuild was originally established to deliver building maintenance and construction services to Queensland government agencies and provide support relief in the wake of natural disasters and major incidents. However, it also made a significant contribution to the delivery of apprenticeships in this state. It is now up to this government to work to restore the capacity of the Queensland economy to deliver new apprentices and trainees with this significant contributor now unable to contribute in such a huge way to that effort.

The Palaszczuk Labor government's payroll tax rebate is tied to the employment of trainees and apprentices and, on that basis, actively encourages the employment of this category of employee. It will give clear incentives for business and create new opportunities to cut through the stubborn barriers to youth unemployment in places such as Logan and Springwood in my neighbourhood and right across the state including, and in particular, regional Queensland.

This bill will also ensure that important construction projects are not delayed owing to skills shortages created by unwieldy or ineffective provisions that purport to crack down on organised crime. This government takes the matter of organised crime very seriously. Its high-level task force will report on this area by 30 October 2015. However, there is no evidence to suggest illegal activities involving motorcycle gangs in the Queensland construction industry. This government is reviewing the provisions of the Criminal Law (Criminal Organisations Disruption) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2013. Therefore, it is reasonable to first assess the outcomes of that review before imposing restrictions that would have a detrimental impact on industry or workers or their families.

I return to the government's focus on jobs. I note that the Finance and Administration Committee received several submissions from business and industry supporting the payroll tax measures. I note the comments of the National Retail Association, which stated with reference to the bill—

This will assist in increasing levels of employment in Queensland—particularly of younger workers.

The National Retail Association goes on to say—

This can only have positive effects on businesses employing those workers and on the Queensland economy in general.

I also note the contribution of All Trades Queensland, an organisation operating out of the electorate of Springwood, which has been established for over 27 years and has supplied skilled apprentices and trainees to more than 9,000 businesses across 47 industries. The All Trades submission to the committee inquiry simply states—

This Government's proposal is simple and transparent.

The Chamber of Commerce & Industry Queensland submitted the following—

A strong and productive workforce is central to business success and underpins full employment and economic growth.

Apprentice opportunities are particularly important for the development of skills by young people, which aligns with the State Government's commitment to address Queensland's soaring youth unemployment rate, and in turn positively impacting the State's declining apprenticeship numbers.

...

The provision of a payroll tax rebate for employers who hire an apprentice or trainee, as proposed in the Bill, is an excellent example of good policy that provides employers with a financial incentive to continue training the skilled workers of the future. Accordingly, CCIQ supports this Bill.

Clearly, there is clear support for this bill in the community. Its job creation and its other elements are measured and they are appropriate.

We are a government that is committed to jobs. As I said, we went to the recent state election with the Working Queensland jobs plan—a commitment to drive jobs growth in this state—and we are committed to delivering on those commitments. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (8.27 pm), in reply: Firstly, I would like to thank the Finance and Administration Committee for the work that it put into considering this bill through the public hearings, submissions and the report that it submitted. We can clearly see the value of a properly run committee process helping the legislative process. I would particularly like to thank the committee chair, the member for Bulimba, for her stewardship of this process.

It is unfortunate that I have to correct the shadow Treasurer and his side of the House on some incorrect figures that were thrown about during the debate. Sadly, this is becoming a little bit more regular but, on this occasion, I am happy to help out.

**Mr Langbroek:** What about the recession figures?

**Mr PITT:** We will talk about that. Members of the opposition have repeatedly referred to a figure of \$600 being the value of the payroll tax rebate. On the Office of State Revenue website, this equates to the scenario of a worker on exempt apprentice or trainee wages of \$50,000 per annum, showing a rebate of \$600, which is what those opposite have used as the figure. However, those opposite appear not to be aware that this \$600 figure relates to a single month only, also known as a periodic liability. Based on the given scenario, the annual saving for a taxpayer would be \$7,125, not \$600. So rather than the opposition's preferred comparison of a benefit of \$600 from the rebate versus a claimed one-off payment of \$6,000 from their measures, based on the OSR advice that I have, the comparison is, in fact, \$7,125 per year for each of the 2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-18 financial years. For the members' benefit, I table that page.

*Tabled paper:* Office of State Revenue webpage, printed 2 June 2015, titled 'Incentive rebate—Apprentices and trainees' [501].

So notionally we arrived at a figure totalling \$21,375 compared to the opposition's one-off incentive for \$6,000. When the opposition members mentioned figures in the debate, they got them wrong. When the Deputy Leader of the Opposition gets his figures wrong by a factor of 35 one has to wonder. There is reference to the \$6,000 incentive as 'the sorts of policies that would lead to spikes in employment'. If that is the case, if he is very positive about a \$6,000 figure, just imagine how positive he should be about our \$21,000 approach. I think that is something worth considering.

This payroll tax rebate is not a new initiative. The former Labor government had it in place. It makes one wonder how those opposite got it so wrong. We were criticised by those opposite about the government's projections in the MYFER when they thought they were Labor's numbers, when of course they were actually from the previous government's MYFER. If those opposite cannot get their sums right I am not sure where they will take us in the future.

As the member for Surfers Paradise continued, further contradictions occurred. Whilst on the one hand the member was supporting schemes to encourage the hiring of trainees, on the other hand he justified scrapping Skilling Queenslanders for Work because he thought that it should be something that the federal government does. The member even mentioned new initiatives in the 2015 federal budget as justification for the former government's absence of any skilling policy. Let me get this straight: apparently they should have done nothing and promised nothing in the hope that the federal government would have come to their rescue five months after the election. That is not good enough. Young apprentices deserve more than two levels of government passing the buck between themselves and not claiming responsibility.

In their contributions some of the members opposite occasionally went a bit off the reservation and tried to rewrite the economic legacy that they had left the state with. The member for Broadwater told us that the previous treasurer worked 'so hard to reduce the payroll tax liability of businesses'. The member for Clayfield did not work hard enough, because straight after his first budget the LNP government broke its promise to increase the payroll tax threshold. It broke its own promise and then it promised it again. One cannot trust its last promise either. In the 2015 election campaign those opposite re-promised their broken promise from last time to increase the payroll tax threshold. Once again this was an LNP promise entirely reliant on the magic pudding of asset sales. Despite the member for Southern Downs alleging that the LNP had a revelation and no longer supported the sale of Queensland assets, time after time today members opposite have referenced policy positions of the former government, including its election commitments for the 2015 campaign, all of which were entirely dependent on asset sales. Their costing document called out their payroll tax promise for what it really was: an empty promise with no funding attached. I table page 10 from the costings which clearly shows that despite making a commitment to increase the payroll tax threshold to \$1.4 million there was no funding allocated to pay for this initiative and no offsets identified.

*Tabled paper:* Document titled 'Funding Queensland's Future—Revenue Measures' outlining LNP election commitments in relation to tax [502].

This is in stark contrast to Labor's approach, with the costs of the increase to the threshold at \$255 million and clearly identified as something that was not fiscally achievable given the state of the budget left by the LNP and our \$45 million commitment to the payroll tax rebate for apprentices and trainees. Now those opposite have taken their empty promise a step further. With absolutely no discussion on how much it would cost and whether the budget could afford it, those opposite have repeated the CCIQ's request for every single business in Queensland to receive an incentive for apprentices and trainees regardless of whether they pay payroll tax or not. This would cost several

hundred million dollars per year. I do wonder how that would be viewed by the ratings agencies and how others would consider that sort of approach. Clearly they had not costed these things at the election. They had nothing in the line items in their costings document and now there is nothing in terms of how they would pay for something they are shooting from the hip on in opposition.

As the debate went on the views of the opposition on other areas of the bill got stranger and stranger. The member for Broadwater made some comments in relation to the amendments to the Criminal Law (Criminal Organisations Disruption) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2015. These amendments essentially delay the commencement of a number of provisions that were due to commence in July pending the outcome of an ongoing review into these and a range of other laws. The member said we cannot anticipate the outcome of an inquiry so we should not stop amendments coming into force that the very same inquiry is looking at. That is a very strange position to take. Furthermore, the member stated that all LNP members recognise the suite of LNP antibiotic reform initiatives and consider these as a whole. If we are to look at a suite of policies as a whole as the member for Broadwater says we must, then we are forced to include the pink jumpsuits in this suite of policies and we all know where that policy ended up.

I note the member for Currumbin was reminiscing today about the four pillars. She appeared to be making the remarkable claim that 95 per cent of businesses were covered by the four pillars. We know that the infamous four pillars make up only 27 per cent of the economy and 22 per cent of employment. I would be interested to hear more from the member for Currumbin as to how she arrived at the 95 per cent of businesses covered by the four pillars.

**Mrs Stuckey** interjected.

**Mr PITT:** The member for Currumbin, I should also say, has made a lot about what is happening with the CCIQ and others. I would suggest that the member take a very close look at what she tweets and think about that before she tweets. That is very important, member for Currumbin, and I think you should take some of that advice.

In relation to amendments to the Plumbing and Drainage Act and the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act, the member for Coomera spoke about the fitting of water meters being undertaken by people who are not qualified plumbers but have merely completed the relevant training modules. The member stated that one does not need the full qualifications to do the task. I am sure you can train someone who is not a mechanic to service the brake lines on your car and four times out of five you might be fine, but I would hate to be driving down the highway on the occasion when they have not got it right.

The member for Stretton noted that the number of complaints that a water utility received had skyrocketed from the 2013-14 financial year to the current 2014-15 financial year after the introduction of the current arrangements. This highlights the need to have correctly installed water meters. Unlike the previous government, this government has heeded the concerns of industry and its election commitment to restore high standards in the plumbing industry. We undertook to ensure that the installation of water meters returned to the hands of fully qualified and licensed plumbers. These amendments will remove the ambiguity around who may install water meters and in doing so the bill will go a long way to restoring confidence in Queensland's plumbing laws which were eroded under the previous government.

I note the support of the members of Katter's Australian Party for these amendments and their desire to shorten the transition period. While we reiterate that two years is the appropriate transition period, I do note that some stakeholders have raised legitimate arguments about addressing safety concerns sooner. In relation to concerns raised around remote communities and their access to plumbers, the fact that a community is remote does not change the standards in terms of public safety. These communities are already required to engage plumbers to do all other forms of plumbing work and we will continue to look at ways to support and encourage the licensing of tradespeople in remote communities. There is no point having someone who is not a qualified plumber in the community directly when of course we can have people within that vicinity to do that work. What we should be focusing on is not trying to stop these laws from being changed but how we can get people within the community of Wujal Wujal to do the training. That would be an achievement and we should be focusing on that instead of trying to stop this legislation. We need to restore the high standards to the plumbing industry.

The member for Glass House raised concerns around the ratepayers of Wujal Wujal having to pay more to get plumbers to their community. Sadly there are not enough ratepayers in Wujal Wujal at the moment but we want to do more, not less, to provide opportunities for locals to upskill themselves in communities right across the state.

Coming back to another key initiative of this bill, the payroll tax rebate, we are committed to kick-starting jobs and growth in this state. The rebate delivers on a key election commitment and is expected to save Queensland businesses up to \$45 million over three years if we are able to get the full participation that we would like. This measure will benefit not only employers and the apprentices and trainees they employ; it will also support the broader economy through reduced expenses. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

### Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 3 and 4—

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (8.39 pm): As I indicated in the second reading debate, clauses 3 and 4 deal with the amendment of the Criminal Law (Criminal Organisations Disruption) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2013. As the Treasurer said in his introduction to the bill, these clauses delay for a further 12 months the commencement of the amendments to these particular acts. At the time, his statement was that they would have unduly added a regulatory burden to the assessment of certain licensed occupations covered by the Electrical Safety Act, the Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act 1991 and the Work Health and Safety Act 2011.

This is particularly relevant to the Gold Coast, although it is relevant to the whole state in terms of the context in which the legislation was brought in by the former attorney-general, who is in the House tonight. The legislation was about excluding motorcycle gang members from working in certain licensed occupations covered by the abovementioned acts. As I have said before in this place, I was in Broadbeach that night. It became quite obvious that the government had to do something about a situation that had been allowed to get out of control by those opposite who had been in control in this state for a long time. It was something that we were very decisive and firm about, because Gold Coasters knew that no matter where you were in the city businesses such as tattoo parlours, massage parlours and locksmiths were involved in extortion. Given that our state has the most stringent prostitution legislation, it became very obvious that bikie gangs were using places such as massage parlours to launder money.

As I understand it, at the time the Gold Coast City Council made inquiries about some of those massage parlours, which were proliferating especially along the Gold Coast Highway, starting at Coolangatta and gradually moving north. Basically, the city council said that they did not offend the city plan. That meant that the issue was not just one for the police; it became obvious that many Gold Coasters were living in fear of their lives. Small businesses were being extorted by members of the outlaw motorcycle gangs. As I have already mentioned, over the past couple of years the member for Mermaid Beach and others have risen in this place to point out the situation that people on the Gold Coast were dealing with. However, former ministers, including Neil Roberts and Paul Lucas, denied that there was a problem even when innocent people were shot and killed in their houses and in the streets surrounding their houses. People were shot along the Nerang Broadbeach Road and people were shot at Broadbeach, just outside Kurrawa.

*(Time expired)*

**Mr BLEIJIE:** As the shadow police minister, I have to rise to express a concern about clauses 3 and 4 of this bill, which delay the implementation of the licensing provisions under the criminal legislation to July 2016. I raise it as an issue because I want to acknowledge that we delayed it by one year. We did that because there was a royal commission into union corruption taking place across Australia at the time. Guess what, members opposite, whom I know are all proud members of the unions? The interim report for the royal commission into corruption in unions is in and it is a damning indictment of the unions that they are so proud to be members of. The CFMEU is subject to fraud, corruption, bullying on construction sites and coercion at polling booths. I think criminal organisations actually get a mention in the interim report. Yet they have the hide to come in here and say, 'We are reviewing the current laws so there is no need to do it.'

We know why they are delaying this, just as we know why the Treasurer has put the plumbing provision in, as the *Courier-Mail* indicated today. We know that the deal with the unions was to make sure this was delayed so that the CFMEU members, some of whom are members of criminal organisations, do not have to stop working. We should rid the construction industry of criminal gangs tonight. There are construction industry workers—

**Mr Pitt** interjected.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** The Treasurer laughs. Has the Treasurer read the interim report into union corruption? I doubt it. It is more than a page and it is not on a chalkboard, so I doubt he has read it. It rules him out. It is a few hundred pages long and the Treasurer will have to set aside a good couple of weeks to read it. The report expresses concern about corruption. I look across the room and I see the members opposite—I cannot recall the seats that they represent—who are members of the unions. I thank the chief whip for the acknowledgement. He is a proud member of the union. They get up here and thank the CFMEU and the ETU, which are subjects of the royal commission. I take the thumbs-up interjection from the member. I do not know her seat either. It is such an insignificant contribution she makes to this place that I am not sure of it.

**An opposition member:** Pine Rivers.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** The member for Pine Rivers; I take the interjection. Two weeks ago in this House I tabled a letter from the independent Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, which prosecutes the biggest crimes in the state. The police are actively investigating the CFMEU in Queensland. Members in this place should vote to oust criminal gangs from the construction industry.

**Mr STEVENS:** I rise to support the shadow Treasurer and the shadow police minister on the outcome of this failed piece of legislation before the House. I was there at the coalface, particularly around the Mermaid Beach, Nobby Beach and Broadbeach areas when heavily tattooed gang members were present. Basically, right across-the-board, particularly in the building industry, the heavy-handed tactics that they employ are rife as reported in the inquiries into the building industry from down south. That reinforces why this legislation is totally inappropriate in addressing the ongoing problems that we have with those very corrupt and criminal bikie gangs that have infiltrated normal society, particularly on the Gold Coast.

As the shadow Treasurer reported earlier and as the Treasurer would know, for some time I have been public in my comments—I have even received some personal threats—about bikie gangs and their infiltration of Gold Coast businesses, particularly for cash-laundering purposes. They take 100 grand from illegal drug money, standover money and all the other illegal money that they manage to generate. They put it through the tattoo parlours or massage parlours. They pay 30 per cent tax and end up with 70 grand of clean money to invest in the community, in building sites and so on. Therefore, it is totally inappropriate that the legislation delays our ability to put in place mechanisms to outlaw those people. No-one wants them. No-one on the other side of the House wants those people within our communities.

Members opposite would be aware that the Gold Coast voted conclusively to support our dealings and those of the former attorney-general in this matter. Anything that robs the police of investigative power or sets back the judiciary in terms of dealing with those people is a failed piece of legislation. I am disappointed that the Treasurer does not understand the importance of this legislation to the Gold Coast and to our attempts to keep the Gold Coast as a family-friendly tourism destination. Big ugly men with tattoos who threaten to ride back into town and get back on the construction sites are a huge problem for the Gold Coast city. If the Treasurer wishes to ignore that, he gives very sad representation to people right across Queensland. Members opposite do not understand the importance of this legislation to the people of the Gold Coast.

**Mr PITT:** The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has risen to speak to clauses 3 and 4. As people are aware, those clauses relate to the Criminal Law (Criminal Organisations Disruption) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2013 and what we are trying to do in this space. Let me be clear. We have said this before and I will say it again: we know that we have a high-level task force formed to undertake a review of this suite of laws, as referred to by members opposite during the debate.

The role of this provision is to ensure that we look at the legislation to see whether it is effectively facilitating the successful prevention and investigation of organised crime and the successful prosecution of individuals. It does not make sense for us to have these laws enacted until we actually undertake that review. It would make no sense whatsoever to do so. We have been on the record numerous times saying that.

Delaying the commencement of the provisions for a further 12 months allows for the government's review of these laws to be undertaken and for any relevant recommendations that arise from the review to be considered. It does not make sense to not do this. If these provisions were to commence on 1 July 2015 they would cause significant delays in the processing of applications and renewals for a number of occupational licences in the construction industry, including demolition, asbestos removal, electrical work and high-risk work licences such as crane operating and scaffolding licences. There are concerns that any benefits arising from their implementation may be outweighed by the costs to workers in potentially restricting the ability of Queenslanders to commence or continue to earn a living in their licensed occupation.

I understand what the member for Surfers Paradise and member for Mermaid Beach are saying. They have spoken on numerous occasions about the violent scuffle that occurred at Broadbeach. We recognise that this is an issue of concern to them as local members. That is why we want to ensure that we have the best laws available to us to combat criminal outlaw motorcycle gangs in this state. That is why the Attorney-General is undertaking the review. We take these matters very seriously. We think that it is sensible for us to delay the implementation of these provisions until we have that review undertaken.

I make note that the member for Kawana is always entertaining. He managed to inject himself into the debate. He referred to the interim report from the Royal Commission into Trade Union Governance and Corruption. There was another report that came out earlier this week. He featured in it—sort of. They did not go into a lot of detail as to why the member for Kawana was essentially put into an LNP sponsored witness protection program for around six months. They hid him from public view. It was 'Operation Boring', particularly as it related to the member for Kawana.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I rise to a point of order, Mr Speaker. Clauses 3 and 4 are about criminal organisations. I do not suspect what the minister is talking about has any relevance to criminal organisations. He should take the matter seriously, just as he acknowledged the serious issue that presented itself at the Gold Coast. He then tries his little joker tricks. Mr Speaker, I ask you to bring him back to the clauses.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Minister, can you return to the clauses, please.

**Mr PITT:** I certainly will, Mr Speaker. The only reason I mentioned that is that the member for Kawana talked about the interim report of the Royal Commission into Trade Union Governance and Corruption. Yes, we have seen what that says. It says that there was no evidence of illegal activity involving motorcycle gang participants in Queensland's construction industry. That is what the report says. The member can read into that whatever he likes, but that is what the report says.

I reiterate for the member for Kawana and those opposite that by delaying the commencement of these provisions by 12 months we will be well positioned to consider the outcomes of the government's review of these laws. The impact of putting this in place will be outweighed by the importance of ensuring that we get the decision right. We must do that. We do not want to get this wrong.

I do take the issue seriously. I reject the assertion by the member that we do not take criminal motorcycle gangs seriously and the impact that they have on our community. I commend the Attorney-General for her work. She is someone who is, frankly, a real Attorney-General. She is getting the respect across the legal fraternity befitting someone in that position. Sadly, we did not get that with the member for Kawana who was consistently referred to as the article clerk.

Division: Question put—That clauses 3 and 4 stand part of the bill.

**AYES, 45:**

**ALP, 42—**Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Byrne, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Donaldson, 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, Pyne, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Stewart, Trad, Whiting, Williams.

**KAP, 2—**Katter, Knuth.

**INDEPENDENT, 1—**Gordon.

**NOES, 41:**

**LNP, 41—**Barton, Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Costigan, Cramp, Crandon, Cripps, Davis, Dickson, Elmes, Emerson, Frecklington, Hart, 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.

Pairs: Enoch, McVeigh.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clauses 3 and 4, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 5 to 72, as read, agreed to.

Clause 73—



**Mr LANGBROEK** (8.59 pm): As I said in the second reading debate, the opposition's concern about this part of the legislation means that we are going to be opposing this clause. The Queensland Water Directorate said at the committee hearings that making sure that plumbers were the only ones who can put in water meters is literally creating a protected market for plumbers. As we have seen in today's *Courier-Mail*, there is an issue around whether it is going to be O'Carroll or O'Halloran who will be president of the Plumbers Union after the weekend. That leads to broader questions as to whether they are affiliated with the old guard or Labor left.

We have the Treasurer saying that there are not many ratepayers in Wujal Wujal but someone has to pay the \$2,900 for a plumber to come in to put a water meter in. Obviously, using Labor's strategy it is the government that will pay. It will be money that gets to the council in some way. It is only government money which, according to Labor, is someone else's magic money. If it is not ratepayers who will be paying for it, it has to be someone else who is paying for it.

The issue is that, in a place like Wujal Wujal or throughout the rest of the state, it has been made very clear—and the member for Coomera made this point in the second reading debate—that in every other jurisdiction in Australia they do not need plumbers to put in water meters. We have had arguments from those opposite who brought up other aspects of plumbing, but they are not about putting in a water meter. We have made it very clear that when it comes to this section and other clauses that we are going to debate in a few moments we do not support a protected market for plumbers—and they are not just our words but those of qldwater. We do not support the Plumbers Union getting special favours. We do not support the fact that this was part of a bill that the former treasurer brought in and now it has been brought in under the guise of other legislation. We do not think it is appropriate. We will not be supporting it.

**Mr HART:** This is simply ridiculous. This is a position on which the Labor Party are going out and supporting their union mates. I was on the committee when this legislation came before my committee in the last parliament. We have a situation here where this is just another piece of equipment. Seqwater or any of those sorts of companies can put in all of this infrastructure—they can build a waste treatment plant, they can lay pipes down the middle of the road, they can put in all sorts of infrastructure right up to a house or a development, but they cannot put a water meter in at the last second just before the house. This is just ridiculous.

These things are getting more and more complicated, I must say, and there will be smart meters eventually. So a plumber is not going to have the capacity to fix the electrical side of a smart water meter. This is just a piece of equipment. All we are doing here is catering to our union mates, giving them back something for their support at the last election. Quite frankly, all this is about is undoing something that the LNP did. They are doing a lot of this sort of thing. They are going back and simply undoing these things for no good reason whatsoever. There is no good reason whatsoever.

We have already heard that this will be the only jurisdiction in Australia where you have to be a licensed plumber to put a water meter in—the only state. We are stepping backwards here. The Labor Party are taking us back to the past. I do not support the clause.

**Mr KNUTH:** I move the following amendment—

**1 Clause 73 (Insertion of new pt 10, div 12)**

Page 71, line 16, '2 years'—

omit, insert—

18 months

We have already made it clear that the KAP has long held the view that the installation of water meters is plumbing work that should be performed by qualified licensed plumbers. Plumbers in my electorate of Dalrymple have told me of the risk and business impacts of the former LNP government's amendments. Plumbers have also told me that tighter time frames are needed in terms of the transition period for the installation of water meters by fully qualified licensed plumbers. At present this legislation provides for a two-year transitional period. But my opinion is and the KAP opinion is that that should never have been brought in in the first place.

We have seen the magnitude of the job for the plumbing industry in terms of the major projects and the size of the water meters here in Brisbane. An average person should not be out there doing those jobs. Plumbers spend four years doing an apprenticeship. They work their guts out and all of a

sudden that job is given to someone else around the corner. This is professional work. We do not want our tradespeople to spend four years training and doing an apprenticeship only to give away those jobs. This amendment reduces the transitional period from two years to 18 months. I consider that as being sensible and I know that the—

**Mr Nicholls** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Clayfield, I cannot hear the member for Dalrymple. I call the member for Dalrymple.

**Mr KNUTH:** I know the plumbers in my electorate are very supportive of this.

**Mr PITT:** I wish to respond to the member for Dalrymple who has moved amendments—

**Mr Bleijie:** What about the *Courier-Mail* article? Respond to that.

**Mr PITT:** You'll get yours, member for Kawana.

**A government member** interjected.

**Mr PITT:** Indeed, you are very correct. In replying to the member for Dalrymple's amendment, we have spoken with the member for Dalrymple in terms of what his reasoning is around the shortened time frame. We have also spoken with other stakeholders this evening and certainly are aware—

**Mr Bleijie:** The union.

**Mr PITT:** Yes, we have spoken to the union. We have also acknowledged that in the submission of the Master Plumbers' Association—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr PITT:** They are going to attack the Master Plumbers' Association as well. No wonder they lost the last election. They picked a fight with everyone in Queensland and they have not stopped.

**Mr Nicholls** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Clayfield, you have had a good go.

**Mr Stevens** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Mermaid Beach, come on!

**Mr PITT:** Mr Speaker, I will do my best to ignore the member for Clayfield—I know plenty of his constituents are. In terms of what has been proposed, we accepted that the 18-month transitional period is something that the member for Dalrymple is passionate about. We have no concern with moving to 18 months. However, we reserve the right to ensure that if there is any suggestion that the time frame for implementation cannot be met then we will have to come back to the parliament and make an alteration. So we have no issues with this.

There has been no fixed view, except the fact that we had a commitment around two years because that was part of our consultation. I just want to reflect on this—consultation. We have managed to have a conversation with the crossbenches. We have managed to have a conversation with unions and other stakeholders. That is what the Labor Party does. We talk to people. I also say that what I have heard very clearly today from those opposite—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order, members! I call the minister.

**Mr PITT:** What we have heard clearly today is that we are being chastised by those opposite for fulfilling our election commitment. That is the absolute absurdity of it all. We have had a longstanding election commitment, one that we said we would deliver within the first 100 days of taking office which we are doing. We put this into the bill to ensure that we met our election commitment. It is a foreign concept to those opposite. They are not used to fulfilling election commitments. Look where they ended up on electricity—\$120 a year—'We can't do it. We can't meet it.'

Every time we hear those opposite talking about us on this side as a government fulfilling election commitments, they are talking down our ability to consult with people to come up with policy in the first place. Secondly, we expect that we will deliver on our election commitments because that is what Queenslanders expect us to do. Finally, I will get back to the other point. I am amazed that those opposite have failed to do any sort of research whatsoever. It sounds like the member for Surfers Paradise is very interested in the Labor Party. He is very interested in internal union politics. We have always suspected that the member for Surfers Paradise is someone who could well come

over to the other side. He is a moderate. We just never know. We are happy to talk to the member for Surfers Paradise. If that is the way he feels, let's bring him over. We certainly could use him on this particular vote.

In wrapping up, we make no apologies whatsoever. There is no secret deal. There is absolutely no secret deal. We fast-tracked this to meet our 100-day commitment because that is what we told Queenslanders we would do. We accept the amendment moved by the member for Dalrymple. We are happy to see how that goes. We will give consideration to whether we need to extend that period out to the full two years at some later stage.

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

**AYES, 45:**

**ALP, 42**—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Byrne, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Donaldson, 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, Pyne, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Stewart, Trad, Whiting, Williams.

**KAP, 2**—Katter, Knuth.

**INDEPENDENT, 1**—Gordon.

**NOES, 41:**

**LNP, 41**—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Costigan, Cramp, Crandon, Cripps, Davis, Dickson, Elmes, Emerson, Frecklington, Hart, 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.

Pairs: Enoch, McVeigh.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Non-government amendment (Mr Knuth) agreed to.

Clause 73, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 74 to 86, as read, agreed to.

Clause 87—



**Mr KNUTH (9.16 pm):** I move the following amendment—

**2 Clause 87 (Insertion of new ch 10, pt 9)**

Page 77, line 15, '2 years'—

*omit, insert—*

18 months

This amendment is consistent with the amendment to clause 73, which decreases the transitional period from two years to 18 months. I want to emphasise the importance of the plumbing industry and sustaining the viability of plumbers in terms of employing apprentices, especially in rural and remote communities. I have heard members from the LNP speak on this part of the government's bill and complain that Queensland is going to be the only state to require the installation of water meters by a fully qualified and licensed plumber. I know plumbers who live in rural and regional Queensland who are now leaving rural and regional Queensland because of the lack of work. One of the big parts of their job was installing meters.

We have said before that there is more to the picture than meets the eye. It is not just about someone off the street going and putting in a water meter. These are qualified people who spend four years training to do that job. We do not want other people—painters, butchers et cetera—being handed this job when they are not trained or experienced to do it. I commend this amendment.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** This amendment seeks to insert a new transitional provision in the Plumbing and Drainage and Another Act Amendment Act 2015. I note from the arguments that we have heard opposite that they have had to come up with a new definition to make it clear that the installation of a water meter that measures the delivery of water to premises is plumbing work even if that particular water meter is part of a water service provider's infrastructure. It is obvious that this is a sop to the Plumbers Union, who are basically looking to those opposite for excuses and reasons to say, 'We need to have more work for plumbers,' and, 'This is work that we now want to claim as our own.' That is despite the fact that it has been done in every other jurisdiction of Australia to bring us into the 21st century. Our opposition to this is in line with our opposition to the earlier parts of this bill. No matter how they have tried to conjure it up as an election commitment—and they may have got the unions to help them because Bradley O'Carroll said, 'We'll campaign on this in every electorate'—whilst this may be a commitment, it does not make good policy. It does not help the consumers who, at the end of it all, will be paying more to have something done by someone with qualifications other

than that of a plumber. The explanatory notes themselves prove that this is something that has been conjured up just to give a payback to the unions for their support. Most importantly, it is the consumers of Queensland who are going to be paying more because of the efforts of this Labor government. It is reprehensible and we will not be supporting it.

**Mr PITT:** This is essentially the same amendment as that which sought to amend the clause we have just voted on, clause 73. I will not take too long except to say that the member for Surfers Paradise talked about it being an election commitment but that did not mean it was good policy. It sounds a lot like Strong Choices. Frankly, we will not be lectured by those opposite. We went to the election with very clear parameters about what our election commitments were. Not only were they fully costed, which is more than I can say for the policies of those opposite, but they were well thought through and consulted on widely. We spoke to a range of people. This is the thing: those opposite are so intent on union bashing. Whatever it is—maybe they got rejected from joining a union one day. Who knows what it was way back when?

Ultimately, Mr Speaker, they do not like it. What we know is that every time they attack a union—in this case Plumbers Union Queensland—for somehow doing a sweetheart deal with the government, they need only look at what other stakeholders said. Let us be clear: is the Master Plumbers' Association of Queensland a union? Is the AMA a union?

**Mr Nicholls:** Absolutely.

**Mr PITT:** So it depends whether you are in government or opposition as to how you refer to them. Ultimately, the Master Plumbers' Association of Queensland believes that the transition period was excessive. They put that in their submission and we accepted the amendment by—

**Mr Nicholls** interjected.

**Mr PITT:** Mr Speaker, the member for Clayfield has an awful lot to say. We accept the amendment by the member for Dalrymple, as we did in clause 73. Those opposite need to understand that this is not just one view of one particular organisation; there are several views. They have made it very clear that they think the transition period is excessive. They anticipate that it should take no longer than six months to transition to an apprenticeship. We had a period of two years. We are happy to look at 18 months, and we will review that when the time arises. We will support the amendment.

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

**AYES, 45:**

**ALP, 42—**Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Byrne, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Donaldson, 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, Pyne, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Stewart, Trad, Whiting, Williams.

**KAP, 2—**Katter, Knuth.

**INDEPENDENT, 1—**Gordon.

**NOES, 41:**

**LNP, 41—**Barton, Bates, Bennett, Blejje, Boothman, Costigan, Cramp, Crandon, Cripps, Davis, Dickson, Elmes, Emerson, Frecklington, Hart, 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.

Pairs: Enoch, McVeigh.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Non-government amendment (Mr Knuth) agreed to.

Clause 87, as amended, agreed to.

### Third Reading

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (9.28 pm): I move—

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

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

### Long Title

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (9.28 pm): I move—

That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

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

Motion agreed to.

### MOTION

#### Order of Business

 **Mr HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (9.28 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That government business orders of the day Nos 2 to 4 be postponed.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Resumed from 21 May (see p. 822).

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy and Water Supply) (9.28 pm): First of all, I acknowledge that we gather here on the traditional lands of the Jagera and Turrbal peoples, and I offer their elders past and present my respect for their custodianship of this ancient land over more than 60,000 years. We have much yet to learn and understand from one of the oldest continuing cultures in the world, and it is my hope that our society benefits from a deeper understanding of the long and rich history of our country.

I would also like to acknowledge that I am here because of the people of the south side of Brisbane. I would like to thank the people of the seat of Yeerongpilly who have placed their faith in me to represent them in the Queensland parliament. It is a great honour to be granted this role by the people via a free and fair election in a peaceful democratic nation—something that so many are still fighting to achieve right across the world.

I commit myself to fight every day on behalf of my constituents for greater opportunities through better education and health services. I commit myself to fight for a fair justice system where people are treated equally before the law no matter what their circumstances; for a culture of government where people are treated with respect and their participation is valued and encouraged; for the right to a job and a fair day's work for a fair day's pay in a safe workplace free of discrimination; for the right of every person to be able to go about their lives without the threat or the reality of domestic violence.

I am aware that I follow in formidable footsteps in Yeerongpilly, formerly known as Yeronga before the 2001 redistribution. It is the former seat of Labor great Matt Foley, whom I welcome to the gallery tonight—a four-time cabinet minister and attorney-general at a crucial time for justice in Queensland, an MP who played a crucial role in abolishing the gerrymander as the EARC chair under then Premier Wayne Goss and, I might say, someone who did more than anybody to ensure women were adequately represented on the judiciary. Yeerongpilly is also the former seat of former minister Simon Finn, who is still much loved on the south side for his absolute commitment to flood recovery after the 2011 floods, and Carl Judge, a very decent man who bravely left a government with a record majority in its first year to sit on the crossbenches on a matter of principle.

Yeerongpilly is made up of the suburbs of Tarragindi, Moorooka, Nathan, Salisbury, Yeronga, Fairfield, Clifton Hill, Ekibin, Wellers Hill, Moorvale and parts of Rocklea, Macgregor and Annerley. I have had the privilege of representing many of those suburbs as a city councillor on the Brisbane City Council. It is a community with an increasingly diverse population. An important part of that community is Toohey Forest, which many people use, along with other remnant bushland areas, for recreation. I believe that is one of the reasons my constituents are so committed to the environment.

We have excellent schools. We have many state schools, such as Moorooka, Rocklea, Yeronga, Wellers Hill, Salisbury and Junction Park just over the northern border; and private primary schools such as St Elizabeth's, Our Lady's, Mary mac, St Brendan's, St Sebastian's, St Pius and

Brisbane Christian College, which will take over the now-closed Nyanda high school site in 2016. It is a great joy in this role working with principals, P&Cs and P&Fs to ensure students get the best possible start in life.

We have many active community hubs and clubs—Yeronga Community Centre, Annerley/Moorooka Senior Citizens, Annerley Traders Uncovered, sports and bowls clubs—right across the suburbs, as well as many local sporting groups such as AFL, Rugby, soccer at Tarragindi Tigers, and swimming the Yeronga pool. It is a thriving constituency of community activity and commitment. Just as I did as a local councillor, I am committed to working closely with all my community groups to improve the lifestyle of south siders.

I ran at the 2015 state election for much the same reason I joined the Labor Party in 1985, 30 years ago. I saw a government with regressive values out of touch with Queenslanders, a government which quickly reneged on its election promises and ruled Queensland—I use the word 'ruled' advisedly—like it was still the Bjelke-Petersen era. The environment once again was under attack on a daily basis and seen only for its economic value. Environmental sustainability was removed from coastal planning, plans to phase out sandmining on the magnificent North Stradbroke Island were revoked and protection for the Great Barrier Reef was ignored. Despite telling Queenslanders at the 2012 election that it had no plans to mine uranium, it took the former government only six months to jettison that promise to Queenslanders. I might add, there has been no mandate for a party with a pro-uranium-mining stance in this state since 1986—nearly 30 years.

There have been more than a few instances of major LNP donors receiving privileged access and treatment starting to appear in the media, just like in the 1980s. More than 1,500 nurses lost their jobs and teacher intakes were cut from about 650 per year to 140, leaving many graduates with no prospects of a career. Workers' rights and conditions were systematically undermined and laws were passed in attempts to nobble those who represent them in the workplace: the union movement. Our justice system was undermined and modern, effective legal reforms like the Murri Court, the Drug Court and diversionary programs were abolished. The law and order drum was beaten in a 'here we Joh again' exercise and some people were arrested under association provisions under the VLAD laws. Apparently locking up a librarian for five days was meant to make us all feel safer! Not surprisingly, unemployment in Queensland surged from 5.5 per cent to over seven per cent, ending at 6.8 per cent by the time of the last election. Of course, public servants were under attack not long after being assured before the 2012 election that they were safe.

When I knocked on thousands of doors during the election campaign I had the same conversation over and over again with public servants and ex-public servants. It goes something like this: 'They said we'd be safe if we voted for the LNP. Once the election was over they moved to get rid of thousands of us. It didn't make a lot of sense who was removed and we couldn't get the work done so contractors at higher pay rates were brought in to fill the gaps and sometimes, to rub it in, they were the same people who had lost their jobs.'

Within months of the election in 2012 I could see a Bjelke-Petersen 2.0 government emerge, all too quickly using the Robert Sparkes playbook from the 1980s of divide and rule. What is surprising is just how little, after being in opposition for 20 out of 22½ years, they had actually learned about the people of Queensland.

As someone with nine years experience on the city council, in the progressive and successful administration under one of Brisbane's great lord mayors, Jim Soorley, I could not stand back and watch this happen to Queensland and do nothing. I could not stand by and watch the award-winning Nyanda high school in Salisbury be closed without a fight. I could not stand by and watch ordinary Queenslanders trying to help the environment and manage their surging electricity bills with solar PV on their rooftops be vilified by the then treasurer as champagne sippers and latte drinkers. I could not stand by and watch parkland being sold off at Kellett Road in Salisbury without helping the community fight to save it. I could certainly not stand by and watch one of Brisbane's oldest train stations, at Dutton Park on the edge of my electorate, next to a major hospital, be closed—denying local people, including visually impaired people, public transport. I could not stand by and watch our justice system be eroded under the former attorney-general. I could not stand by and watch the bipartisan Fitzgerald reforms be unravelled for the first time in a quarter of a century. Today Queenslanders remain as committed as ever—lock, stock and barrel—to those Fitzgerald anti-corruption reforms.

Queenslanders have high standards and they want a fair justice system, they want protection of their environment and they want action to address climate change. They certainly want action to protect the Great Barrier Reef. They want a fair go by a well-resourced education system. They want

an education model which targets disadvantage based on sound empirical research centring on kids in remote areas, those with a disability, those from non-English-speaking backgrounds and those from Indigenous backgrounds, to give them a hand up. They understand the need to target limited resources to where they are most needed in the education system and are looking beyond the old model of public/private systems.

Queenslanders on the south side told me during the campaign that they need a more balanced transport system—that plenty of people are finding it far too expensive as it stands and are using their cars instead. We have to deal with the South-East Queensland rail capacity crisis, where the single inner-city river crossing simply will not be able to cope in a few years as it reaches saturation point on Merivale Bridge.

Many residents also told me during the campaign that they resent losing their right to have a say in new development proposals in their street and in their suburb under the new Brisbane City Plan, brought down last year by the LNP city council. They have no faith that the council is interested in enforcing the provisions within the city plan and feel that the council has sold out the community in favour of developers. As a former deputy chair of planning in Brisbane over nine years, I know they are right.

**Mr Nicholls:** That's what they said about your plan in 2000, mate. I remember you. You said the same thing in 2000. It was your plan!

**Mr BAILEY:** I take the interjection from the member for Clayfield.

**Mr Nicholls:** It was your plan!

**Mr BAILEY:** This is the second chamber I have shared with him and I might add that I have not spent a day on the opposition benches while I have shared a chamber with him and I do not intend to any time soon. Cutting local residents out of the development process inevitably leads to lower grade, more intense developments which do not take into account the community in which they are located. I call on Lord Mayor Quirk to immediately review his pro-developer City Plan and restore the dozen or so rights residents have had revoked under his administration and start enforcing the provisions that still exist in the City Plan. If you cannot have a say you have no opportunity to participate in the local development process. That is not an inclusive culture that Brisbane residents, particularly on the south side, deserve.

Importantly, Queenslanders want renewable energy and for governments to manage the transition to cleaner energy which is happening now worldwide. They expect state governments to show leadership and to work with consumers and the energy industry to sustainably transition to clean energy which helps to address climate change. As the new energy minister in Queensland, it is an exciting time to play a role in implementing Labor's election promises and to build positive relationships with the renewable energy sector to create jobs, attract investment and increase our renewable energy capacity in Queensland. South Australia has left Queensland behind in this regard, with over a third of its power now coming from renewable energy compared to only about a 14 per cent capacity here in Queensland. But I am happy to say that already this government through the Deputy Premier has approved a 225 megawatt wind farm at Mount Emerald which now sits with the federal government for approval in terms of power capacity.

Last week I held a roundtable consultation with renewable energy leaders in Queensland and will hold a broader forum this month to collaborate on the opportunities that exist for our state in the renewable energy sector. The Palaszczuk government is looking at industries of the future through our Advance Queensland plan to encourage business research and development and our \$40 million Business Development Fund to turn ideas into commercial realities. The continued hostility to renewable energy by the federal Abbott government via its reduction and then long-term avoidance of adopting a renewable energy target has been a disaster over the last 12 months as investment in renewable energy has plunged by 88 per cent and cost thousands of jobs across our nation, including the 1,300 jobs that we lost here in Queensland over the last three years. It is hard to imagine any other industry being allowed to plunge in such a way through deliberate government intransigence and inaction. While a reduced RET at 33,000 gigawatts is not preferable, it at least now gives the renewable energy sector some certainty to invest in projects and get them going.

It is also a pleasure working with our staff in the Department of Energy and Water Supply. I thank them for all of their hard work over the last three months as they get used to a new government and a new agenda. Likewise, I also thank the staff at TMR and our government owned corporations

who work hard. Working with the department and road safety stakeholders like CARRS-Q, RACQ, Queensland Trucking Association, Motorcycle Riders Association, Bicycle Queensland as well as the Queensland police and the Minister for Police as our first road safety minister, it is a great honour and privilege to look at how we can address the road toll which has spiked since the Easter weekend.

I am proud to be part of this government—a government full of courageous people from a wide variety of occupations who ran for the right reasons. To those who underestimate the Palaszczuk government, I wish them luck. Of course, to be fair, few thought that an election victory for Labor was possible in 2015 with 78 MPs versus seven after the 2012 election. Many of my now current colleagues knew that the odds were against them and that it may well be two terms before the former Newman government could be defeated given its mammoth and record majority, yet they ran anyway—a diverse team including teachers, a power worker, a childcare director, a few lawyers, four current or former local city councillors, some union organisers, some ambos as well as two former federal representatives. The Palaszczuk government knows about front-line workers because we have them in our party room. When I look at the Palaszczuk government in our party room I see real-life experience. That is the kind of experience that this parliament needs.

Equally, it is an honour to serve in a new Palaszczuk government that has 15 times the cabinet level experience that the Newman government had three years before, and doesn't that show! It is also an honour to be in a cabinet with eight women out of 14—a record in Australian politics. With only seven Labor MPs in the last term of parliament, I want to use my experience from the city council to help Labor rebuild and also to represent as strongly as I possibly can the south siders in the Yeerongpilly electorate. No party wins 35 seats in an 89-seat parliament in one election without effective leadership and solid policies. We put more than 50 policies to the people in January, and that is one of the key reasons why we received 50.9 per cent of the two-party preferred vote.

Perhaps no opposition leader in Australia has had a steeper cliff to climb than the current Premier, the member for Inala. The Premier has offered steady and sure government for this state—an inclusive government with modern values, respectful of people, committed to collegiate government, working with stakeholders and implementing our election promises, a government which has committed to working closely with people and listening. Over the last three years, together with our small and effective Labor caucus, the now Premier had the courage as the opposition leader to apologise to Queenslanders for Labor getting it wrong in the parliament from 2009 to 2012, reconnected with people and developed over 50 policies in partnership with stakeholders. Those who allege this government has no plan deliberately and conveniently ignore this solid grassroots policy spadework over three years.

I want to pay tribute to all members of the Labor team in the last term for their courage and their commitment, including the retired members for Mackay and Woodridge. Every MP in this chamber is here because of the tremendous support of the many committed and passionate people who believe in a fair and just society and are willing to fight for it.

I want to thank everyone who contributed to the Yeerongpilly Labor campaign over nine months. It was certainly an election night for the ages. The first person I want to thank of course is my No. 1 supporter—my mother, Beryl Bailey, who is in the gallery tonight. I am a kid from a single-parent, working-class family, inspired by Gough Whitlam and Gandhi as a teenager, who went to public schools and who had an education that was supported and prioritised at home. Despite my mother, Beryl, being—let us say—comfortably in her 80s, her energy and zest for life is an inspiration to everyone who knows her.

To my campaign director Sandeep Sarathy and assistant campaign director Felix Gibson, I cannot thank them enough for their commitment, good humour, energy and patience. To long-time friends Jo Justo and Lurline Comerford, thank you for being there always with no questions asked. Thanks, too, to my long-time supporters—Councillor Steve Griffiths, Councillor Helen Abrahams, Graham Perrett MP and Terri Butler MP as well as our diehard and committed campaigners Cath Rafferty, John Hegerty, Robin and Ken Boyne, Scarlett Squire, Steve Harvey, Mary-Ellen Ryan, Melina Chalmers, Dale Evans, Edwina and Frank Crowther, Simon Finn, Kym Haynes, Ines Almeida, Norm Bullen, Tom Dixon, Frank and Loretta Carroll, Rod Biesel, Amy Hunter, Steve Bredhauer, Jane McTaggart, Noel Morris and all of our wonderful branch members at Salisbury, Yeronga and Annerley branches.

I also want to thank the ETU in Queensland and its leadership, not just for its support of my campaign but for standing up for working people in Queensland right throughout the last term. Getting to know power workers over the last few years has been a great privilege. They are the guys who

work with industrial levels of power where if you make one mistake you are dead. They are the people who put your power back on under extreme circumstances. After Tropical Cyclone Marcia they reconstructed our power system in only 12 days—half the time it took after Yasi. I also want to thank the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union and the Rail Tram and Bus Union for their support—Owen Doogan, Rohan Webb, Jules Campbell and Peter Allen. It has been a great pleasure working with my current staff Denise Spinks, Ellen McIntyre, Karen Robinson, Kate Griffiths, Tamerlan van Alphen, Stephen Johnson, Gai Duffy and Pauline Peel.

*(Time expired)*

 **Ms DAVIS** (Aspley—LNP) (9.49 pm): I love Aspley, its heartbeat and pulse and I am proud to have called it my home for over 25 years. The people of Aspley are terrific people and I feel as privileged to represent them in this my third term as I did in my first. I know that I am here in this place because the people of the Aspley electorate have again placed their trust in me and I will honour that trust by fighting for the things that are important to my community so that our little part of the world can be an even better place to live.

As members of parliament, I think it is really important that, during our term, we reflect on our maiden speeches to remind us of what brought us to public service in the first place and to ensure that our promise to our community remains central to what we do. A key commitment that I made to the people of the Aspley electorate was to fight for the construction of the Telegraph Road overpass. For years motorists had been crying out for this vital piece of congestion-easing infrastructure—infrastructure that the previous Labor government refused to progress and one that I am sure the new member for Sandgate welcomes. As soon as we came into government, we worked very constructively with the Brisbane City Council and in less than one term, and ahead of schedule, the Telegraph Road overpass was officially opened. I am very pleased to note that, almost immediately following the opening of the overpass, we were hearing reports that trips were being cut by around 15 minutes. So that is an outstanding outcome.

I am also very proud that the residents of McDowall will soon receive a much needed upgrade to the sound barriers along Old Northern Road. As I speak, preparations are being finalised and construction is due to begin shortly with the well-worn timber barriers to be replaced by more resilient, long-lasting concrete barriers. As with the Old Northern Road sound barriers, I will continue to work hard to see that Carseldine residents on Gympie Road similarly receive sound-barrier treatment. The LNP took to the 2015 election a commitment to give the residents along the heavily trafficked Gympie Road similar sound-barrier treatment from Graham Road right through to the intersection at Beams and Gympie roads. These residents were looking forward to the barriers in order to mitigate the noise from the heavy congestion of this stretch of road. I am calling on the government to support this very important local initiative in its upcoming budget.

I may be a little biased, but my electorate has some of Brisbane's best schools. One of the great joys of being a local member of parliament is to be able to take part in and support local school communities and to see firsthand the incredible results that our students, teachers and parents achieve. It is truly a wonderful time for my local schools in Aspley. This year, Aspley State School celebrates its 125th anniversary with a series of celebrations that will be held throughout the year. Bald Hills State School will celebrate its 150th anniversary next year. It is almost as old as Queensland itself. I remember what an exciting time it was for Aspley State School when it celebrated its 100th anniversary. I was very happy to be part of that as a parent of the school. My eldest son, who had just started there, was really excited about the celebrations that were going to be undertaken and we certainly took part in them. These terrific achievements are testament to the hard work and commitment of the local school community and the incredible support from the community at large that has been shown to these schools over many years. So I extend my congratulations to Aspley State School and Bald Hills State School and I look forward to celebrating with them in the months and years to come.

I mentioned the incredible support of the local school community. I think there was no better display of that than last year when I hosted an education accord summit in my electorate. More than 40 teachers, students, parents and P&C members came together from all of the schools in my electorate. Their dedication in their participation in discussing and debating the future needs of our education system was just outstanding.

Of course, to achieve great results it is better to learn in an environment that helps, not hinders your child's education. That is why, over the last three years, more than \$3.6 million was provided to schools in the Aspley electorate to help address their maintenance needs and urgent repair backlog—

a maintenance backlog that grew under Labor but was addressed by the LNP government, in particular, the education minister. Equally important as providing a safe learning environment is doing as much as possible to protect children on their journey to and from school. That is why I lobbied hard to see the schools in my local area with 40 kilometre-an-hour flashing light signs. Each time a school would receive their lights, I was always pleased to learn that there was a noticeable, positive impact in driver behaviour during peak drop-off and pick-up times. I thank the former transport minister for his enthusiastic support in rolling out and delivering these important safety signs not only in Aspley but also right across the state. One of the cornerstone education initiatives of the LNP government was the Great Results Guarantee, which was a fantastic program to boost student outcomes. Nearly \$3 million in funding was allocated to schools in the Aspley electorate. That funding helped the school communities achieve the very best outcomes for their students as it was targeted to their local needs.

I am very proud to have been part of a government that delivered for Queenslanders over the past three years and specifically a government that delivered for my electorate. One of many of those examples was the Get in the Game initiative, where young people were encouraged to take part in sport and recreation. Around 200 vouchers were distributed to families in the Aspley electorate who could least afford it. In being able to help them with those fees, more children were able to get involved in grassroots sporting activities.

The Get in the Game initiative went to the heart of children's health and wellbeing, but our government also prioritised the health and wellbeing of the broader community. It was a great thing that Queensland had the former health minister on the case, leading the massive task of cleaning up Labor's mess in the Health portfolio. Locally, the improvements in Health speak for themselves. There were many examples of improvement, including when back in March 2013 more than 14,300 patients had spent two years or longer on the dental waitlist and by September 2014 that figure had been reduced to zero. I am really proud to say that, under the LNP, the residents of my electorate had shorter stays in emergency departments. When we came to government, 57 per cent of Metro North patients were in the emergency department for four hours or fewer. By September last year, that figure had increased to 70 per cent. In addition, there were improved ambulance response times. It was really wonderful to hear from residents about their positive experiences with Queensland Health. It was particularly heart warming to meet a dad whose son had been a recipient of a cochlear implant through the targeted program to reduce waiting lists for that important equipment. It had changed his son's life, whom I also had the very great pleasure to meet. The smile on that young man's face said it all.

On the border of my electorate is the Prince Charles Hospital—a terrific health facility and one that has served countless residents in my electorate for more than 60 years. Last year, I was delighted to take a tour of the research facilities there and to see just some of the outstanding work that that hospital undertakes to improve the future health and wellbeing of northsiders. The Prince Charles Hospital is a perfect example of how the LNP's commitment to ensuring that more patients were seen on time was delivering real results. When we came to government, under Labor, 95 per cent of category 1 patients were treated within the clinically recommended time of 30 days. But by January this year, with the LNP's wait time guarantee, 100 per cent of category 1 patients were treated at the Prince Charles Hospital.

It is no secret that the LNP in government was committed to not only great health outcomes but also delivering safer communities. Through additional resources and more officers on the front line, the residents of the Aspley electorate saw some really great results, including assaults down by seven per cent, unlawful entry down by 14 per cent, sexual offences down by 36 per cent and robberies down by 38 per cent. In September last year, I was delighted that an additional 10 police officers were posted to Brisbane's north side. That additional allocation came on top of another nine officers posted to the area earlier that year. It has been great to have these fine men and women through our various stations, including our own Carseldine station.

Whilst the crime statistics that I have mentioned are very encouraging, one crime statistic that has not seen a downward trend is that of domestic and family violence. Domestic and family violence is a scourge on our communities. I was very proud to be part of a government that established a Queensland task force on domestic and family violence that was led by Dame Quentin Bryce. It needed to be fulsome, it needed to be holistic and it needed to reflect the true depth of this problem in the community. It was about talking to people on the ground. We now wait for the response by the government to the 140 recommendations. There is still work to be done and this conversation absolutely needs to continue in the community. We need to ensure that we establish the right

mechanisms to keep victims and at-risk victims safe, to maintain family safety and to hold perpetrators to account. In the last sitting I was pleased to table an exposure draft bill which proposes a disclosure scheme similar to the UK's Clare's Law. I am already heartened by the support of this proposal and I look forward to travelling around the state to speak to stakeholders on this exposure draft.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank some outstanding people whom I had the pleasure of working with over the past three years when the LNP was in government. I would particularly like to thank my ministerial office staff, some of the most passionate and committed people I have ever had the pleasure to work with. I thank my electorate staff, Dan and Kaylie, for their phenomenal work in helping me serve the people of Aspley.

During my time as minister we made a significant investment in front-line services and we initiated an extensive reform and renewal agenda for social and human services in our state. This legacy has positioned the new Queensland government in good stead for some positive announcements that they will and already have made claim to. Our reforms were aimed at providing Queenslanders with the right services in the right places at the right time with a focus on investing in prevention and early intervention and giving Queenslanders a helping hand to improve their lives when it was needed. Our agenda was nothing more and nothing less than to make a real difference to the lives of Queenslanders. I would like to take the opportunity to thank the women and men in my former department for all their efforts and their continued dedication to supporting some of Queensland's most vulnerable people. One does not work in this space unless they have a passion and a heart for helping people.

I am very pleased that during our term we brought in legislation so that our non-government service providers now have less red tape to deal with so that they can deliver front-line services rather than poring over excessive and burdensome paperwork. I am pleased that we undertook renewal of youth programs so that some of our most vulnerable young people can now receive the appropriate services that they need. I am grateful for the input of the youth sector in this process. There was much to do and we got on with the job.

In Child Safety we set about delivering the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry recommendations to build a new support system for children and their families. We did this because what we inherited from Labor was a broken and unsustainable system that had a very limited focus on strengthening families so that they could keep their children safely at home. As a result of making this a priority families will now receive support earlier to care for their children and the capacity of the non-government services sector will increase to provide more of the services that vulnerable families need.

I am also incredibly pleased to have been part of a government that signed an historic heads of agreement to have the NDIS in Queensland and to have committed to almost double the disability investment by the time of implementation of the full scheme and to be part of a government that led the process for self-directed funding in Queensland, placing choice and control in the hands of people with a disability, their families and their carers—something that those opposite had 11 years to do and did not. The minister should be well aware that choice and control is central to the NDIS and this is exactly what the LNP was trialling in government in preparation for this significant reform. For the Minister for Disability Services to stand in this House and claim that her government has done more to provide for people with a disability, their families and carers in the last three months, then fail to answer basic questions that are important to them, is nothing short of astounding. The minister has insulted her own department and those in the sector who have worked so very hard over the past three years with government to ensure Queensland transitions smoothly to the NDIS. I can assure the House that, in my discussions with the National Disability Insurance Agency, they never, ever raised concerns about not having a formal trial site here in Queensland—not ever. In fact, they indicated that the work being undertaken by the department was positioning Queensland very well for transition in 2016. If the minister wants to play politics with some of the most vulnerable people in Queensland then all I can say is that that is disappointing.

The same can be said of the Minister for Child Safety, who has come out attacking the LNP for some of the findings in the recent Queensland Audit Office report on managing child safety information. In a hyped-up attempt to discredit the LNP, she has instead discredited the good work done by those who work so hard to protect children in our communities. In doing so the minister failed to recognise the very fine balance between protecting information and the need to exchange relevant information to keep children safe and out of harm's way. When in government the LNP worked hard

to fix the failing, overburdened and unsustainable child protection system. The manner in which Child Safety was operating under years of Labor government had become a problem for child protection workers. That is why we commissioned the most comprehensive review into the child protection system ever seen before in this state. In fact, had the minister done her homework she would know that one of the recommendations of that inquiry, recommendation 14.2, relates directly to the department reviewing the existing information exchange and confidentiality provisions. Her very own director-general acknowledged this work being undertaken in his reply to the Auditor-General.

While these antics may be the will of this government, the people of Queensland and the good people in my electorate of Aspley sit and wait for them to come up with a semblance of a plan. I fear they will be waiting for a very long time. I am very proud to be a woman in this parliament and I was particularly pleased to be present when Joanna Lindgren was confirmed as our new Queensland senator. I attended the preselection and I proudly gave my support to a women to take her place in the senate. This is in stark contrast to the Minister for Women who, as much as she talks the talk, does not walk the walk, because as we know, the Minister for Women is happy to bump a woman senator and back a man instead. Joanna was the first Queensland Indigenous woman to take her place in the upper house in Canberra and I know she will do an outstanding job.

In closing, I would like to thank the local branch members and local supporters. I am always humbled by the unwavering support that they give me. I would like to especially acknowledge some people for their extraordinary efforts during the election campaign: Len and Dorothy Smythe, Daniel Downes, Sally and Craig Myrtle, Denica Gordon, Marisha McPhee, Katherine and Matt Fraser and their family, David Cuddihy, Tony McKinnon, Rob and Giselle Pitt, Peter Askerow, Austin Wenke, Gary Mole and the enthusiastic Lilley Young LNP of which I am delighted to be patron. To my husband John, my children Richard, Rowan and Alexandra and their partners Tamah and Alysha, thank you for your enduring love and support. To my parents Marjorie and Jim, thank you for always believing that I could make a difference. To my brother Michael, thank you for being always available on the end of the phone in Melbourne and for flying to Brisbane and driving your big sister around the electorate on polling day. I look forward to working on behalf of the people of Aspley on issues important to them over the next three years. My door is always open.

 **Hon. WS BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Sport and Racing) (10.08 pm): When considering what I would say this evening I reflected on some of the elements of my first speech delivered just three years ago that provide some cause for reflection. Obviously, my first speech was framed from a perspective of political naivety. However, the ideas and principles that I spoke of then continue to guide me today. My observation so far is that the 55th Parliament is operating in a somewhat more civilised fashion than that of the 54th. That is a good thing, because the tenor and tone of the parliament reflects on all of its members. Perhaps I am sufficiently cynical to be a little cautious in terms of predicting the longevity of this improved environment; after all, leopards do not change their spots.

It has been my experience that the vast majority of members in this House are motivated by a purpose to serve their communities and society more broadly. Despite the temptations of political expediency that arise from time to time, it is important that members of this House endeavour to present themselves in a rational and honest fashion. I attempted to do so initially during the last parliament, and realised that I was bringing a pencil to a gunfight. Early in the piece I had my compulsory cup of concrete. I must publicly thank Jo-Ann Miller for taking the time to mentor me in that early period. Three years in opposition facing considerable odds with long odds for success was, in fact, a fantastic apprenticeship for me. I must also thank the members of the previous government for supporting me on so many occasions through their quiet reflection and deliberate consideration of my points of view.

In truth, I would like to thank those who supported me during the recent election campaign. Every member of this House knows that local campaigns revolve around a very small and dedicated team. While scores of people may be involved from time to time, only a handful is there to help the candidate from whoa to go. First and foremost I thank my wife, the rowing fanatic Kim, and my three daughters, Sarah, Samantha and Bonnie. Without their support, understanding, patience and, most importantly, tolerance I would not be in politics. As most of us know, families carry an undue burden when one of their own is in politics. The additional levels of public scrutiny and anonymous commentary are mostly unwelcome, unfair and in many cases completely disproportionate and unfounded.

As I said earlier, there are many who have had a role in my election campaign and there are a couple of people deserving of special mention. First and foremost is Davey Thomas. Davey is unrelenting in his support for the Labor Party and, frankly, he is an unstoppable machine when it comes to the operational side of running a campaign. Davey is a Vietnam veteran Army sapper; perhaps that is why we get along so well. I can say without any doubt that he is worth half a dozen other men and, without question, is the person who is singularly most responsible for my campaign success. I remain in his debt to a considerable degree. I also mention Marilyn Tynan, Steve Grant, Dan MacIntyre and John Phelan who have always been there for me when I needed help.

I have taken time to reflect on my first three-year term with a small group in opposition. Naturally, in that environment we formed some very strong friendships. For a small group, a shared purpose and a common enemy tends to do that. In my first speech, I said—

I guess it is normal for those opposite—

Referring to the then Newman government—

to be buoyed by their success and to be full of confidence. After all, nothing is sweeter than victory. But there is an old saying that it is not the size of the dog in the fight; it is the size of the fight in the dog ... I have to advise those who think they are unassailable because of the numbers that there are plenty of examples where, against heavy odds, small teams, pure of purpose, have defeated whole companies.

I reflected on the fact that Napoleon had once said that God was on the side of the big battalions. I presented a counter view expressed by Voltaire, who said that God is not on the side of the big battalions, but on the side of those who shoot best. For that parliament, Labor in opposition really was the thin red line. We also had a hell of a lot of fun along the way. Today I stand here taking some comfort from those predictions. For the opposition, perhaps it is an I-told-you-so moment, especially in light of the Borbidge-Sheldon review that was published recently.

I maintain the view that Queenslanders expect us as much as possible to work together and to work constructively on common issues, just as they expect us to compassionately and passionately contest our differences. This gives me an opportunity to reflect on some of the decisions already made in my role as the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries—decisions that I know already have had a positive impact on the lives of Queenslanders in rural and regional areas.

As the member for Rockhampton, I was well aware of the direct impact of bovine Johne's disease after the 2012 BJD incident in Queensland, as it occurred close to my electorate. At the time, the opposition Labor members approached the then minister to say that this biosecurity matter was not one that we wanted to make a political football, as we wanted to ensure that the producers on the ground were looked after and that the necessary measures were taken and would not be subject to unscrupulous use for bipartisan political purpose. That said, in my electorate I took a number of representations from graziers with different views on BJD. BJD remains at the centre of an ongoing national conversation. I am well aware of the national BJD review looking at consistency of approach on this issue. My point is that I was well aware of the disease and the opinions surrounding it when I was sworn in as the minister. Numerous representations were made to me in short order regarding producers who had reached the \$100,000 assistance maximum limit. I listened to the representations, consulted with the department and the experts who survived the various LNP purges and made a financially responsible decision that resulted in increasing the maximum assistance under the BJD Assistance Scheme to \$200,000 as of 27 March this year. I remind members of the House that applications for additional assistance close on 30 June this year.

In the short time that I have been the minister, I have already travelled to many parts of Queensland to speak with and listen to producers and graziers on the ground. It has been a bit of a revelation to note that individual sectors are, indeed, broad churches. On many occasions I have asked three separate individual producers about a given topic and received three very different answers. Therefore, while I have made a considerable effort to listen and engage, clearly not everyone will always agree with decisions when they are taken.

A couple of weeks ago, I visited Longreach to again participate in a community town hall meeting to discuss the drought. I can tell the House that I was somewhat surprised that the only LNP elected representative present was Senator Barry O'Sullivan. I was astounded that not one state opposition member was present, or at least I did not see any of them. While I was there, on the back of the recent drought declarations I announced that the Queensland government would increase the maximum DRAS support from \$30,000 to \$40,000 per annum for property owners in their third and subsequent years of drought. This measure was very favourably received by those producers now in

their third failed wet season. It is disappointing that the federal government has chosen not to renew its assistance to the Emergency Water Infrastructure Rebate under the DRAS support. I am sure many drought affected producers in Western Queensland are asking a simple question: why?

Also whilst in Longreach, the cuts the LNP made to the department of agriculture really struck home to me. In 2012 there were 15 department of agriculture positions based in Longreach. After the actions of the Newman government, there were 10 left. Looking through the agriculture department office, I saw room after room empty because of those cuts. In the community debate that evening, Senator O'Sullivan reflected on the fact that under the LNP 44 Public Service jobs had been ripped out of Longreach. He said words to the effect that this was done by the LNP and it was the wrong decision. In examining the results of the LNP when in government and the impact on staff in my portfolio, the bottom line is a horrifying 638 staff axed. Biosecurity lost 70 front-line positions at a time when everybody understood that biosecurity threats facing Queensland were escalating.

Perhaps as astounding is the recent commentary from my shadow, the member for Nanango. On 26 March this year, she informed the House that the LNP was—

... also committed to delivering stronger front-line services that were focused on people in the field who work directly with our primary producers. They are not sitting here in George Street; they are actually working in the bush. Those people work across all the regions and include new wild dog officers, tick control officers, crocodile protection officers, biosecurity field staff, agronomists, horticulturalists, fisheries officers and technical officers.

I acknowledge that the LNP did deliver 15 new officers, but at the cost of 172 full-time equivalent positions. I do not think gaining 15 and losing 172 Biosecurity staff is increasing people in the field and everybody in the department knows it. The problem here is not what Bill Byrne thinks; it is a matter for the member for Nanango. She is the one who wants to lead the department one of these days. Maybe she should think about what the department, that is, the people who remain, think about what the LNP did to them.

One of the reasons I joined the Labor Party back in the last century was that I saw firsthand the impact of the cuts and privatisation from the Howard government on the ADF, the defence department and Australia as a whole. That is why as the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and a member of the Labor Party I will strongly support the role of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries in Queensland and the ability of government to directly assist those primary industries to be ultimately profitable well into the future.

**Mr Nicholls** interjected.

**Mr BYRNE:** I am glad the member for Clayfield is here. For my remaining time I will reflect on a matter that he drew to the attention of the House during the last sitting week. I am, of course, referring to the Great Keppel Island development. It is not hard to track who has beaten a path to his door.

There are a number of matters that need to be appropriately represented at this point. There has been a concerted campaign and attempts to deny the history by some closely associated with the Liberal National Party regarding Tower Holdings and the development of Great Keppel Island. Unlike some in the LNP, I form opinions and comment publicly based on the best evidence available to me and my appreciation of the prospects of success for all elements of policy, projects or ideas. I do not run around building community expectations until I am convinced of the absolute merits and prospects of anything. To do otherwise would be irresponsible.

The recent debate surrounding Great Keppel Island demonstrates the old adage 'don't wreck a good story for the sake of a few facts'. I will take this opportunity to address the facts—if you like, the evidence to date.

In 2008 Tower Holdings shut the resort on Great Keppel Island and dismissed 110 staff without warning or reference to anyone—no consultation with the community and no prior warning to the workforce. From 2008 to 2013 Tower Holdings, surrounded by much controversy and alienation, attempted a variety of options for its development. Early iterations stumbled or were rejected outright by the federal Minister for Environment, and for very good reason.

In March 2013 the Great Keppel Island proposal was given approval to proceed. This announcement was surrounded by much fanfare from the then LNP government. I remember the statements in this House. So what happened? Absolutely nothing happened. We had all the LNP bells and whistles and nothing happened.

We then fast-forward to October 2013. This was seven months after the mob over the road had given approval to proceed and nothing had happened. The LNP announced out of left field a plan to offer new casino licences in Queensland. At the time, Labor in opposition made these comments via our shadow Treasurer—

The LNP Government has got wrong priorities. One can say it is a desperate act.

This government needs to be really clear on whether they intend to end the moratorium on new poker machines.

**Mr Nicholls** interjected.

**Mr BYRNE:** That is what we said at the time when, out of left field, you brought it up.

In April 2014 the media reported that Tower Holdings was entering a bid for a licence. In April 2014 Mr Terry Agnew and Mr Greg Norman, representing Tower Holdings, were quoted in the *Brisbane Times* saying—

The development would proceed without a casino licence ... and will go ahead anyway. There is plenty of cash sitting on the sidelines looking for investment opportunities.

I remember thinking to myself at that time that it has been 12 months since the approvals were given, and if this statement were true, why has the resort construction started? Again, in April 2014 Mr Agnew was further quoted in the media as saying—

It's not going to be a long campaign because already ... initial interest is terrific. I'd been to Asia many times in the last eight years, it's a good time to go to the international market.

This remains true today. The briefings I received in China and Hong Kong from Queensland Treasury and Investment staff certainly validate that point of view. It remains, however, that surely someone should have asked at some point that if that is the case, why has construction not started on the resort 12 months after the permissions had been given by the LNP? This has always been the central question.

Now we get to May 2014. The LNP deputy premier, the member for Callide, announced the successful casino proponents. Successful proponents are allowed to move forward to the next stage of the LNP process. All other projects and proponents, including Tower Holdings, are rejected and ruled out of the process by the LNP. Where were the howling protests from members of the LNP at that time? Where was the member for Capricornia in her strident criticism of the member for Callide? Where were the local LNP figures so vocal today astroturfing in dispute with the Newman government? I will tell members where they were. Nowhere as usual; they were invisible then.

So we get to September 2013, 18 months after Tower Holdings was given approval to proceed and a month after the licence decisions were made. Mr Agnew of Tower Holdings is quoted in the media as saying—

He hopes to finalise investment within six months with a decision in three months. Brokers are negotiating with a short list of 10 potential investors of which 80 per cent are Chinese.

That is fairly definitive, one would think, on the assumption that the company has always been completely transparent. Finally, in December 2014 the then deputy premier, the member for Callide, said in response to Tower Holdings' point of view about the failure of other proponents to move forward, 'If that happened there would have to be a completely new process.'

This is a first time for me, that the member for Callide was absolutely correct. What is more, I did not see the member for Capricornia out belting the then deputy premier then either. Admittedly, this is an abridged sequence of events, but I want to raise some salient points.

The Labor Party was concerned about the LNP's casino ventures from day one. The Labor Party did not seek a mandate to increase the number of casino licences in Queensland at the last election. Any such idea would require a very robust public policy debate, with potentially substantial social implications for some communities.

So where does Tower Holdings's present theoretical gaming venture end? Most casinos make around 70 per cent of their profit from gambling, with a considerable source of revenue coming from electronic gaming machines. The Canberra casino, for example, which is seeking approval to include pokies, is having terrible financial difficulty. In fact, the job cuts alone are not giving them financial viability. That view has been expressed by the operators. This includes comments from the marketing director who stated—

Normally 60 per cent of a casino's revenue comes from gaming machines and we're probably the only casino in the world that doesn't have them.

In light of these comments, one is left to question the entire basis of the current ideas for Great Keppel Island. Additionally, there is nothing boutique about 35 tables. At the moment, Townsville casino operates 27 tables and Cairns operates 38 tables. So 35 tables is hardly boutique. It is another fully fledged casino, less a gaming machine option or 60 per cent of its profitability.

The Labor Party has been absolutely consistent on this matter since the LNP started the process. It has been two years since Tower Holdings received their approvals for development. Normal people in Central Queensland are justifiably frustrated with the lack of project commencement. So am I. It is time for the community to judge those willing to make evidence devoid commentary. At this point in time there is no licence available for Great Keppel Island or anywhere else. The Premier has recently clarified that should one of the present projects fail to proceed the government is prepared to reopen a process that may lead to the reallocation of a licence. That was sought from the previous LNP government, I might add. Any such process would be open and meet all the appropriate governance and probity requirements. Any other approach would be preposterous and unacceptable to decent Queenslanders.

To quickly summarise, it was the LNP that rejected Tower Holdings casino application. Michelle Landry, the member for Capricornia, now vocal about this issue was absolutely silent all the way through the LNP's process. The casino projects were a creation of the LNP and Labor was concerned from day one. The LNP's casino processes closed long ago to new entrants. There are no casino licences to seek presently. I look forward, as everyone else in Queensland, to Tower Holdings proceeding on Great Keppel Island.

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (10.28 pm): I rise to speak on the address-in-reply. Firstly, I would like to say that it is with great humility that I stand in this House re-elected by the electorate of Mount Isa. It is something which makes me very proud. It is an area that I enjoy and I value the people that I live with out there and represent. It is very flattering to be returned with an increased majority by those people that I represent in what is a very vast electorate.

I need to thank all of those people who helped me in my campaign including Del George, George Ryan, George Tipping, Steve Wollaston, Steve Malone, Les Carter, Garth Power, Wayne and Diane Reeves, and Steve Borthwick. Many people worked tirelessly on the campaign. I especially would like to thank my family, particularly my mother, Susie, and my sisters and their children who came up to help me. It was a good time and I was very pleased to be returned with an increased majority.

I would like to reflect on the result of the election. I think it caused a lot of interest, going from such a large majority of the previous government. I would like to make the observation that the one thing that stood out to me in the election and progressively since I have taken an interest in politics is that people are becoming cynical with the system. A significant poll was released before the state election saying that people are becoming more disengaged with the process. I share this parliament with many well intentioned and very good members of parliament, but I think the system is failing us. I truly believe that. In a unicameral system, which we have inherited here in Queensland, I think it is unhealthy to have a system dominated by two parties. We have a very diverse range of interests.

The two-party dominated system is being rejected in other parts of the world because it does not deliver for the individuals effectively. Despite the best interests of everyone in this House and the virtues of each party that I would agree with, there is room for more parties in here and more robust debate. It is my proposition that that provides greater longevity to legislation that passes through this House. If there is more competition in the House then there is more chance of legislation having longevity, and we would not experience what we are experiencing now where we had a record majority before, ramming their agenda through unopposed, and now we are spending the first six months or 12 months of this term repealing it. I do not think that is delivering for people. I think that is the reason they are becoming disengaged and they are not inspired as they were by the parties. Despite our best efforts, I think the system that we have inherited is failing people.

I will reflect on some parts of that in terms of my first experience here in the parliament. I would have to say now that a lot of it was pretty unpalatable. There were a lot of personal attacks experienced in my first term in parliament which I think was a good awakening as to how it can be in here. I think that had a lasting effect on me. I will reflect on some negative issues from my first term in parliament. An example of where the system is failing is when the fair milk mark legislation was introduced into this parliament which was virtually cost-free legislation that delivered for dairy farmers. I visited the public hearings just to listen to farmers saying, 'Please deliver this,' and the Queensland Dairyfarmers' Organisation saying, 'Go for it, fellows. This is good stuff. This could save a dying

industry.' It really broke my spirit that night to see the parliament vote against the fair milk mark bill. It was not going to cost taxpayers much money at all, if anything. It would have given a lot of dairy farmers out there a chance to survive. But because no-one wants to support the crossbenches or a minor parties' bill, the major parties did not support it. That was the only rationale you could apply to that, so it did not happen.

We might be accused of playing politics with the ethanol bill, but we reintroduced the LNP's bill on ethanol to see that not even make it into the House from the committee system which again demonstrates that there is a failure there if policies that people agreed with previously are not backed because a crossbencher has introduced the legislation into the House. That is evidence that this system is failing people and is not delivering good outcomes. I think that is only going to come with better competition. You are only going to get better competition in this parliament if you break up the two-party dominated system that we have that the rest of the world is starting to reject. We are leaving the voters with a binary choice and they are voting governments out; they are not voting governments in.

Another part of the two-party system that I believe is destructive is the corporate interests. We have heard the LNP tonight criticising the ALP for being dominated by unions. But people critical of the LNP would say that they are dominated by large corporate interests as well. We saw evidence of that in many activities that came through in previous parliaments. Again, the way around that is to break up the interests with other parties so there is better competition for legislation in this House. I truly hope that I can be part of a change in this parliament in my time.

Other aspirations from my time in parliament are to focus more on development, particularly in the regions. It is not very obvious to people that there is a geopolitical bias. We are looking at doing the boundaries again. There are not many seats out there. I think I have a 10½ hour drive to get to the edge of my electorate. I really do try to get to all of those towns because it means a lot to people for me to get to those towns. I ran out of my travel money a few weeks ago, so I am left to drive everywhere at the moment. Both I and the member for Dalrymple spend nights sleeping in cars and at little outposts because we have to try to get around the place. That gives us less time to be in the office reading emails, reading legislation or dealing with issues. So we are already at a disadvantage when we come down here to debate bills, and that makes things very difficult. We are already trying to represent a smaller and diminishing group. The flip side of that is the gross regional product per person in the Mount Isa region is \$180,000, whereas in Brisbane it is \$60,000 per person. So we are of a lot of value to the state.

In the centre of my electorate is Mount Isa Mines. It was voted the most significant business in Queensland's 150-year history at the Q150 celebrations. It has dominated for many years commerce and business and industry in the state. When we say we want stuff for our region, I really believe that people in my electorate do not want streets paved with gold. They do not want brand-new shiny schools. We do not need the best hospitals. We just want a road that works for industry. We want our rail line maintained so that we know that the industry will continue to be there and we will continue to have jobs. That is what people want. They do not want trinkets thrown at them at election time. They can see past that. They really just want good roads and good infrastructure, because we know that that means industry in our area and it gives our kids jobs and there is a future there for us.

The reverse is true. In the last term—and I will pick on the LNP because it was in government in the last term that I was here for—we saw office buildings here in the city, a proposed \$5 billion tunnel, the Royalties for the Regions saw \$21 million go to Townsville for Blakeys Crossing, and Mount Isa got nothing. I do not begrudge people in Brisbane getting that infrastructure. It has some value, but there is not proper competition for where that capital or investment ends up. We do not have the votes out there. There is not the voting power but there certainly are resources, and that has been recognised federally in the great north Australia plan.

Everyone keeps talking about the fact that we need to develop the north. Governments need to get their hands dirty and put their hands in their pocket if that is going to happen, because the hurdle rates are too big for private investment. It is lovely to talk about that. I wish it were true and it might be true in some cases. But it is never really going to happen unless governments are getting their hands dirty and using public debt to make some of these things happen, as has always happened in Queensland's history.

There are many opportunities for that in my electorate, as I am sure there are also in all the other regional electorates. Obviously, I will talk about the Mount Isa electorate. One such road we have spoken about a lot is the Hann Highway, which has, all up, about 100 kilometres of sealed road

if we include the Torrens Creek-Aramac Road, which takes traffic off the Bruce Highway. If it were opened up to triple road trains, one triple would take two B-doubles off the Bruce Highway. They could travel down to Melbourne. This would benefit the banana industry, 90 per cent of which is located in Far North Queensland. Those bananas could get to Sydney and Melbourne eight to 13 hours earlier if they go down the inland route. It would take traffic off the Bruce Highway. It also provides that second route for produce if there is flooding cutting off the Bruce Highway. Figures being thrown around at the moment put the spend for the Hann Highway itself at \$70 million to \$90 million, depending on who is building it. That is a pretty affordable project and that would be a good asset for Australia to have. I might mention that the beneficiaries of that project would be outside of my electorate, but it is something that I believe is a good, strategic spend for any government to undertake. It is not popular because there are not a lot of votes out there, but it does make a lot of sense.

There are irrigation schemes on the Flinders River. Recently I spent the afternoon with Corbett Tritton. There are about five farmers on the Flinders at the moment who have all grown organically. Most of them have been cattle producers. They did not have a lot of expertise. They have worked away at it. They have invested in themselves and they have grown. Essentially, at the time they developed, the government got out of their road and just said, 'Away you go, fellows. Here's your water licence.' They did not cost the taxpayer anything and they built that. They have gone from little cattle properties that employed just the mum and dad to employing five people. If there are three, four or five of those farms in Julia Creek and Richmond they are putting 20 more people in town. That is a huge benefit and costs us in here nothing. That water is just flowing out to sea every few years; there is plenty of it. It is a good innovator and an easy way for us to stimulate those areas.

The ethanol industry—and members are going to hear about it ad nauseam in this parliament—is a cost-effective way for us to stimulate the economy. There will be a lot of debate over how it should be rolled out. It has to be pushed. We cannot just passively say, 'Let's all cuddle and kiss each other and tell the world we love biofuels,' and hope that they use it. There needs to be some force. Today there seems to be a complete aversion to making anyone do anything. Guess what? You have to make them do this because it has to happen. We have to make this happen for Queenslanders. It is an industry that can lead us into the second generation of biofuels and bioplastics, which is a really exciting place. It is renewable and we could be globally competitive in that forever more. Exciting things can come off the back of that but it starts with ethanol and fuel. That is where the technology and the development will start. It provides great opportunities for not just Queensland but also Australia. Queensland can be the champion of that. This parliament can deliver it if we deliver it properly.

I would like to talk a bit about productive infrastructure as opposed to populist infrastructure, which was alluded to previously. I get very frustrated personally when debate always comes back to debt. To me it is a very one dimensional approach. I often think to myself, 'What is the point of patting ourselves on the back in five years time saying we've delivered a surplus if we have jobs and industry collapsing everywhere throughout the state?' That is not advocating pure Keynesian economics where we are throwing money at anything. I would not necessarily advocate throwing it at something like the school buildings program or the pink bats program. However, there is so much productive infrastructure out there that can build our competitiveness. Unfortunately, a lot of it lies in those areas that do not have a lot of votes. It is going to take some leadership to deliver that. It is what people desperately need. I really truly believe that if people in metropolitan areas who, in some cases, might take full advantage of productive infrastructure that might be in there, see a government building in these regions where they know there is industry, I think they will be very accepting of whatever debt levels are at the back end of that government knowing that they have a government that is rebuilding Queensland. They are not tossing it against some populist infrastructure in the city; it is hard infrastructure that they can see is going to build industry. I think too many of the projects that are coming out at the moment are touted as being productive. I am sure people derive some utility from them, but on a competitive basis they would not stand up to all the other opportunities that we have out in the regions, some of which I alluded to earlier.

I would dearly love to see a change in the economic agenda. Supply side economics has had its turn, it has had its run and I think it is failing us federally. Supply side economics is not going to deliver us out of the economic doldrums. Synchronising ourselves with the business cycle—we have a slowdown now; the government needs to spend, but it needs to spend wisely. I often use that quote of Dr Ken Henry at an infrastructure symposium when he said—

... it makes perfectly good sense for public debt to be raised to invest in public infrastructure ... Our problem is not that we spend too little. It's that we don't spend well.

There are too many populist decisions made by governments about building traffic tunnels that no-one wants. Brisbane has established itself as the nation's tunnel capital. I think we now have some 19 kilometres of tunnels versus Sydney's 12. We are the champion of populist infrastructure, if you like, on the basis of traffic tunnels. Essentially, people can see through that. The general public know that if the government is serious about building industry, industry very much lives out in the regions. There are many opportunities regarding that.

The last thing I would like to touch on is the rural crisis. This is a very dark and troubling issue for me because every town that I go into in my electorate is on the ropes. Good families and people that I know, friends I have gone to school with and grown up with are really worried. When they talk to me they say, 'Rob, so-and-so left town. They just know there is no future here.' It hurts me to hear them say that because I know they love the town they grew up in. It is very hard to see the way ahead. I remember talking to a mayor last year. I was talking about the reconstruction board of development and he said, 'Essentially, I agree with you, but that ship has sailed, Rob. I've got 10 to 12 people who haven't paid their rates for a year. Even if we get rain at the end of this year, none of them can afford to buy cattle to get themselves back on their feet and the bank won't lend them that money.' Just in my little shire alone I have 13 people who face foreclosure due to rates alone. If honourable members multiply that by 10, they can see the situation that the banks are facing. We are facing a massive fallout out there. That means that no-one is spending money in the towns. I would suggest that some of these businesses in towns, even the grocery stores, are doing it worse and they are looking for an answer.

I have not been coming down here asking for cash handouts, which I probably should do; I have been asking for a reconstruction board. That is just to stop them haemorrhaging and let them trade their way out of this, which they will. It has been done before in Queensland and Australian history. It is a cost-effective solution to the taxpayer. It is not asking for a cash handout; it will be paid back. It can help these people and it is one of the best ways we can do that. If we cannot deliver that this time, it will be bitterly disappointing to me. I would like to look at it the other way: it is a great thing that this government could offer them. It could demonstrate that they have the leadership to be able to deliver something like that that has not been delivered for some time in Australia. It reeks of industry support, which I think offends a lot of bureaucrats in these positions now, who hate the thought of any industry support because they think that governments should stay out of the marketplace. These people need help and these towns need help, and that is the only thing that is going to help them. It is something that we need to deliver in order to help them out of this rural crisis.

Debate, on motion of Mr Katter, adjourned.

## ADJOURNMENT

**Mr HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.49 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Before commencing the adjournment debate, some members have asked that I convey members' birthday wishes to our chamber supervisor, Angie Jones. Happy birthday, Angie!

**Honourable members:** Hear, hear!

### Pyjama Foundation; Rawlings, Mr E

 **Ms DAVIS** (Aspley—LNP) (10.49 pm): Last week I had the pleasure of catching up with Bronwyn Sheehan, CEO and founder of the Pyjama Foundation, along with pyjama angel Carina, to hear some great stories of the positive impact the simple act of reading can have on a child's learning. This wonderful organisation is dedicated to improving the literacy skills of children in out-of-home care, and I was pleased to lend my support by donating a collection of children's books written by award-winning Aspley author, Jennifer Poulter.

Mr Speaker, the Pyjama Foundation is built on the generosity of its Pyjama Angels. The Pyjama Angels volunteer their time as part of a learning-based mentoring program known as the Love of Learning Program, where one volunteer is matched to a child in care and spends time reading books aloud and playing educational games. The benefits of this program for the more than 1,100 foster children that participate cannot be overstated. When in government the LNP was committed to supporting great initiatives such as this, which is why we earmarked additional funding to help even more children through the expansion of the foundation's reading program. I am pleased this funding has now been received.

Tonight I would like to pay tribute to a wonderful Aspley local Earle Rawlings, whose recent passing is a great loss to our community. His funeral was a fitting tribute to a loving family man whose contribution to our local area was duly honoured. Earle had a stellar career. He started working for Queensland Treasury in 1949 while studying for a degree in accounting at the University of Queensland. During that time he was encouraged by a court reporter to undertake study in Pitman high-speed shorthand, which he completed in 1954. Twenty years later in 1974 Earle was appointed Chief Court Reporter at the State Reporting Bureau—the youngest ever in Queensland. He retired in 1990. In 1994 Earle was inducted into the Shorthand Reporters Association of Australia Hall of Fame, and in 2002 he was awarded the Order of Australia Medal.

On retiring he did not keep still. He continued to volunteer his time to improve the lives of others, whether it was transporting senior citizens to their appointments, coordinating over 1,000 volunteers to build the Kidspace playground in the Seventh Brigade Park or establishing a computer course at Aspley classes for seniors. He was a founding member of the Aspley Scout group, and for more than 50 years Earle was a committee member. Earle was also an active member of the Aspley Lions Club, where he played a vital role in raising funds for charity and community improvement. In 2013 I was delighted to present Earle with the Neighbourhood and Local Citizenship Award as part of my Aspley Achiever Awards.

I would like to offer my sincere condolences to Earle's wife, Hilda, his children, Janine and Murray, and his family and loved ones. Every community has local champions: people who again and again will go out of their way and give all that they can to help those in need. Mr Speaker, Earle Rawlings was such a person—a true gentleman and local hero.

### **Great Barrier Reef, Water Quality**

 **Mr STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (10.52 pm): I would like to advise the House that I recently had the pleasure of conducting a tour with the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef of the Australian Institute of Marine Science, or AIMS, which is about a 20-minute drive south of Townsville. While at that facility we were given a tour through the National Sea Simulator, or SeaSim, which was opened in 2013 at a cost of \$35 million. This facility is state-of-the-art, cutting-edge and one of a kind anywhere in the world. It is the only facility in the world to have the capacity to understand the cumulative effects of multiple pressures, including climate change, ocean acidification, declining water quality and marine pests on tropical marine ecosystems.

As we all know, UNESCO placed the Great Barrier Reef on notice to be listed as endangered unless there were significant improvements. Fortunately, just this Friday past UNESCO announced that the reef would not be placed on the endangered list due largely to the strategies introduced by the Palaszczuk government. The Palaszczuk government, through Minister Miles, has set ambitious targets to improve water quality by reducing nitrogen run-off by up to 80 per cent and suspended sediment run-off by up to 50 per cent from key catchment areas by 2025. To achieve these ambitious targets and to implement effective strategies to address this specific problem, the Palaszczuk government announced that it would attribute \$100 million over five years to help science and research continuously evolve to inform the development and adoption of best practices to bring benefits to the reef.

The Palaszczuk government has always said that it would listen to, and collaborate with, key stakeholders in the community. That will bring a balanced, fair and future-looking perspective to the table. It has introduced a task force of experts from science, business, agriculture and community sectors to advise the government on how best to achieve these ambitious water quality improvement targets. I can tell you, Mr Speaker, that they will meet for the first time tomorrow. Unlike the former Newman government, the Palaszczuk government understands and is committed to protection of the Great Barrier Reef and is willing to commit to: banning offshore dumping of capital dredge spoil within the Great Barrier Reef; implementing vegetation protection laws in consultation with landholders to minimise damage run-off to the reef; reinstate coastal planning laws axed by the LNP government; and repeal the LNP government's water laws, which would have had a detrimental effect on the Great Barrier Reef catchment areas. These are measures that every government should be doing to protect our reef. Unfortunately, this is not what was done under the former LNP government.

### Beaudesert Electorate

 **Mr KRAUSE** (Beaudesert—LNP) (10.55 pm): It was my pleasure on the weekend to attend the Scenic Rim Clydesdale Spectacular at the Boonah showgrounds. It is an exhibition of all things Clydesdale. It is now into its third year and continues to go from strength to strength. This year it was added to by having a Highland gathering, where people of Scottish heritage from all around South-East Queensland converged on Boonah and had a terrific day. We actually had a visit from Her Majesty the Queen to open officially the event, which was a highlight for the locals. I would take this opportunity to thank Valkyrie Blacksmith and her husband Cameron for their work and everyone else who was involved with the Highland gathering. I would also like to thank Rick Stanfield, one of the Scenic Rim councillors, who puts a lot of hard work in the Clydesdale Spectacular.

It is all happening in the Scenic Rim. We have Eat Local Week coming up in the last week of June and the first week of July. It was launched at GoMA two weeks ago, and I encourage everybody here in the House to visit the Scenic Rim for Eat Local Week. We make some of the finest fresh produce in the country, and it is less than an hour from where we stand here. We have some of the best farmers in the country, and during Eat Local Week there are many opportunities to partake in some wonderful local produce at many of our excellent restaurants. I look forward to visiting a lot of them during the week.

There has been a lot going on. A couple of weeks ago we had camel races going on in Jimboomba at Emmaus College where all three levels of government were represented. I have to say that the federal member for Wright was represented in that race although he did not actually get on the camel—which was probably fortunate for the camel. Unfortunately I again went down to local councillor Trevina Schwarz in that camel race. She beat me again! She has beaten me a couple of times in camel races, but it is for a good cause. Emmaus College is a fantastic college, and I congratulate them on the great fair that they put on again this year.

Also last weekend Jimboomba State School celebrated its 125th anniversary. Back in 1890 when it began as Jimboomba Provisional School it was a very small school with about 12 students. I congratulate the school for putting on a very good event on Saturday. There is a lot of activity happening. We also have an Early Education Childhood Forum being held at Kalbar State School on 8 June. Kalbar is our independent public school in Fassifern, and I commend the initiative of the principal Chris Muir in bringing together early childhood experts to focus on early childhood issues and the development of early literacy skills.

### Italian National Day

 **Ms GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (10.58 pm): The Story Bridge is lit up tonight in the Italian colours of red, white and green to mark Italian National Day. It was a pleasure this evening to join hosts the Consul of Italy for Queensland, Ludovico Carlo Camussi, and president Santo Santoro of the Italian Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland at a reception to celebrate Italian Republic Day, the national day of Italy.

Today we celebrate the 69th anniversary of the foundation of the republic of Italy, born on 2 June 1946. It was on this day that the Italian population was called on to decide what form of government to give the country after the Second World War and the fall of fascism. I also want to wholeheartedly congratulate my good friend Mr Antonio Palella, who was awarded an Italian knighthood for his services to the Italian community by Consul Camussi this evening.

Italy voted to establish the Italian Republic and abolish the monarchy and proudly celebrate this auspicious day. But in true Italian spirit, one single day of celebrations is not enough and we have been celebrating for a week. We have been enjoying and toasting everything Italian. As a proud Italo-Australian I have enjoyed immensely attending the many events that have been organised, starting with the official launch last week at the Treasury Hotel, where the open-air courtyard was transformed into an Italian piazza with matching foods and wines. CEO Geoff Hogg, Alison Smith, GM Corporate Affairs and their team did a fantastic job in kicking off the week-long celebrations. It was a great night.

Over the weekend the celebrations did not stop, with the Festa della Repubblica held by the co.as.it at the Brisbane Abruzzo Club, Carina, where I attended with the member for Sunnybank. Many thanks to co.as.it president Nereo Brezzi and director Dina Raineri and of course all the hardworking volunteers who made Sunday a great success. Sunday morning Italian mass at Holy Spirit in New Farm was followed by festivities in New Farm Park, where An Italian Affair street festival ensured you could sample all that is wonderful about Italy—its food, wine and music.

The crowds that attended the many events over the past week are testimony to the strong engagement of all the Italians across Queensland in coming together to celebrate Italian history, heritage and culture—not forgetting of course music, dancing, pizza, pasta and vino. Many thanks to all those involved in organising a very successful week of Italian celebrations.

I wish to formally acknowledge the valuable contributions of Queensland's proud Italian community. I mean, we were not able to get a good coffee in Brisbane until the Italians arrived! And imagine life without pizza, pasta, Italian bread, olive oil and gelato. I wish everyone a very happy Festa della Repubblica. Viva Italia!

### Warrego Electorate, Shows

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (11.01 pm): I am delighted tonight to be able to talk about the local shows in my electorate of Warrego. I was able to attend the 67th annual Jandowae Show and met with Mrs Lillian Krog, patron of the show and also show secretary. Mrs Krog has volunteered for many years, and I thank her for her support and what she has given to her community and the show society. At the Dirranbandi Show, local icon Doug Deshon kept everybody entertained with his official opening address. Marty Sullivan and Caitlin Crothers and their committee again produced an outstanding show, despite the unfavourable climatic conditions in the region.

Wallumbilla Show president Grant Swan, secretary Andy Klein and their new committee succeeded in growing the exhibits and boosted the attendance numbers by offering free gate entry at Wallumbilla this year. St George Show president Ben Gardiner and his team had a beautiful autumn day and a shower of rain before the show. They organised a show with no dust—absolutely amazing. They did a great job in organising the 2015 St George Show.

I was invited to open the 129th Roma Show and the blessing of the plough. Kevin Pope, Teresa Badgery and committee members honoured long-serving volunteer Ray Waldron, who had for 20 years worked as the showjumping ring steward. Ray is a wealth of knowledge and it is always a pleasure to work with him.

I opened the 99th Mitchell Show. Steve Hancock, Lainie Morris and Christine McLean and the committee organised an outstanding show with all sections full, and I am pleased to report that planning is well underway for the 100th Mitchell Show. The Charleville Show again provided free gate entry this year, and secretary Emma Liston and her team did an outstanding job on the 2015 show. I was delighted to attend. Greg Stanke, Lisa Walsh, Chantal Kelly and the Chinchilla Show Committee also invited me to open the 103rd Chinchilla Show. Despite the low cloud and some mist it was great to see the Chinchilla locals out strongly supporting their show.

Last but not least in the Warrego electorate was the 61st Cunnamulla Show. Shaun Fagan, Amy McKenzie and Jess Thompson—a great young committee—did an outstanding job in difficult economic and climatic circumstances.

I would like to thank all the show patrons, show society committees, stewards, volunteers, competitors and exhibitors who have contributed to the success of the shows across the Warrego electorate this year. In conclusion, I have to say that one of the highlights at both Mitchell and Cunnamulla was the pig races. I can tell you: they were very happy little pigs that were racing this year.

### Samford Riding for the Disabled

 **Mr FURNER** (Ferry Grove—ALP) (11.04 pm): Recently having had some prior exposure to the good work the Samford RDA does for persons with disabilities, I was fortunate enough to spend some time with president Clare Emerson, secretary Jane Marsh and others at the Jenny O'Malley Arena, Samford Showgrounds.

Samford Riding for the Disabled is a voluntary, not-for-profit organisation which provides an amazing therapeutic, wholesome experience for disabled children and adults. Many riders with intellectual, specific learning disorders, injuries from accidents, central palsy, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's, autism and many more benefit from their close engagement with the beautiful horses. Interactions with horses provide riders with improvement in core strength and stability, development of coordination and balance, enhancement of speech and communication skills, confidence building and social interaction. In addition, the volunteers gain a sense of fulfilment in assisting the riders at the same time as spending time in open space with beautiful horses.

Samford RDA horses and riders are always active in many events in and around the village. I remember during the election campaign seeing Peter Pan at the Samford Quilt Show and recently riders Andrew and Craig laying a wreath on Anzac Day at the Samford Avenue of Honour.

Earlier this year I donned a tux and went along to the Night to Remember event at the Samford Farmers Hall. It certainly was a night to remember, with many of the locals having a fine night of entertainment while raising funds for Samford RDA and the farmers hall. During the night I was approached by one of the Samford RDA members requesting assistance. Without hesitation I was offering whatever I could to provide the most benefit to the organisation. So in late April, on a beautiful autumn morning, I attended the showgrounds to sign up to a year's gold sponsorship and meet face to face my sponsored horse, Charlie Bun. The gold sponsorship will provide feed, shoeing and vet bills for this beautiful bay gelding of 13 years. Charlie Bun, or Charlie Gun, a former racehorse with 53 starts and a winner, now graces the Jenny O'Malley Arena, winning the hearts of all those children and adults who are lucky enough to be his rider for the day.

As we know, volunteers are the backbone of our communities. Organisations like Samford RDA would not exist without them. Sometimes riders need the help of at least three persons. There is no strict criteria of having a history of owning a horse or any involvement with them. All volunteers are appropriately trained in all safety procedures. I would encourage anyone who has some spare time to call in to Samford RDA on either a Wednesday or Saturday morning to consider volunteering or just to say hello. You might even be fortunate enough to meet my sponsored horse, Charlie Bun.

### Hervey Bay Meals on Wheels, Electricity Prices

 **Mr SORENSEN** (Hervey Bay—LNP) (11.07 pm): I rise to talk about a very important issue affecting the community service Meals on Wheels in Hervey Bay. When I asked to speak in the adjournment debate, the member for Lockyer asked me to mention the Gatton Meals on Wheels as well. Hervey Bay Meals on Wheels prepares around 120,000 meals a year across the Fraser Coast. My electorate of Hervey Bay has an ageing population, and not-for-profit community groups such as Meals on Wheels provide a vital service for many people in my electorate.

On 31 March Ergon Energy sent Hervey Bay Meals on Wheels a letter titled 'Information notice for National Meter Identifier Reclassification'. The letter states—

As a result of this review, and in accordance with section 30F of the Electricity Regulation 2006, Ergon Energy has decided to make a distribution entity-initiated reclassification.

That means Ergon has reclassified Hervey Bay Meals on Wheels from a small user to a large user. That means Ergon Energy has increased the rates. The price has gone up from 33 cents to 44 cents per kilowatt hour of energy. That is understandable, but why can't Ergon just reclassify not-for-profit groups to go back and work under the ordinary scheme? I find that ridiculous and it is disgraceful!

I turn now to the Lockyer electorate Meals on Wheels. It has been brought to my attention that Queensland Health is considering full cost recovery of \$14 per meal. If this becomes fact and when combined with the new My Aged Care Australian government requirements, the viability of the Gatton Meals on Wheels will come into question. It currently purchases its meals from the Gatton Hospital at a discount rate of \$6.85 per meal which is beneficial to Gatton Meals on Wheels and the Gatton Hospital as the Gatton Hospital kitchen may not be viable if it was providing meals for patients only. The current price that is charged for a four-course meal—juice, soup, main meal and dessert—is \$8. The last thing anybody wants to see is these services close and job losses in these areas that are already struggling. It just goes to show that the remnants of the Bligh government are still here bungling along with no plan, no future and just money grabbing from old people's pockets and community groups because they do not care about them.

### Greenslopes Electorate, Food Manufacturing

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (11.10 pm): We frequently hear about the challenges facing manufacturing in Australia, with the media focusing on the bad news of businesses closing down. It is nice to be able to rise in this place to highlight the good work of two local food manufacturing businesses—one drawing on centuries of tradition and the other using modern techniques to deliver fresh food to time-poor workers. It is appropriate on National Italian Day to start by mentioning Borgo Salumi. This Holland Park based business has been part of the community since 1965. A tour of the factory with Luigi will take you on a journey through centuries of food preparation history. Luigi and his son now make up a second and third generation of Borgos who have owned and operated this business. The word 'salumi' is used to describe lots of different types of salted cured meats such as—

and forgive my pronunciation—prosciutto, coppa, pancetta, mortadella as well as salami. Luigi's parents, Ivo and Antonietta, opened their first butcher's shop in Melbourne not long after arriving in Australia in 1952. Spotting a growing number of Italian immigrants in Queensland and a growing demand for traditional Italian smallgoods, Ivo and Antonietta established their business in Oates Avenue, where it remains to this day. You can feel the passion as you walk through the factory with Luigi describing the process of creating his products. This is not a business for those who want weekends off; Luigi visits his factory daily to ensure that the conditions required for curing his meats are maintained. It takes months of work and a lifetime of experience to create smallgoods in a factory that is recognised throughout the industry as having one of the best designed and quality assured operations in Australia, combining traditional artisan methods with cutting-edge technology.

Not far from Borgo Salumi you will find another business—All Real Food. Founded recently by Daniella Stalling and Mark Woodhead, this business brings healthy, holistic, local and ethical foods to the public via vending machines. Mark and Daniella share a desire not just to nourish the body but to nourish the mind. Their business ethos sees them committed to providing an easy way for people to choose healthy foods and educating consumers about why this is important. Recently the Health and Ambulance Services Committee has been reviewing the health promotion activities of many groups such as the National Stroke Foundation, the Heart Foundation and Diabetes Queensland. All share the goal of increasing the amount of fresh fruit and vegetables we eat, and the positive impacts on overall health are well documented. This exciting business makes this option a reality for many Queenslanders. Both businesses are local employers with huge potential for expansion and I hope they take advantage of the payroll tax rebate and perhaps even source some apprentices through the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program. I am certainly glad to have these businesses in my electorate.

### Charters Towers Electorate, Emergency Services Labelling System



**Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (11.13 pm): Tonight I rise to speak about a matter that has been plaguing the people of my electorate for over a decade. This is an issue that has caused a great deal of confusion and anger amongst the residents of Charters Towers. The people of Charters Towers are unable to be located by emergency services due to a bureaucratic and confusing suburb labelling system. In the past residents were listed in the Telstra telephone directory under surname, initial and Charters Towers. Now the town, with a population of just over 8,000 people, has been split into multiple suburbs, each listed with different boundaries depending on which service or utility you speak to. It is like the suburb of Aspley being split into six separate suburbs. To give the House an example of the confusion facing Charters Towers, a constituent has told the local media that according to the council her home is in Macrossan, according to the electoral roll she lives in Dotswood, according to the emergency services she lives in Campaspe and according to Telstra she lives in Basalt. If you ring Telstra and ask for the phone number of a mate, they would not have a clue!

Since 2005 I have disputed these changes, which were originally intended to make it easier for emergency services but have become an absolute nightmare. We were told that the smaller localities were able to assist in calming the confusion. It has now been 10 years and we have seen 000 not having a clue where a street is in Charters Towers. This is unreasonable for these small towns. This weekend a fire claimed another home. The home owner's neighbour had difficulty explaining to the emergency services—triple 0—which suburb they lived in. They called twice, only to hear the sirens head in the wrong direction. That is not the fault of the emergency services but the suburb names. The people of Charters Towers are sick of this insanity. For half a decade we have seen unreasonable and unnecessary changes put people's lives at risk. I quote from a letter written by the person whose house was burnt down. It states—

My name is Stewart Koch, and I am the owner and the sole occupant, of the above property, which caught fire on 23rd May, 2015.

It goes on—

My entire history has been erased. My house was completely destroyed in the fire, along with all of my belongings, Photos, personal papers, everything.

He continues—

She (neighbour) called Triple 0 immediately, but was met with questions from the call centre operator that she struggled to answer.

'I said it was Wilson St in Charters Towers and they asked would it be a certain suburb,' she said. 'I guessed and said it could be in Alabama Hill or Towers Hill and (the operator) asked 'Is it Breddan?'

Breddan is a locality, or suburb, situated 20km from Charters near Sellheim. 'Then I got off the phone and waited for about 10 minutes and no one showed up.' ... 'After the second call we heard sirens, but they were travelling away from us so I rang again ...'

...

'It was just very stressful trying to direct the operator.

I table those two letters and that newspaper article.

*Tabled paper:* Article from the *Northern Miner*, dated 29 May 2015, titled 'Where? Suburb confusion' [504].

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 1 June 2015, from Mr Stewart Koch to the member for Dalrymple, Mr Shane Knuth MP, regarding a house fire at 9 Wilson Street, Charters Towers on 23 May 2015 [503].

### Capalaba Electorate, Road Infrastructure

 **Mr BROWN** (Capalaba—ALP) (11.16 pm): Tonight I rise to speak on an important issue for my constituents and one that I have been campaigning on since my preselection in 2014, and that is the state of Rickertt Road and Green Camp Road. I note that in his first adjournment speech the member for Redlands spoke on a similar topic, because he knows as well as I do that transport infrastructure is a priority for our constituents. Around 60 per cent of residents in my electorate leave each day to head to Brisbane for work. There are only four exit roads out of Redlands, three of which run through my electorate. Rickertt Road is one of these main arterials. Unlike the other three, Rickertt Road is controlled by the two councils, and I note the great effort that was made by the Rudd Labor government and the Redland City Council to upgrade its side of the road to four lanes. Unfortunately, they did not do the same on the Brisbane City Council side. Today this road resembles more of a goat track which has been cut off by floodwaters twice already this year. On a weekly—nearly daily—basis, we see traffic jams backing back for kilometres all the way from Manly Road down Green Camp Road to Rickertt Road and into Redland city—so much so that a mobile coffee van has set up shop next to this traffic jam to capitalise on business. I encourage business in Queensland, but I do not want to do it this way.

I thought our prayers had been answered in May last year when the LNP councillor for Doboy, Ryan Murphy, said on social media when talking about Green Camp Road—

It is an absolute priority of mine to bring it to a four lane median divide arterial as soon as possible. Council has slated this to occur before 2016 in line with budget priorities.

Unfortunately for the young LNP councillor and my community, this commitment was reneged upon by Graham Quirk and Adrian Schrinner in the 2014 budget. Despite being in the Brisbane City Council's own priority infrastructure plan for 2011 and before 2016, an upgrade to Green Camp Road from Manly Road to Rickertt Road has not been committed to yet, an upgrade to Rickertt Road has not been committed to yet and nor has the upgrade to the intersection of Rickertt Road and Chelsea Road. Last Friday was Fatality Free Friday. Unfortunately in my area we could not keep the commitment this day represents and unfortunately a woman lost her life on Chelsea Road. This fatality comes on top of numerous traffic accidents that have occurred along these stretches of road. Accidents along these stretches are all too familiar. It is an unacceptable situation and something needs to be done about it. I implore Graham Quirk and Adrian Schrinner in their upcoming budget to listen to their young councillor in an election year in a hotly contested ward. I call upon Lord Mayor Graham Quirk and Councillor Adrian Schrinner to deliver on their commitments and to live up to their mantra of delivering for the suburbs.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 11.19 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, Farmer, Fentiman, Frecklington, Furner, Gilbert, Gordon, Grace, Harper, Hart, Hinchliffe, Howard, Jones, Katter, Kelly, King, Knuth, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Lauga, Leahy, Linard, Lynham, Madden, Mander, McArdle, McEachan, McVeigh, 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