



# RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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## THURSDAY, 17 SEPTEMBER 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.

### PRIVILEGE

#### Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House by a Member



**Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (9.31 am): I rise on a matter of privilege arising from the question asked of me by the member for Mansfield during question time yesterday. During his question, the member raised a very serious allegation that I had failed to declare a donation of \$10,000. As the member must have known that the gift would have been declared in the ALP's donation return and that his allegation was therefore not true, I will be writing to you, Mr Speaker, to ask that the member for Mansfield be referred to the Ethics Committee for deliberately misleading the House.

#### Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House by a Member



**Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (9.32 am): I rise on a matter of privilege arising from the question asked of me by the member for Indooroopilly during question time yesterday. During his question the member raised a very serious allegation relating to inconsistency between my disclosure return for the Redcliffe by-election and that of the AWU. As the member must have known that there was no return yet uploaded for the AWU on the ECQ website, he must have known that statement was not true. I will be writing to you, Mr Speaker, to ask that the member for Indooroopilly be referred to the Ethics Committee for deliberately misleading the House.

#### Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House by a Member



**Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (9.32 am): I rise on a matter of privilege arising from the question asked of the Attorney-General by the member for Glass House yesterday. During his question the member raised a very serious allegation that I had failed to declare a donation of \$5,000. As the member must surely have known that that gift would have been declared in the ALP's donation return, I will be writing to you, Mr Speaker, regarding the conduct of the member for Glass House.

### SPEAKER'S RULING

#### Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House by a Member



**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, on 16 September 2015 the Leader of the House wrote to me alleging that the member for Buderim deliberately misled the House on 15 September 2015 when he stated to the Acting Deputy Speaker in relation to statements made by the member for Everton that—

I was in the House when that occurred and it was not the member for Everton who made that statement.

In his letter to me the Leader of the House noted that the member for Buderim's statement was misleading as it was in stark contrast to the clear concession made by the member for Everton that he had in fact made that statement in question. The member for Buderim also wrote to me on 16 September 2015 advising that his statement was correct to his knowledge in that he did not hear the member for Everton make the statement in question. The member for Buderim advised that he thought the statement in question came from his left and not to his right where the member for Everton was

sitting. The member for Buderim concedes, in light of the member for Everton's acknowledgement that he did make the statement in question, that his own advice to the Deputy Speaker was also incorrect. Standing order 269(4) states—

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

Given the member for Buderim's letter of clarification, I am satisfied that the member has made an adequate explanation. Accordingly, I have decided that the matter does not warrant the further attention of the House via the Ethics Committee and I will not be referring the matter. I table the correspondence in relation to this matter. I would, however, like to remind all members that should they make an error in their statements to the House the correct protocol to be followed should be that they rise in the House, whether that be on a matter of privilege or personal explanation, and correct the record and apologise to the House at the earliest opportunity. I invite the member for Buderim to do so today in personal explanations in relation to this matter.

*Tabled paper.* Correspondence, dated 16 September 2015, relating to an alleged deliberate misleading of the House by the member for Buderim [\[1107\]](#).

## MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

### Newton, Mr LE



**Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.35 am): I move—

That this House desires to place on record its appreciation of the services rendered to this state by the late Lyell Edward Newton, a former member of the parliament of Queensland.

That Mr Speaker be requested to convey to the family of the deceased gentleman the above resolution, together with an expression of the sympathy and sorrow of the members of the parliament of Queensland, in the loss they have sustained.

Lyell Edward Newton, widely known as Bill, was a proud Caboolture local who went on to become an elected representative for the people and area he knew so well. He grew up on a dairy farm but after leaving school became a fruit farmer and grazier in the Rocksberg area near Caboolture. Indeed, Bill Newton was to have a longstanding involvement with the fruit growing industry, serving as secretary of the Caboolture Fruitgrowers Association for 27 years from 1957. Mr Newton was also to have a longstanding involvement with the National Party and was chairman of the Caboolture branch of the party from 1963 to 1983. At various times he also served as chairman of the National Party's Murrumba and Caboolture electorate council and was also a state central councillor.

In 1983 Mr Newton was elected to represent Caboolture and in 1985 after an electoral redistribution was re-elected to parliament as the member of the newly created seat of Glass House. In his maiden speech Bill Newton spoke with pride and deep knowledge of his local area, particularly about the primary producers whose work and lives he understood so well. During his six years in the parliament Mr Newton was a member of a number of the National Party's government party committees across a wide range of portfolios including mines and energy, primary industries, environment and education.

Lyell Edward Newton passed away on 2 August 2015 at the age of 80 and a funeral service to commemorate his life was held at the Caboolture Seventh-day Adventist Church on 6 August. I place on record the government's thanks for the years of service Mr Newton gave to the institutions of our democracy and to the Queensland community. On behalf of the government, I take this opportunity to extend my sympathy and that of this House to Mr Newton's wife, Margaret, to his children, his grandchildren, his extended family and his friends.



**Mr SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.37 am): I join with the Premier in passing on the condolences of the LNP to the family and friends of Bill Newton. Bill was the patriarch of the Newton family—much loved and revered in the Glass House region. He was a familiar figure to many who passed him at his roadside stall at Harlan selling the mangoes that the family had become renowned for. In fact, there would be many people in this House who would remember his generous gifts of boxes of mangoes duly delivered every November. Lyell Edward Newton, or Bill as we affectionately knew him, passed away on Sunday, 2 August 2015 aged 80. Bill was born in Brisbane to Edward Charles and Lily Alice in 1935. He attended state school at Morayfield before becoming a

fruit grower and grazier at Rocksberg. He was the much loved husband of Margaret and the loving father and father-in-law of Karen and Michael, Andrea and Michael, Glenn and Tanya, Tricia and Harry and of course a much loved grandfather to their families.

Bill Newton was a faithful servant of the conservative side of politics in this state and particularly of his electorate. He was a member of the National Party and served as the chairman of the Caboolture branch of the National Party from 1963 until 1983. In that year, he was elected to the Queensland Legislative Assembly as the member for Caboolture. At the following election in 1986, he transferred to the seat of Glass House but he was defeated in the election in 1989.

Bill was a man who had a great influence on many successive MPs for that region. In her maiden speech, former Pumicestone MP Lisa France paid tribute to him, saying that he was the reason she had entered politics. She told the House—

Bill is a wonderful man who still to this day has his community at heart in everything he does. I first met Bill when I was a rookie environmental scientist providing a briefing to him in his role as member for Glass House. At the conclusion of our meeting he said to me, 'Have you ever thought about going into politics? You should consider it'. Well, Bill, I thought about it for over a decade and I finally took your advice.

I, too, have many fond memories of Bill Newton, even though he left the parliament on the very same day that I was elected in 1989. He was a salt-of-the-earth gentleman, someone who was very highly regarded and someone who was respected by all sides of politics. He was a very affable fellow. He was someone who could always tell a very good tale. Indeed, there were many tales told by Bill Newton in this place. Members who were not in this place at that time may not necessarily properly understand the context in the way *Hansard* has captured some of his remarkable speeches in this parliament.

I remember one of the first initiatives of the incoming Labor government was to put on a seafood buffet every Tuesday. Of course, that was a major attraction for not only serving MPs but also former MPs. We would see Bill every Tuesday when he used to come in for that. He would regale us with great stories of his success in parliament, his love of his electorate and also, of course, his great passion for horticulture for which he was very well renowned. We saw Bill a little bit less often after the former member for Callide, the immediate predecessor to Jeff Seeney, the current member, wrote an article in her local newspaper indicating her concern about the opulence of the seafood buffets and the week after they subsequently disappeared. So then we saw Bill a little bit less. Nevertheless, when we did see him he was still the great character that he had always been.

Indeed, if members want to read one of the more humorous speeches ever delivered in this place—even though I am not sure the passion and the context can ever be properly captured in *Hansard*—I direct them to the speech made by Bill Newton in which he informs this parliament about the difficulties in propagating stubborn cuttings. I would encourage members to read that speech, because it is quite remarkable.

As I said, Bill was a fantastic horticulturalist, he was a wonderful local, someone who was widely respected and he certainly had his entire community deep within his heart right to his very last day. So I join with the Premier and other members of parliament in passing on our heartfelt condolences, prayers and thoughts to the entire Newton family and wish them all the very best in this difficult time as their family struggles with what is a major loss.

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (9.43 am): Mr Lyell Edward 'Bill' Newton and his twin sister, Myra, were born in Brisbane to Upper Caboolture dairy farmers, Ted and Lily Newton, on 29 July 1935. Bill spent his entire life in the Upper Caboolture area. He attended Morayfield State School and after leaving school worked on the family farm. At 18 he was called up for national service but then returned home to start banana farming.

Bill joined the Junior Farmers Association, later to be known as Rural Youth, and became very involved. When he reached the membership age limit it did not faze him too much. He became an adviser and he maintained an interest in youth organisations throughout his life. It was through this organisation that Bill developed his passion for and involvement in agricultural shows. He eventually became an accredited produce judge.

Fortunately, Bill also met his future wife, Margaret, through the Junior Farmers Association. They were married in 1961 and had a family of four children. Last night, I spoke to Margaret. Unfortunately, she and the family cannot be here this morning, but I have reassured her that I will be delivering a copy of this motion to her and the family in the very near future.

Bill was also involved in the Caboolture Apex club and was chairman for a number of years. During that period that club built the Apex kindergarten at Caboolture. Again, when he reached the age limit for that club, he did not really let that faze him and he took on life membership of the Caboolture Apex club.

When Bill's children attended the Morayfield State School he was elected as secretary of the P&C. In 1983, when he was elected as the member for Caboolture, and despite his youngest child having already left the school many years earlier, Bill was still serving on the P&C.

Bill was an active member of the Country Party, the forerunner of the National Party, serving as branch and electorate council chairman. In 1983, Bill was preselected as the National Party candidate for Caboolture. At that time, the electorate ran from Deception Bay to Woodford and north to Golden Beach and included all of Bribie Island. I understand that Bill was assisted in his preselection by long-term Peachester dairy farmers Bruce and Helen Page. I owe a vote of thanks to Bruce and Helen for their contribution to this reflection on Bill's life.

Bill's involvement in the community and his strong network of friends meant that, for the opening of his campaign, he was able to hire the entire Caboolture Showgrounds. He catered for 1,000 people by putting on a barbecue. He literally slaughtered the fatted cow and whacked it on the spit. It was all done through the great support of his many volunteers within the party. The Premier of the day, Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, came along and stood on the back a trailer hitched to a tractor in the showgrounds and opened his campaign. As we all know, Bill went on to win the seat for the National Party. As has been said, after the redistribution in 1986 Bill was the first member for the new seat of Glass House, which in those days ran from the Caboolture River, took in Bribie Island, and went as far north as Imbil and Kenilworth.

As a member of parliament Bill would go to any length to assist anyone and everyone. He worked 24/7 to ensure that the government approved the necessary infrastructure for his growing community and he helped those who needed a hand. After driving around in his van, always packed with various boxes of fruit and mementos of the previous day's activities, Bill would arrive at a function or at the office with a smile on his face and an extended hand wanting to know how he could help. He loved attending the school presentation evenings and presenting the champion boy and girl with the Bill Newton Medal and, of course, a fruit tray.

As the Leader of the Opposition said, after Bill was elected, Parliament House was never the same. Ministers, backbenchers—all—were showered with fresh fruit. Those who worked in parliament would not miss out either with many of them receiving boxes of pawpaws or other fruit that was in season as the parliamentary sittings began. Bill would always stop and chat to everyone. If there was something that needed doing in his electorate, he always took the opportunity to knock on ministers' doors and he would not take no for an answer. I am sure that many times he simply kept coming back until he had the answer he wanted.

During Bill's second term Bribie Island became a particular focus. He was approached by a family who for five generations had been a leaseholder in the area that is now the Poverty Creek camping area. The negotiations for the creation of a national park to protect some of Bribie Island's important ecological area were underway. Whilst not against the declaration of a national park, Bill felt passionately that those who had lived on the land and grazed their cattle continuously since 1868 should not just be thrown off the land. Bill fought for the rights of this family, as he felt that he needed to make the department aware that a family living in an area for so many years had a connection to that land.

For those in the community who were suffering owing to a lack of public accommodation or those who had problems in dealing with local laws, Bill was always there to assist. If anyone had a problem, Bill would do his best to help them. Back in the 1980s, Deception Bay was more isolated from both Redcliffe and Caboolture. Bill fought hard to ensure that the people of Deception Bay had an ambulance station and a police station. He worked hard to ensure that the electrification of the rail was extended to Caboolture, as he knew that that was needed to ensure that Caboolture had other transport options for the rapidly expanding suburbs in that area.

Bill was intrinsic in developing agricultural studies at both Caboolture and Maleny state high schools—studies that successfully continue through to today. He had a hand in establishing the Woodford Folk Festival and he worked with the permaculture village that we now know as Crystal Waters, and the Greens party have been thanking him ever since. The provision of the Caboolture Hospital was another piece of vital infrastructure that Bill fought for. Even after losing the election in 1989, he did not give up and kept fighting for the local residents.

As you can imagine for someone like Bill, sticking to a schedule was never high on his agenda. When the Pope came to Brisbane and the open air mass was held at QEII, Bill decided to attend. All state MPs were invited and, although not a Catholic, Bill thought he should go down to Brisbane for the mass. Many of the streets had been closed for the arrival of the Pope's motorcade. In true Bill fashion, Bill was running late but that did not deter him. As he approached each barrier he would introduce himself and the police would wave him through. Security in those days was not quite the same as we have today. The crowds had been gathering and as the little grey van would approach excitement built as the crowd thought it was the Pope approaching. The crowd started to wave and stand up, wanting to catch a glimpse of the Holy Father. Instead, there was a smiling Billy Newton slowing down and waving to all the crowds as he drove past.

His electorate secretary Sue Quinn, to whom I owe a vote of thanks for her significant contribution to these reflections, always dreaded Mondays. Bill would arrive at work with a fistful of drink coasters, menus, programs or whatever he could find to write down a name and a number of someone who had approached him needing help. She would then have to ring these people to ensure they had their address so she could follow them up and tell them what Bill had been able to do for them or for their brother, their sister or whomever the relative might be. As I said, Bill never said no to anyone.

At the end of his political career he returned to farming and concentrated on growing tropical fruits and developing his South Devon cattle stud. Bill's involvement in the community continued. He became president of the Caboolture Growers and Marketing Group and played a leading role in the Caboolture National Serviceman's Association of which he was made a life member. He was also president of the Caboolture Area Schools Industry Links Scheme, encouraging trade skills for local secondary students. In later years Bill could be found selling his tropical fruit at the cattle sales at Woodford and Toogoolawah and enjoying a yarn with the sale patrons.

He passed away on 2 August 2015, just days after his 80th birthday. His funeral at Upper Caboolture was attended by over 500 people. He will be remembered as a great community worker, a strong family man and everyone's mate—a top bloke who never lost the local touch.

 **Mr RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (9.51 am): I rise to pay tribute to the service of Bill Newton to this House and the people of Queensland, but also, and more importantly, I acknowledge Bill's tireless service to the people of the Caboolture region as the member for Caboolture from 1983 to 1986 and as the member for Glass House from 1986 to 1989. As we have heard, Bill passed away on 2 August 2015 only a few days after his 80th birthday. He is survived by Margaret and his children and grandchildren.

I knew Bill. He was a legend of the Caboolture region. He was a stalwart of the area and was involved in many community organisations. In fact, Bill was so involved in the local community that generally if something was happening Bill had something to do with it. As I said, I knew Bill and I always had an opportunity to catch up with him and his wife at market days or out and about in the community. He was a colourful character and very committed to his politics. Despite being on the other side of politics to me, he always had a kind word for me and was always very generous with his time and courtesy. Bill was a very principled man, especially when it came to proving a point. I remember that for a number of elections Bill made a stand at the Upper Caboolture Farmers' Assembly Hall polling booth. If memory serves me right, many elections ago the Electoral Commission decided to make the Upper Caboolture Farmers' Assembly Hall a polling booth for the Kallangur and Pumicestone electorates, but not the Kurwongbah electorate. That is interesting because the polling booth was only a couple of minutes away from the Kurwongbah electorate and only a couple of minutes away from where Bill lived. The trouble was that Bill lived in the then Kurwongbah electorate only a few minutes down the road from this polling booth. Despite being only a few minutes from the polling booth, many residents of the then Kurwongbah electorate had to either vote absentee or had to travel some distance to vote. To show his upset with that arrangement, Bill stayed all day at this polling booth in a Kurwongbah shirt handing out Kurwongbah how-to-vote cards to very limited Kurwongbah voters. He was very committed to making his point on that day and in subsequent elections as well.

On my temporary departure from this House following the 2012 state election I received a very kind card from Bill and Margaret wishing me well for the future and thanking me for my service to the people of our local area. Bill did not have to send that card, but it meant a lot to me, especially as the reality of the 2012 state election result sunk in. In the same spirit in which that card was given to me, I acknowledge Bill's service to the people of the Caboolture region and thank him for his contribution to this parliament and the people of Queensland. My thoughts are with Margaret and the rest of Bill's family and friends.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Will honourable members indicate their agreement by standing in silence for one minute.

*Whereupon members stood in silence.*

## PETITIONS

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

### Toogoolawah Golf Course, Golf Buggies

**Mrs Frecklington**, from 313 petitioners, requesting the House to help achieve a resolution which allows golf buggy owners (who have their routes approved by Somerset Regional Council and which are conditionally registered) to drive their golf buggies from their homes to the Toogoolawah Golf Course [1108].

### Labrador State School, School Zone Flashing Lights

**Miss Barton**, from 235 petitioners, requesting the House to reinstate funding for flashing school zone lights at Labrador State School on Government Road and have them installed as a matter of priority [1109].

## TABLED PAPER

MEMBERS' PAPER TABLED BY THE CLERK

The following members' paper was tabled by the Clerk—

Member for Ipswich West (Mr Madden)

Member for Nanango (Mrs Frecklington)—

[1110](#) Non-conforming petition requesting funding to complete the Brisbane Valley Rail Trail

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

### Domestic and Family Violence

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.57 am): If there is any light to be found in a dark week for Queensland, it is that the community has united in horror against domestic violence. There is a real mood for change and a feeling that together we are ready to stand up to this scourge on our society. My government has made its views on this issue clear—fast-tracking legislation, boosting funding for domestic violence support services and accepting all 140 recommendations of the *Not now, not ever* report. The head of that task force, Quentin Bryce, has agreed to also head up the Premier's Implementation Council. I would like to acknowledge the bipartisan approach to this issue and thank the opposition for its support in this area.

In that spirit, the Leader of the Opposition and I were both scheduled to speak at a rally to stand up against domestic violence in the Brisbane CBD this evening. Unfortunately, we have just learned that the weather has forced the event to be postponed. This is disappointing, but I am assured that organisers are working to provide another opportunity in the near future. When it is rescheduled, it will be a peaceful gathering to remember victims of domestic violence and it will be an opportunity for us all to say 'enough is enough'.

### Civil Partnerships

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.58 am): This morning the Attorney-General will introduce a bill to restore the right of any Queensland couple—of any gender, of any sexual orientation—to once again hold legal ceremonies to enter civil partnerships. We are restoring this right, which was first permitted under a Labor government and then taken away as one of the first acts of the former LNP government, because every Queensland couple, no matter their gender, should have this right. It is time to inject some maturity and dignity into the marriage debate. It is time to again allow heterosexual couples who might want to affirm their relationship but not take the step of actually getting married the right to do so. It is also time to once again allow same-sex couples that same right.

In 2011 the Labor government provided couples of any gender the right to get legal recognition of their relationship through registration with the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages. We know how important that recognition is to all couples, not only because it gives their relationship official legal status but also because it allows them an official declaration of their love and devotion. It also allowed

the right to participate in an official civil ceremony prior to having the relationship registered. However, in 2012, the former LNP government removed the right to participation in those civil partnership ceremonies and altered the law so that relationships would not be recognised as civil partnerships but as registered relationships.

My government is committed to restoring the civil partnership ceremony provisions so that couples of any gender can participate in an official ceremony and declare their dedication to each other. Those ceremonies and the symbolism they represent are important, particularly to people in same-sex relationships. The amendments to the bill to be introduced into this parliament today achieve what is fair. They offer equality and dignity for all Queenslanders. My government is committed to equality. My government is committed to fairness. Today we deliver on those commitments with this bill, which restores the very important right to couples who want to declare their commitment legally.

### Infrastructure Projects

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade) (10.01 am): The Palaszczuk Labor government follows in the tradition of past Labor governments, particularly in regard to infrastructure planning, privatisation and funding. Our first budget contains a \$10.1 billion building program that supports 27,500 jobs. On a comparative basis, our general government sector building program is the second highest in the nation on both a total and per capita basis. We are getting on with delivering Queensland's first State Infrastructure Plan in three years, something those opposite failed comprehensively to deliver on for this state. Yesterday I announced a new \$59 million Catalyst Infrastructure Fund to provide zero interest loans to fund infrastructure that will help kickstart job-creating developments.

I am pleased to inform the House that today we are lodging our comprehensive submission of more than 200 pages to Infrastructure Australia, outlining our 12 priority infrastructure projects for the Queensland government. I now table a copy of this submission, excluding those components containing commercial-in-confidence material.

*Tabled paper:* Letter, undated, from the Deputy Premier and Minister for Transport, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade, the Hon. Jackie Trad, to Mr Mark Birrell, the Chair of Infrastructure Australia, enclosing a Queensland government submission detailing specific project investment and policy reform priorities [\[1111\]](#).

This submission is intended to inform IA's update of the 2013 infrastructure pipeline, as well as the new Australian Infrastructure Plan and it builds on the numerous individual submissions we have already made to the Commonwealth on specific projects such as the Gold Coast Light Rail. Cross River Rail remains our No. 1 priority in the 2013 infrastructure priority list. This project directly addresses the Brisbane CBD capacity constraint issues identified in the Australian Infrastructure Audit. However, still the federal government has not committed to funding this or the other critical large scale infrastructure projects needed to ease congestion and drive productivity. Stage 2 of the Gold Coast Light Rail system and the duplication of the rail line servicing the Sunshine Coast from Beerburrum to Nambour are also high on our list.

Our submission also includes a reform proposal to deliver a sustainable asset renewal, preservation and operations program on Queensland's national land transport network. We believe it is critical that the Australian government fulfils its responsibility and provides more funding for maintenance to enable more efficient and reliable freight access, improved road safety and reduced whole-of-life costs.

Other new projects being put forward for Infrastructure Australia's consideration and inclusion in the updated infrastructure priority list include: additional Bruce Highway upgrades; Cunningham Highway, Yamanto to Ebenezer-Amberley, upgrade; on the Pacific Motorway, the Gateway-Pacific Motorway merge and Mudgeeraba to Varsity Lakes capacity upgrade; inland rail-southern rail corridor—the Queensland section of this nation-building infrastructure program; and smart road infrastructure for South-East Queensland's managed motorways. In addition to the 12 projects identified for inclusion in IA's priority list, we have also highlighted our preliminary work on a range of other important projects, including North Queensland infrastructure, water infrastructure and aviation infrastructure. We have also sought IA's advice about the potential inclusion on the list of the Townsville Integrated Sports and Entertainment Centre, as historically projects such as that have not been included in the IA remit.

This government understands the importance and value of Infrastructure Australia's work. That is why we have provided this submission ahead of the finalisation of our own State Infrastructure Plan early next year. We will continue to work with the federal government and Infrastructure Australia on

nationwide infrastructure reforms to advance Queensland's infrastructure priorities and fight for Queensland's fair share of infrastructure funding from the federal government. We will also continue to work with Canberra to align the State Infrastructure Plan with the Australian Infrastructure Plan, so that both governments are working towards the best outcomes for Queensland. We remain hopeful that the new Turnbull government will take a different approach to investing in vital urban infrastructure projects, previously ignored by the Abbott government.

### LNG Industry, Exports

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (10.05 am): Before I begin my ministerial statement, I acknowledge the fact that today all members of this House have been given a rose. I acknowledge Roses in the Ocean and awareness around suicide prevention. It is a very important message in a week full of important messages. We should always remember that suicide is preventable and we must all do what we can to reach out to people who need us in their desperate hour.

**Honourable members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr PITT:** I advise the House of a great Queensland success story. The Labor Party is always the party to deliver jobs, growth and real industrial development. This is clearly illustrated by our facilitation of the \$60 billion LNG industry in Queensland. Queensland's LNG industry is going from strength to strength and is now paying dividends for the state. Since the beginning of this year, Queensland's LNG industry has exported \$1.14 billion worth of gas from the port of Gladstone. Exports are projected to hit \$15 billion by 2016-17, earning the state valuable export dollars and annual royalties, while supporting thousands of jobs. Overseas export growth will continue to be strong in 2016-17 as LNG plants approach full operational capacity. Following two years of subdued outcomes, mostly under the LNP's watch, growth in Queensland's gross state product is forecast to strengthen to 4.5 per cent in both 2015-16 and 2016-17. That is the highest growth in the nation and it will be driven by the surge in LNG exports.

To enable this growth in LNG exports, I can advise the House that in our capacity as shareholding ministers my colleague the Hon. Mark Bailey, the Minister for Ports, and I have provided approval for Gladstone Ports Corporation to enter into port service agreements. It should be acknowledged that this announcement can be made on the back of the Palaszczuk government's decision to keep our enduring state owned income-generating assets in state hands. The Gladstone Port Corporation has concluded four port service agreements with our LNG exporters, paving the way for a ramp-up of LNG shipments from Curtis Island, off the Central Queensland coast. The agreements are an important milestone in the growth of Queensland's LNG export industry. PSAs have been negotiated with QCLNG, APLNG and GLNG entities. The PSAs provide a contractual framework for allocating port capacity and charging for access to the port of Gladstone's main shipping channels and other supporting infrastructure. Given the projected growth in exports and in port and vessel traffic, we need strong port service agreements in place to manage the port of Gladstone, while protecting the local environment. Of course, let us not forget that the former government was planning to sell the port of Gladstone, planning to outsource the control of the port at such a crucial juncture.

From 2016, when all three LNG projects are in export phase, there will be enough LNG production to load 10 vessels per month combined. We are planning ahead to manage this growth because the LNG export industry is crucial to the future of the Queensland economy. I know that and certainly the member for Gladstone knows that. We are also looking forward to the ongoing strength of the Palaszczuk government's positive relationships with Queensland's LNG sector. By working together with industry, we can deliver jobs and we can continue to deliver growth in Queensland.

### World Suicide Prevention Day

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (10.08 am): Each year in Queensland, more than 600 people lose their lives to suicide and many more people attempt it. To mark World Suicide Prevention Day, recently I launched the Queensland Mental Health Commission's Queensland Suicide Prevention Action Plan 2015-17. The action plan was developed following extensive consultation with members of the community and those with a lived experience of suicide. We know that there is no single solution, service, action or initiative that will reduce suicide or its impact. However, by working together, including across this chamber, we can make a big difference and that is why an action plan was developed.

During consultation many stakeholders, including those who have been impacted by suicide, called for the community to change the conversation about suicide to one of hope. The action plan starts that change process and focuses on a whole-of-community and whole-of-government approach to reducing suicide and its impact. Many of the actions relate to the health system. This included the commitment I made in June that all accident and emergency staff in public hospitals would receive training to help identify and respond appropriately to people at risk of suicide or who have attempted suicide.

When I launched this plan I also noted the support I received from my ministerial colleagues who have committed themselves to taking action in a number of areas. Working together we will provide better support for children and young people in schools and youth detention centres as well as improving police responses. We have also committed to improving support for our hardworking front-line police and Queensland Rail staff who respond to suicide and attempted suicide.

The commission is leading this work across government and is working with communities to build on their strengths and capacity to support those at risk and those who have been impacted by suicide. It will work closely with the Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention to use the internationally renowned Queensland suicide register to provide communities with information and data to support locally led actions to reduce suicide. I would like to again commend the commission on their hard work in developing this plan.

In conclusion, can I acknowledge the work of so many community and civil society organisations—organisations such as Roses in the Ocean—which work so hard in the Queensland community to help stem the tide of suicide. I want to thank Roses in the Ocean founder and CEO, Bronwen Edwards, for providing all honourable members with a single red rose today. Mr Speaker, I thank you for your indulgence in allowing us to display the roses in the chamber today.

It is amazing how a single red rose, provided to all members, can change how we see this chamber, and perhaps even how we see each other. Simple acts can help stem the tide of suicide. I thank Bronwen and her team at Roses in the Ocean and all the community, non-government organisations for the work they do in helping to address suicide in Queensland.

### Education Council

 **Hon. KJ JONES** (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games) (10.11 am): Tomorrow I will chair a meeting of the Education Council that will bring together education ministers from every state and territory and our federal counterpart.

**Mr Dick:** Whoever that might be.

**Ms JONES:** I take that interjection from the minister. As members in this House know, the Palaszczuk government is determined to drive change in Queenslanders' attitudes towards family and domestic violence. Our schools will play a role in bringing about this shift.

As education minister, I am committed to ensuring our schools have adequate resources to teach students about respectful relationships. That is why I have acted to add to the Education Council agenda how we can work together to reduce domestic violence in this country. Having domestic violence discussed at a national forum like this means we can work together to drive reform.

The Palaszczuk government believes Queenslanders want to see change, and now is the time for action. As I advised the House on Tuesday, the department of education is already preparing new resources to teach students about respectful relationships, gender equality and safety. These resources will be available for schools next term. From term 1 next year Queensland schools will use new resources to teach students.

Queensland will play its part, working with other governments, to build on existing initiatives and bring together and share resources for teachers, parents and students to support the delivery of programs in every school. The Palaszczuk government is committed to teaching Queensland students that domestic and family violence is never, ever acceptable.

### North Queensland, Water Plans

 **Hon. AJ LYNHAM** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (10.13 am): The Palaszczuk government is continuing to facilitate economic growth for regional Queensland. As the Minister for Natural Resources, I recognise that water is a vital component in delivering ongoing development in Central and Northern Queensland and for increased agricultural production.

That is why I recently announced that the Palaszczuk government is seeking feedback from Queenslanders on the Burdekin water plan and the Great Artesian Basin water plan. Working with local stakeholders, the Queensland government has identified an opportunity to promote agricultural development in the Upper Burdekin and expand North Queensland's food bowl.

We have announced proposed amendments to the Burdekin water plan. I know that that is well supported by not only the local member but also the local community as a whole. This will allow farmers to trade their water entitlements to better manage their farms. Farmers will be able to trade surplus water supplies to other operators who require more water.

This is once again an initiative of our government that promotes greater economic development in balance with environmental sustainability by allowing access to enough water to support new operations and encourage growth without adversely affecting upstream users. Similarly, the government is seeking feedback from users on the proposed Great Artesian Basin water resource plan where the increasing demand for water provides further opportunities for economic growth.

The Great Artesian Basin underlies about 1.7 million square kilometres of Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia and the Northern Territory and stores about 64,000 megalitres of water. About 70 per cent of the basin lies within Queensland. The Great Artesian Basin also supports natural springs of significant environmental value and of significant cultural heritage.

This government will consult extensively with the community to ensure a strategic approach to responding to water demand that does not compromise other water users and the natural environment. Decisions about the allocation and management of water will be supported by the best available resource science. We will ensure that the local community has their say. We will address concerns before proceeding with these changes. It is essential we get this right so that water infrastructure and resources are effectively managed to boost agriculture and generate jobs.

### Adoption Act, Review

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (10.15 am): In 2010 a new modernised Adoption Act commenced. It represented major reform to adoption legislation in Queensland. The reforms introduced profound changes that saw adoption in Queensland aligning with contemporary practices in Australia and internationally. Changes included removing discrimination based on marital status, introducing open adoption, information access and, most importantly, judicial oversight for the making of adoption orders. These may not have been new ideas but they were badly needed reforms in Queensland.

At that time, the government committed to reviewing the act five years on. I am pleased to advise the House that we are meeting that commitment with today's release of a discussion paper on the operations of the Adoption Act.

Since the commencement of the act, Queensland and Australia have experienced major events in the adoption space, most notably formal apologies by both governments for past forced adoption practices. It is vital that we continue to reflect on the lessons made available through the experiences of those affected by past forced adoptions.

Adoption is and will remain a service for children and will be carried out in the best interests of children. We must also ensure our adoption laws reflect contemporary approaches and are based on sound evidence. That evidence includes the lived experiences of people, especially those who have or sought to engage with our adoption laws.

I am pleased to say that we have already received some great feedback. Stakeholders are telling me Adoption Services Queensland is doing great work. During a recent Brisbane Children's Court matter, adoptive parents made special mention to the magistrate of the positive support they had received over the years from Adoptions Services staff. While this feedback is encouraging, we must ensure that we ask the tough questions to see if we can do better. Consultation on this discussion paper will be held over a six-month period. The discussion paper will be available from the get involved website.

The review of the operation of the act will consider the impact of changes in the field of adoption since the act was introduced, as well as reforms underway in other jurisdictions. The review will specifically look at: how our new consent requirements have worked; how our eligibility criteria to adopt has impacted on couples wanting to adopt, including those excluded from expressing interest; and how open adoption and information processes have been working over the past five years.

I know that in the community there is a multitude of views. I look forward to constructive feedback from all members of the community and members of this House.

### Work Camps

 **Hon. JR MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services) (10.18 am): On a recent visit to Southern Downs, I had the opportunity to visit hardworking police, fire, emergency services and corrective services staff and to listen and learn about local concerns. I met with staff and officers at the Warwick Fire Station and Warwick Police Station and everyone involved in the Queensland Corrective Services work camp.

They have achieved a new milestone—20 years of continuous service to the community, delivering positive outcomes for prisoners wanting to turn their lives around. These low-security prisoners are cleaning and maintaining the Warwick Historical Society Museum and the golf club, sorting through clothing and furniture for St Vinnies and pitching in with whatever needs to be done to help the community stage big local events at the showgrounds. It is one of the real success stories of our modern corrective services system, providing the community with much needed labour and giving prisoners the opportunity to gain new skills and give something back to the community.

Work camps inject around \$3 million a year of community work into regional Queensland and, in the last financial year, the Warwick work camp provided almost 15,000 hours of community work valued at around \$250,000. Through their efforts, they have become a much loved and extremely valued part of the Warwick community.

In Goondiwindi, I met with officers and staff at the local police station and fire station, along with Mayor Graeme Scheu. The mayor and I will seek urgent talks with the New South Wales police minister to resurrect a long-lost MOU between Queensland and New South Wales police so that our officers can better deal with cross-border issues, including crime and antisocial behaviour. It is about looking after the interests of the good people of Goondiwindi.

I was also pleased to introduce Goondiwindi State School's new Adopt-a-Cop to years 4 to 6 students at a special assembly. Senior Constable Tim Wiggan will play a valuable role looking out for students and teaching them about road safety. The combined efforts of our police, fire, emergency services and corrective services staff are making a real difference to people's lives right across the Southern Downs.

### Shark Control Program

 **Hon. WS BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Sport and Racing) (10.21 am): I am sure that many Queenslanders are glad that summer is approaching, and it is also timely to reassure visitors to Queensland beaches that the state government remains fully committed to our tried and tested methods for shark control. Queensland's shark nets and drum lines have been keeping swimmers and surfers safe off our beautiful tourist beaches since 1962. This is in stark contrast to our southern neighbours. Since 1 January there have been 14 reported shark attacks off the New South Wales coast. One of them, at Shelly Beach, Ballina, was fatal.

Honourable members will be aware that successive governments in New South Wales have not employed the same defences that are in place in Queensland. The Palaszczuk government is of the view that human safety is paramount. I can assure the House that until there are alternative methods proven to protect swimmers and surfers to the same extent, the drum lines and shark nets will remain in place off Queensland beaches. The need for them is clear. From 1 January to 8 September this year, 447 sharks have been caught in the shark control equipment off Queensland beaches. During this same period, there have been no reported attacks. Indeed, since 1962 when the Shark Control Program was introduced, there has been only one fatal shark attack in Queensland in an area protected by nets or drum lines.

Government decisions should be based on evidence rather than emotion. There is a very powerful argument in support of continuing what we know is working. The Queensland government will not place Queenslanders at risk with unproven shark control technology. I want to make it clear to Queenslanders that the defence mechanisms are not in place to indiscriminately kill sharks. The nets are in place to catch resident predators close to the shore to reduce numbers in particular areas. We recognise that nets can affect other marine life, which is why we use other measures to reduce entanglements of non-target species.

All the nets are fitted with electronic warning devices—pingers—to warn whales and dolphins away. The program uses drum lines wherever possible and uses bait that does not attract dolphins or turtles. Fisheries Queensland supports research into ways of reducing accidental catch of non-dangerous marine life. Since the equipment was introduced, there have been improvements to the nets, and the types of hooks and baits are aimed at improving the ability to target key species while reducing the impact on marine mammals.

While it is estimated that 20,000 whales pass through Queensland waters each year—a number that appears to be growing with each migration season—only 52 have become entangled in shark control nets over the last 50 years. I am pleased to inform the House that 48 of those whales were released alive.

Visitors to our tourist beaches can be assured that the Queensland government continues to place the highest value on their safety and will continue to do all it can to protect them from attacks by sharks.

### Road Safety

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy and Water Supply) (10.24 am): The Palaszczuk government is committed to reducing the burden of road trauma on our communities. The safety of the people who travel on the state's vast road network is paramount. The Safer Roads, Safer Queensland strategy and action plan was launched on 24 August 2015 to guide those efforts. This roadmap represents the culmination of ideas generated by key road safety experts and practitioners at the Safer Roads, Safer Queensland forum held in April this year and on our continuing steering committee. I would like to thank all of those stakeholders for their tremendous work with us on this.

Our ultimate vision is zero deaths and serious injuries on our road network. No road death is acceptable. We are working towards this vision through the agreed national road safety targets set for 2020. The action plan includes 57 initiatives that take the first steps towards realising the goals of the strategy. Over the next two years we will deliver more than \$500 million on road safety programs, including education, community engagement, enforcement, technology, research and improved road infrastructure targeting the highest risk locations.

We have already started delivering some of those key initiatives. So far we have introduced double demerit points for two or more mobile phone offences committed within one year, which commenced on 1 September this year. Over 100 young people from across the state participated in the Co-Lab youth road safety innovation challenge on 8 July to brainstorm the road safety issues impacting their generation. Phase 2 of Co-Lab will be held on the 30th of this month, with a prize for the best innovative solution. We have also released a discussion paper and online survey about our proposed reforms to motorcycle licensing requirements in Queensland. We have also had our first statewide Road Safety Week, with over 50 events across Queensland.

Statewide road safety campaigns continue with the launch of the distractions ad campaign on the 31st of last month, the development of a drink-driving campaign for the Christmas-New Year festive season and a renewed flood focused road safety campaign. There are many more activities happening around the state and in our local communities. I certainly encourage everyone to have a look at the strategy and action plan and commit to how they can get involved and make road safety a priority for Queensland.

### Protected Area Estate

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef) (10.27 am): Labor governments in Queensland have always been strong advocates for a robust, resilient and representative protected area estate. The Goss Labor government brought in the groundbreaking Nature Conservation Act in 1992, which introduced new classes of protected area estate and the land management principles required for each.

Currently, just under 7.7 per cent of the state is in a protected area under private and public conservation tenures and agreements. The Palaszczuk Labor government is continuing this great work and is committed to expanding our protected area estate towards the target set through the international Convention on Biological Diversity. However, finding the additional dollars needed to acquire and manage vast new tracts of public land for conservation is a great challenge. To meet this challenge, a more collaborative approach will be needed.

I have asked the Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing and the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection to work together in consultation with relevant stakeholders and philanthropic conservation groups to develop a protected area policy that will consider innovative and cost-effective ways to improve the capacity for managing the existing and future national park estate, evaluate the most cost-effective balance of public-private involvement and enhance participation in and the effectiveness of private land conservation. There is no better example than the campaign currently underway by Bush Heritage Australia to attract funding to secure habitat and fund research for the recently rediscovered night parrot in far Western Queensland. The Palaszczuk Labor government is helping Bush Heritage achieve this with the night parrot habitat likely to become a protected nature refuge.

On this front, I am also pleased to advise the House that in early October I intend to propose the declaration of 11 new nature refuges. This will take the total area of high conservation value land in Queensland to over four million hectares. Agreement has also just been reached with the Australian government to declare more than 400,000 hectares of new protected area estate in Queensland. These properties purchased with contributions by both governments under the national reserve system program will initially be declared as a mixture of national park and regional park while some administrative impediments to the declarations are resolved. In addition, I have asked that priority be given to the conversion to national park of a further four properties totalling approximately 90,000 hectares in area, selected for their outstanding conservation values and their high resilience to the likely impact of climate change. Once these areas are declared as national park, the portion of Queensland that is protected area estate will be just under eight per cent. It is essential that we as a government and a society more broadly take prudent steps to ensure our unique flora and fauna is protected in a way that allows it to thrive and be appreciated by generations to come.

### Science in Parliament, Advance Queensland

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algeria—ALP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works and Minister for Science and Innovation) (10.31 am): The Palaszczuk Labor government recognises science and innovation as the keys to our state's future economic prosperity. Today's Science in Parliament event is an opportunity for members to participate in the journey we are taking Queensland on to create jobs now and jobs for the future as part of our \$180 million investment through Advance Queensland. We also need to encourage more Queenslanders to pursue education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. This is about skilling today's children in the jobs of the future.

We know that science and technology are changing our world at an ever-increasing pace. Driverless cars, personalised medicine, 3D printing and other transformations will have a huge impact on manufacturing, engineering, construction and food production. Every part of our lives will be touched by these transformations. We not only need to embrace these changes and make them work to our advantage but also need to be leading them—realising the benefits of being the driver on science and innovation and not just the end recipient while someone somewhere else reaps the rewards.

It is also important that all Queenslanders benefit from our changing economy. Last Friday while in Cairns I was delighted to announce two landmark funding programs to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers and help keep our best and brightest minds in Queensland. The Advance Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research Fellowships and Advance Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander PhD Scholarships are designed to help address the underrepresentation of Indigenous researchers in the state by helping them establish and develop research careers. The research fellowships will provide funding of up to \$240,000 over three years and foster increased linkages, with closer collaboration between researchers and industry organisations. These linkages with industry will deliver tangible social, economic, environmental and regional benefits for Queensland in the next five years. The PhD scholarship program will provide up to \$120,000 over three years for scholars to undertake an applied PhD research project in collaboration with an industry or end-user organisation able to translate and apply the research in practical ways. Both programs will support innovative research aligned with Queensland science and research priorities.

This is the first time the Queensland government has offered full PhD scholarships, marking a momentous occasion for this state. It is globally recognised that we have an amazing pool of talented researchers in Queensland. The Palaszczuk government is committed to investing in our local talent to keep the bright ideas, innovators and entrepreneurs in Queensland for the benefit of our economy. I look forward to updating the House on these and other Advance Queensland initiatives into the future.

## INFRASTRUCTURE, PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

### Reporting Date

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.33 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That the date for the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee to report to the Legislative Assembly on its inquiry into fly-in fly-out and other long-distance commuting work practices in regional Queensland be extended from 30 September 2015 to 9 October 2015.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

## CRIMINAL LAW (DOMESTIC VIOLENCE) AMENDMENT BILL

### CORONERS (DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE DEATH REVIEW AND ADVISORY BOARD) AMENDMENT BILL

### Cognate Debate

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (10.34 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That, in accordance with standing order 172, the Criminal Law (Domestic Violence) Amendment Bill 2015 and the Coroners (Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board) Amendment Bill 2015 be treated as cognate bills for their remaining stages, as follows:

- (a) second reading debate, with separate questions being put in regard to the second readings;
- (b) the consideration of the bills in detail together; and
- (c) separate questions being put for the third readings and long titles.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

## ELECTORAL (REDISTRIBUTION COMMISSION) AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL

### SUGAR INDUSTRY (REAL CHOICE IN MARKETING) AMENDMENT BILL

### Allocation of Time Limit Order

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.34 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

Notwithstanding anything contained in standing or sessional orders:

1. That the second reading debate of the Electoral (Redistribution Commission) and Another Act Amendment Bill 2015 commence during the sitting week starting on 27 October 2015 with all remaining stages to be completed by 5 pm on 29 October 2015, as previously agreed by the House on 15 July 2015.; and
2. That the Sugar Industry (Real Choice in Marketing) Amendment Bill 2015 commence during the sitting week starting 10 November 2015 with all remaining stages to be completed by 5 pm on 3 December 2015.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### Comments by Member for Everton

 **Mr DICKSON** (Buderim—LNP) (10.36 am): I unconditionally withdraw the statement I made on 15 September and accept the Speaker's ruling on this matter. I make the House aware that I do have a 40 per cent hearing disability and that the hearing aids I wear make it difficult at times to determine the actual direction of sound, especially where there is a lot of background noise. I table my letter of explanation.

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 16 September 2015, from the member for Buderim, Mr Steve Dickson, to the Speaker regarding comments made in the House on 15 September 2015 [[1112](#)].

## EDUCATION, TOURISM AND SMALL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

### Addendum to Report

 **Mr STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (10.36 am): I lay upon the table of the House an addendum to report No. 4, titled *55th Parliament: 2015-16 budget estimates*, by the Education, Tourism and Small Business Committee which was tabled on 10 September 2015. The addendum outlines why answers to prehearing questions on notice were not distributed immediately after they were received. I commend the report to the House.

*Tabled paper:* Education, Tourism and Small Business Committee: Report No. 4, 55th Parliament—2015-16 Budget Estimates—Addendum [[1113](#)].

## NOTICE OF MOTION

### Criminal Gangs Legislation

 **Mr SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.37 am): I give notice that I will move—

That this House directs the Attorney-General not to introduce a bill that would repeal the state's successful criminal gang laws including the very successful Vicious Lawless Association Disestablishment Act, otherwise known as the VLAD Act.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Queensland Health

 **Mr SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.38 am): We know what former premier Anna Bligh said about the Queensland health system three years ago. The former premier said that the health system was a basket case, that it was dysfunctional. It was so dysfunctional under Labor's administration that it needed to be torn in two so that the government could create two bureaucracies, because one just was not big enough. Fast-forward to when this government took over and those particular issues were largely confined to history.

Indeed, it is very interesting to see that Labor is back and ambulance ramping is back; Labor is back and bypass is back; Labor is back and waiting lists are back. More concerning is that Labor is back and the payroll disaster is looming again. Indeed, the same little birdie that fluttered into the room when parliament last sat has fluttered in in a more concerning way and has indicated that there has been a serious malfunction with the payroll system in Queensland Health. Labor is back and the payroll system debacle is back. That is something that should be of great concern to the 60,000 Queensland Health workers it services.

Indeed, that same little birdie informs me that on Tuesday of last week the much vaunted Workbrain system collapsed. The rostering system collapsed. They were unable to load data electronically into the payroll system for the pay run on Sunday this week. I have been informed that some of those staff worked 40 hours straight to try to patch it up. They have had to put a bandaid on the system to try to get it to function for this Sunday's loading for next week's pay run. We have to ask what has gone wrong in this area. The one common denominator is Labor. They cannot manage anything unless it involves kowtowing to the union movement in Queensland.

On that matter, has the Minister for Health informed the unions of what the little birdie told us—that there was this collapse on Tuesday of last week and that they worked furiously for four to five days to put it back together, with the grim hope that it will function for the next pay run? Has the Minister for Health informed the staff of Queensland Health that they potentially face another payroll debacle? Was this a consequence of the Hunter review, which this government recently commissioned? It has actually caused a change in the organisational structure within Queensland Health. We know that complexity in the system is something that leads to this sort of debacle and it is what led to the absolute failure in the payroll system when Labor was last in power. That is why we were moving to simplify the award structure. That is why we moved to contracts with our medical officers to make sure that it was simplified. I think the health minister should give full and proper account about what he knows about this. He should actually inform us whether this little whistleblower birdie is right. Has that whistleblower given us the right information? I suspect that the little birdie has.

On Tuesday of last week we saw a collapse in the system. In the intervening period, we have seen a set of circumstances where the department has been furiously trying to patch up a system which is becoming dysfunctional again under Labor. They have been scrambling around with line managers throughout the state to make sure they can harvest that information to put in by way of manual load so the system will function. When they start to put it altogether to push that button after Sunday of this week, will it work? Has it been patched up? Why weren't the unions informed? Why wasn't Queensland Health informed? The one common denominator is we cannot trust the Labor Party with the health of Queenslanders. We know what happened previously. Under Labor, 63,000 people were waiting longer than recommended for a routine dental appointment; under the LNP, none. Under Labor, 6,485 people were waiting longer than recommended for surgery; under the LNP, 72. They have stripped away our surgery guarantee and now they have stripped away certainty with regards to paying our hardworking doctors and nurses in Queensland.

### Queensland Health, ICT Systems

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (10.42 am): Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to address a series of deliberate misrepresentations put to this House by the Leader of the Opposition today. There are so many things to challenge in what the Leader of the Opposition said that it will take me half a day to address all of the falsehoods and misrepresentations he put to the House. But if you were the Leader of the Opposition, why wouldn't you want to misrepresent the past? When I came into the minister's office, I saw this big revolving front door and I asked, 'What is that for?' I was told, 'He's sacking people so quickly he's got to have a revolving door to get them in and out of the office quickly.' More than 4,000 staff were sacked from Queensland Health. Right at the front line, there were 1,800 nurses and midwives sacked—he was thrashing and trashing nursing in this state.

What did I find with the ICT systems when I came in? The Leader of the Opposition was banging on about how great he was—that he was the fixer, that he fixed it all with no problems at all—but what did I find when I came to office? In my incoming minister's brief, there were 16 information and computer technology systems identified as having a risk profile of high or extreme. Why didn't the Leader of the Opposition tell us about HCBIS, the patient information system which is on the verge of collapse? Why didn't he tell us about FAMMIS, the finance, assets and materials information system? Why didn't he tell us about AUSLAB, the pathology system which is about to collapse? What did he do?

There were millions of dollars spent on a royal commission, but he could not even implement the first recommendation—a statewide eHealth Investment Strategy. We have done that in seven months. We have a 20-year plan, a 20-year vision. Those opposite say that we do not have a plan, but I have done it in seven months when he sat on his hands for three years and did nothing.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Members, when the Leader of the Opposition spoke there was not this level of agitation. I urge members to allow the minister to continue in silence.

**Mr DICK:** They have not listened to him for 26 years; why are they going to start listening now? The Leader of the Opposition spoke about ambulance ramping. No wonder it is back—he removed the directive late last year requiring hospitals to treat patients when they came in. Labor has put that back in. We have put in MEDAI, the Metropolitan Emergency Department Access Initiative. Labor has to fix these chronic problems left behind by the Leader of the Opposition. He did not fix ICT. He did not fix ramping. What he did was he fixed the jobs of people; he fixed the jobs of contractors. We may be able to save \$512,000 a fortnight. He was too busy paying contractors and not paying staff because he sacked them.

What about waiting lists? What have we been able to do in seven months? More than 100,000 people were waiting longer than clinically recommended, so what have we been able to do in seven months? That figure has gone down from 100,000 to 82,000, so 18,000 Queenslanders have been able to get into a hospital, get treatment and get an appointment with a specialist. They were left in the waiting room by the Leader of the Opposition who did not care about them. This Labor government cares about health. This Labor government cares about waiting lists. I have got the clean-up job of a lifetime to do which was left behind by the Leader of the Opposition—ICT, waiting lists, staffing. I will do the job.

**Mr Minnikin** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I notify the member for Chatsworth that he has an opportunity to make a private member's statement if he chooses.

### Education, Tourism and Small Business Committee, Addendum to Report

 **Dr McVEIGH** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (10.47 am): I would like to take the opportunity this morning to refer to the Education, Tourism and Small Business Committee and the addendum to its report No. 4 of the 55th Parliament on the 2015-16 budget estimates which was tabled by the chair of the committee, Mr Scott Stewart, this morning. As the chair of the committee outlined, that addendum to the report referred to the fact that, despite the Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games, the Hon. Kate Jones, submitting her answers to pre-hearing questions on notice at the required time of 10 am, they were not made available to other committee members and interested parties until about 4.30 that afternoon. The addendum said that that was on the basis of two of the answers appearing to be outside of the standing orders, a point subsequently confirmed by senior parliamentary officers. The addendum went on to say—

This was communicated to the relevant Cabinet, Legislation and Liaison Officer and the answers were as a result amended and resubmitted later than the required time.

During estimates, when queried about the same issue, the minister confirmed there were no conversations held between 10 am and that later time of 4.30 in relation to these issues. She went on to say—

I, too, like you, would like to know what the delay was. That is a matter for the parliament and I think we can get an answer from the parliament on that.

I think this raises very significant questions that this House should consider in relation to the performance of the minister on the day and in answer to the questions that were put to her about the delay. It suggests at best that she forgot what she said, which is recorded in Hansard. At the other end of the spectrum it suggests that perhaps there is a query there about her misleading the House. I think these queries that should be considered are indicative of the minister's performance on the day, the lack of regard that she showed for the estimates process and the flippant manner in which she answered questions. There are very serious questions to be answered here. The opposition will be following up on those questions and I can confirm that my colleague the member for Currumbin will be writing to the chair of the committee about this very issue.

When we see a case of either flippant disregard for the parliamentary process, in this case in estimates, or perhaps even a question about misleading the House, I would suggest the minister has very serious questions to answer.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Before calling the next speaker, I inform members that students from Siena Catholic Primary School in the electorate of Kawana are currently in the public gallery observing our proceedings.

### Disability Action Week

 **Hon. CJ O'ROURKE** (Mundingburra—ALP) (Minister for Disability Services, Minister for Seniors and Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland) (10.50 am): This week is Disability Action Week, Queensland's biggest celebration of people with disabilities, with a series of events across the state. The Palaszczuk government has allocated grants totalling almost \$150,000 to 50 community groups to support the week.

Disability Action Week is held in September each year with the aim of empowering people with disability, raising awareness of disability issues and improving access and inclusion throughout the wider community. It is about challenging all Queenslanders to think about their attitudes and perceptions and how these may prevent or limit inclusion of people with disability.

This year's Disability Action Week theme is Inclusion: Changing attitudes, changing lives. As part of this year's campaign, we are releasing a series of short videos via social media that promote inclusion by asking people to challenge their perception and attitude. The videos feature singer Tim McCallum, NDIS Queensland ambassador Karni Liddell, Guide Dogs Queensland representative Sharon Rogers and Deaf Services Queensland representative Brad Jardine sharing their tips for a more inclusive community. I hope members will look out for the videos and share them as widely as possible to get the messages out there.

I have been getting out and about to many of the events on offer throughout the week including the Queensland Advocacy Incorporated forum, the Positive Practices Symposium, a barbecue hosted by CPL at Moorooka which I attended with my colleague the member for Yeerongpilly, a Disability Awareness and Post-School Options Expo at Chandler and tonight I will attend the Access Arts annual

art exhibition featuring artworks by people with disability. An online calendar is available on my department's website. I urge members to check it out and help play their part in celebrating the role of people with disability in our community.

### Labor Party, Unions

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (10.52 am): As we reach the end of this parliamentary sitting week I think it is opportune that I raise two issues that are going to be of increasing concern to Queenslanders—they are probably of grave concern to Queenslanders—right now. During the course of this week we have started to see unfolding at the royal commission into union corruption a sequence of events and allegations that would strike terror into the heart of law-abiding businesses and terror into the heart of union members who want to see their union portrayed in the best light possible. What we have seen over the last three days is increasing evidence and allegations that call into question the union leadership in this state. We have seen photos of a former vice-president of the Labor Party, a former national president of the CFMEU and a state president of the CFMEU displayed across the pages of our papers with allegations of the most serious kind.

When we hark back only to January 2014 we had the head of the Queensland Council of Unions in Queensland, Mr Battams, say that he was not aware of any of this type of union corruption. Mr Battams, a long-term member of the QCU, was not aware of this and he hoped it was not here. He supported weeding it out root and branch. We are seeing now clear evidence of it. What do we see today? We see today in the paper 'Union corruption bombshell', detailing a house being built by other people's money. What did we see yesterday? We saw IVF funding being paid for by union funds.

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

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

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** Mr Speaker, you gave guidance to members yesterday about displaying props, and newspapers are props. Unless he is quoting directly from the newspaper and he is quoting directly from today's copy and he wants to table it, which I do not think is necessary for anyone, I think it is a bit of a pantomime that we do not need.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Thank you, members. I call the member for Clayfield.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** Let me read from the headline and let me table this. It states 'Top CFMEU official quits over IVF funding scandal'. I am very happy to table that.

*Tabled paper:* Article from the *Australian Financial Review*, dated 16 September 2015, titled 'Top CFMEU official quits over IVF funding scandal' [\[1114\]](#).

What is disturbing is that this seems to be a normal part of business. That is what the paper says; that is what the allegations are: a normal part of business. Why is that concerning here? It is concerning here because of the dominance of the CFMEU over the Labor government in this state, because of the control they have over the members of this state. Where do we see that manifest itself? We see it manifest itself amongst all of the nominations of the people who thank the CFMEU for all their work: the member for Waterford, the member for Murrumba, the member for Capalaba, the member for Thuringowa, the member for Ferny Grove, the member for Pine Rivers, the member for Springwood, the member for Bundaberg and of course the member for Bundamba. We see the pattern emerging: union corruption. A strong hand is not on the House; it is in the House.

### QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

**Mr SPEAKER:** Question time will conclude at 11.56 am.

### Palaszczuk Labor Government, Unions

 **Mr SPRINGBORG** (10.56 am): My question without notice is to the Premier. I refer to the ongoing revelations and investigations into corruption, extortion and intimidation involving the Labor Party affiliated CFMEU, and I ask: will the Premier, who is responsible for the conduct of her ministers, instruct her cabinet ministers to refuse donations and campaign assistance from the CFMEU?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. I share with every other member in this House that the revelations that are coming out of the royal commission into unions that have been displayed in our national newspapers are indeed concerning and it is indeed disgraceful behaviour. That will run its course. As I said publicly yesterday, if anyone breaks the law they will face

the full consequences of that law. I do not care whether they are a member of the union movement, a member of the business community or the broader public; if they break the law they will face the full consequences of that law.

This morning I have spoken to the party secretary, Evan Moorhead, and the party has started disciplinary proceedings against Mr Hanna, and that is the right and correct thing to do. My party is acting and my government is acting. From that side of the House—

**Mr Crandon:** Are you going to kick him out?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** No, let's be very clear. Let's not discount history because—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** They do not want to hear it. I will tell honourable members one thing.

**Mr Crandon** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! One moment—

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Unlike the former premier, I have not had a private lunch with Mr Hanna. On 17 April 2012 here in Mr Newman's diary, it states '12 to 1.30 pm, meeting and lunch with Dave Hanna BLF, Premier's lounge'. I table it.

*Tabled paper.* Extract from diary of Mr Campbell Newman, dated 17 April 2012 [1115].

It does not say that there was any departmental rep there. It does not say if there was any staff member there. It looks to me like it was a private lunch behind closed doors. Let's not stop there. On 5 June 2013 the member for Everton said—I quote *Hansard*—

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

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I am answering the question but you do not like the answer.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order, members! Pause the clock. I realise you have had a busy week. What is your point of order, Leader of the Opposition?

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Before I ask the Leader of the Opposition what his point of order is, I put all members on notice that I will not hesitate to warn you and ask you to leave the chamber under the range of standing orders that are open to me if we cannot get through this question time with a reasonable degree of decorum. I call the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. My point of order was specifically on that point about answering the question. My question was: has the Premier instructed her cabinet ministers to refuse donations and campaign assistance from the CFMEU? That was the nub of the question, which has not been answered.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Premier, do you want to add anything further to your answer?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** No.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Before I call for the next question, member for Coomera and member for Chatsworth, you have been asking questions all morning. If you want to ask questions, get on the speaking list. I call the Leader of the Opposition.

### Palaszczuk Labor Government, Unions

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** My second question without notice is also to the Premier. I refer to the ongoing revelations and investigations into corruption, extortion and intimidation involving the Labor Party affiliated CFMEU, and I ask: following the Premier's selfie with David Hanna, has the Premier sought a personal explanation from each of her ministers to ascertain their personal and political relationships with any union official currently under investigation?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** In relation the royal commission I have made my answer very clear: anyone who is found guilty will face the full force of the law. I find it quite ironic that those opposite want to come in here and throw mud, but if they go back into history they will see very clearly that the former premier had a meeting with Dave Hanna and the member for Everton put Dave Hanna on a panel of experts. This is what the member for Everton said in *Hansard* on 5 June 2013—

I thank those panel members—Mr Phil Kesby, Mr Andrew Wallace and Mr David Hanna ...

It gets better, Mr Speaker: they also appointed Mr Hanna to the board of directors of Construction Skills Queensland. So it was all right to appoint him to a board; it was all right for him to have lunch with the Premier; and it was all right for him to be on the expert panel advisory board. You were a champion of Mr Hanna, and that is the truth.

Perhaps very shortly we will find out more about the meeting between the former premier and Dave Hanna, because we know that on 6 October at the Tatts Club, which is a very exclusive establishment, former premier Campbell Newman will embark on a book tour—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Premier, we do not want to know about the book tour. You are invited to either make your answer relevant or let someone else ask a question.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I want to see what is in the book! I do want to say that the Deputy Premier did approach me the other day and the Deputy Premier told me that yes, she did have a meeting with an official from the CFMEU. The Deputy Premier also informed me that the meeting was sought by the member for Gregory. The member for Gregory took along a member of the CFMEU to meet the Deputy Premier. I think the opposition should seriously think about its strategy today—

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I rise to a point of order. I rise out of a sense of frustration. Giving the Premier the opportunity to go for 2½ minutes—

**Mr SPEAKER:** I do not want a speech.

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

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** My question was simple and it has not been answered.

**Mr SPEAKER:** One at a time. Leader of the Opposition, I do not want a speech. What is your point of order?

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I defer to your ruling. Mr Speaker, my question was simply: has the Premier sought from her ministers information regarding their personal and political relationships with any of those union officials currently under investigation? That question has not been answered.

**Mr SPEAKER:** What is your point of order, Leader of the House? Premier, you have answered the question. I call the member for Barron River.

### **Far North Queensland, Economy**

**Mr CRAWFORD:** My question is for the Premier. Is the Premier aware of any private sector projects that could help boost the economy of Far North Queensland?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** It is good to see that on this side of the House we are interested in creating jobs for Queenslanders and focusing on the regions, particularly the far north.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** They do not want to talk about jobs. Last week I had the pleasure of being up in Cairns, Far North Queensland, and I had the opportunity to visit parts of the electorate of the member for Barron River. I also took the opportunity to meet with an organisation that is putting in a very significant tender to the federal government. I mention this tender because it is worth more than \$2 billion. It will generate over 100 jobs in the Cairns region and 1,000 indirect jobs.

This tender is for the Pacific Patrol Boat Replacement Program. It will provide technical expertise and it will involve building patrol boats. It would also involve the ongoing maintenance program for patrol boats for the Pacific region. This is an exciting project and it is absolutely needed. I believe that this project fits in firmly with the federal government's agenda and its focus on the Northern Australia white paper. I believe that the members in the Cairns region are supportive of this and I know that the Treasurer is taking a deep personal interest in it. I also had the pleasure of speaking with the federal member Warren Entsch, and he said that he is pushing this case very strongly with the federal government. We need to have the support of the entire parliament when it comes to ensuring that we attract jobs and contracts to the Far North region.

I believe that this will be a game-changing program if we are able to deliver it for the Far North. At the moment there are other parts of Australia who are vying for this program. As you can appreciate, it is a large tender in excess of \$2 billion. Being close to the Pacific Rim we have the regional geographic advantage, but I also believe that if we have a strong voice and advocate for the region then we will secure the contract. I urge those members, especially those opposite, to talk to your federal counterparts in Canberra because this project is just so important.

### Palaszczuk Labor Government, Unions

**Mr LANGBROEK:** My question without notice is to the Premier. I refer to the ongoing revelations and investigations into corruption, extortion and intimidation involving the Labor Party affiliated CFMEU, and I ask: will the Premier direct any of her cabinet ministers who are currently members of the CFMEU to suspend their membership in this union?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I am confused by this question because the statements which I have made are very clear. If anyone breaches the law, they will face the full consequences of the law.

**An opposition member** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** No, just because there is one rotten egg does not tarnish everyone else. Do you want to go back to Scott Driscoll, the former member for Redcliffe?

**Mr Minnikin** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Premier, one moment. Member for Chatsworth, I have mentioned your name a number of times this morning. I now warn you under standing order 253A. Please cease interjecting and obstructing the business of the House.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** There is a right called freedom of association in this country that other members may not be well aware of. I have taken swift action. I have spoken to the party secretary. Let us contrast that back to the days of Scott Driscoll, a former member of this House who is currently facing charges. I am not going to go into the details as it is currently before the courts but it seems they have erased that from their memories.

**Mr Crandon** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Pause the clock. Member for Coomera, your name has been mentioned a number of times this morning by me. I now formally warn you under standing order 253A. Please cease interjecting and obstructing the business of the House.

**Mr CRANDON:** Mr Speaker—

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

**Mr CRANDON:** Mr Speaker, I would like to make the point that I have not said one word this morning. My name has not been mentioned. I make that point. I take your ruling, but I do make that point.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Coomera, I ask you to withdraw those comments immediately.

**Mr CRANDON:** I withdraw.

### Film Production

**Mrs LAUGA:** My question is to the Premier and Minister for the Arts. Will the Premier update the House on national and international film production in Queensland?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for Keppel very much for her question. As we know, it is exciting times in Queensland as we diversify our economy with a lower Australian dollar. We know that there is an enormous opportunity for us to have a permanent movie industry based here in Queensland. I have been very heartened to see that there is growing support across the industry. Not only that, on my recent trade mission to the United States I met with major production companies including Legendary Pictures, Walt Disney Studios and Marvel, and in the evening I met with NBC executives who were looking at filming a television miniseries here in Queensland.

Recently the Minister for the Commonwealth Games and I went to the studios on the Gold Coast. We can confirm that we will build the largest sound studio in the Southern Hemisphere which will be utilised by the movie industry and also by the Commonwealth Games as squash courts. This is about providing long-term capital infrastructure that will be utilised not just for sport but also for the movie industry.

I also want to confirm that we have had some exciting news recently with Columbia Pictures which I met with here in parliament before they made this announcement. They are going to film the international thriller *The Shallows* in Queensland. The shoot will run from late October to mid-December with production at Village Roadshow Studios. *The Shallows* will showcase Queensland's stunning beaches to the world and employ about 130 crew. We will also have the 3D Chinese thriller *The Nest* start filming in October at Village Roadshow Studios and on location throughout South-East Queensland. There are also opportunities for films to be filmed in the region. We have a lot to offer right up and down our coast. You never know, we might even see them in Keppel as well.

**An opposition member:** What about the west?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Maybe even out west. We have had some films out there. *Goldstone*, from memory, was recently filmed in Winton. It is good to see that this will generate employment not just on the Gold Coast but right across Queensland.

At the moment we are in intense negotiations with US studios to secure additional films which will bring significant new money to the state, creating new jobs and economic opportunities for Queensland. I expect another big film production in 2015-16. Wouldn't that be marvellous?

### Disclosure of Political Donations

**Mr WALKER:** My question is to the Attorney-General. Yesterday the Attorney indicated and announced to the House that the CEPU plumbing declaration regarding a donation to her as a candidate had been disclosed in the ALP's ECQ return. I table two declarations from the CEPU—one declaring a \$10,000 donation to the ALP and the other declaring a \$10,000 donation to Yvette D'ath.

*Tabled paper:* Electoral Commission of Queensland, Disclosure of Gifts to Registered Political Parties—Organisations (CEPU Plumbing Division of Queensland), for the period 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 [1116].

*Tabled paper:* Electoral Commission of Queensland, Disclosure Return—Donor to Candidate (Yvette D'Ath) in the name of CEPU Plumbing Division of Queensland, dated 2 June 2014 [1117].

As the minister responsible for the administration of the Electoral Commission, what steps will the Attorney take to resolve this apparent discrepancy?

**Mrs D'ATH:** I thank the member for his question. Firstly, this matter, as I understand it, has been referred to the Ethics Committee.

**Mr Bleijie:** You are writing to the Speaker. The Speaker refers it to the Ethics Committee.

**Mrs D'ATH:** Just for clarification and to let the LNP know what its own side was doing yesterday afternoon, after question time the member for Mansfield got up and said that he would be referring a matter to the Ethics Committee. I say that in case they are not clear about what their own side did. As I said yesterday, I am happy to go back and check the records to make sure that they are completely accurate. I can advise that donations are not made to me personally as a candidate. Donations are made to the party for a particular campaign, and as agent for me the Labor Party then puts those disclosures in their returns. That is the way it works. Donations are made to the Redcliffe campaign or the Redcliffe by-election through the party office or the Redcliffe branch of the ALP, and as agent the ALP puts in the disclosure and the returns. I suggest that the LNP have a very good look at that.

As I said yesterday, I am happy to answer these questions. The only reason these questions can be asked is because of the disclosures—disclosures that we are more than happy to have on the record because we account for the donations that we receive. Unlike those opposite, \$100,000 worth of donations has still not been disclosed, in breach of their own fundraising guidelines. The LNP's fundraising guidelines say they are to record the name and address of everyone who gives them donations. They have failed to comply with their own fundraising guidelines by taking \$100,000 worth of donations and not recording who those donations came from. I think anyone in the community would find it extraordinary that donations up to \$10,000 were being accepted and they were not even recording who gave them that money so they could at least write them a thankyou letter and then I suspect after that go back to them and say, 'Can we have some more?' Before those on the other side want to throw stones, let us see where that \$100,000 worth of donations have come from. Let us see some disclosure and accountability on behalf of the opposition—the one they tried to run and hide from when they were in government when they changed these laws to increase the threshold so they could get these sorts of donations every single day and never, ever have the public know who was giving them that money.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Before I call the next member, I warn the member for Gaven under standing order 253A. Please cease interjecting and obstructing the business of the House. I heard you speaking on numerous occasions, and I note the Attorney did not pick up on any of your interjections.

I also inform members that more students from Siena Catholic Primary School in the electorate of Kawana are observing our proceedings in the public gallery.

### Building Queensland

**Mr MADDEN:** My question is to the Deputy Premier. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on the work being undertaken by Building Queensland?

**Ms TRAD:** I thank the honourable member for the question. I know that the member for Ipswich West is a very strong advocate for more infrastructure projects in his electorate. I do not know whether the Minister for Main Roads often gets text messages from the member for Ipswich West about infrastructure maintenance, improvements and particular projects in his electorate, but I certainly do. I want to particularly acknowledge the strong advocacy that the member for Ipswich West makes on behalf of his electorate.

Building Queensland, as members of parliament would know, has already been established within my agency and I am pleased to inform the House that, despite this establishment phase, Building Queensland has already undertaken some significant work to identify key projects across agencies. Building Queensland has been working closely with agencies on projects that meet thresholds for business case leadership and finalising key guidelines and planning frameworks. This was a particularly important issue because we know that over the last three years the state did not have an infrastructure plan and it did not have an infrastructure pipeline. That meant that projects that did not stack up like 1 William Street, which will be a drain on the public purse for decades to come, got prioritisation over other key important projects that had a very significant economic, employment and social return to the state.

I am pleased to advise the House that Building Queensland is now commencing its role leading the business case on several major projects across government. The initial tranche of projects that Building Queensland will lead business case development for include Cross River Rail, which I have mentioned this morning, in terms of referral to Infrastructure Australia for the national infrastructure plan. Other projects are the train control system upgrade; the Beerburrum to Nambour rail upgrade project, a project of significant importance to the Sunshine Coast; and the Queensland Health legacy ICT projects which the Minister for Health outlined today, because those opposite failed to grapple with the very important task of looking at health legacy ICT projects even though their own agency had advised them. We will be working to make sure that Building Queensland is indeed the rigorous, independent infrastructure advisor to Queensland that this state needs because infrastructure is too important to mess around with, particularly in relation to mistakes like 1 William Street.

### **Disclosure of Political Donations**

**Mr BLEIJIE:** My question is to the Attorney-General. I refer to the Queensland Council of Unions' return for the 2015 state election in which the QCU declares it received a \$187,405 fundraising contribution from United Voice. United Voice has not lodged with the ECQ a return for the same period, and I ask: as the minister responsible for the administration of the Electoral Commission, is the Attorney aware of any reason the retrospective \$1,000 disclosure threshold for political fundraising will not be applied to the United Voice transaction?

**Mrs D'ATH:** I thank the member for his question. What we do know in relation to the Electoral Commission is that there are a number of returns that have been lodged that are still being uploaded onto the website. As far as the allegations being made from the other side—and we are going to keep hearing it because they are not exactly the best at doing research—as I said yesterday, if those on the other side believe that there has been a breach of the requirements under the disclosure rules then they can certainly go to the Electoral Commission to advise it of that or advise my office. The Electoral Commission is the body that would investigate whether these disclosures have been complied with under the law. The only reason the disclosure threshold is there at \$1,000 is thanks to the Palaszczuk Labor government—unlike those on the other side who ran from it and who hid.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mrs D'ATH:** I thank my colleagues on this side of the House for reminding me which minister actually introduced those changes to increase the threshold, and I am not surprised because of course it was the former attorney-general who is now questioning disclosure and transparency. This would actually be quite amusing if not for the fact that I know what that former attorney-general did in the job when he was there, because I am still picking up the pieces and cleaning up the mess from the former attorney-general. He was not exactly the Attorney-General for disclosure and transparency, and we only need to look at the Auditor-General's report on boot camps and the fact that there is still no evidence about how the decision was made in selecting the provider for the Lincoln Springs boot camp. I would be happy to hear that information at any point from the former attorney-general.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! One moment, Minister. I bring you back to the question that was asked and ask you to make sure your answer is relevant. I do not believe it related to boot camps.

**Mrs D'ATH:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, but I am just pointing out that disclosure and transparency are very important things that the Palaszczuk government prides itself on. It is a shame that those on the other side do not operate in the same manner.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I rise to a point of order. My point of order is with respect to relevance and the Attorney's last comment about integrity and transparency, and that is exactly what I asked: why the retrospective \$1,000 disclosure threshold for political fundraising will actually not be applied to the United Voice disclosure.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Thank you, member for Kawana.

**Mrs D'ATH:** Mr Speaker, if you listen to the question again, it asked why it will not be. It is a statement about what might or might not come when the disclosure is uploaded. How about we wait until we see the disclosure and then those opposite can make allegations, which they are very good at—blanket allegations? How about we look at the facts? Based on the question, they have not even seen the disclosure. This is what we saw yesterday. They have not seen the disclosures but they are going to make the allegations anyway because, quite honestly, they have run out of things to say this week.

### **Indigenous Advancement Strategy**

**Mr FURNER:** My question is to the Treasurer. Can the Treasurer provide the House with an overview of the impact of the Commonwealth funding and rollout of the Indigenous Advancement Strategy?

**Mr PITT:** I thank the honourable member for Ferny Grove for his question. Earlier this year the Australian government began announcing outcomes under its new funding arrangements for the Indigenous Advancement Strategy, or the IAS. As members may be aware, this is of course an Australian government initiative and the Queensland government was not consulted on any of these funding decisions. Regrettably, as these announcements were being made, it became increasingly clear that valuable and effective community services were unsuccessful in their bids for funding. This is going to be placing unnecessary pressure on some of our most vulnerable Queenslanders and potentially put them at further disadvantage. Predictably, the IAS process has drawn wide criticism from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, from service providers and of course also from leaders. Members of this House would know that I very carefully try not to play politics around the Indigenous portfolio. It is very important that we do not do that, but I think it is very much the case that there is widespread damnation of this process because it has been a failed process.

Social justice commissioner Mick Gooda questioned the ability of the Abbott government to implement the IAS. He said that Prime Minister and Cabinet is now dealing with about 1,440 organisations and nearly 3,040 current funding contracts and that it will take time to build the administrative systems, acclimatise staff in the new structure within PM&C and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples already cynical and fatigued by change to have confidence in the competence of those implementing these new arrangements. So it seems that there is a lack of confidence in the IAS implementation and it is widespread.

On 19 March the matter of the IAS tendering process was referred to the Senate finance and administration committee, not to be confused with our Finance and Administration Committee in Queensland. It was initially meant to report on the matter by 18 June this year, but of course it is now going to be handing down its report on 26 November. The extension was granted by the Senate. I am very keen to see that report and will be taking a very close look at what that report comes up with. This is a matter that has been referred to me as a local member as well as the minister in terms of concerns around who missed out on funding and why, and why the overall reduction was there. Essentially what we are seeing is reduced service delivery as a result of these decisions.

I have certainly expressed my dissatisfaction with the Australian government and I will be writing to the new Prime Minister asking him if he will reinstate the \$500 million in cuts that have resulted from these announcements. I look forward to working with the federal minister, whoever that may be—I trust it may be Senator Scullion, with whom I have had a good working relationship—and I will certainly always try to be constructive with my federal counterparts. One thing we can almost guarantee is that Joe Hockey will not be there. I wish Mr Hockey well, but of course he will be remembered for his cuts to health and education.

### Ergon Energy

**Mr LAST:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Energy, and I ask: was the minister advised by Ergon Energy that it would be legally challenging the Australian Energy Regulator's decision before those court documents were issued?

**Mr BAILEY:** I thank the honourable member for his question. We have seen some considerable posturing from the opposition about this particular matter. The process is underway in terms of the preliminary determination on electricity pricing. This year in Queensland we have seen an on-average decrease of 0.5 per cent across the state. That is a very good outcome for this state, after a 43 per cent price increase over the last three years under the opposition.

The LNP's record stands for itself. The LNP members opposite are trying to whip up this issue as some kind of problem when, in fact, on average this year's prices are going down. That is a locked-in situation.

At the estimates process we saw the opposition attempt to develop a case in terms of alleging that prices are going to increase in this state. Let me quote a question from Mr Powell, the member for Glass House. He asked Ergon Energy if there—

... has been any modelling done in either of their organisations based on their AER submissions?

The Ergon response was—

We modelled our original submission to the AER, which had CPI minus 2.3 per cent over five years based on the submission. Since then we have reduced our totex requirements, so we should see that figure actually go down. The cost of the—

weighted average cost of capital—

... has also gone down, so we project stable and flat network prices for the next five years.

Then the member for Glass House tried it on with Energex. The response from Energex was also that modelling—

**Mr LAST:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The question was very specific. Was the minister advised by Ergon Energy that he would be legally challenging the Australian Energy Regulator's decision?

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

**Mr BAILEY:** What we saw is Energex confirm a similar situation. Nobody would suggest that the energy markets are anything but complex. There is a process that is underway at the moment for the energy companies to submit in terms of the follow-up to the preliminary decision—and that is why it is called a preliminary decision—to sort out the complexities around it. Ergon had also outlined that it believes that a \$600 million calculation error has been made. That has been confirmed by the regulator, whose preference was for it to be sorted out in terms of the process leading into the final decision on 31 October.

So it is a normal part of this complex market for the energy companies to make submissions. In this case, it was a calculation error. That has been confirmed by the regulator. It will be sought, but the outcomes for electricity consumers this year will be much better than they were under the LNP, that is for sure—a lot better than they were under the LNP. The record of the opposition on energy in this state is a disgrace and it is—

*(Time expired)*

### Ambulance Week

**Mr RYAN:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services. Will the minister update the House on the events of Ambulance Week, which ran from 7 to 11 September?

**Mr DICK:** I thank the member for Morayfield for his question and his strong support for the Queensland Ambulance Service. As honourable members would know, last week was Ambulance Week—a great week to pay tribute to our hardworking paramedics across Queensland, the quiet heroes of our emergency services who do so much for us in times of need; our paramedics, our emergency medical dispatchers, patient transport officers and ambulance volunteers. Today, I want to pay tribute

to all of them. They are the people who are on hand day and night always ready to answer our call for help, the ones who care for us when we are sick and injured, the ones who are there to comfort us after tragedy and trauma.

Last week gave us the chance to recognise the work of some of our paramedics—people like Officer in Charge Leia Spencer, whose quiet and diligent work with staff has been able to generate a significant change in the culture of the Gladstone Ambulance Station. Earlier in the year, with the member for Gladstone, I was very pleased to be at that station and I know how much he supports his local paramedics and ambulance officers. I refer also to people such as Justin Tarr, who, when the big storm hit Caboolture earlier this year, swam through floodwaters to rescue a 68-year-old woman hanging on to tree while floodwaters swirled around. He stayed with her until reinforcements could arrive, treated the woman and transferred her to Caboolture Hospital. I know that the member for Morayfield is a strong supporter of the work that our Queensland Health staff do at Caboolture Hospital. There is also advanced care paramedic Darrell Thompson, who was the first on the scene when there was a gas bottle explosion in Ravenshoe. There were 21 people who were injured in that Far North Queensland town. Like all paramedics, Darrell's response was calm, yet decisive. The actions that he took on that day undoubtedly saved lives.

I refer also to paramedics from the city of Logan, some of whom work at the Woodridge station—Paul Gray, Matthew Meister, Jane James, Gary Fuller. Last week, Paul, Jane and Matthew received their 10-year long-service medal and Gary Fuller received his long-service medal second clasp for 30 years of service. I know that he is strongly supported by the member for Logan and the other members representing the city of Logan, such as the member for Springwood and others.

As a government we are going to support our front-line emergency services. In our budget there was a significant boost to the ambulance budget of \$40 million, making it a record ambulance budget of \$633 million, 75 new paramedics this year alone and 155 new and replacement ambulance vehicles, giving our front-line emergency services the tools that they need to do the job.

That is what our government is committed to doing: putting money back into the front line of nursing and putting money and staff back into the Ambulance Service that was denied to them by the previous government. We are going to turn things around and continue to support our paramedics and ambulance officers to ensure that we deliver world-class prehospital emergency care to all Queenslanders.

### **Ergon Energy**

**Mr POWELL:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Energy. Will the minister instruct Ergon to withdraw from its legal action designed to raise electricity prices for Queensland families?

**Mr BAILEY:** This year the Australian Energy Regulator has made it very clear that the outcomes for electricity consumers will be much better in this state. The Australian Energy Regulator has made it very clear that, when its decision is brought down on 31 October, that will be the case.

Let us look at the record of the member for Glass House and his opposition team. Only 10 months ago, under their administration, the energy companies submitted \$1 billion more funding than they have put in for now. They submitted more under the previous administration. So how dare the member come into this place and allege that somehow that means that the energy companies are asking for more. They are asking for less than they did under the administration of the former government.

Under the opposition's administration, electricity prices would have been higher and the energy companies submitted much more funding. So it is absolute hypocrisy for the opposition members to come into this place and to be alleging such—

**Mrs Frecklington** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** One moment, Minister. Pause the clock. Member for Nanango, I warn you under standing order 253A. Please cease interjecting and obstructing the business of the House.

**Mr BAILEY:** We made a commitment to the people of Queensland to keep our energy companies in public hands. That is what we have done. We were not taking the energy companies out to the abattoir, like the opposition was promising to do at the last election. The energy companies are still in public hands. The issue of the rules around the energy market will be sorted out through the appropriate process that is going on now. That process includes identifying things such as calculation errors—

something that has been confirmed by the regulator. In fact, the regulator has confirmed to Ergon that it was its preference for the calculation error to be corrected as part of the process. Again, that is another fact that has been conveniently ignored by the opposition members. They are running around trying to rebuild their credibility on energy.

We have to feel sorry for the member for Glass House because, given the opposition's record on energy in this state, with price increases of 43 per cent, if ever there was a hospital pass it has been giving him the shadow portfolio of energy. In that regard, the member for Glass House has my sympathies.

The regulator has made it clear that electricity prices will be a much better outcome than they have been in recent years. That is its commitment. The arguments around the rules of the energy markets will play themselves out. That is a normal part of the process. It is clear that we will see much better outcomes for Queensland consumers on 31 October. The regulator has defended that. The submissions from Ergon and Energex are \$1 billion less than they were under the LNP. So how dare the members opposite come into this place and try to whip up a fear campaign to scare consumers. There are people out there who are struggling with their bills. How dare the member try to instil fear into them as they struggle, but their outcomes are looking better.

### **State Schools, Maintenance**

**Ms HOWARD:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Education. Will the minister update the House on the Palaszczuk government's \$763 million investment in school maintenance, including the \$10 million committed to improve our state's special schools?

**Ms JONES:** I thank the honourable member for the question. I know how passionate she is about education. In celebrating and acknowledging Disability Action Week we should focus on the investment that we are making through our three-quarters of a billion dollar investment in maintenance to every single school in this state, including special schools. Our commitment in the budget included \$10 million for structural and access improvements at our special education facilities right across Queensland. I am pleased to inform the House that work will start at our state special schools next term and in order to minimise disruption to students, teachers and staff the majority of this work is likely to be undertaken during the school holidays.

The honourable member for Ipswich will be well aware—and I know she is from the conversations she has had with my office—that half a million dollars will be provided for fencing and upgrades to the on-site set-down area at the Ipswich Special School. I know this is something that she has been lobbying for and has been welcomed by that community. There is also \$400,000 for Goodna Special School in the electorate of Bundamba that will provide fencing and upgrades to the administrative area. High-level scoping works have already been undertaken. There is funding of \$500,000 for the Rockhampton Special School and a \$350,000 upgrade to the Dalby South State School in the Condamine electorate.

At the Toowoomba West Special School, in the Toowoomba North electorate, there is another \$500,000 project to refurbish and update two teaching blocks and remove asbestos sheeting. Project consultation with the school has already commenced. In the Mount Isa electorate there is \$100,000 to upgrade outdoor play areas and indoor and outdoor matting, and in the Morayfield electorate, Morayfield State High School will get \$200,000 to upgrade special education program facilities.

We are getting on with the job. This is a record investment in maintenance and I am very pleased, during Disability Action Week, that we are able to demonstrate clearly we are making this investment in upgrading these facilities. I felt a bit guilty sitting here this morning because we have heard a lot about donations and where they came from, and I really must confess that I have never on the record thanked some of the best fundraisers for me in the last campaign—for example, the honourable member for Kawana! He was a great fundraiser for me. I want to take this opportunity to thank the honourable member for Kawana for all the great work he did to ensure so many people walked into my campaign office to make donations to the Australian Labor Party because they wanted to make sure that he was no longer the attorney-general of this state.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. I do not think it is relevant to the question.

**Ms JONES:** I think it is extremely relevant to the discussion this morning, Mr Speaker, with all due respect.

**Mr SPEAKER:** No.

### National Firearms Agreement

**Mr KATTER:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services. Can the minister confirm who the minister is consulting with in regard to the current review of the National Firearms Agreement and further confirm that the rural community, Police Union and shooting communities will be engaged for meaningful input into this review process at the state level?

**Mrs MILLER:** Thank you very much for the question. I can confirm that.

### Butane Gas Cookers, Product Safety

**Mr WILLIAMS:** My question is for the Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines. Minister, what advice will you provide about safety with butane gas cookers?

**Dr LYNHAM:** I thank the member for his question. He would be aware of the recent faulty butane gas cooker explosion that injured two people from Rockhampton. My thoughts are with the injured men and their families and friends. The Palaszczuk government does not want any more of these accidents to happen. I have a very important safety message for all Queenslanders. I am deeply concerned that there are many more of these faulty cookers in sheds, garages and caravans around Queensland. For those not familiar with them, they are small butane gas cookers that have an aerosol can that attaches to them. They are extremely common and extremely dangerous.

These gas cookers have a safety mechanism that does not work. When the gas canisters overheat they should be ejected and in these models they are simply not and the gas canisters are exploding. My plea to Queenslanders is: if you have one, get rid of it. These faulty cookers can maim and kill you, your friends and your family. There was a national recall of these cookers by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission as well as the Queensland government's safety warnings about these cookers in February this year. Retailers have fully complied with the safety instruction to remove the faulty cooker stock from their shelves. People can be reassured that if they buy a cooker today it is safe and the safety mechanism is there. Prior to February they were not safe. These cookers, unfortunately, are very easy to use, they are very inexpensive and have been on sale for approximately 10 years so there are a lot out there. If you have one, please stop using it and dispose of it safely. You can re-use the butane canisters, they are fine, but if they are empty please dispose of them in the appropriate bins at council waste recycling centres. As I said before, people can be reassured that if they purchase a model now it is safe.

This message is particularly important for those people of Central Queensland who were involved in the cyclone and floods. A large number of these cookers were purchased by people in Central Queensland. I am encouraged to hear from the member for Pumicestone that the safety message is being shared widely on social media. I would ask all members of this House to share the social media messages about these cookers on the Gas Safety Queensland Facebook page.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Before calling the member for Caloundra, I inform members that there is a group of students from the Siena Catholic Primary School in the electorate of Kawana in our gallery observing our proceedings.

### Rockhampton Hospital, Radiation Oncology Services

**Mr McARDLE:** My question is to the Minister for Health. Minister, given that the invitation to offer to provide radiation oncology services at the Rockhampton hospital closed on 17 June this year, can the minister advise when the successful tenderer will be announced?

**Mr DICK:** I am delighted to say that as a government we will continue to provide health services to Queenslanders in a safe, efficient and clinically effective way for the benefit of the Queensland community. Just to give a bit of background of what is happening in Rockhampton, in 2011 the former federal Labor government, as part of its very significant commitment to health care across the nation—which is now in jeopardy because of the cuts to be implemented by the federal coalition government that we are calling on Malcolm Turnbull to reverse—invested \$84 million into the National Health and Hospital Fund to build a regional cancer centre in Rockhampton. That building is complete. Expanded services commenced in June 2015. Multidisciplinary teams are working in a range of areas to respond and treat cancers across the region of Central Queensland and staff currently in place operating within the centre are employed by Queensland Health as public servants. An open tender process,

commenced under the previous government, took place to identify a service partner to deliver radiation oncology services under a model that would see the contracted staff embedded as part of the existing multidisciplinary team.

This is a brand-new service for Central Queensland. It is not replacing existing services. A preferred private contractor has been identified to provide the specialist radiation oncology staff and equipment along with a relationship with the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital tertiary service. The contracted staff will comprise approximately 27 per cent of the staff of the cancer care team. Contracting radiation oncology staff in Rockhampton will have no impact at all on the publicly employed radiation oncology staff at other public services in Queensland or Rockhampton. When those opposite were in government they sacked people from the Rockhampton Hospital and replaced them with contractors. We are not doing that. We are putting a new service in and 27 per cent of the staff will be contracted and 73 per cent will be government employees. It is a mixed system. We support a mixed system. We understand the reality of a mixed healthcare system in Queensland. We will work now towards the delivery of that in 2016. That is the plan; it has always been the plan. There has been no difference from us.

We have committed to transitioning over time to a full public service in Rockhampton. As we always do, we understand our mixed system and we work with contractors as necessary. However, we have made a commitment to contract that very specialised team according to the normal contracting process and according to the plan that was set previously. We will deliver new radiation oncology services that will serve not only Rockhampton but also all of Central Queensland. This will provide better health care and better treatment for cancer patients, and we will transition across time to deliver that service. Procurement is continuing. We will continue to work on that and deliver a world-best cancer healthcare centre in Rockhampton for the people of Rockhampton and the centre of our state.

### Smoke Alarms

**Mr POWER:** My question is to the Minister for Housing and Public Works. Like the member for Woodridge, the member for Waterford and the member for Algester, I am deeply concerned about the number of house fires in the Logan community over the past year. I ask: will the minister advise the House of the importance of smoke alarms for ensuring safety in the home?

**Ms ENOCH:** I thank the member for the question. I acknowledge his tireless work in Logan and his concerns about this issue and other very important health and safety issues across the community. As a long-time resident of Logan—I have spent some 40 years in the community—the spate of house fires within the region over the past 12 months has been extremely concerning for me. I take this opportunity to reiterate a message relevant for all Queenslanders when it comes to keeping their houses and their families safe. The message is clear and the message is supported by hard facts, but the message is certainly not new: smoke alarms save lives. Every house fire is a tragedy with long-term repercussions for families and communities, so we need to ensure that families are doing everything they can to stay safe.

The Palaszczuk government wants to underline its commitment to highlighting the importance of taking the right steps to prevent injuries and fatalities as a result of house fires by having correctly installed smoke alarms. According to the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services's 2013-14 annual report, 12 per cent of houses may not comply with current smoke alarm provisions. When we consider that there are more than 4.7 million people in Queensland, that puts thousands of Queenslanders in danger of becoming another statistic. However, by working together as a community we can turn this around.

If people are unsure about what the regulations are, I urge them to please find out. Under fire safety legislation there are requirements for all existing houses and units in Queensland to have at least one operational smoke alarm. Additionally, the National Construction Code requires the installation of smoke alarms in all new residential buildings and renovations, such as additions. Residences built after 1997 require alarms to be hardwired and alarms in residences built from May 2014 must be interconnected if more than one smoke alarm is required.

I ask all Queenslanders to ensure that they have the right fire safety measures in place to protect themselves and their loved ones so that we do not see the continued tragedies that we have seen in the past year. So many families have been impacted. Not just those who lived in the properties but others across communities have also felt the pain and tragedy of loss of life. I urge all Queenslanders to have the right safety measures in place to protect themselves and, of course, their families.

### Police Resources

**Mr COSTIGAN:** My question is to the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services. Given that the former LNP government provided funding in three successive budgets, can the minister explain why a new police boat for the Whitsundays is yet to be commissioned?

**Mrs MILLER:** I thank the member for the question. I will arrange for the member to speak with the Police Commissioner or his delegate in relation to this matter. I understand that it is important. I would ask that the member wait until we make that arrangement to speak directly with them.

### Gold Coast, World Surfing Reserve

**Mr de BRENNI:** My question is to the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef. Will the minister please update the House on the status of the Gold Coast world surfing reserve nomination?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Minister, you have two minutes.

**Dr MILES:** I thank the member for the question. The member for Springwood has been a strong ally of the community campaign to have the southern Gold Coast beaches and surf breaks declared a world surfing reserve. The member, along with the entire Palaszczuk Labor government, recognises the economic value of surf tourism and the jobs it creates in Queensland. I am pleased to report to the House today that the community campaign, powered by deep passion and tireless effort, has achieved a key milestone. Last Friday, my office received a phone call from Councillor Tom Tate, the Mayor of the Gold Coast, advising that the Gold Coast City Council will be supporting the Gold Coast world surfing reserve nomination. The Gold Coast City Council made a very considered decision to stand with the Palaszczuk Labor government and the community in supporting the upgrade of the Gold Coast national surfing reserves to world reserve status. Before the last state election, the Palaszczuk government committed to working with the community and the city council to progress the nomination to have the southern Gold Coast beaches declared a world surfing reserve.

The Gold Coast is renowned the world over for its surf heritage. Many of the world's best surfers have grown up riding the surf breaks from Burleigh Heads to Snapper Rocks. The surf industry alone brings in \$1.4 billion to the Gold Coast economy and supports more than 20,000 jobs. More importantly, the community-driven campaign shows that surfing means much more to the Gold Coast community. It is a way of life for those who spend time enjoying the coast's world-class ocean, beach and surfing amenity. The bid for world surfing reserve status recognises this. I would like to make special mention of Andrew 'Andy Mac' McKinnon, chairman of the Gold Coast world surfing reserve, who has been a champion of the nomination.

## CONSTITUTION (FIXED TERM PARLIAMENT) AMENDMENT BILL

### Introduction

 **Mr WALKER** (Mansfield—LNP) (11.56 am): I present a bill for an act to amend the Constitution of Queensland 2001 to provide for fixed terms for the Legislative Assembly and to amend the Constitution Act Amendment Act 1934 and the Electoral Act 1992 for particular purposes, and to repeal the Constitution Act Amendment Act 1890. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Finance and Administration Committee to consider the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Constitution (Fixed Term Parliament) Amendment Bill 2015 [[1118](#)].

*Tabled paper:* Constitution (Fixed Term Parliament) Amendment Bill 2015, explanatory notes [[1119](#)].

In February 2015, to ensure that Queenslanders are served with a more accountable parliament, we in the LNP announced that an LNP government would conduct a referendum on fixed four-year parliamentary terms during the current parliamentary term. Our proposal ensures that Queenslanders would have a direct say in how their governments are elected and the manner in which elections are called. As I referred to in the explanatory notes, New South Wales was the first Australian jurisdiction to adopt a four-year fixed parliamentary term in 1995. Since that time, most Australian parliaments, apart from the Commonwealth and Queensland lower houses, have followed suit. Since 2008, local governments in Queensland also now have fixed four-year terms.

Currently, the Premier of Queensland can call a general election at his or her whim, subject to the agreement of the Governor. Since 2004, the average term of parliament has, in fact, been just two years and nine months. Obviously that gives the government the political advantage of being able to

call an election at a time that is in its political interest. Often this can undermine both business confidence in the economic certainty and direction of the state and also the public confidence in a government that governs in the interests of Queenslanders and not itself.

As I stated in the explanatory notes, there are a number of significant advantages in having fixed four-year terms of government. Firstly, it provides for better government and better public policy making because decisions can be made in the interests of outcomes and better services for Queenslanders rather than short-term political gain or what may be in the news that day or that week. Secondly, it removes the constant speculation from the political process and provides fairness to all political parties rather than what is in the interests of the government of the day. Thirdly, it provides confidence and certainty in government from the public and also from the business community which drives investment, economic confidence and job creation.

We in the LNP have been consulting with Queenslanders about this important issue and discussions have commenced with academic and legal bodies such as the Queensland Law Society, the Bar Association of Queensland and various district law associations. In terms of the specific detail, the bill provides that a general election must be held on the second Saturday in March in the fourth calendar year after the calendar year in which the last election was held. This is the process which fixes the specific date on which the election would be held every four years. The 2015 election was due in March and the 2012 and 2009 elections were held in March.

The bill provides for exceptional circumstances in which the Governor can and must dissolve the Legislative Assembly and issue a writ for a general election prior to that four-year period. This includes motions of no confidence in the government, a rejection of supply and also other established constitutional conventions. There is also a provision for which the polling day can be postponed by up to 35 days for exceptional circumstances such as if a federal election were called for the same date as the due date for the state election or if there were a natural disaster, such as a cyclone or flood, which made it impossible to hold the election on that date.

We have also provided a process whereby this particular bill is not presented to the Governor for assent unless it has obviously been passed by the Legislative Assembly but also after it has been approved by a majority of electors at a referendum held on a Saturday at least two months after this bill has been passed by the Legislative Assembly. Finally, the bill provides that should the bill be passed by the Legislative Assembly and approved at a referendum it would not commence until after the next general election, meaning that the 57th Parliament would be the first to have a fixed four-year term. We are presently in the 55th Parliament.

Queensland has a unique democratic system whereby we have a unicameral parliament, the only one in Australia. While we do have a more robust committee system, it does not replicate what is seen as an upper house or house of review that is in place in other jurisdictions. While this bill is not providing for the re-establishment of an upper house, the issue of representative democracy and confidence in the government are fundamentally important issues for Queenslanders.

Finally, we note that the government has announced an inquiry into this issue, to report back to the House on 9 November. While we understand the notion of proceeding down this path, the LNP believes that there is no better time for this issue to be looked at and, more importantly, acted upon than the present. The local government elections in March next year would perhaps be an opportunity for a statewide referendum on this issue.

We look forward to the government's support of this bill and also its support on working towards a referendum on this issue in the near future. I commend the bill to the House.

### **First Reading**

**Mr WALKER** (Mansfield—LNP) (12.02 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

### **Referral to the Finance and Administration Committee**

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

## CONSTITUTION (FIXED TERM PARLIAMENT) REFERENDUM BILL

### Introduction

 **Mr WALKER** (Mansfield—LNP) (12.02 pm): I present a bill for an act to provide for a referendum on the Constitution (Fixed Term Parliament) Amendment Bill 2015. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Finance and Administration Committee to consider the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Constitution (Fixed Term Parliament) Referendum Bill 2015 [[1120](#)].

*Tabled paper:* Constitution (Fixed Term Parliament) Referendum Bill 2015, explanatory notes [[1121](#)].

As indicated in my earlier speech, this bill would follow upon the passage of the Constitution (Fixed Term Parliament) Amendment Bill 2015. It provides for a referendum to be held under the Referendums Act 1997.

The bill provides that any such referendum should be held on a day appointed by the governor-in-council that is at least two months after the Constitution (Fixed Term Parliament) Amendment Bill 2015 is passed by this Assembly and that a person who is entitled to vote at an election for the members of the Legislative Assembly is entitled to vote at that referendum. I should add for completeness that there was a referendum on the issue of extending the terms of parliament in Queensland from three years to four years—although they were not to be fixed terms—on 21 March 1991. That measure narrowly failed. There was a yes vote of 48.8 per cent and a no vote of 51.2 per cent.

For historical purposes, it should also be noted that there have been seven statewide referendums in Queensland, with only two being successful. The last was held on 22 February 1992 and that dealt with the issue of daylight savings. Given the length of time that has passed since this issue was last considered by Queenslanders and the changes in other jurisdictions towards fixed four-year terms, we believe there is no more opportune time for this issue to be revisited. I commend the bill to the House.

### First Reading

**Mr WALKER** (Mansfield—LNP) (12.04 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

### Referral to the Finance and Administration Committee

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

### Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date

**Mr WALKER** (Mansfield—LNP) (12.04 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That the Finance and Administration Committee:

- (1) consider the Constitution (Fixed Term Parliament) Amendment Bill 2015 and the Constitution (Fixed Term Parliament) Referendum Bill as part of its inquiry into the introduction of four-year terms for the Queensland parliament referred by the House on 15 September 2015; and
- (2) under the provisions of standing order 136, report to the House on the Constitution (Fixed Term Parliament) Amendment Bill 2015 and the Constitution (Fixed Term Parliament) Referendum Bill by 9 November 2015.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

## HEALTH AND AMBULANCE SERVICES COMMITTEE

### Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Ms LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (12.06 pm): I move—

That the House take note of report No. 2 of the Health and Ambulance Services Committee on personal health promotion interventions using telephone and web based technologies.

The referral charged the committee with inquiring into the evidence for the effectiveness of health coaching interventions to increase physical activity, improve nutrition and reduce weight, taking note of both the experience in other jurisdictions and potential opportunities for collaboration and cooperation.

As referenced in my foreword to the report, *The health of Queenslanders 2014* report of the Chief Health Officer, Dr Jeanette Young, states that Queenslanders enjoy one of the longest life expectancies in the world and our health continues to improve. However, while Queenslanders are living longer we are not always living longer in good health, with chronic disease, most notably type 2 diabetes, cancer and cardiovascular disease, causing approximately 80 per cent of deaths, hospitalisations and allocated expenditure in Queensland in 2012.

The evidence is well understood that increasing physical activity, reducing weight and improving nutrition reduces an individual's risk of developing chronic disease. Yet people are becoming less healthy generally. The reasons for this are many and varied. However, the economic burden of ill health due to non-communicable diseases like obesity, diabetes, heart disease and some cancers is alarmingly widespread. Health promotion presents an opportunity to positively influence the health behaviour of individuals and communities and in so doing enhance quality of life and reduce premature deaths.

During the inquiry the committee received 23 submissions, including contributions from the stroke and heart foundations, Diabetes Queensland, CSIRO, the Queensland University of Technology, the University of Queensland and the Australian Health Promotion Association. The committee found that there is evidence that personal health promotion interventions using telephone and web based technologies can deliver clinically appropriate and cost-effective outcomes and that effective health promotion requires a multistrategic approach, must be evidence based and can be strengthened by collaboration with stakeholders, clinicians, primary health networks and the private sector.

The committee made seven recommendations including that any investment in personal health promotion interventions be evidence based and subject to rigorous evaluation; that the government investigate options to draft standards or guidelines for personal health promotion interventions using telephone and web based technologies; and that the government encourage partnerships with the private sector, research institutes and primary healthcare networks for the development and delivery of such interventions. I was pleased to see the minister's tabled response and positive acceptance of these recommendations. I look forward to seeing progress with these initiatives in the future.

I take this opportunity to thank the minister for the reference and applaud the government's focus on not only the treatment of disease but also, vitally, the prevention of chronic conditions by promoting behaviours which support good health. I note the further reference received by the committee yesterday to further this work and inquire into the potential role, scope and strategic direction of a Queensland Health Promotion Commission and ways of reducing fragmentation in health promotion efforts and increasing shared responsibility across sectors. I look forward to the committee further reporting to the House on this work next year. I thank my fellow committee members for their contributions and the committee secretariat for their professional advice and assistance throughout the inquiry. I commend the report to the House.

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (12.09 pm): I rise to speak on the Health and Ambulance Services Committee's report into personal health promotion interventions using telephone and web based technologies. As a registered general nurse and former hospital administrator, I know that early intervention in health care and encouraging healthy living can make a substantive difference in the overall public health of Queenslanders.

In recent decades Queenslanders have been living longer and have been measurably healthier, with early interventions often credited with an overall promotion of healthy lifestyles before chronic diseases take hold. As a result, committees of the Queensland parliament have been asked to investigate early interventions a number of times—certainly over the last seven years I have been on all three of them—in this instance investigating personal health promotion interventions using telephone and web based technologies.

During our inquiry, the committee found that there is evidence that personal health promotion interventions using telephone and web based technologies can and do deliver positive outcomes which are clinically appropriate and cost-effective. We also, however, determined that effective health promotion requires a multistrategic approach which includes public policy and legislation, sector development, social marketing, personal skills development, risk assessment, early intervention and counselling, and health surveillance and research. This means that, while early intervention using new

technologies can assist in a number of important ways, it is also important to ensure that we do not overstate its importance in terms of preventative health care. In addition, we also identified that any investment in and development of personal health promotion interventions must be evidence based and occur in conjunction with relevant stakeholders to ensure that funding is spent wisely and not arbitrarily allocated under the assumption that it would be put to good use.

During our public briefing the committee heard from a number of individuals and organisations who provided insight into the benefits and limitations of early interventions and personal health promotions using new technologies. I was pleased to be given the opportunity to ask Dr Bill Kingswell about whether there had been any barriers to the implementation of successful telephone or web based personal health promotion interventions.

While a broad shift towards utilising technology in the provision of health care and a range of other areas is evident in public policy, it was pertinent to ask whether, in a state as diverse as Queensland, it is appropriate to assume telephone and web based technologies can be used to reach people throughout our regional communities. He identified the way installing technological infrastructure such as kiosks, computers and internet services in remote and Indigenous communities in particular can often be difficult and that barriers exist in getting information to people in rural communities and remote communities who may not have access to this proper technology. In addition, we discussed how computer literacy, bandwidth issues and internet access all proved to be obstacles which would need to be overcome if early interventions were to be proven effective, as was also noted by the Australian Health Promotion Association in their submission to the committee in relation to equity issues.

As a member of the former health and community services committee, I also identified the way in which previous inquiries into telehealth services in Queensland had identified a number of issues related to the successful implementation of telehealth services. In particular, the under-utilisation of telehealth equipment across Queensland hospitals was of genuine concern, with some hospitals, due to staffing arrangements, not using telehealth equipment on a regular basis, resulting in equipment simply collecting dust in hospitals throughout the state despite significant funding investments.

Having toured many Queensland hospitals prior to the election of the LNP government, I was concerned to see that telemedicine machines were covered with black plastic and dust, indicating that they had not been used in some time, meaning tens of millions of dollars had been spent in numerous funding injections for telehealth but this funding had not translated into clinical results. I raised this matter on numerous occasions in opposition, and I was very pleased to see that during the tenure of the LNP government the then minister for health, now the Leader of the Opposition, Lawrence Springborg, increased funding for telemedicine by committing an extra \$30.9 million for telehealth in rural and Indigenous areas. In turn, while personal health promotion interventions using telephone and web based technologies undoubtedly produce positive outcomes in terms of clinical benefits to patients, we need to ensure that funding injections see measurable results and the equipment which is procured is put to good use.

Having participated in a number of recent inquiries into telehealth, I remain positive about the capacity for early interventions and personal health promotions to encourage real change in the healthcare habits of Queenslanders. I look forward to continuing to monitor whether funding allocated to this worthwhile cause by successive governments is put to good use and to determining how we can best overcome the barriers which exist as a result of the large and diverse nature of our state.

*(Time expired)*

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Grace): Order! Before calling the member for Greenslopes, I advise the House that Nursery Road State Special School students, teachers and supporters from the electorate of Greenslopes are in the gallery.

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (12.15 pm): That is perfect timing. I support this report and its recommendations. I thank the chair and my fellow committee members. I am appreciative of the submissions that were made and the hard work done by the secretariat. I am very pleased that our committee was able to reach agreement on recommendations and that the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services has responded to those recommendations positively.

This week is National Stroke Week. Stroke is one of the leading causes of death and acquired disability in Australia. On current rates, 14.3 members of this House will suffer a stroke during our lifetime. Statistically, stroke will kill more people in this House than breast cancer or prostate cancer. In

2012, there were about 130,000 people living in the community with the effects of stroke under the age of 65. These effects could be reduced mobility, loss of arm movement, cognitive changes, speech and swallowing problems. Many of these impacts will see survivors of stroke requiring high levels of care for the rest of their lives.

The good news is that we know what causes stroke and we know how to avoid it. All we have to do is eat more fruit and vegetables; drink less alcohol; cut out smoking; get more exercise; deal with our stress; monitor our blood pressure; visit the GP; and, for people with diabetes, make sure we manage that properly. That all sounds pretty easy. The challenge is that we live in a world that delivers us an immense array of alternative foods to fresh fruit and vegetables. Alcohol is cheap, easy to obtain and culturally acceptable to consume in high levels. Smoking, while at record low levels, is incredibly hard to stop for those who take it up. Finally, we have made major amazing technological advances that have made us more sedentary.

However, the same technology that creates the challenges can also form part of the solution. We can connect health professionals and individuals, whether they live in the remotest part of Queensland or in the busiest part of Brisbane. We can use phone coaching, web based technology, phone apps and other technology to assist individuals to change behaviour. Changing behaviour is what this is really all about. It is very hard to do but the research shows us that it can be done and that technology can play an important role.

There is much being done in this space already by the government. Also, non-government organisations like the National Stroke Foundation, the Heart Foundation, the Queensland AIDS Council and Diabetes Australia are already making significant contributions. Private sector involvement is significant and growing. No doubt someone in this chamber is wearing a Fitbit. If so, you are using technology to change your behaviour to stay healthier. We need to ensure that we coordinate all of this activity, and a statewide Health Promotion Commission will greatly assist with that.

There are a few key points that I want to highlight from our deliberations. First, changing behaviour requires a range of strategies across all sectors. Technology is a big part of the solution, but it is not a silver bullet. Second, we need to ensure that advice and interventions offered are evidence based and involve a clinician. It is very easy to build an app or website and develop a slick ad campaign. It is much harder to read a research paper and offer advice or interventions based on evidence, years of clinical experience and a code of ethics and practice.

Third, evidence confirms that changing behaviour in areas such as diet, exercise and alcohol and smoking cessation will have a positive impact on a wide range of chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease and macular degeneration. Fourth, we know that this is cost effective. Finally, the evidence for the use of web based technology and phone coaching to achieve lasting behavioural change is incredibly strong.

Before I finish, I particularly want to acknowledge the leadership of the National Stroke Foundation. Stroke prevention, care and rehabilitation have all shifted massively since I started my nursing training over a quarter of a century ago. We educate more people about stroke thanks to the foundation. They have contributed to changing the way we care for people with a stroke, with care now starting the moment you phone an ambulance and being guided by strong, evidence based care right through the rehabilitation process.

The member for Buderim says that it will be rare that he and I will agree, but it seems that we have had one of those rare moments. The member could not have been more correct than when in the committee he said, 'We know this stuff works. Let's just get on with it.' I support these sentiments and commend this report to the House.

 **Mr DICKSON** (Buderim—LNP) (12.20 pm): I rise to speak to the report of the committee relating to personal health promotion interventions using telephone and web based technologies. I also thank the chair of our committee, the member for Nudgee; the deputy chair, the member for Mudgeeraba; and the members for Thuringowa, Greenslopes and Moggill. The member for Greenslopes is absolutely right that we will not agree on everything. This issue is so important to the future of our children and generally. The chair's foreword to the report makes a very good point—

... while Queenslanders are living longer we are not always living longer in good health, with chronic disease, most notably type 2 diabetes, cancer and cardiovascular disease causing approximately 80% of deaths, hospitalisations and allocated expenditure in Queensland in 2012.

Evidence shows that increasing physical activity, reducing weight, and improving nutrition ... improves quality of life and wellbeing.

We know of the many apps out there at the moment. Some of them are absolutely fantastic; some of them are making a lot of money for those who are involved. We have to sort the wheat from the chaff. We have to come up with the best possible solution, working through a bipartisan process, to ensure we deliver what is best for the future of Queensland and ensure we keep our children out of the health system by giving them healthy longevity whereby they will live to be productive people in our community.

I pay my respects to the government for continuing a couple of LNP policies, one of which, Get in the Game, funds children who can no longer afford to be involved in sport. This leads to better physical healthy lifestyles and they learn better nutrition within sporting groups and organisations. Another big hit—and this came to my attention today—is Nature Play, something we put in place a couple of years ago. The Labor government is continuing with that. Today, 115,000 passports were issued to young children throughout Queensland so that they eat well, get out, are physically fit and are healthy and active within our community.

We must work on increasing physical activity, improving nutrition and ensuring that we work on weight reduction. I know that it is hard for a lot of people to accept, but failing to address weight reduction leads to heart disease, kidney disease, liver disease and diabetes. I know of diabetes directly. My father died in his mid-50s. He ended up getting his toe cut off and then his leg cut off. He lost his vision and eventually died from diabetes. Today, so many people are afflicted by this terrible disease but there are so many other issues affecting our health. That impact flows on to the health system. We have to ensure we get the biggest bang for our buck.

The committee has reached agreement on getting behind this type of technology where people can communicate, make a phone call and find out what they can do to live a better, healthier lifestyle. We must go out into the community and reach out to those people who really need our help—those underprivileged and disadvantaged people who feel like they are locked in a room all by themselves. Regardless of which side of politics is in power, the Queensland government should help them. We have to spend money, particularly in this area, to look after the needy. Through this web based technology and the telecommunications network, that opportunity is there.

I call on the health minister in particular—the Health budget is bigger than almost any budget in the country—to direct some of that money towards prevention instead of to hospitals. By spending an appropriate amount of money on intervention at a very young age, we can stop so many people ending up in a hospital bed and costing copious amounts of money in the future. We all know that within 10 to 15 years the Health budget will consume more than 50 per cent of the Queensland budget, so now is the time to make that intervention. We need to be bipartisan on this.

I thank the members of the health committee. There are so many things that I am learning from that committee as I am not a health professional. The committee is very fortunate to have the input of Dr Christian Rowan—he borders on being a genius; I do not want to say that too often because his head will swell—and other members of that committee who have been involved in the medical field. They give such good input, whether it be about smoking, obesity or the implications of diabetes. Let us pull together and work together. This is where I believe the committee system is working so well, as committees make decisions that are not political but are for the benefit of all Queenslanders.



**Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (12.25 pm): Madam Deputy Speaker—

**Opposition members:** Genius!

**Dr ROWAN:** I take the interjection! I rise to speak to report No. 2 of the Health and Ambulance Services Committee related to personal health promotion interventions using telephone and web based technologies. I thank the hardworking parliamentary secretariat staff for their diligence and commitment in preparing all of the required documentation, facilitating submissions from stakeholders and arranging public briefings and a public hearing in relation to this inquiry. In particular I thank Mr Brook Hastie, Ms Kathleen Dalladay, Ms Emily Booth and Ms Clare Keyes. I also acknowledge the chair of the Health and Ambulance Services Committee, the member for Nudgee, Leanne Linard MP; the deputy chair, the member for Mudgeeraba, Ros Bates MP; and my fellow committee members in terms of the preparation of this parliamentary report.

There is certainly a strong evidence base that a number of personal health promotion interventions using telephone and web based technologies can assist in achieving optimal clinical outcomes in a cost-effective manner for many patients with chronic and complex conditions. However,

the implementation of such technologies requires significant planning, appropriate consultation with relevant stakeholders, resourced education programs as a part of implementation processes, and appropriate certification mechanisms of such technologies in order to ensure safety and maintain high standards of clinical care.

In order for the Queensland government to invest in individual technologies, there must absolutely be clinical efficacy, a rigorous evaluation process, clinician support and an evaluation of long-term individual and community outcomes. There is certainly significant scope for the government to develop partnerships with the private and not-for-profit sector, individual universities and research institutions as well as primary healthcare providers in order to maximise taxpayer investment in translational technological outcomes related to personal health promotion interventions using telephone and web based technologies. However, one area that would need absolute clarity is the intellectual property related to taxpayer investment in such technologies.

I support the development of standards and guidelines, and there is scope for the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services to pursue a national scheme through collegiate cross-jurisdictional processes such as the COAG Standing Council on Health. There is potentially a role for the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare to develop a national standard around this.

There is no doubt that promoting healthy lifestyles improves the overall physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of communities across Queensland. Many chronic complex diseases are often caused by or exacerbated by obesity, physical inactivity, excessive alcohol consumption and tobacco usage, despite the overwhelming evidence of physical harms. We must do more to address these issues, which can reduce quality of life metrics and lead to poorer overall wellbeing for Queenslanders.

It must also be remembered that these technologies cannot augment and enable enhanced clinical care without a sustainable health workforce, and the continuing challenges related to medical, nursing, allied health and midwifery staff will need to be addressed in an ongoing way by successive Queensland governments given the decentralised nature of our state and the existence of many rural and remote communities. Further work in relation to identifying target and at-risk populations, identifying unmet needs and how personal health promotion interventions fit into the broader health promotion statewide strategy should be a priority of the current government.

As a doctor and as a former president of the Australian Medical Association of Queensland and the Rural Doctors Association of Queensland, I have a detailed understanding and professional appreciation of the importance of health promotion and preventative medicine in our state and the capacity of these technologies to deliver true clinical improvements, particularly amongst some of our vulnerable populations, those of Indigenous backgrounds and others who are socioeconomically disadvantaged.

In conclusion, I also thank the Department of Health for their contribution, the individuals who appeared at the public hearing and the various organisations that provided written submissions. Without all of this input, such a comprehensive report would not have been achieved. In fact, there were 23 submissions. I commend this report to the House.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

## **COMMUNITIES, DISABILITY SERVICES AND DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION COMMITTEE**

### **Report, Motion to Take Note**

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Grace): In accordance with standing order 71, the notice of motion relating to report No. 2 has lapsed.

## **LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE**

### **Report, Motion to Take Note**

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER**: In accordance with standing order 71, the notice of motion relating to report No. 9 has lapsed.

**COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY****Report, Motion to Take Note**

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** In accordance with standing order 71, the notice of motion relating to report No. 14 has lapsed.

**WORKERS' COMPENSATION AND REHABILITATION AND OTHER  
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL****WORKERS' COMPENSATION AND REHABILITATION (PROTECTING  
FIREFIGHTERS) AMENDMENT BILL****Second Reading (Cognate Debate)**

Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill resumed from 16 September (see p. 1951), on motion of Mr Pitt, and Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation (Protecting Firefighters) Amendment Bill resumed from 16 September (see p. 1951), on motion of Mr Bleijie—

That the bills be now read a second time.

 **Mr WALKER** (Mansfield—LNP) (12.31 pm): I am pleased to speak to these bills today. I was even more pleased to allow the lead to be taken by my colleague the member for Kawana, given this is a cognate debate. By doing that, I acknowledged the tremendous win he had for volunteer firefighters here in Queensland. I think it was appropriate that he took the lead and in turn that he takes the credit for a great outcome for volunteer firefighters. In passing, I also thank the committee for their dispassionate look at the matter and the recommendation they passed on to the House which has been accepted.

In the short contribution I want to make, I will concentrate on the workers compensation provisions within the legislation. I think a number of overall themes are becoming clear through the actions—or, in some cases, inactions—of this government. The first is that business is screaming out that nothing is happening. I heard some of the speakers in the debate earlier this week quote facts, figures, various reports and surveys which claimed to the contrary. I am sure that every member of this House who is talking to business in Queensland—be it big business or small business—is hearing back their concern that nothing is happening and nothing is in the pipeline, apart from perhaps the housing industry. I have to concede that something is happening in the housing industry, but apart from that the other elements of our economy are concerned at the inactivity of this government. That was brought home to the government by their own round table which made exactly that point.

The second theme that is coming out quite clearly is the influence of unions on this government. We have had some discussion about that today in relation to the connection between unions and this government. Of the 43 members on that side of the House, 41 of them are members of unions. We had 180 or so shout-outs and thank-yous to unions in their maiden speeches made in the House. We have the clear connections between members of unions and members of the government who are claimed as 'our' members of parliament or 'our' members of cabinet. It is clear that the union movement and the Labor Party have a strong history together but there is a point where that goes too far—and this government has well and truly reached that.

The third point is that this government has a predilection for swifties in relation to economic matters, and it is this one that particularly relates to this bill. We have seen steps taken by the Treasurer to shuffle debt from the state's books to the books of government owned corporations and then pretend that it does not exist—when we all know that it is still debt that burdens this state. The Treasurer has not only taken the \$3.4 billion put aside to cover long service leave liabilities; he is also taking a five-year contribution holiday from making payments into the defined benefit fund. In this measure, we see the government once again cutting things to the bone. The side of politics on which I stand has a long, proud history in this state of ensuring that conservative measures are taken when we look at things like reserves and the state's finances. This side of the House has a long history in fully funding superannuation obligations, for example, and long service leave. All of these matters—

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Grace): Order! Member for Mansfield, I am just drawing on the conversation and the issues that were raised last night in this debate. I want to bring you back to the relevance of the bills. I have listened now for a little while and I do not think I have heard you mention workers compensation once, so can I bring you back to the workers compensation bills please.

**Mr WALKER:** Madam Deputy Speaker, this is, with respect, quite clear, because in this measure, in the case of workers compensation, here we have the government stripping away the substantial investment fluctuation reserve that has been built up over the past five years. We had strong investment returns and sound financial management of the scheme by successive boards, yet all of this is being put at risk. If the measures proposed by the government's bill are put into effect, then if payouts increase—and that is the intent of the amendments—we will see pressure put on either premiums or reserves. There has been some modest commitment to keep premiums at a low level for a very short time, but if this measure is passed we cannot guarantee that this will continue into the future.

It is important from the point of view of this scheme that the scheme is both fair to employees and also affordable to employers. My view is that this measure does not do that. It puts at significant risk the viability of the fund. Under this bill, if the premiums are to be kept low—and that is obviously desirable—then the reserves will have to be eaten into, and it is clear that is going to happen from the committee's report. I go back to the overarching statements I made at the beginning of my speech: if that happens, we once again have this government not taking a conservative view, a safe view, of how reserves and funds need to be managed in this state; rather we have them cutting them to the bone, keeping their fingers crossed and hoping that nothing bad happens. That is not good enough.

**Mr Powell** interjected.

**Mr WALKER:** Nothing put away for a rainy day; I take the interjection from the member for Glass House. There might be some rainy days around the corner. We have seen only in the last few weeks the fluctuations on the stock market in China which has an immediate effect throughout the financial markets of the world, yet here we have a government which instead of taking a cautious, conservative view is moving for political reasons to cut these reserves to the bone and is putting at risk the low premiums which are attractive to business in Queensland.

I do not think anybody has put it better in terms of what the business community is looking for than the message that came from the Chamber of Commerce & Industry Queensland to all members of this House yesterday. They very clearly and succinctly summarised what business is feeling about this measure. Again, to go back to my broader point: this government has a reputation now for nothing happening and business being concerned at the fact that its activities are being curtailed, and there is doubt and concern about the future. The government's bill does nothing but feed that concern from business within Queensland. If business in Queensland is not allowed to move forward in a reasonable way and continue to add to the prosperity of this state and the jobs available in this state, then any gain is illusory because our economy weakens—and in turn those of us who have children looking for work and those of us who are looking to see a buoyant financial business sector within this state will find that we will not have that. So my caution in relation to the government's bill and the reason I cannot support it is because I believe it puts at risk the issue of premiums and the issue of the viability of the reserves of the scheme—and that is not in the interests of our state.

In passing, I also refer to the other provisions of the bill that are of concern, in particular the ability of an employer to gain access to a potential employee's WorkCover history. It seems to me to be an absolutely sensible thing to allow an employer to have that information not only to assess whether or not that employee is suitable for the job that is being offered but also, if required, to ensure that the workplace practices of that firm are so ordered that the employee is not put at further risk. Why would you not give the employer that information? It is sensible. It makes perfect sense.

**Mr Rickuss** interjected.

**Mr WALKER:** It is the sort of thing that is disclosed for all other sorts of issues. Again, I take the interjection of the member for Lockyer. Life insurance, health insurance—similar to when you are entering into a circumstance in which risk might be involved, it is eminently sensible to have all risks available and known to you, and the work history provides that.

I once again take the opportunity to congratulate the member for Kawana in relation to the provisions that he was able to secure in this suite of legislation. I think he did a great job for the volunteer firefighters of Queensland. However, I am unable to support the government's measure in its other aspects for the reasons I outlined earlier.

 **Mr RUSSO** (Sunnybank—ALP) (12.40 pm): I rise to support the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. In particular, I will address an issue in relation to what work is being done to ensure workers engage in the rehabilitation and return-to-work process when the common law threshold has been removed.

The 2013 bill, introduced by the LNP, was a fundamental attack on the rights of Queensland workers. It introduced unjust thresholds for workers to access common law rights. Those amendments meant that individuals whose impairment was assessed at below five per cent would not have access to common law damages. The number sounded small to the then attorney-general, but the reality was that over half of all the people injured in unsafe workplaces would not have the right to claim damages. The Palaszczuk government on the other hand is committed to ensuring that all Queensland workers who are injured at work get the support and protection they need to be able to get back to work as soon as it is safe for them to do so.

Our government also recognises the importance of consulting with representatives of the various stakeholders including employers, workers, the legal profession and insurers, as it is through this consultation process that we will achieve a just and fair outcome to enable a swift and calm transfer to the new system. In this regard a stakeholder reference group was consulted in May 2015. The stakeholder reference group provides a broad representation of community interest and also has played a critical role in shaping the policy development process. Our aim is to achieve a fair, sustainable and efficient system that promotes durable return-to-work programs. The importance of this is highlighted in the statistics gathered to date. These statistics show that if an injured worker is out of work for a long period their likelihood of ever returning to work is significantly reduced. For example, if a person is off work for even 20 days, the chances of them ever getting back to work drops to 70 per cent. If this duration extends to 70 days, the chances of them ever getting back to work drops to as little as 35 per cent.

There is also evidence that the best results are achieved when employers and workers embrace employment practices that encourage workers to recover at work or, if they are absent from the workplace, to return to safe work duties as soon as they can. Importantly, statistics show that workers who are supported by their employer following an injury are seven times more likely to return to work. The act supports this outcome through outlining the injured worker's obligations to participate in rehabilitation and return-to-work initiatives and through the removal of the threshold. This provides further incentive for employers to engage with their injured workers to provide rehabilitation and return-to-work opportunities.

In recognising the importance of rehabilitation and return to work, the stakeholder reference group has also endorsed several initiatives to support workers with an early and safe return to work. These initiatives include Getting Back. This is a new Queensland government media campaign to improve return-to-work outcomes. The campaign promotes awareness of the benefits of an early return to work and the importance of good communication to achieve this. To assist employers manage rehabilitation, the guidelines for the rehabilitation standards are currently being reviewed and updated with input from relevant stakeholders. Additionally, a review is also underway of the current Queensland workers compensation medical certificate. The review is looking at opportunities to focus more on what the worker can do rather than what they cannot. A capacity certificate focused on what workers can do will contribute to an increased awareness of the importance that workers play in the rehabilitation process.

This bill ensures that Queensland has a fair and just workers compensation scheme. This bill protects our Queensland workers and their families. I commend the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 to the House.

 **Mr PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (12.45 pm): I rise to speak briefly in support of rural firefighters in my electorate of Gympie. I also speak in support of and acknowledge the dedicated effort of the shadow minister for police and emergency services and member for Kawana, Jarrod Bleijie, to give them recognition. Without his and the LNP's unwavering commitment to stick by the hardworking and loyal rural firefighters of Queensland, the passage of this legislation would have missed the opportunity to provide long-term confidence for their tireless efforts in protecting property across the state.

As we move into the hotter months of the year, it is fitting that in debating this legislation we are again made acutely aware of the dangers of fire, particularly for those who have to fight them. Fighting fires and providing assistance during times of natural disasters are a fact of life in regional and rural Queensland. We rely heavily on the volunteers, who give up so much of their time, both in directly

fighting the fires and providing assistance. It is important that we do not ever underestimate just how essential they are to rural and regional Queensland. It is also important that we do not underestimate the hazards they put themselves through in protecting our lives and our properties. As a grazier and a rural landholder, not only have I seen the great work that they have done, but I have been assisted and I have been able to assist them. On many occasions I have witnessed volunteer firefighters saving pasture, fixed assets, livestock and wildlife on rural and rural residential land.

Rural fire brigades exist because members have a commitment to the safety of their local communities and that of other communities in the broader area. Rural Fire Brigade members also give up freely many hours of their time attending callouts, training, running brigades and education programs. There are 15 volunteer brigades in the Gympie electorate: Brooloo/Mary River, Cedar Pocket and Greens Creek, Chatsworth, Glastonbury, Goomboorian, Gympie South, Kandanga, Kybong, Lagoon Pocket, Mothar Mountain/Tandur, The Palms, Traveston, Veteran, Wolvi and Yabba Creek. The number of volunteers is staggering. Queensland families, properties, homes and businesses are protected by 36,000 volunteer firefighters across 1,441 brigades covering 93 per cent of Queensland.

Firefighters in Queensland should receive the same workers compensation regardless of whether they work full time or volunteer. All firefighters deserve to be given the same protection irrespective of whether they are permanent, part time, auxiliary or volunteer. Unfortunately, those opposite were initially prepared to discriminate against volunteers. They wanted to pick and choose who deserved protection.

Their original proposal sent the message that volunteer firefighters are of lesser value than full-time firefighters. Thankfully they now understand that is not so and they have agreed to accept the LNP's position of supporting the selfless firefighters who put their lives on the line to keep us and our property safe. This can be exacerbated by the fact that those volunteers who fight fires side by side with permanent or auxiliary firefighters often have inferior protective equipment. In the words of one volunteer firefighter—

We do not have decontamination areas, washing units for PPE or deemed contaminated zones at our station, nor have I seen these at any other rural station I have attended. I have been to fires where multiple agencies have been in attendance—me with my P2 mask standing in the smoke next to my urban colleagues in their breathing apparatus.

Smoke and fire do not discriminate according to working status. All firefighters should receive the same protection irrespective of pay status or the colour of their fire engine. To ensure that fair workers compensation is in place if a firefighter suffers a disease such as cancer in the course of their employment seems a small act to repay their sacrifice. Labor's initial push for a fire quota that only volunteer firefighters must meet—to make them attend 150 fires before receiving workers compensation—was mean-spirited. This was nothing more than discrimination. It was unfair and an insult to those volunteers who selflessly put themselves in harm's way to protect us. Thankfully those opposite saw the error of their ways and put politics aside to give volunteer firefighters a fair deal. This legislation cannot come soon enough.

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (12.51 pm): I rise to speak in support of the restoration of common law rights for injured workers in the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015.

Queensland's workers compensation scheme is the best performing scheme in the country. It is in a strong financial position, which enables it to provide a fair balance between low-cost premiums for employers and good benefits for injured workers, and today we enhance that. WorkCover is the sole commercial insurer in Queensland's workers compensation scheme and provides policies to over 150,000 Queensland employers. WorkCover is self-funded from revenue received through premiums and return on investments.

Under the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003, WorkCover is required to remain fully funded, that is, total assets must be equal to its total liabilities. In addition, Queensland Treasury requires that WorkCover maintain a buffer of 20 per cent, resulting in a funding ratio of a minimum of 120 per cent. As at 30 June 2015, WorkCover's funding ratio was a strong 169 per cent, which is well above the 120 per cent required for WorkCover to be fully funded. WorkCover's total equity has increased from \$1.5 billion in 2013-14 to \$1.7 billion and, as at 30 June 2015, it has approximately \$4 billion in funds under management.

The strong performance of WorkCover today can in part be attributed to the previous Labor government's 2010 workers compensation scheme reforms. As a result of the 2010 reforms common law claims have reduced by 15 per cent since 2011-12 and total annual common law claim payments

and the average cost of a damages claim have reduced by around 10 per cent over the period 2009-10 to 2013-14. In light of this very strong financial position, WorkCover has been able to maintain its low average premium rate for employers at \$1.20 per \$100 of wages in 2015-16.

Queensland's average premium rate is currently the lowest of any scheme in the country. The average premium rate is set each year by the WorkCover board based on the advice of its actuary, in this case PricewaterhouseCoopers. The average premium rate takes into account a number of factors including expected wages growth, the number of claims anticipated to be received from injuries sustained in that year and investment returns. WorkCover is also committed to working with employers on an individual level and has also made significant improvements in the way it calculates individual employer premiums over recent years. In particular, it has introduced a new method of calculating individual premiums for small employers—such as the member for Maryborough was talking about—with payrolls of less than \$1.5 million in wages which discounts the claims costs incurred. This is aimed at easing financial pressure and uncertainty on small businesses and enables them to feel the benefits of improving workplace safety sooner.

Not only is Queensland's workers compensation scheme performing well financially, it is also one of Australia's most efficient schemes, with 80 per cent of the premiums collected being used to benefit injured workers through claims expenses and only 20 per cent being used to cover non-claim expenses such as operating costs, grants and levies. It is clear that Queensland's workers compensation scheme has strong foundations and that WorkCover is well positioned to absorb the cost of removing the unfair common law threshold from 31 January 2015 without impacting on the average premium rate or its solvency target. I note also that this has been confirmed by actuarial modelling by PricewaterhouseCoopers, who modelled the impact on solvency of removing the threshold from 31 January 2015 and maintaining the average premium rate at \$1.20 per \$100 of wages paid. The Palaszczuk Labor government is committed to working with the WorkCover Queensland board to ensure that low premiums are maintained and workers receive fair compensation. I now turn—

**Miss Barton** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Grace): Order! The interjections are not being taken. Can we please have order in the House.

**Mr POWER:** I turn now to the changes to the protection of firefighters that reverse the presumption of certain cancers for firefighters. I notice that the temporary friends of firefighters today sing the praises of those who risk their lives to save ours and protect our property from fire. However, that was not always the case. In the last term of government what did those opposite say about the very firefighters who were advocating for these changes when they tried to express these views publicly? The LNP said that they were 'fake' firefighters, 'pretend' firefighters. They said that they were 'dressed up' as firefighters and they said they were really 'strippers'. The men and women who risk their lives one day were trashed the next. One member of the old front bench whom the member for Kawana still supports today said that they were people 'masquerading' as firefighters and that the last time they saw a fire was when they were camping. That is shameful. John Oliver of the firefighters union made it clear when he said in February 2014—

Fireies have tried to talk with the government for two years, their only response to us has been arrogance and belligerence.

John Oliver further stated that the reality was that all the firefighting volunteers who campaigned for those laws and other protections were professional firefighters. I cannot take any member on the other side of the House seriously who does not begin their speech in this debate with a sincere apology to all those firefighters for their previous arrogance and belligerence in the last term of government. I have heard a lot from the other side about our attitude to firefighters, especially rural firefighters—

**Miss Barton** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Broadwater, I have given you some latitude—

**Miss BARTON:** I rise to a point of order. With due respect, the member for Logan did not afford me the same courtesy when I was—

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order; resume your seat. I have given you some latitude. There will be no further interjections or else I will warn you.

**Mr POWER:** I support rural firefighters and I recognise the great work that our rural firefighters do, especially the volunteers at Chambers Flat, Greenbank, Jimboomba—which I share with the member for Beaudesert—and of course the Logan Village Rural Fire Brigade, which all serve the

electorate of Logan. I most recently spoke with members of the Logan Village Rural Fire Brigade at the Logan Village Country and Music Festival, where they were spreading the fire message and giving kids a ride on the little red fire wagon.

I am pleased that rural firefighters are being supported by this bill, and I commend the committee and the minister for listening to the information before them. I was really disappointed when I heard that one of the members opposite said, 'Why do you hate rural firefighters?' Like everyone on this side of the House I find those comments both insulting and demeaning, and I think it diminished the integrity of the arguments they put forward. The member for Barron River, who is a second generation volunteer firefighter, has served as a volunteer firefighter together with his father for over 50 years.

This bill restores the right of those injured to seek common law compensation when the injury is less than five per cent loss of capacity. In the case of a firefighter, that might mean that they could be injured while risking their life to save others. They might lose less than five per cent capacity but they may not be able to continue to serve as a firefighter even with that diminished loss of capacity. In effect, they would lose their chosen career in public service saving our lives.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I welcome to parliament the principal, students and staff of the Hemmant Flexible Learning Centre, located in the electorate of Lytton.

Debate, on motion of Mr Power, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.30 pm.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Morayfield State School, Morayfield Magic

 **Mr RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (2.30 pm): It was magic in Morayfield this year when the inaugural Morayfield Magic event was held at Morayfield State School. Morayfield Magic is an initiative that I have introduced to help create excitement for reading and a love of books for local kids. I have done this because we know that by creating excitement for reading and a love of books we can improve literacy levels and academic levels for the young people of our community.

This initiative involves an interschool literacy orienteering challenge and family fun day. The entire event is free and this year's Morayfield Magic had popcorn, fairy floss, a sausage sizzle, a jumping castle, little squirt fire truck ride, information stalls and the interschool challenge. With over 1,000 people attending this year's inaugural event, I am pleased to say that Morayfield Magic 2015 was a great success.

The inspiration for Morayfield Magic is found in the literary works of Australia's most celebrated children's book author Mem Fox. Madam Deputy Speaker Farmer, I know that you have a particular interest in Mem Fox's work because I recall that she attended a school with you quite a few years ago and read to young school students. Many members of this House will know of Mem's most famous book, *Poosum Magic*, a story of two possums, Grandma Poss and Hush, her invisible granddaughter, and their life in the Australian bush. Mem is the author of more than 40 literary works and is a positive influence upon millions of young children, parents and educators worldwide.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Farmer): Order! The level of conversation in the chamber is rising. I know we have just come back from lunch, but can we keep it to a minimum or take your conversations outside.

**Mr RYAN:** I am sure all members of the House will be very excited to hear that Mem Fox was very enthusiastic when I asked her to partner with me to develop Morayfield Magic. In particular, I am extremely grateful that Mem was able to join with me and education minister Kate Jones to officially launch Morayfield Magic in June this year at Morayfield State School.

Witnessing Mem's magic as she shared her love of books and reading with hundreds of students will be a memory that I will hold dear for many years. Mem mesmerised these students with the most brilliant readings of some of her most popular books—*Tough Boris*, *The Magic Hat* and *Poosum Magic*. I will never forget the excitement in the students' eyes as they experienced Mem's magic. As proof that the kids really did enjoy Mem's visit, I still have prep and year 1 students from Morayfield State School coming up to me and asking whether I am Mem Fox's friend. I use this opportunity to publicly thank Mem for her contribution to making Morayfield Magic a reality and all those community groups and members of the public who helped make the inaugural Morayfield Magic a great success.

### Schools, Enrolment Management Plans

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (2.33 pm): I bring to the attention of the House an issue that I am starting to get more and more representations on from parents in my electorate and parents outside of my electorate, and that is the number of schools that now have enrolment management plans. Enrolment management plans come into place when a school cannot take any more students because of the sheer numbers. This is causing a heck of a lot of concern for parents. To my knowledge, at the moment around about 300 schools, nearly 25 per cent of our state schools, have enrolment management plans. This has a number of implications. One of the major implications is that parents have far less choice than they have ever had before. Parents want a choice in picking a school that suits their children. Some schools have strengths in particular areas, and parents want to have that option. This is causing them great concern.

There are some real practical implications with this. I have had a parent make representations to me about a high school in my electorate which the older siblings attended but the younger siblings will not be able to attend because of the enrolment management plan. I think that is a real issue, and it is one that I am asking the education minister to address. It has implications such as those I have already mentioned. It means less choice for parents, it means we have crowded classrooms and it means there has been an incredible lack of planning. Under the former LNP government and the leadership of former minister Langbroek, we put the Schools Planning Commission together. This was a great initiative. It came up with some really startling facts. It came up with the outcome that we are going to need about 40 or 50 schools built over the next 10 years. Then beyond that we are going to need another 50 or 60 schools. If we do not address this issue, we will have more and more crowded schools and fewer options for our parents to place their child in a school that they think will suit them best.

I know that the member for Beaudesert has a real issue in his area. The planning commission recognised that his area needed four schools over the next six years—two secondary and two primary. I am happy to continue to work with him to bring about some new schools in that area. It is well and good for the minister to say that we are going to have 875 extra teachers, but where are those teachers going to go? We do not have enough classrooms or schools to put those people into unless we have proper planning for the future and we build the number of schools that the expanding population of Queensland requires.

*(Time expired)*

### Business Confidence

 **Mr WHITING** (Murrumba—ALP) (2.37 pm): I want to discuss two developments in my area that illustrate growing consumer and business confidence in my area and throughout Queensland. Recently, we had the launch of the Moreton Bay Regional Council Innovation Awards at the Narangba Innovation Precinct. These are new awards from my local council that will recognise, reward and support innovation, invention and commercialisation by local businesses. Many new and innovative businesses in the area are now showing they have the growing confidence to enter these awards and the growing confidence to expand their operations.

One of the other notable developments in my area is the initiation of the North Lakes Sports Club by the Caboolture Sports Club. This club will provide substantial financial and in-kind support for local sports clubs, schools and community groups. The club will cover four blocks of land over 1.6 hectares, and I table an article about that.

*Tabled paper:* Article in *North Lakes Times*, dated 7 August 2015, titled 'Caboolture Sports Club will replicate its business in new club at North Lakes'. [[1122](#)]

The background to this great news is that business is booming, riding on rising consumer confidence under the Palaszczuk government. The other side claim that it is all doom and gloom, but they cannot argue about the wide range of statistics painting a picture of rising confidence. Queensland consumer confidence has risen to the highest level in almost two years according to the Westpac-Melbourne Institute Survey of Consumer Sentiment. State consumer confidence has risen significantly by 12.2 percentage points, the highest consumer sentiment of any mainland state. Queensland business confidence is the highest of all mainland states for the second month in a row according to the NAB Monthly Business Survey. Queensland housing investor finance commitments have hit a near-eight-year high in Queensland. Investor housing finance for the purchase of existing dwellings hit \$4.8 billion in the July quarter. Investor housing finance for the purchase of new dwellings rose to \$745 million in the July quarter.

That is \$450 million higher than the same period last year, and the good news keeps coming. ABS labour force statistics show that Queensland added 28,500 extra jobs since the Palaszczuk government took office in February. This is a strong collection of positive economic indicators that cannot be denied—cannot be talked down—and it is a positive. Yesterday the member for Surfers Paradise talked about the Sensis survey relating to confidence in Queensland. I looked at it and guess what it said? It said that all metropolitan areas except Hobart displayed higher confidence than in the last survey and, relative to the previous quarter, confidence levels were higher in regional Queensland. That says that confidence levels in Queensland are recovering after the turmoil of the Campbell Newman government. There has been a strong turnaround in consumer and business confidence since the election of the Palaszczuk government and a contributor to that growth in confidence comes down to the budget. CCIQ director of advocacy, Nick Behrens, said that confidence in the Queensland economy has improved on the back of a balanced state budget delivered on 14 July.

*(Time expired)*

### Glass House Electorate

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (2.40 pm): Since the election in January I have been working very hard with the 20-odd communities in the electorate of Glass House to establish a 'fighting for' list—a range of projects that the community, individuals in the community and I can work on together to deliver for the great electorate of Glass House to make our lives so much better in that part of the world. I want to spend the next couple of minutes addressing three issues in particular. The first is the Jubilee Drive and Palmwoods-Montville Road intersection. Members would be well aware that this is a very notorious intersection. It actually dives underneath the main north coast rail line. It is not of an appropriate height for trucks and there are often bridge strikes to the point where TMR invested quite considerable money in putting big steel barriers on either side of the bridge. But guess what? That has not provided a solution. This morning yet another truck tried to go under the bridge but got stuck and that ultimately led to a whole morning of chaos for the community of Palmwoods. I am not for one minute excusing the behaviour of drivers who fail to take notice of the appropriate signage saying that the bridge is a low bridge, but this is not only a bridge that trucks get stuck under which then causes road congestion and the railway line has to be shut down while checking the bridge; it also gets flooded every time there is significant rainfall despite the efforts of councils to do some improvements around drainage. This area is basically unsafe as the main sporting facilities are down Jubilee Drive and parents are trying to get back out on to Palmwoods-Montville Road. Regular representations to TMR basically come back saying that the ultimate solution is the rail duplication. We know that, under this mob, that is not going to happen any time soon, so I plead with TMR: think outside the box. Look at the problem we have here. Please help us to come up with a solution that we can achieve in the very near future to make this intersection so much safer for the community of Palmwoods, Woombye, Montville and beyond.

The two other issues I want to touch on involve petitions that are currently underway. The first is for flashing school zone lights at Peachester State School. Again, it is on the main drag between Beerwah and Kilcoy. A lot of tourists are not aware that it is actually a 40 zone until they get pulled over by our men in blue. I thank Margie Jennings from the Peachester State School P&C for promoting this petition and I would encourage all Peachester locals and many tourists to sign it. The other issue is the speed limit as you come out of Woodford towards Kilcoy. We are seeking to move a 100-kilometre speed zone 300 metres down the road to the other side of the Mary Street intersection. I thank Mr Brenton Kelly for his support. We doorknocked the other week around Mary Street and got hundreds of signatures. It would be great to have—

*(Time expired)*

### Peter Doherty Awards

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (2.43 pm): I rise to speak about the 2015 Peter Doherty Awards. The importance of the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics to the future of our state cannot be underestimated. These fields, collectively known as STEM, are the key drivers of innovation—the key to our future economic growth. We must therefore take every opportunity to encourage and recognise the high achievements of our young people in these crucial fields. That is why it gives me great pleasure today to acknowledge the achievement of Hayden Randall from Ipswich Grammar School in my electorate. Hayden recently received an award for outstanding senior science

student in the 2015 Peter Doherty Awards. These awards take their name from eminent Queenslander and Nobel Prize winning scientist, Professor Peter Doherty, who remains a role model for students of science and technology.

I am pleased to say that these awards, managed by Education Queensland, recognise Queensland students, teachers, support staff and schools who excel in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. In 2014 Hayden was selected to attend the QUT vice-chancellor's STEM for schools camp and received a grant from the University of Southern Queensland. I congratulate Hayden on his hard work and his passion and I congratulate the teaching and support staff and principal Rob Henderson of Ipswich Grammar School for their continued dedication to the students of their school, which remains one of the premier schools in Queensland. Each beneficiary of the awards receives a \$5,000 prize and recipients this year included teachers, support officers, schools and 20 year 12 students like Hayden from around Queensland. These students represent some of the very brightest and best of our current crop of science, mathematics and technology students.

Over the past decade Queensland has experienced strong growth in workforce skills in the STEM areas. However, over the same period there has been a fall in students studying these subjects at school and university. The Palaszczuk government is committed to preparing our young people for the challenges of the future to help them become the innovators of tomorrow. It is fantastic that this government continues to recognise the achievements of students, support officers and teachers. The Peter Doherty Awards have a proud 11-year record of highlighting and rewarding outstanding science, technology, engineering and maths talent in our education system. The awards are one way this government helps promote the importance of STEM subjects as we prepare Queensland students for the challenges of tomorrow.

### National Parks, Grazing Leases

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (2.46 pm): The seat of Gregory is a powerhouse for the Queensland beef industry—like many seats across Queensland including Gympie, Nanango and Warrego—and today I want to speak about one particular success story in the seat of Gregory with the beef industry which is being put at risk by the Palaszczuk government's inability to provide businesses with certainty and practical understanding. Goathlands is a certified organic grazing property long operated by Peter Mayne and his family, especially son Struan and his partner Hanna. In addition to being organically certified, the Maynes also abide by the Global Animal Partnership code of practice, and I table a certificate of compliance that they have on their property.

*Tabled paper:* Document, dated 5 August 2014, titled 'Certificate of Compliance—Australian Certified Organic—Peter Mayne Family Trust Partnership' [\[1123\]](#).

This requires annual audits which check, among other things, that there has been no use of poisons, including on their animals, no poison sprays and no dingo baiting. As a part of this sustainable practice, for many years a grazing lease over a section of the adjoining Carnarvon National Park has formed part of their successful business plan. Their lease is 50,000 acres which they use as one paddock so there are no fences to interfere with the wildlife, and I table a photo of a paddock on the Mayne's property.

*Tabled paper:* Photograph, undated, of grazing paddock at Goathlands, Springsure [\[1124\]](#).

Their sustainable strategy manages pastures and ground cover through rotational grazing and it is here that the park lease plays a small but vital role. It carries over 500 head of cows for three to four months of the year. Other than that, it is left stock free. The limited grazing is vital to Goathlands's business model. What does Queensland get in return? Additional crown rents paid. Queenslanders also receive stewardship over the land for no taxpayer dollar outlay. They also manage the feral pests and weeds on the property and pay local government rates. While this part of Queensland is very beautiful, it is also rugged. The sustainable model manages both bushfire and erosion by ensuring there is always optimum ground cover. Grazing for that crucial three to four months ensures that the fuel load does not become a hazard.

The concern is that the Maynes have been advised by the department that their lease will not be renewed when it expires in March next year. They were given no explanation as to why, even though Queensland is suffering a severe drought and this decision will compromise their farming model. I made representations to the Minister for Environment in July and received a reply in which Minister Miles advised that the department will consider the lease further once the government's position on grazing in national parks is confirmed. However, in April—some months prior—he was broadcast on ABC stating—

It's not our intention to continue renewing leases as the previous government intended to do.

I ask the minister for certainty for my constituents and for some compassion. I believe these photographs show that the Mayne's stewardship has been absolutely outstanding and they deserve every consideration—

*(Time expired)*

### **Lytton Electorate, Skilling Queenslanders for Work**

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (2.49 pm): I am delighted to rise today to speak about the outstanding Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative. I am a great supporter of initiatives that put our communities in the driver's seat to grow local employment opportunities, encourage greater social inclusion and assist people who are needing a little extra support to enter the workforce. That is exactly what Skilling Queenslanders for Work does.

Skilling Queenslanders for Work gives vulnerable Queenslanders the skills and training that they need to get back into the workforce and build a career. I was delighted to hear that, in the recently announced first funding round, three applicants from the bayside were successful. When I rang the organisations to let them know about their successful application, this news was received with much excitement and enthusiasm. The response from each and every organisation was to say, 'What a difference this funding will make to our clients.' Each of these organisations is a vibrant and innovative member of the bayside, providing assistance and support across the community.

BABI is a much loved local organisation that celebrates young people, their strengths and their abilities. BABI will be delivering Get Set for Work and a Certificate II in Skills for Work and Vocational Pathways in either early childhood or logistic electives. Even better, that training will be undertaken by TAFE Queensland.

Help Enterprises has been operating since 1968 to provide opportunities through employment and training to enhance the lifestyle and independence of people with disabilities. The bayside is now lucky to have Help Enterprises operating in Wynnum. Help Enterprises will be delivering Help2Beautify Community Work Skills in Wynnum. Clients will obtain a certificate II in horticulture. I am fortunate to have some of Help's lovely work outside my electorate office in Edith Street.

The Wynnum Manly Employment and Training Association will be providing a certificate I in construction for Career Employment Australia under the Community Work Skills Stream 2: Work Skills Traineeships funding.

Over the years all three of these organisations have provided outstanding services to the community of Wynnum in meeting the needs of some of the most marginalised and vulnerable in our community. These organisations are experienced, progressive and vibrant and will deliver fabulous training, support and, ultimately, jobs. I congratulate BABI, Help Enterprises and CEA and I look forward to hearing the successes of the participants. I am delighted that the next round of funding has opened. I thank the Palaszczuk government for reinstating this important initiative.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Farmer): Order! Before I call the member for Mount Ommaney, I would like to acknowledge the students and principal of Marsden State High School, from the electorate of Waterford, who are in the gallery today.

### **Domestic and Family Violence**

 **Mrs SMITH** (Mount Ommaney—LNP) (2.52 pm): Two days ago in this House I congratulated the task force, headed by Dame Quentin Bryce, and I referred to the *Not now, not ever* report, which highlighted disturbing findings in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. That got me thinking about the additional hurdles that people in smaller communities and country towns face in this area of domestic violence.

Earlier this year, I met with a young woman who told me of the abuse that she had suffered from a violent partner. She had made the decision to seek help and speak out. What unfolded both stunned and dismayed her. As members can imagine, in a small country town the grapevine moves very quickly. The minute this young woman sought help her whole community was divided. She received phone calls of support but, equally, she received phone calls of harassment—calls from people making comments such as 'Why are you doing this?' 'It's not that bad.' 'Worse things have happened to others.'

This issue highlights the following line in the report about small communities—

... people who live there consider violence to be a part of 'every day' life.

The young lady also said that what she did was withdraw from the community. She stayed at home. Her predicament had her questioning herself and had she done the right thing. Her actions were also impacting on her kids at school. Children were taunting her children and she had them home from school. This prevented her from going about her daily life, such as the stigma of speaking out.

Another impact of this young woman's situation was the financial abuse. She indicated that payments to her were erratic and, as such, that limited her ability to get away when she felt that she needed to. As the report highlighted—

The lack of support services—

in these areas—

and poor access to the justice system compound the violence and make it virtually impossible for victims, who are predominantly women and children, to escape.

I heard that young woman's story firsthand. I think it is very important that we in this House consider all of those factors when dealing with this terrible, insidious crime of domestic violence.

### Bundaberg Electorate, Events

 **Ms DONALDSON** (Bundaberg—ALP) (2.55 pm): Recently, it was a great privilege for me to host a community leaders round table to discuss the report of the Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence, *Not now, not ever*. The round table was an important opportunity to join with community leaders in my electorate and to share their ideas with me about how we can all work together to bring about positive change. One of the most noticeable instances that came from the round table was the high percentage of men who were in attendance and leading the way in tackling domestic and family violence in Bundaberg. About 40 per cent of the people in the room were men, which was wonderful. With my previous experience working in child safety, I know that it is rare to see so many men being involved at this level. I think that demonstrates clearly the willingness of men to fight this battle.

Domestic and family violence is a serious problem in my community. The only way forward is for all levels of government, service providers, community groups and individuals to come together to work towards some positive outcomes. This very point was highlighted again and again at the round table—that the groups who were at the coalface of dealing with the problem also need to form strong links to face this together by moving forward in one direction.

I am also proud to be a part of this government which has agreed to implement all of the recommendations in the *Not now, not ever* report. I am also heartened by the appointment of Dame Quentin Bryce to be the chair of the Premier's implementation council for domestic and family violence. That council is, of course, coupled with the allocation of \$31.3 million included in this year's state budget.

I also recently had the honour of representing the Minister for Health, Cameron Dick, at the Wide Bay Local Ambulance Service Network Awards ceremony in Hervey Bay. It was an excellent opportunity to recognise and celebrate the dedication and commitment of the Queensland Ambulance Service's paramedics, staff and volunteers and also to showcase the outstanding contribution of the staff to our community. I was proud to personally award the national medals to Natalie Pickering, Lyle Oppermann, Simon Knight, Daniel Allwood, Derek Hegh and Darrell Searle, with Darrell also receiving his national medal first clasp. The national medal recognises the long and diligent service of the men and women whose job it is to protect life and who have been providing this service to our communities for 15 years.

Finally, this past Sunday Bundaberg put on a spectacular third edition of Bundy Flavours. Despite the inclement weather, more than 6,000 people attended this magnificent event, where people could listen and watch celebrity chefs Matt Golinski and Alastair McLeod as well as Bundaberg's own Shannon Kellam. This free event was a showcase of all the culinary delights and produce produced by our locals. Our growers, producers, artisans and businesses need to be congratulated for putting Bundy on the map in regard to food tourism and demonstrating—

*(Time expired)*

### Hinkler Memorial

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (2.58 pm): In the time allotted to me I want to share with the House a unique project that is associated with the Anzac Centenary commemorations, which was successfully completed in Italy on 2 August and witnessed by some 200 people. The 8.4-kilometre mountain trekking

track in Tuscany, Italy is now called the Hinkler Ring. It covers the region where Bert Hinkler lost his life on 7 January 1933 in his de Havilland Puss Moth while en route from the UK to Australia in an attempt to create another world-record-breaking flight.

On 7 January 2015, a ceremony was held in my electorate of Burnett on Mon Repos Beach to witness the removal of a 1.4-tonne basalt boulder, which is now the main feature of the Hinkler memorial monument. Mon Repos Beach is where Bert first flew in his homemade glider in 1912.

A time capsule was embedded into the monument's base to be opened in 100 years. The then prime minister, Tony Abbott, wrote a message on behalf of our nation, as did Premier Palaszczuk on behalf of Queensland. The Hinkler Hall of Aviation donated a slate tile and some original nails from Bert's Southampton home to be placed inside the time capsule along with some treated sand from Mon Repos beach and the Bundaberg Regional Council provided some written material.

The Australian parliament presented a special gift for permanent display at the Hinkler Ring associated Chalet Da Giocondo. The Queensland Anzac Centenary Commemoration Unit supplied the major bronze plaque recounting Bert's WWI service. The dedication of the memorial monument was performed by Anglican Father Cliff Greaves, whose ministry was previously in Bundaberg. Three ranking officers from RAF 28 Squadron attended from England. They laid a wreath of poppies. RAF 28 Squadron commissioned a carved basalt stone replica of its crest in honour of Bert's Italian service with its motto, 'Whatever you may do, do.' A Royal Navy commander attended on behalf of the British Embassy in Rome. Two RAAF officers from the Roulettes attended from Melbourne and played pipes and bugle. An RAAF group captain from our High Commission in London attended, as did our London Agent-General acting on behalf of the Queensland government.

I mention also Ballandean Estate Wines of Stanthorpe, which gifted wines for the occasion, the Royal Queensland Aero Club, the Bargara Men's Shed in my electorate whose members made a beautiful wooden lectern to hold the visitors' book, Bundaberg company Jabiru, which gifted a wooden propeller to be incorporated in its design and my federal colleague, Mr Keith Pitt MP, the member for Hinkler, who shared the cost of several specially designed visitors books with me. The Australian Ambassador to Italy, His Excellency the Hon. Mike Rann, officiated at the unveiling ceremony.

*Tabled paper:* The Hinkler Ring Memorial Monument unveiling ceremony on Mount Pratomagno—order of proceedings and related documents [\[1125\]](#).

I commend the Australian organiser of this project, Mr Kevin Lindeberg, as the project's driving force. The former federal member for Hinkler, Mr Paul Neville, and its new member, Mr Keith Pitt, aided in the project, as did Mr Lex Rowland, Bundaberg's mayor, the member for Bundaberg and I. For historical purposes, I seek leave to table some photos at a later date.

## MENTAL HEALTH BILL

### Introduction

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (3.01 pm): I present a bill for an act to provide for the treatment and care of people who have mental illnesses and for other purposes, to repeal the Mental Health Act 2000, to amend this act, the Criminal Code, the Forensic Disability Act 2011, the Powers of Attorney Act 1998 and the Public Health Act 2005, and to amend the acts mentioned in schedule 4 for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes and I nominate the Health and Ambulance Services Committee to consider the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Mental Health Bill 2015 [\[1126\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Mental Health Bill 2015, explanatory notes [\[1127\]](#).

Today is an historic day in the history of mental health treatment support and recovery in this state. The Mental Health Bill 2015 will repeal and replace the Mental Health Act 2000 which is 15 years old and which has not kept pace with developments in patient rights and clinical practice. As members would be aware, the government released a consultation draft of the bill for a two-month period. Nearly 100 written submissions were received during this consultation period. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all stakeholders and citizens of Queensland who took the time to participate in meetings and workshops and who made submissions on the draft bill. Many of those individuals and groups are in the gallery of the Legislative Assembly chamber today.

The strong engagement of stakeholders throughout the consultation period demonstrates that improvements can be made to legislation through careful and methodical engagement and consultation with the community. An overarching purpose of the bill is to provide a regulatory framework for the management of persons who are so unwell they do not have the capacity to make decisions about their

own treatment and care. In these cases the bill provides a lawful authority to treat a person with a mental illness. The bill strengthens patient rights. The bill strengthens the independence of independent patient rights advisers by requiring them to be employed outside of authorised mental health services. The bill also expands the functions of these advisers, including by requiring them to work cooperatively with community visitors under the Public Guardian Act.

The bill also strengthens the requirement to consult with families, carers and other support persons. This is critical to having a recovery orientation to the treatment and care of persons with a mental illness. Under this bill this consultation must occur unless the patient specifically requests the communication does not take place, the support person is not readily available or the communication is likely to be detrimental to the patient's health and wellbeing—for example, if there is a dysfunctional family relationship. Improvements have been made to the nominated support person provisions, including by allowing persons to appoint two nominated support persons. Under the bill, nominated support persons must receive notices, can discuss confidential information with the patient's treatment team and represent or support the patient at tribunal hearings.

The bill takes a significant step forward in facilitating and promoting the use of advance health directives which give patients an opportunity to have greater control over their future healthcare needs. In response to views expressed by stakeholders, this bill will require authorised doctors to explain to a patient and document in the patient's records why an advance health directive prepared by the patient was not followed. The bill also clarifies the circumstances in which a person may be taken to a public sector health service facility for emergency examination, treatment and care. The bill achieves this by placing emphasis on high-risk individuals who need urgent examination or treatment. These provisions are included in the Public Health Act in recognition of the fact that these situations may arise due to factors such as drug or alcohol abuse, as well as from a mental illness or other health conditions.

The vast majority of involuntary patients have no connection to the criminal justice system. However, for those involuntary patients who also have interactions with the criminal justice system it is important that there be a strong legislative framework that balances treatment needs with the protection of the community. Importantly, this bill strengthens the management of risks to the community where serious unlawful acts are committed. In these circumstances the bill enables the Mental Health Court to impose a non-revoke period of up to 10 years on a forensic order for the most serious violent offences such as murder.

The bill includes significant improvements from the Mental Health Act 2000. I am pleased that the bill addresses a deficiency in the legal system in relation to actions that magistrates may take where a person appears of unsound mind at the time of an alleged offence or is unfit for trial. The bill provides that magistrates may dismiss charges in these circumstances. These provisions apply to persons with a mental illness, an intellectual disability or another mental condition. I would like to acknowledge the advocacy of Mr John and Mrs Collein Avery who are present today. They have sought improvements in the legal system in this state to prevent vulnerable individuals from being unfairly found guilty of minor offences. This bill responds directly to these concerns by giving magistrates a clear power to dismiss a charge if a person is not fit for trial.

The bill also provides for appropriate referrals to service delivery agencies. For persons with a mental illness a magistrate may refer a person to an authorised mental health service for an examination which may result in a treatment authority being made for the person. For persons with an intellectual disability a referral may be made to a disability service agency to determine what care may be provided to the person. The provisions of this bill, along with appropriate education, training and other supports, will minimise the risk of situations such as those faced by the Avery family in the past arising again in the future.

The bill continues the Mental Health Court as the central judicial body for the forensic mental health system in Queensland. The court hears references on whether a person charged with a serious offence was of unsound mind at the time of an alleged offence or is unfit for trial. This bill also improves operational aspects of the Mental Health Court, including by enabling the court to hold a court with one assisting clinician where it is appropriate to do so. The independent Mental Health Review Tribunal also continues under the bill with the primary role of reviewing the continuation of authorities and orders made under the bill. The bill also improves operational aspects of the tribunal, including by enabling the tribunal to refer questions of law to the Mental Health Court.

The bill continues the role of the Chief Psychiatrist, who replaces the director of mental health under the current act. The Chief Psychiatrist is primarily responsible for protecting the rights of patients in authorised mental health services. The Chief Psychiatrist is to prepare policies and practice guidelines for the treatment of patients which must be publicly available.

This bill expands the controls on restrictive practices to better protect involuntary patients. In addition to provisions relating to seclusion and mechanical restraint, this bill also includes provisions to regulate the use of physical restraint in authorised mental health services. There is strong evidence that physical restraint can lead to serious harm to patients and staff. The provisions in this bill will enable the use of physical restraint to be carefully monitored to ensure that it is only used as a last resort.

The bill also ensures the appropriate use of medication on patients in authorised mental health services. This addresses a longstanding concern of patient advocates. The provisions in this bill will enable the use of medications to be carefully monitored to ensure that their use is appropriate for a patient's treatment and care. This bill removes the ability for an individual—the Chief Psychiatrist—to require a forensic patient to wear a GPS tracking device. This authority will be limited to the Mental Health Court and the Mental Health Review Tribunal, where the issues can be considered in a transparent way, free from government interference.

Other improvements from the Mental Health Act 2000 include:

- a tightening of the criteria under which a person may be placed on a treatment authority, to focus on a person's lack of capacity to consent to treatment and a risk of serious harm or deterioration;
- requiring a patient to be treated under an advance health directive or with the consent of a personal attorney or guardian instead of under a treatment authority, if the patient can be treated this way;
- replacing 'justices examination orders' with more tightly defined 'examination authorities', made by the Mental Health Review Tribunal;
- supporting patient recovery, including by providing that a patient on a treatment authority must be treated in the community unless it is not possible to meet the patient's treatment and care needs in this way;
- the removal of the restrictions on the use of audiovisual technology, leaving it to clinicians to decide when use of this technology may be appropriate;
- the right for a patient, or a support person, to seek an independent second opinion if there are unresolved concerns with the patient's treatment and care;
- introducing 'treatment support orders', which operate as a step-down order for a forensic patient as part of their recovery when it is appropriate;
- requiring the use of all mechanical restraint to be approved by the Chief Psychiatrist;
- enabling the Chief Psychiatrist to issue directions on the use of seclusion;
- introducing other protections for the use of seclusion and mechanical restraint, including through the introduction of Reduction and Elimination Plans, which are approved by the Chief Psychiatrist;
- allowing persons on an authority or order under the bill who are charged with a serious offence to request a psychiatrist report on whether the person was of unsound mind at the time of an alleged offence or is unfit for trial;
- requiring the Mental Health Review Tribunal to provide free legal representation for patients for specific types of hearings, such as where the Attorney-General is represented, for minors and for electroconvulsive therapy applications;
- strengthening safeguards for the use of electroconvulsive therapy, including by requiring the Mental Health Review Tribunal to consider all treatments for minors, while retaining the ability for emergency electroconvulsive therapy, which must then be referred to the tribunal for consideration;
- prohibiting psychosurgery, but allowing deep brain stimulation techniques to occur with the informed consent of the person and with the approval of the Mental Health Review Tribunal;
- enhancing the provisions for victims of unlawful acts, including by notifying victims of the reasons for increasing community treatment for the relevant patient; and
- improving the way that interstate transfers of involuntary patients may occur, including by requiring transfers of forensic patients to be decided by the tribunal.

This bill is part of the government's commitment to improving mental health services in this state. The government has committed to deliver new youth residential rehabilitation facilities and self-contained residential family accommodation in Townsville. Following a number of tragic events in 2014, this government has also commenced a statewide clinical review to examine mental health sentinel events and make recommendations to improve the system.

Further, the Queensland Mental Health Drug and Alcohol Strategic Plan 2014-2019, which was developed by the Queensland Mental Health Commission, commits the Department of Health to develop a new mental health drug and alcohol services plan. Consultation and work on the services plan has commenced and will take into account the government priorities, the principles and directions established in the commissioner's plan, and relevant quality and service standards. These initiatives, together with the Mental Health Bill 2015, will support the mental health sector to deliver services that support patient rights and deliver evidence based clinical practice.

I note that the previous LNP government introduced the Mental Health Bill 2014, which did not pass prior to the dissolution of the last parliament. Although there are important differences in the approach of this bill, the bills have many reform directions in common. In a spirit of bipartisanship, I commend the opposition for their support of these reforms. I commend the bill to the House.

### First Reading

**Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (3.14 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

### Referral to the Health and Ambulance Services Committee

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

### Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date

**Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (3.14 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That, under the provisions of standing order 136, the Health and Ambulance Services Committee report to the House on the Mental Health Bill 2015 and the Mental Health (Recovery Model) Bill by 24 November 2015.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

## RELATIONSHIPS (CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS) AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

### Introduction

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (3.15 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Relationships Act 2011, the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 2003, the Corrective Services Act 2006, the Duties Act 2001, the Succession Act 1981 and the acts mentioned in the schedule for particular purposes. I table the bill and explanatory notes. I nominate the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee to consider the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Relationships (Civil Partnerships) and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2015 [[1128](#)].

*Tabled paper:* Relationships (Civil Partnerships) and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2015, explanatory notes [[1129](#)].

This bill amends the Relationships Act 2011 and the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 2003 to deliver on the government's election commitment to provide couples of any gender with the option of participating in an official civil ceremony prior to having their relationships registered. The bill makes related and consequential amendments to a number of other acts. The bill also includes a number of amendments to the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 2003 to provide recognition of electronic records and support the transition to a digitised registration service.

In Queensland, under the Relationships Act 2011 couples of any gender can obtain legal recognition of their relationship through registration of the relationship with the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages. This legal recognition is important not only because it means that a couple no longer has to prove that they are in a de facto relationship to access a range of state and

Commonwealth government entitlements but also because it acknowledges the importance of those relationships and that they are deserving of acknowledgement. However, as we all know, for many people there is more to acknowledging a relationship than assigning it a particular legal status. It is about making a formal commitment to our significant other in front of our loved ones and celebrating the love and value we bring to each other's lives. When the Civil Partnership Act 2011 commenced, not only did it introduce the relationship registration process but also it provided couples with the opportunity to participate in an official ceremony prior to registering their relationship as a civil partnership. However, in 2012 the former LNP government removed those civil partnership ceremony provisions from the act, renamed the act the Relationships Act and changed terminology so that relationships would no longer be recognised as civil partnerships but as registered relationships.

This government has committed to restoring the civil partnership ceremony provisions in the act to ensure that couples of any gender can participate in an official ceremony as part of the process of forming a civil partnership. We acknowledge there is both strong support and opposition from sections of the public in relation to this bill. We have listened to the range of perspectives through consultation on the proposed changes with marriage celebrant associations; lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex organisations; and religious and family groups. The intention of this bill is not to replicate or devalue marriage. However, the bill provides couples who are not married with an opportunity to hold an official ceremony to acknowledge and celebrate their commitment. That is because those ceremonies hold meaning for many of us, including those people in same-sex relationships. These amendments are about doing what is fair and supporting the equality and dignity of all Queenslanders.

Firstly, the bill reinstates provisions into the Relationships Act 2011 to provide a couple with a choice of entering into a civil partnership by making a declaration of civil partnership—that is, the civil ceremony—prior to having their relationship registered. Couples will also have the option of registering their relationship under the act without holding a civil ceremony.

The bill also restores the title and key terminology of the Civil Partnership Act 2011. Couples will register civil partnerships rather than registered relationships. Couples will be civil partners rather than registered partners. These terminology changes are important as they signal a recognition of a couple's commitment to each other rather than just the administrative process of registration.

The bill restores the provisions that applied under the Civil Partnerships Act 2011 that governed a civil ceremony. The bill allows two persons, after they have provided notice in the approved form of their intention to the civil partnership notary, to make a declaration in the presence of a registered civil partnership notary and at least one adult witness. However, the bill does not prevent couples from making their own arrangements for a ceremony outside of the framework in the bill and then choosing to register their relationship as a civil partnership. The bill provides for the registration of civil partnership notaries, including setting out eligibility criteria for a notary. The Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages must be satisfied that an applicant is appropriately qualified and suitable to be a notary.

Given the skill set of marriage celebrants and the robust regulatory scheme applying to marriage celebrants, the bill provides that where a registered marriage celebrant under the Commonwealth Marriage Act 1961 applies to be a notary the celebrant will be registered as a notary without assessment of eligibility by the registrar upon payment of the application fee. This proposal will minimise cost and time impacts for applicants who are marriage celebrants and also for the registrar, while maintaining the standard of notaries.

Unlike the Civil Partnerships Act 2011, the bill requires civil partnership notaries to pay an annual registration fee to maintain registration and at this time to provide an annual return updating their eligibility information. The fee will cover the costs of administering the notary registration scheme and the annual return will help the registrar determine if the person should continue to be registered as a notary.

The bill reinstates provisions in the Civil Partnerships Act 2011 for the cancellation of a notary's registration through a show cause process. The bill will also mirror the offences that applied under the Civil Partnerships Act 2011 to uphold the integrity and community regard of the civil partnership ceremonies.

The bill provides for decisions by the registrar: to refuse to register a relationship following a civil partnership ceremony; to refuse to register a person as a notary; or to cancel the registration of a notary. All these decisions are reviewable by the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

The bill also makes other amendments to the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 2003 to provide recognition of electronic records and support the transition to a digitised registration service. These amendments will: promote the use of electronic lodgement services by requiring hospitals to

lodge birth notices and funeral directors to lodge death registration applications electronically, with limited exceptions; support greater accessibility to information through the use of online channels by clarifying how individuals and entities can be provided information electronically under the act; and provide that the same legal status applies to digitised copies of source documents relating to the registration of a life event as the original paper versions.

This bill delivers on the government's commitment to restore civil partnership ceremonies. These changes are about the acceptance and recognition of the value in the relationships of all couples, regardless of gender. These amendments are quite small but they mean so much to so many couples in our community. I commend the bill to the House.

### First Reading

**Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (3.23 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

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

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

### Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date

**Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (3.24 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That, under the provisions of standing order 131, the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee report to the House on the Relationships (Civil Partnerships) and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2015 by 17 November 2015.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (NO. 2)

### Introduction

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade) (3.24 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the City of Brisbane Act 2010, the Local Government Act 2009, the Local Government Electoral Act 2011, the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) Act 2009 and the Sustainable Planning Act 2009 for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee to consider the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Local Government and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2015 [\[1130\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Local Government and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2015, explanatory notes [\[1131\]](#).

I am pleased to introduce into the House today the Local Government and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2015. The bill proposes several amendments to the Sustainable Planning Act 2009. Firstly, the bill provides for a local government to seek an extension of time to complete its local government infrastructure plan. Earlier this year, I foreshadowed the proposed extension of time in the *Better planning for Queensland* directions paper. This government recognises the critical role of local government in implementing the planning reforms to ensure they are delivered smoothly. This will have an impact on their resources.

To support local government in planning reform, one of our priorities is to extend the current statutory time frame for the making of a local government infrastructure plan. A local government infrastructure plan is that part of the planning scheme that identifies the local government's plans for

infrastructure that are necessary to service development in a coordinated, efficient and financially sustainable manner, and at the desired standard of service. Infrastructure in a local government infrastructure plan may only include infrastructure for water supply, sewerage, stormwater, local transport or public parks and land for community facilities, commonly referred to as trunk infrastructure.

The infrastructure planning and charges framework under the Sustainable Planning Act provides for local governments to levy infrastructure charges when approving development. This enables them to recover some of the costs of delivering infrastructure that are necessary to support development. Local government infrastructure plans are important instruments to support the process to deal with development applications and approvals. Through a prescribed preparation process, it presents information about necessary infrastructure in a transparent and consistent way.

The new framework, that commenced under the previous Labor government, and was finally implemented last year, provides a more level playing field between local governments and developers by clarifying the charges and conditions local government can impose on development. The objectives of the new framework include certainty, transparency and fairness while supporting local government financial sustainability and development feasibility.

After 30 June 2016 local governments will not be able to levy infrastructure charges if they do not have an infrastructure plan in place. Local governments that do not intend to levy infrastructure charges are not required to prepare an infrastructure plan.

To support local governments in implementing this aspect of planning reform, we are taking the necessary steps to introduce amendments to the Sustainable Planning Act 2009 to extend the deadline up to 1 July 2018, with extensions to be considered on a case-by-case basis. Local governments will, by resolution, have to submit a request to me with supporting information outlining the steps they intend to take to prepare the required infrastructure plan, time frames and the necessary resources. The purpose of the process is to ensure that both councillors and staff are aware of the final deadline and are committed to complete their local government infrastructure plan by that date.

Without this amendment, local governments will not be able to impose infrastructure charges on a development approval after 30 June 2016. The proposed amendment has no impact on those local governments with a local government infrastructure plan in place by 30 June 2016.

The bill also amends the Sustainable Planning Act 2009 and the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) Act 2009, also known as the South-East Queensland Water Act. In July 2014, a new water and sewerage connection approval process was introduced. Under the new process, water and sewerage matters of a development are assessed and approved under the South-East Queensland Water Act by distributor-retailers for the local government areas of Brisbane, Ipswich, Somerset, Scenic Rim, Lockyer Valley, Moreton Bay, Sunshine Coast and Noosa.

To ensure infrastructure charging for water and sewerage matters are kept transparent and consistent with the infrastructure charging framework for all other aspects of development, the Sustainable Planning Act provisions were mirrored in the South-East Queensland water act. The proposed amendments enable applicants for a development approval and water connection approval to advise the local government or the distributor-retailer that they are not seeking information about an offset or refund in an infrastructure charges notice.

The Sustainable Planning Act and the South-East Queensland water act outline the information a local government and a distributor-retailer is required to include in an infrastructure charges notice, which is issued when it approves a development or connections application. This information is required to ensure that the developer has a clear understanding of how the charge has been calculated and whether an offset or refund has been taken into consideration for any trunk infrastructure the developer has been conditioned to provide by either the local government or the distributor-retailer.

The information enables a developer to consider whether to negotiate or appeal the amount of the offset or refund allowed by the local government or the distributor-retailer. This has been effective in encouraging local governments and distributor-retailers to take proper account of the trunk infrastructure being delivered by the developer when the local government or the distributor-retailer determines the appropriate charge.

It has also provided certainty to applicants in relation to the value of their contribution to the cost of providing the trunk infrastructure. While this provision supports certainty and transparency at the approval stage, it can take some time to do the necessary analysis to determine the costs of required infrastructure. If a significant refund is involved, it may require budget considerations and, for a local government, a council resolution—which can take up more time and delay development approval.

For this reason, the bill includes amendments to allow developers to indicate to a local government or distributor-retailers their preference to receive an infrastructure charges notice without offset and refund information. This arrangement will allow for those applicants who are either unconcerned about the prospect of an offset or refund or are prepared to receive this information at a later time, and will allow for a speedier development approval.

In addition, the bill amends the City of Brisbane Act 2010 and the Local Government Act 2009 to enable local governments to make accepted how-to-vote cards available for public inspection in the local government's public office during the caretaker period for a local government election. Under the Local Government Electoral Act 2011, the Electoral Commission is responsible for accepting or rejecting how-to-vote cards. The Electoral Commission will only accept a card if satisfied that the card is unlikely to mislead or deceive an elector in voting and if the card complies with administrative requirements.

The same scrutiny is applied to how-to-vote cards used in state elections. The Electoral Act 1992 requires the Electoral Commission, or the returning officer, to accept how-to-vote cards before the cards are made available to the public. Before polling day, the Local Government Electoral Act requires a returning officer to ensure how-to-vote cards are available for public inspection at the place of nomination, the local government's public office—if not also the place of nomination—and on the Electoral Commission's website. Without amendment, however, the City of Brisbane Act and the Local Government Act prohibit a local government from publishing or distributing accepted how-to-vote cards during the caretaker period, inconsistent with the Local Government Electoral Act.

The government made a promise to the people of Queensland before the state election that local government elections are to be run to the same high standards of independence and efficiency as state elections. The amendments to the City of Brisbane Act and the Local Government Act align local government how-to-vote card electoral laws with state electoral laws and provide certainty in this respect for local governments leading into the 2016 quadrennial local government elections to be held on 19 March 2016.

Finally, a minor amendment is proposed to the Local Government Electoral Act 2011 to remove an obsolete reference to mayoral first-past-the-post voting. The amendment is machinery in nature and is required as a consequence of the change on 1 January 2015 to the system of voting for mayors in undivided local governments from first past the post to optional preferential voting. I commend the bill to the House.

### **First Reading**

**Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade) (3.34 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

### **Referral to the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee**

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

### **Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date**

**Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade) (3.34 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That, under the provisions of standing order 136, the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee report to the House on the Local Government and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) by 2 November 2015.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT****Moreton Bay Rail Project, Independent Hydraulic Review**

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade) (3.34 pm): The extreme weather event experienced in South-East Queensland on 1 May 2015 was unprecedented and severe. More than 300 millimetres of rain fell within three hours, making it akin to a one-in-1,000-year flood event. To put that into perspective, the rain event triggered by Cyclone Marcia in February 2015 which caused devastation in Central Queensland was estimated to have been slightly larger than a one-in-50-year event. No-one could have predicted the severity of the storm. Immediately following the event, concerns were raised by residents in the Moreton Bay Rail Project area that the project may have impacted on flood levels in the area. This government listened and we took immediate action.

We commissioned Snowy Mountain Engineering Corporation, SMEC, to undertake an independent hydraulic review to investigate if the project works had an impact on flood levels. The government has now received the report from SMEC and has made it publicly available on the Moreton Bay project website. I table a copy of the report for the benefit of the House.

*Tabled paper.* Report, dated 7 August 2015, titled 'Moreton Bay Rail Project—Independent Hydraulic Review', prepared for the Department of Transport and Main Roads by SMEC Australia Pty Ltd [[1132](#)].

The SMEC report found—

Afflux calculated by comparing resulting water levels from the existing base and developed conditions indicate the MBR project works increased the flood levels upstream of project works within the Saltwater Creek catchment during the 1st May 2015 event. The magnitude of the increase varies depending on the location within the catchment and are summarised below:

- There was no increase in flood levels upstream of Greene Street, Rothwell including Major Street and properties further upstream;
- There was an afflux affecting properties at and near Mary Street, Mango Hill. The water level observed was approximately 4.2 mAHD and of this 35 mm can be attributed to the MBR Project;
- There was an afflux affecting properties in McGahey Street, Rothwell. The water level observed was approximately 3.92 mAHD and of this 90-100 mm can be attributed to the MBR Project;
- There was an afflux affecting properties at Anzac Avenue, Rothwell. The water level observed was approximately 3.91 mAHD and of this 90-105 mm can be attributed to the MBR Project;

We have set up a dedicated phone number—1800823133—for anyone seeking further information on the report. This government listened to the people of South-East Queensland. We commissioned an independent hydraulic review to ensure that integrity and transparency was maintained in the delivery of this very important project for the Moreton Bay region.

**WORKERS' COMPENSATION AND REHABILITATION AND OTHER  
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

**WORKERS' COMPENSATION AND REHABILITATION (PROTECTING  
FIREFIGHTERS) AMENDMENT BILL**

**Second Reading (Cognate Debate)**

Resumed from p. 1999.

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (3.38 pm), continuing: As I said before, I am disappointed that in this debate members opposite have used words such as 'discriminatory' and 'discrimination' and have said things like, 'You hate firefighters,' when we on this side support firefighters and especially volunteer firefighters.

This bill restores the right of those injured to seek compensation where their injury would be less than five per cent loss of capacity. In the case of a firefighter, that could mean that they could be injured while saving the lives of others. They might lose less than five per cent capacity but they would not be able to continue to serve as a firefighter. In effect, they would lose their chosen career in the Public

Service. If I were of a similar mind to those opposite, I might indignantly claim of the LNP: why do they hate firefighters? But I know they do not hate firefighters, and I would not say that because it would lower the tone of this debate. But on this they are wrong in that they are not supporting firefighters who take risks to ensure the safety of others and the safety of property.

This is serious for me. As the Labor candidate in the 2014 election campaign I went door to door in Heritage Park and met a man who had served as a Queensland firefighter for over 20 years. I thanked him for his public service and asked what it was like to be a firefighter. We talked of the science that made him more likely than me to develop a range of cancers because of his service. I made a pledge to him to support the research and science and to change the law to recognise the presumption of causation of a range of cancers to support firefighters. Today I honour that pledge. I stand with firefighters, not just opportunistically for political gain. I will return to that house to thank him again and tell him that a promise made on the streets of Heritage Park was delivered in the Queensland parliament on this day. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Albert—LNP) (3.40 pm): I rise to speak to the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation (Protecting Firefighters) Amendment Bill 2015. First, I thank the committee in terms of supporting the Rural Fire Service. I thank the member for Kawana for his unwavering support of rural fire members.

I am proud of each and every rural fire unit in the Albert electorate. The Albert electorate is home to the northern Darlington Range, a very picturesque part of the Gold Coast. It is a place where families choose to live in a more private, rural atmosphere. There are a number of lucky individuals in the hilltops who have spectacular views to North Stradbroke and to the New South Wales border. It is certainly a place of natural beauty. While it is peaceful and tranquil, we all know that for local residents it can turn very deadly.

The Rural Fire Service volunteers give up their time and put their lives on the line to help others. They ask for so little. All they want back is a little respect. At numerous fairs, community and school events throughout the Albert electorate they educate residents about the dangers of fires and about preparation techniques. These men and women make themselves available to discuss issues or to offer services in terms of pre-emptive fire reduction burns, which help reduce fuel load in local bushland and which certainly help protect our environment from intense summer fires. There are members like Brett, Lewis, Wayne, Andy, Karen, Matthew and Peter, just to name a few, and our first officers Paul Graham, Bevan Love and Col Veivers. I could talk all night about these members and about their passion for our community. They are part of the Ormeau Rural Fire Brigade, the Cedar Creek Wolffdene Rural Fire Brigade and the Coomera Valley Rural Fire Brigade.

In times of need, these members rally in numbers and put themselves on the front line to protect our homes. The stories I hear from residents about their amazing work are truly uplifting. They are exceptionally professional in their conduct and demonstrate exceptional skills. I refer to their efforts in places like Timberview, at the base of Mount Tamborine. Many locals voice their accolades in terms of their swiftness of response and their competency in dealing with the bushfire situation. It is not just about bushfires, as many times they help with Queensland floods. These individuals stand united to volunteer their services during these flood events—cleaning houses, removing debris and assisting those in need.

**Mr Costigan:** Motor vehicle accidents?

**Mr BOOTHMAN:** Yes, motor vehicle accidents. Every time there is a flood event in the Albert electorate, to ensure safety they are the first people to put up the signs warning motorists that a road ahead is flooded.

I am very proud that my fellow LNP colleagues so vigorously opposed the 150-incident prerequisite proposed by the government for volunteer units. All firefighters, volunteer or not, must be treated equally if they are diagnosed with one of the 12 specific diseases within the required qualifying period. Depending on the disease, the minimum number of years ranges from five to 25. To be eligible under the government's original proposal, volunteers had to participate in 150 exposure events. Some of my volunteers would average attendance at about five fires a year as they have families, other commitments, businesses and work. It could potentially take 30 years to reach the 150 figure. This discriminated against the 37,000 Rural Fire Service volunteers. Cancer does not discriminate on the basis of the colour of one's uniform or whether people are paid or volunteer.

Our rural firefighters attend bushfires and do not know what is lying in the bush. It could be a dumping ground for those who have little respect for our laws and our environment. In a recent discussion, local quarry managers highlighted the amount of illegal dumping in the back country in my electorate. While the quarries and the local council do their best to ensure this vile mess is cleaned up, some individuals flout the law, do not care and will dump anything they like.

A rural firefighter said to me, 'Mark, imagine a fire roaring towards us. We do not know what is in the undergrowth. There could be dumped tyres. We will be covered in these toxins and potentially be forced to breathe them in. We do not know what is out there in the bush.' As I said, there could be tyres and toxins. As we all know, tyres are highly toxic when on fire.

We all have seen the horrible, soul-destroying effects of cancer. Everybody in this chamber knows somebody who has suffered this horrible disease. These exceptionally good and highly trained individuals give up a huge amount of their time and their lives training to harness their skills to become very proficient in dealing with bushfires.

My community holds these individuals in such high regard. This summer fire season is predicted to be very busy because of the El Nino effect. I ask residents to take pre-emptive action, to clear away combustible materials such as branches from their houses, to do everything they can and, most importantly, to ensure that their driveways are safe to traverse in the case of emergency. People should not forget that Rural Fire Service trucks must traverse these driveways and firefighters do not want to be put in dangerous situations. I ask residents please to take that action. Importantly, people should ensure they have a fire evacuation plan and discuss it with their family.

 **Mr de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (3.49 pm): I rise to speak on the Palaszczuk government's action on restoring fairness in Queensland workplaces as the rollout of a comprehensive raft of industrial relations reforms continues. These laws will deliver greater fairness to the state's workers, including firefighters. Queenslanders spoke with determination when their important common law rights were so callously stripped. I pay tribute to the brave Queenslanders who over the last 3½ years told their story on this issue, who fronted the media, who took the stage at protest rallies on the street outside this building and who appeared in billboards and in advertisements.

I was reminded of these brave young Queenslanders when, in undertaking some research, I found a story in the *Queensland Times* titled 'Injured electrician warns against compo payout cutbacks'. This is a story about an electrician named Nathan Sandy. His story is that he survived only by virtue of a miracle a terrible workplace accident that nearly cut his body in half—only to then find he did not meet the former government's unfair, arbitrary, poorly-thought-out and callous thresholds. Nathan was reported in the *Queensland Times* as saying that he thought the Queensland workers compensation scheme before the Newman government amended it 'works really well'. But if you think he was happy about the fact that he was injured, of course he was not. He also said in the article, 'I'd rather have my old life and my old body back any day.'

Make no mistake—these amendments introduced in the middle of the night by the former attorney-general, the member for Kawana, played a huge role in bringing down his own government. The system was working beautifully in 2013 on all financial measures. What was most offensive about the former attorney-general's act of legislative vandalism was how he dishonestly sought to characterise the common law threshold as minor tinkering, when WorkCover's own data showed it would knock out around half of the claims—claims for men and women like Nathan Sandy and tens of thousands of other Queenslanders.

We know that Queenslanders will not let people like Nathan down, nor will they let down nearly 100,000 other workers who suffer compensable injuries each year. We know that the former government is history and that this government is taking action to reverse the damage it inflicted. Firefighters stood side by side with Nathan to call for an end to the former LNP government. Fortunately, the public listened. As a result, we now move amendments that deliver nation-leading legislation that makes it easier for brave Queensland firefighters to access compensation for work related cancers.

These reforms are not just for electricians like Nathan or for our brave firefighters. In my community, they benefit the 25,500 employed persons within the electorate of Springwood. But it is more than that. Working people are fathers, mothers, sons and daughters; they are friends and family; they are mates. When Springwood locals and Queenslanders far and wide voted for a change of government earlier this year, they were not just thinking about their husband, their wife or their child walking out the door on their way to work; they were thinking about bringing them home safely as well.

That is why the laws that the previous government rammed through this House with complete and utter disregard for those mums and dads, sons and daughters, must be overturned and fairness must be restored.

I want to spend a few moments in particular discussing the provisions relating to section 36A applying to firefighters. The deemed disease provisions are important and effective protections. The objective of the former attorney-general's private member's bill is the same as the government's bill and both bills propose deemed disease coverage for the same 12 specified cancers. However, the private member's bill fails in its policy intention to assist those who are currently having difficulty in proving their latent onset cancers are related to their past work as firefighters. There are significant concerns that the deeming provision in the private member's bill will not provide certainty of coverage for exposure prior to the commencement of the amendments, and that if you are incapacitated prior to the commencement of the amendments but diagnosed after you may not be subject to deeming provisions.

The Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003 includes specific provisions for establishing the date of injury for latent onset diseases such as cancer. Section 36A of the act is designed to ensure that an injured worker's compensation benefits for a latent onset injury are calculated based on the date a person is diagnosed with a disease. However, the question of whether a person is a worker and whether they have a work related injury must be decided under the act in force at the time the injury was actually sustained. This may, for example, be under the Workers' Compensation Act 1916.

In comparison to the member for Kawana's bill, our bill is considered, it is measured and it is effective. Clause 17 amends the act to ensure that the deeming provisions apply to determining whether an eligible firefighter has sustained an injury—not the definition of injury that existed at the time the injury was actually sustained. Without this amendment, an insurer will be forced to determine if the cancer was a work related injury at the time the worker actually attended the exposure incidents. The firefighter will then be required to submit proof that their cancer was a result of their employment. As you can see, this amendment of section 36A is essential to ensuring the operation of the deeming disease provisions for current and former firefighters.

The private member's bill does not make any change to section 36A of the act. It is uncertain how these deeming provisions will interact with section 36A of the act. Under the private member's bill where a firefighter is exposed to smoke and other substances prior to the commencement of the amendments, section 36A could nullify the operation of the deeming provisions for that firefighter. This places considerable doubt on the number of firefighters who will benefit from those provisions.

In addition, under the private member's bill, a person contracts a disease when they are first diagnosed, they become totally or partially incapacitated or they die, depending on which occurs first. It is possible that a firefighter with a specified cancer may become partially incapacitated because of the disease prior to them being diagnosed. This means that it is possible that a firefighter with a specified cancer that has not yet been diagnosed may be excluded from accessing the deemed disease entitlement because they have become incapacitated prior to the commencement of the amendments. As a consequence of rushing to get this bill before parliament, the private member's bill once again has been poorly conceived and drafted.

The private member's bill, if passed, will not deliver the benefits that Queensland firefighters rightfully expect it to deliver and that the member for Kawana claims it will deliver. This bill will see firefighters who have one of these insidious cancers denied swift access to workers compensation. Once again, the private member's bill is flawed and is a fraud. Instead, I commend the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill to the House and I encourage those opposite to stand up for injured workers.

It will be this Labor government that will restore the rights of these workers. In contrast, what we saw from those opposite was an abuse of trust. You let Nathan down and you let Queensland down. You even let down your own committee when it advised against the worst of your amendments. Look around, members of the opposition. When you are hoodwinked into making workplaces unsafe, you get punished. However, the Palaszczuk Labor government has a mandate on workplace safety and the restoration of workers compensation. You did not have a mandate—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Furner): Order! Member for Springwood, can you direct your comments through the chair, please.

**Mr de BRENNI:** The opposition did not have a mandate, nor an excuse, nor any imperative to introduce the reforms they did. We on this side of the House will restore the public's trust in government. I welcome this bill from the Minister for Industrial Relations and I commend it to the House.

 **Mr COSTIGAN** (Whitsunday—LNP) (4.36 pm): I rise this afternoon to make a contribution on the cognate debate in relation to the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, especially on behalf of our hardworking volunteer rural firefighters right across the state of Queensland but particularly in my own electorate and my beloved patch of Whitsunday. There is no doubt that everyone in this chamber would have great respect for our rural firefighters. As recently as last week or so—and I look to the member for Hinchinbrook here—we saw firefighters at Bluewater in his electorate of Hinchinbrook putting their lives on the line, protecting property and potentially saving lives. I believe there was a shed destroyed in that blaze at Bluewater. It was certainly big news across the city of Townsville and the electorate of Hinchinbrook.

**Mr Cripps:** There were evacuations.

**Mr COSTIGAN:** I take the interjection from the member for Hinchinbrook. The gravity of the situation was underlined by the fact that there were evacuations with that fire; it was certainly frontpage news, as I recall. We commend those rural firefighters—those fine upstanding men and women who answered the call in the hour of need for those people of Bluewater and the surrounding communities. The story is no different to many other communities around the state of Queensland.

I myself can relate to the worry and the dread of having one's home gutted by bushfire. Some years ago I was living in New South Wales where the fires are very different to other jurisdictions. I will always remember the look on the face of the rural fire commissioner, Phil Koperberg, who went on to serve the Labor Party in the New South Wales parliament, but at that stage he was leading his men. I will always be grateful for the *Georgia Peach*, which was the sister ship to the *Elvis*, the Erickson Air-Crane which dumped water on our property and neighbouring properties. That saved our property but unfortunately did not save a couple of properties in the neighbourhood. Nevertheless, no matter the jurisdiction, no matter the community, this nation and this state have a great tradition and a great record when it comes to our rural fire brigades and long may that continue.

Unfortunately, regrettably the rural fireys in this state were the ones being left like a shag on a rock under the legislation introduced by this unions-loving, pro-Greens, superannuation-sucking, accidental Labor government. Let us not forget that the original plan centred around that crazy quota system which meant our rural fireys had to attend a whopping 150 fires a year and prove it in order to qualify for a potential cancer related workers compensation claim. Put simply, it was discrimination. The men and women in those yellow trucks were discriminated against because of the colour of their truck.

**Mr Rickuss:** There were only 30,000 of them!

**Mr COSTIGAN:** That is right: there were only 30,000-odd of them! Talk about picking a fight! That is why they rose up under the presidency of Alan Gillespie, and I will come to that in a moment.

We come back to the colour of the truck. If it was red like members opposite, they were okay, no worries. But if it was yellow, they were treated like lepers. In today's world we do not tolerate racial discrimination. In today's world we do not tolerate sex discrimination or any discrimination. So why should we stand by and cop discrimination against rural firefighters who are volunteers and community minded people and pit them against non-rural fireys? The colour of the truck should be completely irrelevant. That is why I was relieved to see the relevant committee and its members, government and non-government, recommend that the quota be dumped. In fact, as we heard earlier in this debate, the committee chair the member for Bulimba said it all when she told the *Sunshine Coast Daily* on 9 September 2015—

... we did not receive enough evidence to actually justify the threshold of the 150 and a significant problem is record keeping.

There you go, a Labor MP running the show and effectively saying that her government colleagues had got it wrong and something obviously had to be done. Where was the Minister for Emergency Services while all this was playing out? She certainly was not up in my electorate—

**Miss Barton:** Running her protection racket.

**Mr COSTIGAN:** She was hiding somewhere. She had the camouflage gear on maybe at Canungra, maybe up at High Range west of Townsville with the diggers. Who knows? But she was not listening to the concerns of rural firefighters anywhere—certainly from my point of view, and I suspect I am not alone in that regard. I myself certainly heard what rural fireys had to say. In fact, I caught up with many of them in recent weeks at various community events including at the Seaforth Car Show in my electorate. I even hopped in the so-called 'Little Squirt'—and a couple of members opposite come to mind. It was a big hit with the kids, including the big kids.

These fireys all do a magnificent job. I want to take the opportunity to heap some praise on each and every one of them in my electorate: the various brigades in Whitsunday. I speak of the likes of Dumbleton, Seaforth Town, Seaforth District, Halliday Bay/Ball Bay, Habana, Bloomsbury, Conway, Gloucester, Cannon Valley and on it goes. They all do a fantastic job in serving our local communities, saving lives and protecting the community.

I have to say that the Labor member for Mackay had a hide getting up in this place last night and having a go at us when it was her mob, the red army, that was on a mission to deny rural fireys in Queensland the same level of workers compensation if they contract one of those 12 cancers in the line of duty. I suggest to the member for Mackay that she stays in her own electorate, especially after her previous visit to Whitsunday which was in a rural setting. I recall on that occasion that she came out to the canefields of Kuttabal, which is served magnificently by the Mount Blackwood Rural Fire Brigade. Wally Giumelli, the Pernas and the Sommerfelds all do a marvellous job. The member for Mackay came out to the opening of a new tourist venture. She was driving along, had no idea and missed the turn-off. Then after she arrived for the official opening she bemoaned the fact that she had come all this way out of town. She had no idea.

**Mrs GILBERT:** I rise to a point of order. He is being offensive now. I was invited to an event, which I went to. He needs to withdraw.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Furner): Order! There is no point of order.

**Mrs GILBERT:** I have taken personal offensive at what he just said about that event.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I will ask the member for Whitsunday to withdraw the offensive comments.

**Mr COSTIGAN:** Mr Speaker, I am more than happy to withdraw. I certainly remember what happened that day. I have to say the likes of Mr Giumelli, Mr Perna and Mr Sommerfeld are not geographically challenged. They know what happens in that part of my electorate of Whitsunday. I salute them along with everyone who has been associated with rural fire brigades in the Whitsunday. I speak of people like John Byrne up at Seaforth. I had the pleasure of working with John's brother many, many years ago. I remember meeting him for the first time some years ago. Sadly, John lost his wife not that long ago. It is pleasing from my point of view and that of so many people in the Seaforth community that he has continued to play a significant role with the local brigade at Seaforth Town. Well done, John.

Likewise, there are other community minded people like Dwayne Shea at Seaforth district, Gary Considine at Bloomsbury, Bob Jamieson at Gloucester, Kerry Dunk at Cannon Valley—and I wish the brigade all the best for getting their shed finally up and running at Cannon Valley. Strategically, for those people who are not familiar with the Whitsundays, it is located about halfway between Airlie Beach and Proserpine. So that is a significant development and we look forward to that shed being erected. There is also Graham Andrew, who is part of a very respected family at Dumbleton to the north of Mackay, and on it goes.

I am proud to support them and their brigades, unlike this government that was going to discriminate against them until the LNP came along, working alongside the Rural Fire Brigades Association of Queensland under the leadership of Alan Gillespie. I say well done to Mr Gillespie, well done to the General Manager, Justin Choveaux, well done—as the member for Lockyer alluded to—to the 35,000-plus rural fireys across the state who said no to Labor's original plan to treat them like lepers. Shame on Labor.

At the same time it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the sterling efforts of the member for Kawana in this debate and my fellow LNP colleagues who rolled up their sleeves to stand up for rural fireys. To all those volunteers I say thank you. I say thank you for your dedication. I say thank you for your commitment to the community. Thank you for saving lives and protecting property. We are most grateful indeed.

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (4.07 pm), in reply: I thank honourable members for the contributions to the debate yesterday, late into this morning and then the sterling effort from the member for Whitsunday, who has just rounded off the debate. I think it is quite telling in this cognate debate that we are debating both the firefighters protection legislation, which is the private member's bill, and the government's workers compensation bill. Listening to the debate, I think there has been quite a compare and contrast between the LNP's provisions and our stance on a few things like protecting employers

from the heightened costs of workers compensation, which will inevitably happen—and the CCIQ have confirmed that—and also our view that we treat all firefighters, rural or otherwise, in Queensland with the same dignity and respect.

The debate with respect to some of the members opposite has been quite shameful. I heard people saying today that the LNP was accusing people of hating rural firefighters and all of that sort of thing. The simple reality is that, when the government introduces legislation into this place saying that if people contract cancer not only do they have to prove 150 fire events but they also have to provide evidence of the 150 fires and it has to say that to a man or woman who potentially is dying of cancer, that is pretty upsetting. That is pretty much a slap in the face to rural firefighters in Queensland as opposed to other provisions under which urban firefighters and auxiliary firefighters quite rightly are entitled to the workers compensation provisions. As we indicated, this workers compensation applies at the moment, but the burden is on the firefighter to prove that the cancer was contracted during the course of the employment. This presumptive legislation changes that. I am proud that the LNP government was the first government in Queensland to introduce presumptive legislation for firefighters.

The way I see this eventuating is that the government bill will get up with their amendments and the LNP bill will fall, but let it be known—and the record will show—that the LNP were the first government in Queensland to introduce presumptive legislation for all firefighters: auxiliary, full-time, part-time, urban, rural and volunteer.

We also dealt with the issue of the workers compensation changes. As I indicated, the LNP opposition will be opposing those changes and standing up for the changes that we made in 2013, which saved businesses across Queensland on average 17 per cent in workers compensation. The government's bill is an attack on employers in this state and it is an attack on small business. The conversations that I am advised have taken place today with the likes of CCIQ and other people clearly indicate that the government have not listened to small business and the peak advocacy group. I want to pay tribute to the CCIQ, who continually stand up for the rights of their members, because we know that the economy in Queensland is driven by small business.

All of our electorates have small, medium and large enterprises, but the majority are small businesses which keep the cogs moving and the oil flowing in the economic machine. I pay tribute to all of our small businesses. We will be opposing the government's bill because it will increase workers compensation—maybe not next week, the week after or next year—but inevitably workers compensation will increase as a result of these changes and the government will stand condemned. The Treasurer will stand up in a few minutes and say that they have listened to the community and they have listened to everyone. Well, they have not because the CCIQ do not want the bill passed, and if they listened to the peak business group in Queensland they would not be passing the legislation. In a few minutes when the Treasurer stands up and says, 'We are a new type of government. We are consulting and we are listening,' he will be waxing lyrical. There may have been a bit of consultation, but there has not been much listening to the business community. Unions and other self-interest groups will make a lot of money out of the changes that are about to be put forward through the House.

I want to thank my colleagues, particularly the LNP, for sticking up for rural firefighters, volunteers in this state and small business, which creates jobs and opportunities for young Queenslanders. We will be opposing the government's legislation with respect to the workers compensation changes, particularly the Commonwealth threshold.

I would encourage those members opposite to support the LNP opposition bill on rural firefighters and presumptive legislation for all firefighters, because that is by far the fairest way to achieve the policy objective. Tomorrow when government members go back to their electorates they will be talking to rural firefighters who will say, 'But wasn't the government the one that had the 150 fire events?' They will claim, 'No. It will be wiped off because of an amendment the Treasurer is about to move.' But we will keep reminding people that it did contain discriminatory legislation—150 fire events for rural firefighters—and they cannot wipe it off the bill that was introduced into the House originally. I do not know how a member of parliament, particularly the Treasurer, could have ever contemplated introducing legislation into this place which says that, if you have cancer, your life is worth more than someone who drives a yellow truck, a rural firefighter—

**Mr Pitt** interjected.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I take the interjection from the Treasurer, who says that is not the case. I did not introduce legislation with 150 fire events. I did not introduce discriminatory legislation. I introduced legislation that defined a firefighter as all types of firefighters. It is clearly the case that the Labor government discriminate and want to destroy small businesses.

In a few years time, when WorkCover realise that the changes that are made tonight will blow out the cost to workers compensation, we will have a debate here. Businesses will start complaining to their local members, and the Labor Party will come in here and concoct some story that somehow it had something to do with the LNP government from 2012-15, not recognising the fact that it had everything to do with what they are about to vote on tonight. Good luck to the Labor members when they go back to their communities tomorrow and talk to their businesses, particularly the member for Pine Rivers—

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I take the interjection. I talked about the postcard because the member for Pine Rivers said that all of the small businesses in her electorate love her. I have to say that even though we finished at 2 am last night I did not get any sleep because I was contemplating what sort of mind-boggling artwork I would have on the postcard I am going to send to that electorate. The member for Pine Rivers says that businesses love her so much, but do they know that tonight she voted to increase their workers compensation premiums by 20 per cent? Do they know that those opposite stopped the payroll tax threshold increase?

In terms of sticking up for small business, there is plenty of rhetoric out there from the Labor government but not much action. I know that they will go out into their electorates and spin it. They will say that it is not going to increase, but the CCIQ have confirmed it and we know it will. If I hear anything contradictory in terms of workers compensation from the QQIC or the Treasurer, I am pretty confident that I can bet on the CCIQ, which represents small businesses in this state. If small businesses are saying to the CCIQ that there are major problems with this legislation, it is flawed and it should be blocked in this parliament, I am going to place my bet on the CCIQ's and small businesses' understanding of what their issues are rather than the Labor government, because they certainly have form in this regard.

To my LNP colleagues, thank you very much for your support and contributions to the private member's bill here tonight. There is always a distinction between the Labor contribution and the LNP contribution: we do not owe union thugs and bosses anything and we do not have to come in here and pay lip-service to union bosses. We come in here and defend the rights of small business and workers in this state and we defend the rights of rural firefighters. Let the record show tonight that that is exactly how we will be voting.

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (4.16 pm), in reply: Firstly, I thank my colleagues and all members of parliament for their contributions to what is a significant piece of legislation that will restore fairness and balance to the workers compensation scheme.

This bill meets the commitment that we took to the election to reinstate the rights of injured workers to sue negligent employers if they are injured at work. Before the former LNP government's unnecessary and unfair 2013 changes, Queensland's workers compensation scheme was both fair and sustainable. For over a decade it was the best performing scheme in the country, with good benefits and support for workers and low premiums for employers.

The changes made by the previous government were unjustified, unnecessary and certainly ideologically driven, as demonstrated by the fact that they ignored the findings of the Finance and Administration Committee's inquiry into the operation of the scheme. I was the deputy chair of that committee. They shamefully denied Queensland workers who were injured due to the negligence of their employer and unable to return to work because of the injury access to compensation on the basis of an arbitrary threshold.

Permanent impairment of less than five per cent can have serious and long-term effects. Impairment does not take into account the disability caused by the impairment, the impact on the injured person's earning capacity or the fact that in some cases that person may never return to their profession. Those opposite have lost sight of the purpose of the workers compensation scheme. This scheme is about ensuring injured workers get the support they need to get on with their lives. This bill restores those rights.

The member for Kawana has certainly been hypocritical in his criticism of our consultation and I think that is outrageous. The Palaszczuk government undertook an extensive consultation process, convening a stakeholder reference group that included employer organisations, insurers, trade unions

and the legal fraternity to ensure we considered all aspects of removing the threshold including timing, the cost to the workers compensation scheme itself and the impact on business and advise government accordingly. Simply citing an email and the view of one organisation does not outweigh the importance of fairness for injured workers and the majority views of the stakeholder group.

The member for Kawana made many references to a mystery email from Nick Behrens from the CCIQ that apparently every member received. I have received plenty of information to say that not every member received that email, but I thank the member for tabling this email because otherwise possibly no-one would have seen it. I welcome the member for Kawana tabling his email, but perhaps he can table emails that he has received from injured workers and their families who have been excluded from seeking common law damages where there was negligence by their employer.

**Mr Bleijie:** Nothing to table.

**Mr PITT:** The member for Kawana says that there is nothing to table. I am hoping that means he is a bit more in touch with his electorate, because there are always people who have been impacted in some way by this legislation. We certainly hear many stories as local members.

The member for Kawana talks about the importance of business confidence. It is maybe something we can agree on. Business confidence is absolutely critical, and it is very important to note that this government is overseeing very high levels of business confidence. For the second month in a row we are leading business confidence according to the NAB Monthly Business Survey. Falsely claiming that businesses will be paying 20 per cent more in premiums as a result of this bill does not help business confidence. In fact, it does the opposite. Unlike the LNP, business knows that the Labor Party will responsibly look after their interests as well as the interests of workers.

As I have said, Queensland has the lowest average premium rate of any state in Australia at \$1.20 per \$100 of wages paid for 2015-16. Modelling by WorkCover's actuary PricewaterhouseCoopers over the five years to 2019-20 demonstrates that based on current scheme trends the removal of the common law threshold can be achieved without impacting on the average premium rate of \$1.20, given WorkCover's substantial reserves that have accumulated since 2010. I do note that the member for Kawana insists he knows better than the resources available at PwC in stating that we cannot afford to continue the average premium rate of \$1.20. Again, I do not think he has been very straightforward with the facts.

Under the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003, WorkCover is required to remain fully funded—that is, total assets must be equal to its total liabilities. In addition, Queensland Treasury requires that WorkCover maintain a buffer of 20 per cent, resulting in a funding ratio of a minimum of 120 per cent. As at 30 June 2015, WorkCover's funding ratio was a strong 169 per cent, which is well above the 120 per cent required for WorkCover to be fully funded. WorkCover's total equity has increased from \$1.5 billion in 2013-14 to \$1.7 billion. As at 30 June this year it has approximately \$4 billion in funds under management.

It is clear that the Queensland workers compensation scheme has strong foundations and is well placed to absorb the cost of removing the threshold without impacting on the average premium or solvency targets. I make the point at this juncture that we would not have to be considering its ability to absorb anything if that threshold were not taken away in the first place.

I will now turn to the issue of WorkCover's break-even premium, which I am advised is estimated to be \$1.36 per \$100 of wages paid following the removal of the threshold. This is something that was touched on by the member for Kawana. The break-even premium rate is not fixed. It is a point-in-time amount. This estimate will be revised over time taking account of factors such as changes in the cost of claims and increases or reductions in the number of serious injuries. The break-even premium rate will go up or down over time depending on a range of factors including reductions in serious injury rates and medical.

In relation to small business, WorkCover is also committed to working with employers on an individual level and has also made significant improvements in the way it calculates individual employer premiums over recent years. In particular, it has introduced a new method of calculating individual premiums for small employers with payrolls of less than \$1.5 million in wages which discounts the claims costs incurred. This is aimed at easing the financial pressure and uncertainty on small businesses and enables them to feel the benefits of improving workplace safety sooner.

Our changes are fair for those workers who are injured because of employer negligence, and we have balanced the restoration of these rights against ensuring the ongoing viability of our strong scheme. I did in opposition, and I continue now as the industrial relations minister to credit the financial

strength of WorkCover to the previous Labor government's 2010 workers compensation scheme reforms. The 2010 reforms addressed a sustained increase in the rate of common law claims by capping general damages to be consistent with the Civil Liability Act 2003, abolished strict liability for breach of statutory duty and increased the rigour in pre-proceedings processes. It is now clear that the 2010 reforms have been successful in containing the cost and number of common law claims.

As the Minister for Health advised, there has been a 15 per cent reduction in common law claims lodged for the period 2009 to 2014. Total annual common law claim payments and the average cost of a damages claim have also reduced by around 10 per cent over the same period. The strong performance of WorkCover today can, in part, be attributed to previous Labor government reforms which are now being realised.

This bill is about correcting the wrongs made by those opposite in the previous parliament. In his second reading speech, the member for Kawana said 'no-one is worse off' under the LNP's 2013 amendments. Tell that to the estimated 3,700 workers and their families who have been injured and are excluded from seeking damages from their negligent employer.

Members on this side care about who is left behind in the wake of the former LNP government. That is why we are removing the unfair common law threshold from the date of the 2015 state election. There are still an estimated 2,700 Queenslanders who were injured at work between 15 October 2013 and 30 January 2015 who will have an assessed degree of permanent impairment below six per cent and be excluded from accessing common law damages. The provisions in the bill will be supported by regulation, and I have previously tabled the draft regulation for the consideration of members to assist in the debate.

The draft regulation provides that this additional lump sum compensation is available to workers where they can demonstrate on the balance of probabilities that the worker's employer would have had a liability for common law damages but for the operation of the threshold. Where eligible, a worker will be entitled to an additional payment based on their degree of permanent impairment equivalent to twice their lump sum entitlement. For example, an eligible worker with a one per cent permanent impairment will be entitled to a lump sum compensation of \$3,149 plus additional lump sum compensation of \$6,298. If a lawyer has assisted the worker in determining their eligibility, they may also be entitled to an additional payment of up to \$4,700.

The Palaszczuk Labor government also made a commitment before the election to provide greater certainty of coverage for Queensland firefighters by introducing deemed disease provisions for certain latent onset diseases. Under our changes, if a firefighter develops one of 12 specified cancers and meets the qualifying period of active firefighting service, the cancer will be deemed to be work related. This includes volunteer firefighters. There will be no 10-year limit on making a claim and they will not have to attend 150 fire events to be eligible for compensation. Volunteer firefighters told us that proving they had attended 150 fire events was difficult because of poor historical record keeping. They requested an alternative evidence threshold and, as a consultative government, we have taken this feedback on board. Listening and making common-sense changes based on feedback is the key to being a consultative government. That is what this government is. It is something that those opposite do not seem to understand.

I am proud to stand behind this legislation which will deliver Queensland firefighters the best access to workers compensation in Australia. The provisions in the bill will apply equally to all firefighters whether they are permanent, auxiliary or volunteer firefighters. Those opposite have thrown around terms like 'discriminatory' to describe the government's bill, but they are keeping very quiet about how their bill discriminates against volunteers—against those same rural firefighters whose cause they allegedly champion.

The LNP's bill discriminates on benefits between full-time and volunteer firefighters. The LNP would deny rural firefighters access to lump sum payments to support themselves and their families during their most vulnerable time. As we know, weekly statutory benefits are not very valuable to a volunteer firefighter with a significantly reduced life expectancy because of a cancer they have contracted in the course of active firefighting. The member for Kawana seems to take pleasure in denying common law access to injured workers including those with permanent impairments and rural firefighters.

Under our bill for the first time in history volunteers will be covered for exactly the same benefits as full-time firefighters. It is fair and reasonable for all firefighters to have access to medical expenses, weekly benefits and statutory lump sum or common law damages. All firefighters with a claim accepted under the deemed disease provisions will be entitled to seek common law damages for their disease.

The member for Kawana suggests that this House should adopt his bill despite the Finance and Administration Committee's report not making any recommendations to indicate whether the bill should be passed. That is not uncommon because even when the Finance and Administration Committee makes a recommendation it did not seem to matter in the last parliament. The government members on the committee recognised the significance of presumptive legislation for firefighters. They consider that firefighters risk their lives protecting the public and their property, and when faced with a life-threatening illness which is caused by their firefighting activities there is a moral obligation to reduce the stress and hardship that diagnosis of a specified cancer will have on that firefighter, their family and community.

The government members found that the amendments proposed in the private member's bill were so poorly drafted that (1) they did not provide that volunteer firefighters have access for common law damages; (2) they did not ensure that the proposed amendments interact adequately with section 36A, the date of injury; and (3) they did not draft the provisions to ensure that, should the insurer be unable to meet its obligations, the fund has access to make payments from the Consolidated Fund.

The private member's bill is so poorly drafted that even non-government members of the committee were unable to recommend the bill be passed without significant amendment. The LNP sat on their hands for three long years and did nothing to introduce these protections for firefighters. Finding themselves in opposition, they were in such a rush to introduce this bill so they could grandstand with hollow empathy for firefighters.

The LNP has introduced a fundamentally flawed bill that discriminates between rural and full-time firefighters in the benefits they could receive. Even members of its own party could not support this bill as it was introduced. The member for Kawana should do the right thing for firefighters and admit that his bill will not support firefighters, withdraw his flawed bill and support the government's bill. We will just see how the vote goes.

Overall, the provisions in the government's bill meet the election commitments made by us to restore a fair, sustainable and efficient workers compensation scheme that balances low premium rates for employers with fair and reasonable benefits for injured workers while promoting durable return-to-work programs. The government's bill also introduces nation-leading presumptive deemed disease legislation for all firefighters. I again thank all members of the House for their contributions. I again thank the Finance and Administration Committee for its examination of the bill. I am very proud to stand here as the Minister for Industrial Relations in a Labor government winding back the clock on the difficult changes that have caused so many Queenslanders pain. I commend the bill to the House.

Division: Question put—That the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill be now read a second time.

**AYES, 44:**

**ALP, 41**—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Byrne, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Donaldson, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Hinchliffe, Howard, Jones, Kelly, King, Lauga, Linard, Lynham, Madden, Miles, Miller, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pease, Pegg, Pitt, Power, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Stewart, Trad, Whiting, Williams.

**KAP, 2**—Katter, Knuth.

**INDEPENDENT, 1**—Gordon.

**NOES, 40:**

**LNP, 40**—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Costigan, Cramp, Crandon, Cripps, Davis, Dickson, Elmes, Emerson, Frecklington, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Mander, McArdle, McEachan, McVeigh, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, Perrett, Powell, Rickuss, Robinson, Rowan, Seene, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Watts, Weir.

Pairs: Harper, Walker; Pyne, Hart.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read a second time.

### Speaker's Ruling, Same Question Rule



**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, the question before the House is that the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation (Protecting Firefighters) Amendment Bill 2015 be now read a second time. I draw members' attention to the statement I circulated in the chamber yesterday regarding the

application of the same question rule. Standing order 87 provides the general rule of Westminster parliamentary practice that once the House has resolved a matter in the affirmative or negative the same question shall not again be proposed in the same session. Similarly, standing order 150 provides for the application of the same question rule in relation to amendments, new clauses or schedules of a bill. It states—

No amendment, new clause or schedule to a Bill shall be at any time moved which is substantially the same as one already negatived by the House, or which is inconsistent with one that has already been agreed to by the House, unless there has been an order of the House to reconsider the Bill.

As previous Speakers have noted, the matter does not have to be identical but merely the same in substance as the previous matter. In other words, it is a question of substance, not form. The Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation (Protecting Firefighters) Amendment Bill 2015 introduced on 3 June 2015 seeks to achieve substantially the same objective as that of the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 which the House has just resolved to read a second time. Therefore, under standing orders 87 and 150, the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation (Protecting Firefighters) Amendment Bill 2015 cannot proceed and is therefore discharged from the *Notice Paper*.

### Consideration in Detail

#### Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill

Clauses 1 to 5, as read, agreed to.

Clause 6—

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (4.38 pm): Clause 6 of the bill reinserts into workers compensation legislation in Queensland deletion of the five per cent common law threshold, so it takes it back to no threshold for common law claims in the state of Queensland. That is concerning considering that the CCIQ has indicated publicly that if that is the case workers compensation premiums for all small businesses in Queensland will rise. This House should not support provisions that mean that small businesses in Queensland, which are struggling in a subdued economy at the moment, are going to have at least a 20 per cent increase in workers compensation premiums all because this is a deal paying back the union bosses to take this provision out of the legislation.

As I said in the debate, the Treasurer says that he is consulting with everyone and he is listening. The Premier says this government is a small business government that wants to do everything for small business in government and that the door is open and Queensland is open for business. Yet the Labor Party just voted on legislation which takes away a five per cent common law threshold which effectively puts taxation up for small businesses in Queensland. If we compare and contrast that to the LNP when we were in government, we were reducing taxation for businesses. We put the payroll tax threshold up so that fewer businesses were paying payroll tax. We put the common law threshold in and other amendments to workers compensation that meant that some small businesses in Queensland were saving up to half a million dollars in workers compensation.

What does that mean for these businesses? It means that they can employ more people in factories or whatever the case may be. Now, a 20 per cent increase in workers compensation premiums will lead to job losses in Queensland. If businesses have put on employees in the past couple of years because they have been able to afford to do so, they may not just be able to afford that once this bill receives assent. So I would implore all members to vote against this provision of the legislation, because it is unfair for small business and it is not in the interests of Queensland.

**Mr PITT:** Can I say immediately to the member that I do not know where he gets his 20 per cent figure from. When we speak to our actuarial, PricewaterhouseCoopers—the advice that is provided to WorkCover—they have said that the premium is able to be maintained at \$1.20. So as I said earlier, I will take the advice of the PWC over that of the member for Kawana any day of the week.

The member for Kawana talks about business confidence. I come back to this point. It is no good talking about potential rises to workers compensation premiums that are not based on any evidence that I can see. That does nothing for confidence. We know that it creates uncertainty in the marketplace when we do not need it. I think that is concerning.

I really think that the most important point to make is that those opposite have no compass on this issue. They have completely lost the reason we have a workers compensation scheme and that is to protect injured workers. Yes, employers pay into that scheme. Yes, they are a valuable partner in ensuring safe workplaces as well as ensuring that we have a scheme that is funded.

The member for Kawana does not seem to care about those 3,700 workers who, in the time between the opposition's bill coming into effect and, thankfully, the change of government in Queensland, have been adversely impacted by the LNP imposing a threshold. They are people who have families. They are people who deserve support. That is what our workers compensation has been set up to provide for so long.

The member for Kawana has put his case. He put his case as well in the term of the previous LNP government. Clearly, this was something that Queenslanders did not agree with. This provision is a very important component of the changes to workers compensation. To suggest that you can vote against this one provision and not turn back the clock, to not change things back to the way they should be with the best workers compensation scheme in the country, shows a complete lack of understanding of the scheme and what it is for. I urge all members of the House to support this provision.

Division: Question put—That clause 6, as read, stand part of the bill.

**AYES, 44:**

**ALP, 41**—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Byrne, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Donaldson, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Hinchliffe, Howard, Jones, Kelly, King, Lauga, Linard, Lynham, Madden, Miles, Miller, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pease, Pegg, Pitt, Power, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Stewart, Trad, Whiting, Williams.

**KAP, 2**—Katter, Knuth.

**INDEPENDENT, 1**—Gordon.

**NOES, 40:**

**LNP, 40**—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Costigan, Cramp, Crandon, Cripps, Davis, Dickson, Elmes, Emerson, Frecklington, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Mander, McArdle, McEachan, McVeigh, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, Perrett, Powell, Rickuss, Robinson, Rowan, Seeney, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Watts, Weir.

Pairs: Harper, Walker; Pyne, Hart.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clause 6, as read, agreed to.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Members, I seek leave for all future divisions on this bill to be of one-minute's duration.

Leave granted.

Clause 7 to 10, as read, agreed to.

Clause 11—

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (4.49 pm): Clause 11 is a lengthy clause so I will confine my comments with respect to retrospectivity. When the Labor members were in opposition we heard a lot about retrospectivity—how opposed they were to it—and they objected to it on all sorts of moral grounds. Not so long ago in this House we saw a bill passed containing retrospective clauses and we also have more retrospective clauses in this bill. We not only have retrospective clauses in this legislation but also two classes of retrospectivity: we have a retrospectivity dating back to 31 January 2015 and we have a retrospectivity dating back to when the original legislation passed in 2013.

As I understand it, from 2013 to January 2015, the Treasurer has tabled a regulation with respect to a scheme that will apply so that if one incurred an injury and had a whole-body impairment of less than five per cent and could not sue their employer, they will now be able to claim out of this pool of money that there is for that particular time. What is more concerning is that, from 31 January 2015 until now in the transitional provisions, it is essentially putting the legislation back to before 2013.

There was no mention in the Treasurer's contribution of how much this will cost the scheme. This is Labor politics 101 in terms of business. This bill contains a retrospective provision that says if a person has obtained an injury from their workplace and has a whole body impairment under five per

cent, which they would not ordinarily under the current legislation be entitled to sue their employer for, they can feel free to go and sue their employer now. It dates back to 31 January. The Treasurer has not given any indication of how much that will cost the scheme or what pressure it will put on the scheme. He guarantees that nothing will happen to the scheme with this retrospectivity provision.

The question for the Treasurer is: what figure did Treasury and the Department of Justice and Attorney-General estimate this will cost the scheme from 31 January 2013 to 2015? We know that the more pressure that is put on the scheme the more it will mean that WorkCover will put up premiums. Has the Treasurer done any calculations? Is what it is going to cost the scheme on the back of an envelope? These are important matters. If they are telling businesses in Queensland there will be no impact from this legislation then surely someone has done the sums. I can see people lining up at the minister's old firm, Hall Payne Lawyers, next week ready to take action against employers. The questions are how much will this cost the scheme and who did the calculations? They are the important issues for Queensland businesses.

**Mr PITT:** I will be brief with my response. What we have said all along is that the scheme itself is a scheme that is in good health. We know there are important solvency thresholds. It is embedded in legislation to have a 120 per cent solvency ratio. This is ensuring that we have that 20 per cent buffer at all times. I think the member was not listening earlier when we talked about the scare campaigns he is trying to run. Our advice certainly suggests that the scheme itself, including incorporating the changes in this bill, will be able to maintain an average premium of \$1.20. I am not sure how much more we need to have the member understand than that.

**Mr Bleijie:** Are you guessing this?

**Mr PITT:** No, we are not guessing this. I think that is the way the member opposite operates. What we have here is a situation again where the member for Kawana is trying to suggest retrospectivity when in fact there is none. What we have is a statutory adjustment scheme, a modest scheme, which certainly does not go the full way to try to address the LNP's concerns. That would have come. If we applied full retrospectivity it would have applied a significant cost. We on this side of the House understand what this scheme is about. We understand employers make contributions and over the next five years we see that the scheme will be able to continue to maintain its fully funded status as well as, of course, absorb any changes as we go forward.

**Mr Bleijie** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Kawana, you do not get a second go.

Division: Question put—That clause 11, as read, stand part of the bill.

**AYES, 44:**

**ALP, 41**—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Byrne, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Donaldson, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Hinchliffe, Howard, Jones, Kelly, King, Lauga, Linard, Lynham, Madden, Miles, Miller, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pease, Pegg, Pitt, Power, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Stewart, Trad, Whiting, Williams.

**KAP, 2**—Katter, Knuth.

**INDEPENDENT, 1**—Gordon.

**NOES, 40:**

**LNP, 40**—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Costigan, Cramp, Crandon, Cripps, Davis, Dickson, Elmes, Emerson, Frecklington, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Mander, McArdle, McEachan, McVeigh, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, Perrett, Powell, Rickuss, Robinson, Rowan, Seeney, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Watts, Weir.

Pairs: Harper, Walker; Pyne, Hart.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clause 11, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 12 to 17, as read, agreed to.

Clause 18—

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (4.56 pm): This is the provision, prior to any amendment the Treasurer makes, that actually is the discriminatory provision. Let the record show the Labor Party introduced its legislation under this Treasurer which discriminated against rural firefighters by saying if you have cancer and you want protection you have to have attended 150 fires and, not only that, you have to provide proof that you have attended 150 fires. Let them stand condemned. They introduced legislation discriminatory to rural firefighters in this state.

**Mr PITT:** Before I move my amendments I should just say that this word 'discriminatory' keeps coming up. Firstly, if our bill was truly discriminatory we would have had nothing on offer at all, and that was not the case. What we did see was a threshold which we recognised, after our consultation and through the work of the committee, was going to be too steep for people to meet. We have listened, and I cannot say this enough. We are a government that listens to and consults with people. We do not run roughshod over the process. If the member wants to talk truly about what is discriminatory, discriminatory is excluding many thousands of people from being able to access common rights. That is discriminatory. Discriminatory is putting a five per cent threshold in place. That is discriminatory. Without any further ado, I table the explanatory notes to my amendments and I move the following amendments—

**1 Clause 18 (Insertion of new ch 1, pt 4, div 6, sdiv 3B)**

Page 21, lines 12 to 15—

*omit, insert—*

- (c) a volunteer fire fighter or volunteer fire warden engaged by the authority responsible for the management of the State's fire services; or
- (d) a person appointed or employed under the repealed *Fire Brigades Act 1964*, section 24; or
- (e) a person appointed or employed under the repealed *Rural Fires Act 1946*, section 9.

**2 Clause 18 (Insertion of new ch 1, pt 4, div 6, sdiv 3B)**

Page 21, lines 18 and 19—

*omit.*

**3 Clause 18 (Insertion of new ch 1, pt 4, div 6, sdiv 3B)**

Page 21, lines 20 to 27 and page 22, lines 1 to 3—

*omit.*

**4 Clause 18 (Insertion of new ch 1, pt 4, div 6, sdiv 3B)**

Page 22, lines 11 to 15—

*omit, insert—*

column 2 opposite the specified disease.

**5 Clause 18 (Insertion of new ch 1, pt 4, div 6, sdiv 3B)**

Page 23, lines 1 to 4—

*omit, insert—*

- (2) A period of 12 months may be included only if, throughout the period, the person—
  - (a) was employed for the purpose of firefighting; and
  - (b) attended fires to the extent reasonably necessary to fulfil the purpose of the person's employment.

**6 Clause 18 (Insertion of new ch 1, pt 4, div 6, sdiv 3B)**

Page 23, lines 10 to 24—

*omit, insert—*

*Example—*

A person was employed for firefighting and attended fires for 10 years before working in administrative and management roles for another 20 years. For section 36D(1)(b), the person was employed as a firefighter for 10 years.

- (4) In this section—

***firefighting*** means extinguishing, controlling or preventing the spread of fires.

**7 Clause 18 (Insertion of new ch 1, pt 4, div 6, sdiv 3B)**

Page 23, lines 25 to 33 and page 24, lines 1 to 21—

*omit.*

*Tabled paper:* Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, explanatory notes to Hon. Pitt's amendments [1133].

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 18, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 19 to 21, as read, agreed to.

Clause 22—



**Mr PITT** (4.59 pm): I move the following amendments—

**8 Clause 22 (Amendment of sch 6 (Dictionary))**

Page 27, lines 9 and 10—

*omit.*

**9 Clause 22 (Amendment of sch 6 (Dictionary))**

Page 28, line 6—

*omit, insert—*

*volunteer firefighter* means a person mentioned in section 36B, definition *firefighter*, paragraph (b), (c) or (e).

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 22, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 23 to 29, as read, agreed to.

Clause 30—



**Mr BLEIJIE** (4.59 pm): Clause 30 omits section 571D of the legislation. At the outset one could look at it and not think it is anything, but it is quite a substantial omission from the legislation. In 2013 we introduced an amendment that if a prospective employee was going for a job, particularly in the agricultural sector, the employer was able to request a copy of the workers' compensation claims history of the potential employee. That was not so that the employer could say, 'No, I am not employing you'; that was so the employer could say, 'Well, you've had five previous back injuries at the previous strawberry farm, perhaps this job is not quite right for you, but you could do this over here. We will find something else for you.'

There have been thousands of requests and, guess what? No-one has complained about it. No-one has protested that there have been issues with this provision, because people in Queensland know that if you sign up for health insurance, you have to show pre-existing injuries.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Government members, I urge you to allow the member for Kawana to continue.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** If you take out housing insurance or if you have a claim for housing or motor vehicle insurance, you have to explain to your insurance company any claims that you have had in your history so that they can show you what your premium will cost. This provision takes out the right of the employer to seek the claims history of the employee.

There is no doubt that there were dodgy claims throughout the state. We heard all the time about how dodgy claimants would essentially farm shop. Particularly in the strawberry industry, they would go from farm to farm, have an injury and either sue their employer under the common law or take a statutory claim. This provision provided the opportunity for the employer to get the full facts before they had a discussion with an employer about the sort of employment that they would be undertaking. Therefore, we oppose the omission of this provision, because it is important for the employer. It is also important for the employee. An employee who has had, for instance, four claims for a back injury should not be lifting or standing for eight hours a day, or whatever the case may be. This provision allows the employer and the employee to have a discussion about what sort of work they ought to be doing in that particular job; therefore, we oppose the omission of that particular provision.

**Mr PITT:** Again the member for Kawana is showing that he has little regard for workers and people seeking employment. They were anti jobs when in government. They managed to dismiss tens of thousands of government workers. Very clearly, they have no regard for workers. The member for Kawana is saying essentially that if somebody has had previous injuries it should be held against them. Of course, there is no regard for someone who may have gone through some kind of return to work program or rehabilitation program, or somebody who deserves another chance. He is saying we should throw people on the scrap heap because we cannot allow them to work. We take a very different view.

I can tell members who else takes a different view. This clause implements the election commitment made by the government to remove the entitlement of prospective employers to apply to the Workers Compensation Regulator for a copy of a prospective worker's compensation claims history

summary. Privacy concerns have been raised about access to this information and how it is being used. Those opposite are pretty selective when it comes to privacy. On the one hand, they want to protect people's privacy because apparently it is being misused when passed onto unions. On the other hand, they want to ensure that people's privacy is again eroded by giving the employer full access to a claims history and the employee has no rights. It is very interesting to see—

**Mr Bleijie:** But the unions are allowed to have public servants' information. There is no privacy issue there.

**Mr PITT:** The member for Kawana cannot have it both ways. In its submission to the Finance and Administration Committee, the Anti-Discrimination Commission highlighted that there is potential for the information to be misused to discriminate against certain workers, which far outweighs the limited use and value of the provision. Of course, employers are still able to ask prospective workers about pre-existing injuries and medical conditions that may impact on their duties. They can also require prospective employees to undergo pre-employment medical assessments to determine suitability for the role. This does not take away an employer's opportunity to find out more about an employee. It ensures that any concerns about privacy and discrimination are taken away. That is the Labor way. We ensure that people have fairness and balance and, again, that is what these laws are all about.

Division: Question put—That clause 30, as read, stand part of the bill.

**AYES, 44:**

**ALP, 41**—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Byrne, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Donaldson, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Hinchliffe, Howard, Jones, Kelly, King, Lauga, Linard, Lynham, Madden, Miles, Miller, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pease, Pegg, Pitt, Power, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Stewart, Trad, Whiting, Williams.

**KAP, 2**—Katter, Knuth.

**INDEPENDENT, 1**—Gordon.

**NOES, 40:**

**LNP, 40**—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Costigan, Cramp, Crandon, Cripps, Davis, Dickson, Elmes, Emerson, Frecklington, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Mander, McArdle, McEachan, McVeigh, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, Perrett, Powell, Rickuss, Robinson, Rowan, Seeney, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Watts, Weir.

Pairs: Harper, Walker; Pyne, Hart.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clause 30, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 31 to 37, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clauses—

**Mr PITT** (5.06 pm): I seek leave to move an amendment outside the long title of the bill.

Leave granted.

**Mr PITT:** I move the following amendment—

**10 After clause 37**

Page 34, after line 8—

*insert—*

**Division 1A Amendment of Industrial Relations Act 1999**

**37AA Act amended**

This division amends the *Industrial Relations Act 1999*.

**37AB Amendment of s 75 (Conciliation before application heard)**

Section 75(6), 'vice'—

*omit.*

**37AC Amendment of s 140F (Periodic reviews of a modern award)**

Section 140F(2) and (3), 'or vice-president'—

*omit.*

**37AD Amendment of s 149 (Arbitration if conciliation unsuccessful)**

Section 149(3)(a), 'vice-president'—

*omit, insert—*

president

**37AE Amendment of s 149A (Arbitration period)**

(1) Section 149A, 'vice-president'—

*omit, insert—*

president

(2) Section 149A(4)(b), 'vice-president's'—

*omit, insert—*

president's

**37AF Amendment of s 149B (Full bench to determine matters by arbitration unless vice-president directs otherwise)**

Section 149B, 'vice-president'—

*omit, insert—*

president

**37AG Amendment of s 160 (When an agreement passes the no-disadvantage test)**

Section 160(5), 'vice'—

*omit.***37AH Amendment of s 242E (Functions of the president)**

Section 242E(4), after 'vice-president'—

*insert—*

or a deputy president (court)

**37AI Amendment of s 246C (Deputy presidents (court))**

Section 246C(2)(a), from 'local' to '2007,'—

*omit, insert—*

lawyer

**37AJ Amendment of s 252 (President's annual report)**

(1) Section 252(3)—

*omit.*

(2) Section 252(4)—

*renumber* as section 252(3).**37AK Amendment of s 259AA (Dealing with matters as commissioner and ombudsman)**

Section 259AA(3), 'vice'—

*omit.***37AL Amendment of s 264 (Administrative responsibilities for the commission and registry)**

(1) Section 264(1), (2), (3), (4AA), (4A), (6) and (7)(b), 'vice'—

*omit.*

(2) Section 264(4A)—

*insert—*

(aa) to the vice president; or

(3) Section 264(4A)(b), after 'if'—

*insert—*

the vice president or

(4) Section 264(4A)(aa) to (b)—

*renumber* as section 264(4A)(a) to (c).

(5) Section 264(5), 'vice president or a deputy president'—

*omit, insert—*

president, vice president, a deputy president or an industrial commissioner

**37AM Amendment of s 269 (Vice president to consider efficiencies that may be achieved by using dual commissioners)**

- (1) Section 269, heading, 'Vice president'—

*omit, insert—*

**President**

- (2) Section 269, 'vice'—

*omit.*

**37AN Amendment of s 270 (Reallocation of commission's work)**

Section 270, 'vice'—

*omit.*

**37AO Amendment of s 281 (Reference to full bench)**

- (1) Section 281(2)—

*omit, insert—*

- (2) A commissioner may refer the matter only with the president's approval.

- (2) Section 281(3), (4) and (5), 'vice'—

*omit.*

**37AP Amendment of s 299 (Functions and powers of registrar)**

Section 299(3)—

*omit, insert—*

- (3) In performing a function or exercising a power, the registrar must comply with a direction given by the president in relation to the court or the commission.

**37AQ Amendment of s 301 (Delegation by registrar)**

Section 301(b), 'vice'—

*omit.*

**37AR Amendment of s 308 (Reference of matter to Commonwealth official)**

Section 308(1), (2) and (5)(b), 'vice'—

*omit.*

**37AS Amendment of s 309 (Conferences with industrial authorities)**

- (1) Section 309(1) (a) and (2), 'vice'—

*omit.*

- (2) Section 309(3)—

*omit.*

**37AT Amendment of s 310 (Joint sessions with industrial authorities)**

- (1) Section 310(1)(a) and (2), 'vice'—

*omit.*

- (2) Section 310(3)—

*omit.*

**37AU Amendment of s 311 (Similar matters before full bench and industrial authority)**

Section 311, 'vice'—

*omit.*

**37AV Amendment of s 311A (Adoption of result of joint session)**

Section 311A(1), 'vice'—

*omit.*

**37AW Amendment of s 313 (Vice president may decide matter not to be dealt with in joint session)**

- (1) Section 313, heading, 'Vice president'—

*omit, insert—*

**President**

- (2) Section 313, 'vice'—

*omit.*

**37AX Amendment of s 320 (Basis of decisions of the commission and magistrates)**

Section 320(5), note, 'vice-president'—

*omit, insert—*

president

**37AY Insertion of ch 20, pt 21**

After section 857—

*insert—*

**Part 21 Transitional provision for Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2015****858 Action taken by vice-president**

- (1) This section applies to a relevant action taken by the vice-president that is still in force immediately before the commencement.
- (2) The action continues to have effect after the commencement as if the action had been taken by the president.
- (3) In this section—

**relevant action** means an action taken by the vice-president under a provision amended by the *Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2015*.

**37AZ Amendment of sch 2 (Appointments)**

- (1) Schedule 2, part 1, section 4A(2), 'the vice-president'—

*omit, insert—*

any other member

- (2) Schedule 2, part 1, section 4A(3)—

*omit.*

**Division 1B Amendment of Industrial Relations (Tribunals) Rules 2011****37BA Rules amended**

This division amends the *Industrial Relations (Tribunals) Rules 2011*.

**37BB Amendment of r 79 (Application to refer matter to full bench)**

Rule 79, 'vice'—

*omit.*

**Division 1C Amendment of Trading (Allowable Hours) Act 1990****37BC Act amended**

This division amends the *Trading (Allowable Hours) Act 1990*.

**37BD Amendment of s 23A (Reference to full bench)**

Section 23A(2) and (3)(b), 'vice-president'—

*omit, insert—*

president

**37BE Insertion of pt 8, div 4**

After section 52—

*insert—*

**Division 4 Transitional provision for Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2015****53 Referral by vice-president**

- (1) This section applies to a referral by the vice-president under section 23A in relation to a matter that immediately before the commencement had not been decided by the full bench.
- (2) The referral continues to have effect, and the full bench may hear and decide the matter referred to it, after the commencement as if the referral had been made by the president.

**37BF Amendment of sch 1 (Dictionary)**

Schedule 1—

*insert—*

**president** means the president of the industrial commission under the *Industrial Relations Act 1999*.

Amendment agreed to.

Clauses 38 and 39, as read, 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) (5.07 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) (5.08 pm): I move the following amendment—

**11 Long title**

Long title, after '*Electrical Safety Act 2002*,'—

*insert—*

**the *Industrial Relations Act 1999*, the *Industrial Relations (Tribunals) Rules 2011*, the *Trading (Allowable Hours) Act 1990*,**

Amendment agreed to.

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

Motion agreed to.

## SPEAKER'S RULING

### Notice of Motion, Out of Order

 **Mr SPEAKER:** On 24 February 2010 at page 451 of the parliamentary record in a ruling on an unorthodox notice of motion Speaker Mickel stated that a notice of motion is merely an incomplete motion, a proposal. That ruling also stated that it is for the House to determine whether it will agree to the proposal. As long as the motion, if agreed to, would not offend the law and the notice is internally logical, coherent and contains only facts necessary and able to be authenticated, it should not be interfered with.

On 27 February 2008 at page 422 of the parliamentary record Speaker Reynolds ruled a notice of motion in its first version out of order. The basis for that ruling was that the proposed motion in its first iteration purported to be more than a simple resolution: it purported to be in the nature of an order. As an order, Speaker Reynolds thought it would be unconstitutional. Speaker Reynolds offered the member, who gave notice, the opportunity to resubmit the notice in a form that if accepted would be a resolution only—a simple expression of the House's opinion.

The difficulty with the current notice of motion is that it is drafted in such a way that if accepted it would purport to be an order of the House. It seeks the authority of the House to direct the Attorney-General to not introduce certain legislation. Whether if accepted by the House it would have legal effect as an order is open for debate. No doubt, however, if the House agreed to such a purported order and the Attorney-General introduced such legislation, there would be complaints that the Attorney-General was breaching an order of the House and was in contempt.

The difficulty is that the Attorney-General, as a member of this House, has rights that are protected constitutionally, especially by section 9 of the Constitution of Queensland Act 2001. This purported order seeks to interfere in those rights guaranteed by the Constitution. Moreover, such a purported order arguably interferes with the constitutional powers of the House itself, remembering that this House is one of the constituent arms of the Parliament of Queensland, empowered by sections 2 and 2A of the Constitution Act 1867 to make laws for the peace, welfare and good government of the state in all cases whatsoever.

The purported order seeks to prevent a member from introducing bills that would be considered by the House, in its constitutional role, on the merits of the actual bill. For all of these reasons I rule the notice of motion in its current form out of order and suggest that the member alter the terms of the motion by replacing the word 'directs' with 'requests'.

## SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT



**Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (5.12 pm): I move—

That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 9.30 am on Tuesday, 13 October 2015.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

## ADJOURNMENT



**Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (5.12 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

### Albert Electorate, Infrastructure



**Mr BOOTHMAN** (Albert—LNP) (5.13 pm): I rise this afternoon to speak about some infrastructure issues in the great electorate of Albert. The M1 runs the length of the electorate. It is the main transport corridor for residents who travel to the Gold Coast and Brisbane for employment every day. Unfortunately, there has not been any work done on a lot of the interchanges. There was a very welcome funding package provided by the previous treasurer for work to be done at exit 54. This will certainly help to alleviate a lot of congestion around the Upper Coomera area.

The exit a little further south, exit 57, straddles the Upper Coomera, Oxenford and Helensvale districts. It is a major intersection. Vehicles that traverse this intersection come from areas like Tamborine Mountain and Hope Island. It is an extremely important intersection in my electorate.

At this interchange there are eight entry points and three sets of lights within a very short distance of each other. This causes an enormous amount of traffic congestion during peak hour. It is also extremely confusing for motorists who are not familiar with the area. Due to the current line markings, motorists unfortunately seem to swap lanes mid intersection. It has caused some near misses.

This is an issue that I certainly get a lot of emails about and hear a lot of discussion about when I do my roadside electorate work down the road from there. I have spoken to the Department of Transport and Main Roads about this on numerous occasions.

Some wonderful work has taken place on the Coomera side of the M1 in the electorate of my colleague the member for Coomera, Michael Crandon. We still need to rectify the fundamental problem with the interchange. That is that there is an enormous amount of queuing, especially on my side of the highway along Heathwood Drive. Around school drop off and pickup times there is a traffic jam which literally goes for kilometres. It results in enormous delays for my residents.

We have set up a petition for residents to sign to highlight the importance of this interchange for my local community. I ask all residents to get onto my Facebook page and sign this petition to further emphasise how important this piece of infrastructure is.

### Skilling Queenslanders for Work



**Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (5.16 pm): Last week, the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills announced the first round of successful projects under the reinstated Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative. I am proud to report that within my electorate of Woodridge 18 projects delivered through eight organisations received funding to the tune of \$2.6 million. This will create approximately 660 jobs for our local region.

This is a big win for the people of Woodridge. Woodridge has come out on top and is receiving the largest injection of funds in this first round. These projects will deliver more training and more jobs for local people. Before the election I promised to work for education, training and jobs and to boost employment in Logan. I am delivering on that promise.

This initiative puts communities in the driving seat through a partnership with government to grow local employment opportunities, encourage greater social inclusion and assist people needing extra support to enter the workforce. The successful projects are specifically tailored local programs that support young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with disability, mature age

jobseekers, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and long-term unemployed people to find a path into work. Training will occur throughout a range of areas including hospitality, construction, logistics, business, conservation, community services, education and disability services.

Access Community Services, under the leadership of CEO Gail Kerr, will undertake five projects that will provide jobs and training in the areas of hospitality, tourism, business administration, conservation and land management and construction for 221 local people. BoysTown, under CEO Tracy Adams, will receive funding to undertake five projects that will provide jobs and training in construction, community services, disability services, early childhood and warehousing operations for 130 local people.

Civic Solutions, led by president Les Macdonald, will receive funding to undertake two projects that will provide jobs and training for 75 local people in the industries of early childhood, hospitality and logistics. The Queensland Police-Citizens Youth Welfare Association will receive funding to undertake two projects at Logan and Crestmead that will provide jobs and training in the community services and aged-care sectors for 88 local people.

Blueprint Employment & Training, under operations manager Angie Rue, will receive funding to undertake one project that will provide jobs and training in warehousing operations and logistics for 50 local people. The Kingston East Neighbourhood Group, under manager, Kim Wright, will receive funding to undertake one project that will provide jobs and training in business, hospitality, logistics and aged care for 56 local people.

YFS, led by CEO Cath Bartolo, will receive funding to undertake a project that will provide jobs and training in youth justice for 20 local people. Lastly, the Maxima Group will receive funding to undertake one project that will provide jobs and training in business, construction and conservation and land management for 15 local people.

I am proud to be part of a government that is delivering such a broad range of training initiatives that will help hundreds of local people in the Woodridge electorate into work and provide them with the skills for the jobs of today and the jobs of tomorrow.

### Whitsunday Electorate, Rugby League

 **Mr COSTIGAN** (Whitsunday—LNP) (5.19 pm): I rise tonight to pay tribute to the Rugby League community in my electorate in what has been a break-out season in my electorate of Whitsunday, because we had a very historic occasion this year with the Whitsunday Brahmans winning their first ever Mackay and District Rugby League premiership. They have been a very successful club as the Proserpine Brahmans in years gone by in the now defunct Burdekin-Whitsunday and Whitsunday competitions. On Father's Day this year they won their first ever Mackay and District Rugby League grand final. There was a terrific crowd there for the grand final between Sarina and Whitsunday. The 'Brahman Army' certainly came down the Bruce. It is great to see those trophies back on the northern bank of the O'Connell River. Well done to reserve grade as well. I know for the old boys it would certainly warm their hearts—people like Luchie Gardel—'Whiptail', as we call him—Billy Lade and Dave Rogers. It was tremendous not only for the Rugby League club but the wider Whitsunday community.

It was great to be at the Down Under Bar last Saturday night for presentation night. I will just go through some of the award winners for the Brahmans for 2015. Grant Cooke was the best forward. Michael Newman was the best back, and he picked up the Phil Nolan Trophy. Ivan Petelo was the players' player. The A-grade debut medals this year went to Darcy Camm, Blake Faull and Jaeden Corbett. The Rookie of the Year picked up the Leo and Flo Donadelli Trophy, and that was Kieran Anderson. The Outstanding Sportsmanship award, named after the late Gary Deicke, went to Lachlan Scanlon. The Club Person of the Year award went to Michael Lee, and he has done a terrific job in getting the club very professional. Samuel Key took out the Jimmy Hill Trophy in honour of the 1973 premiership winning halfback for Whitsunday. That was the year that Whitsunday won its one and only Foley Shield. It was great to see the Hill family represented on the night. The Player of the Year took away the Les Stagg Memorial Shield and the Paul Bowman Award, and that was Ivan Petelo. It was great to catch up with Ivan and Naomi on Saturday night. It was certainly a great year for the juniors as well, with the under-16s winning the premiership at the stadium the day before. So, all in all, it has been terrific for the Brahmans.

It has been a big year off the field as well. The Whitsundays hosted the Origin team in late June. I certainly lobbied for that when we had the Parliamentary Friends of Rugby League meeting here at Parliament House last year. We had seen the team go to Roma, Bundaberg and Longreach in the past. I said to the QRL, 'Let's come north,' and come north they did. So it was a terrific outcome.

I also want to pay tribute to Norths Juniors. I was there last Saturday for their junior presentation day, handing out the Geoffrey Vea Vea Memorial Trophy. I knew Geoffrey when we were young lads growing up in Mackay. Sadly, he is no longer with us. Well done to young William Lansbury, who picked that up. I also pay tribute to the Kirwan State High School and players from my electorate and the Whitsundays—people like Nathan Barrett—but also players from further afield. This week they became the national schoolboys champions defeating Patrician Brothers' College, Blacktown, and that is no mean feat. It is terrific. I am sure that the principal of Kirwan State High School for over 27 years the late John Livingston would be smiling from high above. We have a big weekend this weekend with the Paul Bowman Challenge. It is a huge boost for local tourism. Good luck to all teams and go the Cowboys on Saturday night!

### Local Government, Jobs

 **Mr WHITING** (Murrumba—ALP) (5.22 pm): Last week I was honoured to be a guest of the Services Union at their annual conference in Brisbane. These local government employees told me about their ongoing struggle to achieve fairness in local government workplaces and encouraged me to keep talking about their struggle. So I will give the House an update on restoring fairness in council workplaces in Queensland.

The LGAQ took issue with me about what I said on 4 June during debate on the restoring fairness bill. I have done some more research on the matter and I can give the House some more information on Northern Australia Services. I said, 'This is what I have been informed. Reportedly the other 50 per cent is owned by Partnerships Australia, which is 50 per cent owned by the LGAQ.' The LGAQ have clarified that. Fifty per cent of NAS is not owned by Mackay Enterprises. It is owned by two joint venture parties—Prewood and Partnerships Australia. Prewood have 67 per cent of that 50 per cent, and Partnerships Australia have 33 per cent. Prewood is a private company owned by the LGAQ, and Partnerships Australia is owned by Aegis Services Australia. Prewood and Partnerships Australia also own a company called Queensland Partnership Group (LG Shared Services) Pty Ltd (Propel Manager) in the same ratio of 67 per cent to 33 per cent.

I thank them for that information. It shows the ownership structure is even more complicated than we thought. We now know that the LGAQ have no interest in Partnerships Australia. They are the co-owners of other ventures with Partnerships Australia—NSA and Queensland Partnership Group—through their own private company Prewood.

We now know that the NSA was set up during recent enterprise bargaining negotiations, reportedly so. It was registered on 17 December 2014, and the Services Union informed me that the enterprise bargaining negotiation started in October 2014. I said, 'Reportedly, 650 workers from council would go across to this new company out of a workforce of 1,400.' The LGAQ still have not given me clarity on this. They told me that 155 Mackay council staff will be involved in the NAS project but they will remain council employees. But they also told me that there are no immediate plans for NAS to employ council staff. My question is: if the council wants the partnership with NAS to cap operating costs through driving efficiencies and deliver improved services to the community, who will be delivering these services to the community if not council employees?

It is clear why the local government employees I met at the Services Union conference were still concerned. I still have concerns with local governments looking to have their work done by private corporations, especially those with complicated ownership structures. I still have concerns about the industrial relations legacy left by Campbell Newman and how councils treat their staff and their unions. We want to keep restoring fairness in workplaces throughout Queensland, and I ask the LGAQ and councils to join with us to do so.

### Coomera Electorate, Fire Ants

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (5.25 pm): I rise to alert the House to the fact that the northern Gold Coast is under attack. In fact, it is being invaded. Yes, we have many thousands of new residents moving into the gorgeous part of the world known as Coomera, where heaven meets earth, but coming with them—and I seek your indulgence here, Madam Deputy Speaker; I need to show a photo of the culprit to those present—is the fire ant. That is a black and white photo of a fire ant. That is the only one I could capture.

Fire ants are moving into the northern Gold Coast. It is very scary indeed. Since the beginning of January, we have had 52 positive detections on the northern Gold Coast. To give members an idea that they are all over the northern Gold Coast area and that we have to be vigilant: Stapyilton has had

six detections; Ormeau, eight; Yatala, two; Pimpama, two; Gilberton, 12; Woongoolba, nine; Norwell, seven; Upper Coomera, one; and Alberton, five. So we have to do something about this. I quote an email from Biosecurity Queensland that I received recently. It reads—

I would like to inform you of a recent detection of Red Imported Fire Ants within the Gold Coast suburb of Pimpama.

One fire ant colony, consisting of three mounds, was detected on the footpath on Sunstone Avenue in Pimpama. The ants were reported to Biosecurity Queensland by a vigilant member of the public.

That brings me to the main point that I want to make here today. We have to be vigilant. We have to get out there and start looking for these little terrors—and they are terrors. If you touch them, you will know they are fire ants because they will swarm. They will swarm up your arm, so you have to stay right away from them. There is a wealth of information on the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries' website at [www.daf.qld.gov.au/fireants](http://www.daf.qld.gov.au/fireants). You can even send fire ants an email at [fireants@daff.qld.gov.au](mailto:fireants@daff.qld.gov.au), believe it or not, and they will respond to you.

But there are simple things that we can do. This is a simple one and we want to get it out into the community. In fact, I am going to be writing to all of the schools in my community to encourage them to have 'Aka the Fire Ant Tracker' come along and show the children exactly what they have to do. What do they have to do? They have to check, they have to click and they have to send. What does that mean? They have to check to see whether or not they think it is a fire ant or a fire ant nest. They have to take a photo of that, staying well away from it because they are dangerous little beggars. Then they have to send that photo to the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries to establish whether or not it is in fact a fire ant nest. I will encourage every one of my schools to get out 'Aka the Fire Ant Tracker'.

*(Time expired)*

### **Ipswich West Electorate, Agricultural Shows**

 **Mr MADDEN** (Ipswich West—ALP) (5.28 pm): It gives me great pleasure to rise for my first adjournment speech to acknowledge the four agricultural shows in the electorate of Ipswich West and the Ipswich region. With the 2015 show season in Ipswich and the Somerset now wrapped up, I am pleased to be given this opportunity to thank the hundreds of people who freely gave up their time, skills and energy to put on an agricultural show for their local communities.

As I am sure many of those present in the chamber here tonight will appreciate, nothing brings out the spirit and sense of community quite like spending a Saturday at an agricultural show. Not only are they a chance for families to jump on a sideshow ride, see livestock up close and get a bite to eat; each show has something unique about it.

Firstly, the Marburg Show Society, with president Robert Krause—father of Jon Krause, the member for Beaudesert—led a team that put on a great country show. The team included secretary Lyndell Blanch, treasurer Chris Wilkens, and vice-presidents Mal Sprenger, Donald Hines, Ross Buchanan and Gaven Anderson.

The Ipswich Show Society, in the city where I was raised, organised state Governor Paul de Jersey to officiate at the opening. President Marcia Cruickshank, vice-presidents Luke Barron, Syd Haag, David Thomas and Darren Zanow, treasurer Allen Zanow and assistant treasurer Kate Martindale oversaw a three-day event with thousands of people coming through the gates to see the best Ipswich had to offer. It is estimated by the Ipswich City Council that this annual event contributes an astounding \$13 million to the Ipswich economy.

The Lowood Show Society, comprising president Noel Kammholz, vice-presidents Dean Wise, Bruce Vayro and Lynell Jendra, secretary and caretaker Janeen Schulz and women's committee convenor Carol Knopke, saw record gate takings this year thanks to a great public response from the residents of my home town of Lowood.

Last but not least, the Rosewood Agricultural and Horticultural Show Society, with president Barry Embrey, vice-president Paddy Lenihan, treasurer Renea Lenihan and secretary Kate Lenihan, once again delivered a fantastic show that took amazing steps to involve the local schools and community groups. This show just gets better every year, and I was honoured to officiate at the opening of the local show in what is the ancestral home town of my father's family.

When I asked the various show committees what they thought was special about their 2015 show, I was surprised by the responses I received. From the horse ring at the Marburg Show to the QCAA's baking competition at the Ipswich Show to the needlework exhibit at the Rosewood Show and the wild demolition derby at the Lowood Show, each had something that made their show unique. However, what each show had in common was the special way they allowed the community to

participate, be it skills, putting on exhibits, community groups holding stores or even, as was the case with the Rosewood Show local seniors dance groups, flying across-the-board. These shows really are all about locals who just want to support their community.

### **Robina Community Legal Centre**

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (5.31 pm): I rise to inform the House of the fantastic work being done to assist victims of domestic violence in my electorate by the Robina Community Legal Centre. As members are aware, recent days saw residents of the Gold Coast and my electorate of Mudgeeraba shaken to the core by a number of tragic events related to the insidious crime that is domestic violence. While these events have been deeply upsetting for our community, we are fortunate that my electorate is home to the Robina Community Legal Centre, which offers free and discreet legal services to local residents who need help to deal with their domestic violence situation but who may be unable to seek private legal assistance.

Since commencing operations in February 2014, the Robina CLC has delivered free, front-line legal and referral services as an all-volunteer, unfunded community legal centre. I have visited the Robina CLC on a number of occasions and am always heartened to hear of the great work they do to provide this important community service to those who need it most in our local area, particularly in relation to domestic and family violence.

I am told that on average between 40 and 50 per cent of the Robina CLC's caseload is related to family and domestic violence. Unfortunately, however, despite the rise of domestic violence in our community and the crucial role they play in assisting domestic violence victims in my electorate, the Robina Community Legal Centre remains unfunded by the Labor government. While the Labor government has spent recent weeks talking about domestic violence, it appears that time after time the Robina Community Legal Centre's requests for funding from this government have been turned down. Not only that but, despite my representations to the Attorney-General in May requesting and inviting her to visit the centre to hear about their funding needs firsthand, she is yet to visit the Robina CLC. This produces real consequences in terms of the accessibility of legal services in my electorate and throughout the Gold Coast.

With only one other CLC in our city, due to conflict-of-interest requirements there is a strong possibility that those seeking legal advice may be turned away if another party has already approached another CLC. Should the Robina CLC receive funding certainty from the government, it would allow a direct expansion of the free, front-line services they offer and allow them to expand the number of ongoing cases they are equipped to deal with, in addition to employing dedicated staff and administrative support. The opposition stands ready to support the government in a bipartisan way to ensure we become a safer community. I urge the Labor government to ensure that the Robina Community Legal Centre receives funding to continue helping domestic violence victims in my electorate.

### **Bulimba Barracks, Sale**

 **Ms FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (5.34 pm): I refer to the Bulimba Barracks site, the 21-hectare area of land on the river just off Apollo Road which the federal government is about to sell. I have talked previously about this site in this House and will continue to do so over the coming years as I believe that the sale and its potential impact is the biggest issue facing our local area in decades. If we are not able to control density on this site, the ensuing problems with local traffic management and traffic congestion in general, with parking, with the strain on community infrastructure such as our recreational and sporting facilities and our local parks and with the demand on Bulimba State School—an already landlocked school—the impact on the general quality of life in our area is incalculable. That is why I am working very closely with my colleagues Terri Butler MP, the member for Griffith, and Shayne Sutton, councillor for Morningside, to ensure our community gets the best outcome possible from the sale.

Along with our community, we are extremely grateful for the close interest being taken on the issue by the Deputy Premier and the Minister for Education. We certainly would not be where we are now without their support. Our local community has been absolutely magnificent on this issue. They just do not take anything lying down, and they have shown that on local issue after local issue—namely, fantastic examples such as the development at Byron Street and the current battle at Taylor Street. I congratulate Alex Proctor for his leadership on that issue. No challenge is too great and they all have my greatest admiration.

Our local residents have come out in droves to community planning sessions, to our joint mobile offices and to community meeting after community meeting, having their say on emails and social media, on the phones and through petitions and making it clear to anyone who needs to know that they will protect their quality of life. Groups such as the Bulimba State School and Balmoral State High School P&Cs, the Bulimba State School Council, the Southside Eagles Football Club, the Brisbane Sailing Squadron, the Bulimba Historical Society, the Myuna Bushcare Group and Bulimba Seniors want to ensure our community stays the wonderful place it is.

There are some dedicated local residents now on a community planning team helping develop a master plan for the site, and we are relying on Brisbane City Council to do the right thing with this. We know that the federal government has let us down. We are looking forward to Brisbane City Council doing the right thing in terms of a constructive partnership with us, and we will be watching to ensure that does happen. We will take up the fight to all of them, no matter who they are. I look forward to informing the House about this important local issue in coming months.

### **Leyburn Airfield, Commemorative Monument**

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (5.36 pm): Recently, on 15 August to be exact, I had the pleasure of attending the unveiling of a commemorative monument at the Leyburn Airfield. Many would not be aware of the existence of this airstrip or the role that it played in the defence of Australia during the Second World War. The airfield was one of four built on the downs by the US for use by heavy bombers in the event the Japanese ever landed near Brisbane, a real possibility at one stage of the war. Thankfully, that never happened, and after building the strip the US forces never actually used it and it was instead used by RAAF units. The airfield was used by RAAF units from July 1944 until the end of the war, during which time many squadrons, all flying B24 Liberator bombers, were based there, including the 200 Special Duties Flight whose mission was to drop agents and supplies of the Australian Army's Z Special Unit by parachute into enemy territory.

The monument was unveiled by a Leyburn Airfield veteran, Ian Lang, in memory of all who served at this important site and in memory of those who flew from the strip on missions and did not return. *The Last Post* was played and one minute of silence was observed. The date of 15 August marked the 70-year anniversary of the surrender of the Japanese that ended the war in the Pacific.

The monument was a joint project of the Leyburn RSL, the Leyburn Sprints, the Leyburn and District Historical Society, the Toowoomba Regional Council and Ian Waters OAM. After the war, the forces were disbanded and the airfield was used for car racing. In 1949, the Australian Grand Prix was held there, the first time the event had been held in Queensland. My father actually attended that day and used to speak about it often. That tradition continues, as that very same weekend the famous Leyburn sprints were held in front of a very large crowd. This is another example of the history we all have in our local communities if we just take the time to investigate it. I thank Gary Sprott of the Leyburn RSL for his kind invitation to attend what was a very moving and memorable ceremony.

### **BHP Billiton Mitsubishi Alliance, Blackwater**

 **Mr PEARCE** (Mirani—ALP) (5.39 pm): I was recently in Blackwater where I chaired a community meeting that was attended by just over 1,000 local and nearby resource community residents. The purpose of the meeting was to engage residents and supporters who were angered by the unforgivable actions of BHP which sacked 300 workers from its Blackwater mine, many of whom lived locally with their families. BMA is the big coal producer which hates families and hates communities and will replace the local workforce with labour hire contract workers. Moments before the meeting, 12-year-old Kealhan O'Brien, a year 6 student at Blackwater North State School, approached me and asked if he could speak to the meeting. The following is what Kealhan had to say—

Hello everybody my name is Kealhan O'Brien and I am a proud born and bred Blackwater boy. I'm also one of the school captains at north school.

It is a great opportunity for me to stand up here and give you all a couple of reasons I think it will be a real shame to see 300 local BMA workers lose their permanent jobs.

I'm a local rugby league player and half of my team's fathers or mothers work at BMA and if they lost their jobs I may not even have a team next year.

And I am also a member of the local PCYC boxing club and my coach is a BMA worker, it would be disappointing not to be able to do the sport I love and it would have a really big impact on other kids growing up in this town.

We have already lost a large number of sporting clubs from losing permanent jobs in the past,

I know this from my parents growing up here and all the opportunities they had here as kids.

Everybody had permanent jobs in the coal mines, and it's the way it should stay. I swear there are two kids gone every week from my school when I speak on parade.

Blackwater, just like all other communities BMA are involved in, will slowly fade away because of this.

Great opportunities in my education will be lost and any future chance of a BMA apprenticeship will be gone if there is no permanent work with BMA.

Thank you everybody for listening to me I hope we can all rally together and everybody can keep their jobs and keep this great little community that I call home, happy.

Cheers.

That was a 12-year-old student, the captain of his school, a very decent young fellow who was very well mannered. He had the guts to stand up in front of 1,000-odd people and tell the meeting how important it was for his town to still have those permanent jobs in the area so he could play his sport and enjoy his life in his community, just like his mum and dad did.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 5.42 pm.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Bailey, Barton, Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Byrne, Costigan, Cramp, Crandon, Crawford, Cripps, D'Ath, Davis, de Brenni, Dick, Dickson, Donaldson, Elmes, Emerson, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Frecklington, Furner, Gilbert, Gordon, Grace, 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