



RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Hansard Home Page: <http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/work-of-assembly/hansard>
 Email: hansard@parliament.qld.gov.au
 Phone (07) 3553 6344 Fax (07) 3553 6369

FIRST SESSION OF FIFTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT

Wednesday, 20 April 2016

Subject	Page
PRIVILEGE	1201
Alleged Unauthorised Release of Committee Documents	1201
Alleged Unauthorised Release of Committee Documents	1201
PETITION	1201
MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS	1201
Innovation and Investment Summit and Startup Festival; Advance Queensland.....	1201
Domestic and Family Violence.....	1202
Gold Coast, Community Cabinet.....	1202
Trade and Investment.....	1203
Innovation and Investment Summit; Bayles, Mr HJP.....	1203
Organised Crime.....	1204
Firearms, Regulations and Licensing.....	1205
Coal Worker's Pneumoconiosis.....	1206
Influenza.....	1206
Entrepreneurs of Tomorrow.....	1207
Gold Coast Commonwealth Games, Official Mascot.....	1207
Solar Power Generation.....	1208
Great Barrier Reef, Coral Bleaching.....	1208
<i>Supporting Families Changing Futures</i>	1209
<i>Tabled paper: Queensland Government: Supporting families changing futures, Advancing</i>	
Queensland's child protection and family support reforms.....	1209
<i>Tabled paper: Queensland Government: Supporting families changing futures, Advancing</i>	
Queensland's child protection and family support reforms—Summary.....	1209
Innovation.....	1209

Table of Contents – Wednesday, 20 April 2016

HEALTH, COMMUNITIES, DISABILITY SERVICES AND DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION COMMITTEE	1210
Report	1210
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee: Report No. 15—Subordinate legislation tabled between 16 February 2016 and 15 March 2016.	1210
LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE	1210
Office of the Information Commissioner, Report	1210
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Letter, dated April 2016, from the Information Commissioner, Ms Rachael Rangihaeata, to the Chair of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee, Mr Mark Furner MP, enclosing a report prepared under section 131 to the Right to Information Act 2009 (Qld).....	1210
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Office of the Information Commissioner Queensland: Report No. 3 of 2015-16—Follow-up of review recommendations: Department of Education and Training—Review of agency adoption of recommendations made under the Right to Information Act 2009 (Qld) and the Information Privacy Act 2009 (Qld).....	1210
NOTICE OF MOTION	1211
Electricians and Contractors	1211
PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS	1211
Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance	1211
Gold Coast	1211
Public Hospital Waiting Lists	1212
Public Hospital Waiting Lists	1213
Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance	1213
QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE	1214
Minister for Housing and Public Works	1214
Deputy Premier	1214
Speaker's Ruling, Question Out of Order	1215
Queensland Economy	1215
Ministerial Diaries	1215
China, Health Services	1216
Royal Commission into Trade Union Governance and Corruption, Report	1216
State Infrastructure Plan	1216
Minister for Racing	1217
Northern Australia, Federal Funding	1218
Racing Queensland, Board Appointments	1219
Speaker's Ruling, Question Out of Order	1219
Jobs	1219
Toowoomba Range, Rail	1220
Advance Queensland, Startup Festival	1220
Regional Queensland, Health Services	1221
Regional Queensland, Transport Infrastructure	1222
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Article from the <i>Fraser Coast Chronicle</i> , dated 19 March 2016, titled 'Fix it: Minister joins Maryborough MP at "dangerous intersection" \$12.5m for road repair'.....	1222
HMAS <i>Tobruk</i>, Dive Wreck	1223
Youth	1223
Oakey Army Aviation Centre	1224
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Queensland Health: Information for medical practitioners—Oakey Army Aviation Centre contamination incident.....	1224
North Queensland, Jobs	1224
North Stradbroke Island, Draft Transition Packages	1225
MINISTERIAL STATEMENT	1226
Further Answer to Question; HMAS <i>Tobruk</i>, Dive Wreck	1226
CRIME AND CORRUPTION AMENDMENT BILL	1226
Second Reading	1226
MOTION	1246
Electricians and Contractors	1246
Division: Question put—That the amendment be agreed to	1252
Resolved in the affirmative.....	1252
Division: Question put—That the motion, as amended, be agreed to.....	1252
Resolved in the affirmative.....	1252
TRANSPORT LEGISLATION (TAXI SERVICES) AMENDMENT BILL	1252
Second Reading	1252
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Photographs, undated, of an Uber services business card.	1265
Division: Question put—That the bill be read a second time.....	1267
Resolved in the affirmative.....	1267
Consideration in Detail	1268
Clause 1, as read, agreed to.....	1268
Insertion of new clause—.....	1268
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee: Report No 21—Transport Legislation (Taxi Services) Amendment Bill 2015, government response.....	1268
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Transport Legislation (Taxi Services) Amendment Bill 2015, explanatory notes to Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe's amendments.....	1268
Amendment agreed to.....	1268

Table of Contents – Wednesday, 20 April 2016

Insertion of new clause—	1268
Division: Question put—That the amendment be agreed to.	1269
Resolved in the affirmative.	1269
Non-government amendment (Mr Katter) agreed to.	1269
Clause 2, as read, agreed to.	1269
Insertion of new clause—	1269
Division: Question put—That the amendment be agreed to.	1270
Resolved in the affirmative.	1270
Non-government amendment (Mr Katter) agreed to.	1270
Insertion of new clause—	1270
Division: Question put—That the amendment be agreed to.	1270
Resolved in the negative under standing order 106.	1270
Non-government amendment (Mr Knuth) negated.	1270
Clause 3—	1271
Clause 3, as amended, agreed to.	1271
Insertion of new clause—	1271
Amendment agreed to.	1273
Insertion of new clause—	1273
Amendment agreed to.	1273
Clause 4—	1273
Clause 4, as amended, agreed to.	1273
Clause 5—	1274
Clause 5, as amended, agreed to.	1274
Insertion of new clause—	1274
Amendment agreed to.	1274
Clause 6—	1274
Clause 6, as amended, agreed to.	1274
Clause 7—	1274
Clause 7, as amended, agreed to.	1275
Third Reading	1275
Long Title	1275
Amendment agreed to.	1275
CRIME AND CORRUPTION AMENDMENT BILL	1275
Second Reading	1275
Division: Question put—That the bill be read a second time.	1284
Resolved in the affirmative.	1284
Consideration in Detail	1284
Clauses 1 to 45, as read, agreed to.	1284
Insertion of new clause—	1284
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Crime and Corruption Amendment Bill 2015, explanatory notes to Hon. Yvette D'Ath's amendments.	1284
Amendment agreed to.	1285
Clause 46, as read, agreed to.	1285
Schedules 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.	1285
Third Reading	1285
Long Title	1285
Amendment agreed to.	1285
RACING INTEGRITY BILL	1285
Second Reading	1285
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Agriculture and Environment Committee: Report No. 15—Racing Integrity	
Bill 2015, government response.	1286
ADJOURNMENT	1306
Australian Industry Trade College, Cleveland	1306
Samford Valley Target Archers	1306
Member for South Brisbane; Country Shows	1307
Nudgee Electorate, School Leaders	1307
Coomera Electorate	1308
Aitkenvale, Police Citizens Youth Club	1309
DownsSteam	1309
World's Greatest Shave, Kallangur	1310
M1 and Beechmont Road, Upgrades	1310
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Media statement, dated 13 April 2016, by the Commonwealth Minister for Infrastructure and Transport and Member for Gippsland, Hon. Darren Chester, titled 'Government committed to easing congestion in South East Queensland'.	1311
MultiLink's National Youth Week; Anzac Day	1311
ATTENDANCE	1312

WEDNESDAY, 20 APRIL 2016

The Legislative Assembly met at 2.00 pm.

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

PRIVILEGE

Alleged Unauthorised Release of Committee Documents

Mr BENNETT (Burnett—LNP) (2.00 pm): It was brought to my attention today in the Agriculture and Environment Committee that I had supposedly breached standing orders relating to the confidentiality of committee business. As I said to my fellow committee members and I say now to the House, if my actions are in breach of standing orders I acknowledge and unreservedly apologise to the House.

Alleged Unauthorised Release of Committee Documents

Mr BUTCHER (Gladstone—ALP) (2.01 pm): I rise as chair of the Agriculture and Environment Committee to report that at this morning's meeting the committee resolved to refer to the Ethics Committee the apparent breach of standing order 211 by the deputy chair, the member for Burnett, by providing a draft report of the committee on the Environmental Protection (Chain of Responsibility) Amendment Bill 2016, or sections of it, to officers of the Queensland Resources Council.

PETITION

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

Water Fluoridation

Mr Sorensen, from 17 petitioners, requesting the House to resume the mandate and state government control of water fluoridation in Queensland [533].

Petition received.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Innovation and Investment Summit and Startup Festival; Advance Queensland

Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (2.02 pm): As promised at the election last year, my government is restoring innovation as a central element of the government of Queensland. Next week my government will host Queensland's first-ever Innovation and Investment Summit in Brisbane, with Queensland leading the nation. The summit and festival will connect great local ideas with investors from across the country and of course overseas.

Modelled on the government's Northern Queensland Economic Summit in Cairns last year, next week's Innovation and Investment Summit and the Startup Festival have had an overwhelming response. In fact, both events are now booked out. With the summit we have over 757 people attending, and there is a waitlist; and for our Startup Festival we have 527 people, with 228 people on the waitlist. This shows the immense interest and opportunities in the Advance Queensland agenda.

Queensland is cementing itself as the national leader in innovation. We are the state to get a start and to be a start-up. Today the Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy and Minister for Small Business announced the first \$10 million round of the inaugural Advance Queensland Research Fellowships and PhD Scholarships. The Minister for Health also attended today's ceremony. The 54 recipients, here at Parliament House today, will help to drive innovation in new and existing industries, keeping and developing talent in Queensland. I am also pleased to report to the House that over 45 per cent of the recipients are women. They will play a key role in building our jobs and industries in the future. Their success will help us to attract leading researchers from overseas and interstate and deliver a brain gain for Queensland.

My trade mission to Hong Kong and China further galvanised my commitment to Advance Queensland. Significantly, we recently signed a major agreement with the Chinese Ministry of Science and Technology that will open doors for Queensland researchers and entrepreneurs to work within China's dynamic science and technology incubators. With this funding we are supporting a broad range of innovative projects across diverse sectors such as health, mining, agriculture, environment, disaster management and energy.

My government is striving for new industries including biofuels and large-scale renewables. We also want to transform our traditional industries and produce opportunities for growth and job creation in whole new areas. I am pleased to say that these fellowships are a direct result of our commitment to listening to stakeholders and working collaboratively on solutions to problems. These fellowships will stand us in good stead to develop, retain and attract world-class talent here in Queensland as well as to turn these ideas into jobs for the future.

Domestic and Family Violence

Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (2.05 pm): Thanks to women like Rosie Batty, domestic violence is now an important part of our national conversation. Gone are the days when this issue was hidden in the shadows. It is up to all of us to keep this conversation alive. It is up to all of us to empower victims to seek help, to empower friends and family to identify the warning signs and, where possible, to change the culture that leads to domestic and family violence in the first place.

Today I am pleased to join the federal government and my COAG colleagues to announce the start of a federal awareness campaign against domestic violence. Queensland is contributing \$3 million to the overall campaign. Advertising begins this weekend across all mediums, with the first phase aimed at parents and family members of children aged 10 to 17 as well as the teachers, coaches, community leaders and employers of young people. It will be supported with online tools and resources to help influencers of young people to reflect on their own attitudes and talk about respect with the young people in their lives. As I said, this is just the first phase. Campaign activities will run to 2018 and will do so with Queensland's full support.

The campaign is part of an increasing national effort to tackle this issue. Queensland is ready and willing to lead from the front, which is why I offered to host a national summit on domestic and family violence in Queensland. I can confirm that the Prime Minister has agreed to my request, with the summit to be hosted here in Queensland in October. The national summit provides an excellent opportunity for Queensland to bring together a broad range of experts from across the country to tackle domestic and family violence.

The government has developed a 10-year reform program in response to the recommendations of the landmark *Not now, not ever* report. The national summit will allow us to share this program with other states and territories. It will allow us to listen to their ideas and their experts as well, because we are all in this together and we can work together better to drive domestic and family violence out of our lives.

Gold Coast, Community Cabinet

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (2.07 pm): My government's next community cabinet meeting will be held at the Gold Coast on 15 and 16 May. This is an opportunity for my government to meet with local business owners, families and workers to discuss our plan to create jobs for Queenslanders.

My government is committed to revitalising community cabinet meetings, making cabinet more accessible to the public. It is for this reason that we reinstated community participation through this public forum. All community cabinet meetings hosted by my government include a public forum where members of the public can ask questions directly to me or my ministers. The public forum at the Gold Coast will be held on Sunday, 15 May starting at 1.30 at Southport State High School. This will be immediately followed by formal deputations, which will be taken by ministers and directors-general of government departments in the school's hall from 2.30 to 4.30.

The program for two-day community cabinet meetings now also includes more time for local community engagement. I will be hosting a women's business breakfast with Minister Enoch on the Monday morning, 16 May. It will be an opportunity for my ministers to meet with local stakeholder groups, community organisations and business leaders to discuss issues that are important to them. The formal cabinet meeting, which has traditionally been held on the Monday morning, will start later in the day.

The Gold Coast is growing strongly. As a government, we are contributing to the growth in jobs and opportunity on the Gold Coast. We are building or upgrading 17 world-class facilities for the 2018 Commonwealth Games, making this area a powerhouse that will inject \$2 billion into the Queensland economy and support more than 30,000 jobs. The \$320 million investment into sport and community infrastructure alone will support more than 1,000 jobs during design and construction, as well as leaving a lasting legacy for the coast. Today I had the opportunity to meet Borobi here at Parliament House. He is a great mascot for what will be a great games. It was good to be part of a government that won the games and now to be Premier of a government that will deliver them. This is on top of the 1,000 jobs supported during the construction of stage 2 of the Gold Coast Light Rail. The community cabinet meeting will be an important opportunity for my government to further our work on the Gold Coast and create new jobs and new opportunities.

Trade and Investment

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade and Investment) (2.10 pm): Trade and investment are a critical part of our future. Already one in five jobs are trade related and over the last two decades we have deepened our relationship with Asian markets, where a burgeoning middle class will help power our future. Queensland exports to China have grown from half a billion dollars in 1999-2000 to \$11.2 billion in 2014-15, moving from our ninth largest export destination to our first. In the 10 years to 2015, Chinese direct investment in Australia was \$15.1 billion, a 60 per cent increase in just 12 months. The Palaszczuk government is working hard to get our share so that we can create jobs and prosperity for Queenslanders. The Premier's recent trade mission to China will help open the doors to more export and investment opportunities, and Trade and Investment Queensland is helping local businesses translate opportunity into jobs.

I am pleased to inform the House that Guoxin International, the international business arm of China's largest project tendering and procurement company, Guoxin Group, recently signed an MOU with the Queensland Investment Corporation. It is a partnership that could see billions of dollars invested over time. Through this partnership, QIC will be working with Guoxin International on potential investment opportunities in infrastructure, real estate, agriculture and private equity, both internationally and here in Queensland. Not only does this partnership introduce another very significant investor to Queensland; it is also recognition of QIC's world-class reputation as a funds manager. China is a significant investor in Queensland and our state's largest trading partner and I congratulate QIC on this partnership agreement which will help develop this valuable relationship even further. I should also note that the introduction of Guoxin International was facilitated by Trade and Investment Queensland, which organised a series of meetings for Guoxin with potential Queensland partners and co-investors earlier this year.

To continue our engagement with Asia, I inform the House that I will be travelling on a trade and investment mission to Indonesia and South Korea from 15 to 21 May. I will lead an industry delegation to a Study Queensland Week in Indonesia involving a series of events to promote our state's world-class education and training industry in this emerging target market. Queensland's current share of Indonesians studying in Australia is very small, offering significant opportunities for growth. I am also scheduled to meet with the Governor of Central Java, which has had a sister-state relationship with Queensland for 25 years. In South Korea, which is our third largest export market, I will meet with government officials, promote our international education and training sector as well as explore opportunities arising from the Australia-South Korea free trade agreement. The Palaszczuk government is committed to helping Queensland companies take on the world and we are committed to attracting the investment that is so important for our state's economic growth and diversification for the benefit of all Queenslanders.

Innovation and Investment Summit; Bayles, Mr HJP

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Minister for Sport) (2.13 pm): A key part of our economic plan is our Advance Queensland initiative supporting innovation, developing new industries, building on traditional strengths and creating jobs now and jobs for the future. Next week the Premier will host the Advance Queensland Innovation and Investment Summit in Brisbane, showcasing the potential for new jobs and new investment through innovation.

Another key element of our economic plan is the work we do with the private sector to foster ideas for innovative projects or services to benefit Queenslanders and create jobs. An essential part of that approach is our market-led proposals initiative that I announced in the 2015 state budget. It is

appropriate that in parallel with the Advance Queensland summit we will be hosting a market-led proposals forum in Brisbane next Wednesday. The Brisbane forum follows similar events I have attended and spoken at in regional centres including Townsville, Cairns, the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast. Those events have attracted about 250 potential proponents and more than 120 are booked in to the Brisbane forum next week.

The MLP initiative operates a staged process for initial assessment, detailed assessment, approval and, finally, delivery. So far, three significant projects worth a total of \$650 million have moved from initial assessment to detailed assessment and I can tell honourable members there are others very much soon to follow. Those progressed so far are the \$100 million Brisbane international cruise terminal, the \$100 million Queensland aquarium and Maritime Museum at South Bank and the \$450 million Logan Motorway enhancement. Together it is estimated they will generate around 1,600 jobs.

This government wants all Queenslanders to have the opportunity to participate in our state's growth and to secure jobs. Our consultative and cooperative approach extends to Indigenous Queenslanders and potential private sector investment in remote Indigenous communities. To that end I was pleased to host an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander investor forum in Cairns last week to discuss new economic opportunities in North Queensland. The market-led proposals initiative was one avenue explored at the forum for developing business opportunities and jobs in the north across sectors including tourism, agribusiness and education, to name just a few. The investment forum last week showed there are already many successful Indigenous business operations that could be expanded or serve as inspiration for new ones—businesses like Ingan Tours, which is wholly owned by the Grant family in Tully who are Jabanbarra Jirrbal rainforest people from the Davidson River valley between Cairns and Townsville. Ingan leads rainforest tours on foot and in kayaks to provide tourists from around the world with a unique view of the lands and waters of the Jabanbarra Jirrbal people. The Mossman Gorge gateway centre is a new ecotourism development, with tourist walks and a gallery showcasing the local Kuku Yalanji artists. Some 90 per cent of its employees are local Indigenous people.

The Olkola people are leading tours through their land north-west of Cairns, which was finally returned to them 18 months ago. The Olkola Aboriginal Corporation is also looking at other ventures which leverage its connection with the land. They include ventures like carbon credits for early burning of the land and cattle farming. I will save the presentation by Colin Saltmere, which was very entertaining but obviously shows the enormous potential of the use of spinifex, for another day.

There is a range of business opportunities in which Indigenous Queenslanders and their communities could be involved. I must say that it was great to have very senior government officials including the Under Treasurer as well as Damian Frawley from QIC to present and show just how serious this government is about investment in Indigenous communities. Market-led proposals can help build on all of those ideas and make them realities and of benefit for all Queenslanders.

I want to take a few moments to pay tribute to 'Tiga' Bayles, who died at the weekend. Tiga was well known for his persistent and passionate advocacy on Indigenous issues and also for his practical approach to improving the lives of individuals and communities. He was a true legend of Australia's media and political landscape. His passing is a profound loss for our state and for all Queenslanders, not just Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people. For decades he was a strong, loud voice on crucial issues that might otherwise have gone unheard. Our entire nation has been enriched by his life and his service. I pass on my condolences to his family and his friends.

Organised Crime

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (2.17 pm): This government is determined to deliver on its election commitment to give Queenslanders strong and robust legislation to tackle serious organised crime in all of its forms. In response to the report from the Taskforce on Organised Crime Legislation, on Thursday, 4 April the Queensland government announced that it will introduce a new regime to tackle serious organised crime in Queensland. The Queensland government is listening to the experts to ensure workable laws to crack down on the pervasive nature of organised crime in Queensland and that they will be made in the best interests of Queensland families.

I want to thank the members of the task force for their dedication and for lending their various expertise from across the criminal justice system. I want to thank the chair, retired Justice Alan Wilson QC, the Bar Association of Queensland, the Queensland Law Society, the Queensland Police

Service, the Queensland Police Union, the Queensland Police Commissioned Officers' Union of Employees, the Public Interest Monitor and representatives from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and the Department of Justice and Attorney-General and the task force secretariat.

Following the comprehensive, detailed and well-researched task force report, I am committed to delivering a new legislative regime aimed at serious organised crime—a regime that is both operationally strong and legally robust. The proposed package of laws will be better suited to combating not just outlaw motorcycle gangs but will empower police to bring down those involved in criminal organisations, be they OMCGs, child sex offenders, drug traffickers or boiler room fraudsters.

The new regime draws upon the findings of the Queensland Organised Crime Commission of Inquiry, the Taskforce on Organised Crime Legislation and the statutory review of the Criminal Organisation Act 2009. All three of these reports are now publicly available. It is proposed to retain some elements of the 2013 suite of laws that were found by the task force to work effectively and to replace those aspects that are considered to be compromised, ineffective or vulnerable to constitutional challenge.

The new regime will include aspects of the laws in other jurisdictions that have been shown to be more robust and effective. The result will be workable and enforceable laws for Queensland that will lead to convictions against groups of organised criminals. Some key features of the new regime include targeted consorting laws, new organised crime control orders, additional jail sentences with mandatory provisions for crimes committed by groups of organised criminals, the commitment to ensure that outlaw motorcycle gang clubhouses remain closed, the wearing of outlaw motorcycle gang colours in licensed premises to remain banned, encouraging people to assist law enforcement in disrupting, dismantling and defeating criminal networks and promoting public confidence in Queensland as a safe place to live and invest.

This is a comprehensive approach to deliver a new regime that can be both operationally strong and legally robust. As we move from the myriad laws that are currently on the books to the new comprehensive regime to tackle serious organised crime, we will continue to work with key stakeholders and across government agencies to have appropriate transition arrangements in place as we move from the old laws to the new regime.

Firearms, Regulations and Licensing

 **Hon. WS BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services) (2.20 pm): Firearms policy is an emotive issue for many in our community. There are strongly held views from different sectors about different aspects of firearms regulation and licensing. Therefore, to ensure that any future policy framework reflects the diverse views of key stakeholders, such as the police, victims of crime, recreational and sporting shooters and the agricultural sector, a decision has been made to establish a new Weapons Consultation Forum.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr BYRNE: Just wait.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr BYRNE: I have never ruled it out. As members of this House would appreciate, firearms and weapons policy is a complex and evolving area for governments to consider and for agencies such as the Queensland Police Service to uphold and enforce. The forum will meet on an as-needs basis and provide an opportunity for key industry, recreational and community stakeholders to provide their views directly to me as the accountable minister.

I appreciate that the forum may or is likely to include robust conversations from time to time. As a member representing a regional area in this House, I am well aware of the importance of different firearms to certain constituencies. I suspect that I am the only member of this House who has ever been qualified for aerial destocking operations under the old BTEC program. I know a little bit about the application of such tools. Nevertheless, it is critical that voices of moderation and the broader views of community members are filtered into any proposal to shift weapons regulation in Queensland.

The membership of the forum will be determined by the government following an expression of interest process. This is similar to the Parole Board process. I look forward to engaging with other members of this House and external stakeholders as part of this process and I appreciate the contributions from those members who have already conveyed their views to me.

I make it clear that the new Weapons Consultation Forum will be different from the former government's Weapons Advisory Panel. That panel had no representation from the broader community and had police officer representation, via the Queensland Police Union, only as a last-minute afterthought from the then premier, as we well remember. I want to ensure that our administrative practises reflect the spirit and object of the Weapons Act in Queensland which, ultimately, is to maintain public safety above all else.

Coal Worker's Pneumoconiosis

 **Hon. AJ LYNHAM** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (2.23 pm): Protecting the health and safety of workers is a fundamental objective for any Labor government and it is particularly important to me as a doctor. That is why I have ordered an independent review of our existing screening system when the early cases of coal worker's pneumoconiosis emerged last year. This review is part of my five-point action plan, which also includes taking action on coalmines exceeding regulated limits on dust levels; improving how information is collected and used to ensure that cases are not missed; investigating regulatory changes as part of the mine safety legislation review that is already underway; and placing the issue on the agenda for the national council of mining ministers. The interim findings of the independent review are available on my department's website and we are implementing recommendations from that interim report.

When I started this process, I committed to transparency and openness and have made public any confirmed diagnosis of coal worker's pneumoconiosis as it has come to light. In the interests of transparency, I will share the advice that I have that a Queensland coalmine exceeded the regulated dust limit last month. My department's inspectors are taking firm action with the operator to ensure that this level is reduced to the regulated limit.

The tripartite Coal Mining Safety and Health Advisory Committee is the cornerstone of mine health and safety in this state. It is made up of three union representatives, three employer representatives and three departmental representatives. The committee is already working on a number of important actions, including regulatory changes to the dust monitoring system, and will develop minimum training and experience standards for all nominated medical advisers. In regard to that, I have already been in contact with the medical colleges.

Further, I am very keen to see more transparency on dust monitoring and I want the committee to look very carefully at how this can be achieved. The next meeting of the committee will be on 26 April and I look forward to receiving advice then. Records of the Coal Mine Workers' Health Scheme have been crosschecked against Queensland hospital admission data to identify any possible unreported cases of coal worker's pneumoconiosis, past or present. We are not waiting for cases to come to us; we are looking through Queensland Health records, actively trying to research and find cases that may be out there in the community. Patient medical records have been reviewed by a respiratory physician, who found insufficient information to determine conclusively that they had coal worker's pneumoconiosis or that they had been missed through the screening program. I encourage any past or current coalminer with any diagnosis of coal worker's pneumoconiosis, or any suspected diagnosis of coal worker's pneumoconiosis, to contact the Mines Inspectorate on 13QGOV—that is 137468—to ensure that we have full information and, most importantly, to see their local medical practitioner.

The CFMEU has continued to play a very large role through the advisory committee and the screen review reference group. That is why I am a bit puzzled by its statements today. I encourage all committee members, including the CFMEU, to continue to examine all of the evidence and work together to provide me with full, frank and considered advice about this extremely important issue. I again commit here in this chamber to act swiftly, in consultation with all parties, and to take whatever action is required through regulation or legislation to protect the health and safety of our coalminers.

Influenza

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (2.27 pm): Every year during winter Queensland's hospital and health services confront a challenge as influenza starts to take its toll on our state. Already, this year we have seen over 2,600 cases of influenza. The effect of the flu can be long waits in the emergency department, ambulances unable to off-load their patients and get back to the next job and cancellations of elective surgery.

The challenge for our health system is twofold. At the same time as more members of the public get sick, so do more members of our staff. That means that our time of highest demand is matched by the time of our largest staff absence due to illness. This year, the Department of Health is working with

the Queensland Ambulance Service and all hospital and health services to produce a winter bed strategy. This strategy is being developed by leaders across our state's public health system and is designed to support the system during this time of increased demand. I will have more to say about that strategy in due course.

I can assure this House that, although the government will do its part, it can do only so much. Queenslanders can play a role to support the health system through this period. There are three things that Queenslanders can do. Firstly, we need Queenslanders to roll up their sleeve and grab a jab. Getting a flu shot is one of the most important preventive health steps that we can all take into the lead-up to winter. I am pleased to say that the Premier and I have set an example today. We rolled up our sleeves and we grabbed a jab.

Secondly, I call on all Queenslanders to go and see their GP if they feel sick and also to proactively manage their health. Queenslanders can also call 13HEALTH for up-to-date advice and support. Thirdly, I ask Queenslanders to remember that emergency departments are for emergencies. This year, a quadrivalent vaccine has been issued as part of the national immunisation program. It protects against two type A and two type B strains of the influenza virus in response to the spike of type B cases that we saw last year. Stocks of the vaccine are now available throughout Queensland. I encourage all members of this House and all Queenslanders to grab a jab and avoid the flu this winter.

Entrepreneurs of Tomorrow

 **Hon. KJ JONES** (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism and Major Events) (2.30 pm): Today I announce a \$1.7 million program to incubate the next generation of tech entrepreneurs in Queensland state schools. Entrepreneurs of Tomorrow will give 100 Queensland primary and secondary state schools the opportunity to become business leaders, creators and innovators. This program is part of our Advancing Education action plan. We are committed to investing in the skills that our young people need to build Queensland's economy of the future. This funding will enable schools to create innovative and entrepreneurial programs that solve real world problems by using coding and robotics. Thousands of students will have the opportunity to connect with a range of experts, including robotics experts, programmers, entrepreneurs and innovators to bring their ideas for the future to life.

Entrepreneurs of Tomorrow will provide students with real world experiences that will generate real pathways into the world of work and further study by inspiring them to be the creators of Queensland's future. Applications for Entrepreneurs of Tomorrow are now open and I encourage all members of the parliament to work with their schools to put in an application as it will close on 13 May.

Gold Coast Commonwealth Games, Official Mascot

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games) (2.31 pm): Just over two weeks ago, on 4 April, Borobi, the blue surfing koala, was introduced to the world as the official mascot of the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games. What an entrance it was! Borobi was spectacularly winched down by rescue helicopter onto the beach at Burleigh Heads, James Bond style, in front of a live TV audience. I was thrilled to join thousands of people to greet him on the beach that day at a community event to celebrate the important two-years-to-go milestone of the countdown to the games.

Once again I would like to say jingerri, or hello, to Borobi and acknowledge the great marsupial himself, who is joining us here in the Speaker's gallery. A big shout and a big thumbs up to Borobi, as he enjoys doing. As we have all learnt by now, 'borobib' means koala in the local Yugambeh language of the Gold Coast and his name highlights a strong commitment to celebrating our rich Indigenous and natural heritage throughout the games. It is not just a high priority for the Palaszczuk government, but one shared by the Commonwealth Games Federation and all of our games partners. As members would have noticed by now, Borobi is an energetic and fun-loving koala who embodies the values of the games as well as the Gold Coast, Queensland and the Australian way of life. He is approachable, determined, passionate and active.

Ms Jones: It sounds like me!

Mr HINCHLIFFE: He is already proving to be a hit and a bit of a media tart. The Minister for Education might want to make other admissions now! He has been touring the country and giving interviews and developing a huge social media following with his very popular tweets. That is a very effective way to communicate when you do not otherwise speak. We hope Borobi's personality will inspire people from all over the world to come and join us here on the Gold Coast for the games to reflect the event's core message to the world, which is 'share the dream'. Welcome, Borobi!

Solar Power Generation

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply) (2.33 pm): I am pleased to be able to stand here today and say that the transition of the Sunshine State to the solar state continues full beam ahead.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr BAILEY: I am doing my best. As at the end of March, Queensland now has more than 1,500 megawatts of installed solar generation capacity, which equates to half a million rooftops. That means that solar is now generating enough electricity in our state to effectively make it our second largest power station. It also means Queensland is now more than half way towards the Palaszczuk government's 2020 solar target of 3,000 megawatts. This milestone sees Queensland continue to demonstrate its world-leading credentials in the uptake of solar photovoltaics. Our state already has one of the highest uptakes of residential rooftop solar panels in the world as more Queenslanders continue to jump on board.

I can advise the House that close to 30 per cent of all detached homes in Queensland now have a solar system installed and are producing electricity from the sun's rays. Not only that, but the system sizes are increasing as businesses start to take up the opportunities that solar offers. There is strong potential for future growth in emerging sectors, especially as battery storage systems enter the market and product costs continue to fall. Customers are installing smaller scale solar at a rate of approximately one panel per minute. Couple that with Queensland's impressive pipeline of proposed large-scale solar PV projects and the state is well on its way to its 2020 solar target of a million solar rooftops.

Short-listed large-scale solar projects include many in North Queensland in places like Collinsville, Hughenden, Kidston and Proserpine. This is all part of our government's election commitment to invigorate the state's renewable energy sector. We will continue to boost investment and jobs in renewables as we play our part in addressing climate change and creating jobs now and into the future.

Great Barrier Reef, Coral Bleaching

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef) (2.36 pm): Members will be well aware that the Great Barrier Reef is currently affected by a global mass coral bleaching event caused by warming oceans due to climate change combined with the effects of a strong El Nino weather system. I can confirm to the House that extensive in-water and aerial surveys conducted in March and April of this year by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority show extreme coral bleaching in Far North Queensland between Cooktown and the tip of Cape York. Bleaching has also extended and intensified between Cooktown and Townsville and minor bleaching has been detected in the southern areas of the marine park. In fact, findings released today by the National Taskforce on Coral Bleaching confirm that 93 per cent of reefs within the Great Barrier Reef are affected by some degree of bleaching.

Thankfully, I can also report to the House that key tourism sites off Cairns are not as severely impacted as areas further north. I have personally witnessed that most of the reef around Cairns is as vibrant and beautiful as ever. This is some bright news in an otherwise distressing event. This bleaching event is still unfolding and the full extent and severity, including the level of coral mortality, will take a number of months to become clear. It is difficult to see the disturbing effects of coral bleaching, as I have, and know our precious Great Barrier Reef is under pressure. It is imperative, for the sake of the reef and our tourism industry, that we do everything we can to reduce these pressures.

The Palaszczuk government is working hard to address local pressures on the reef, in particular the land based run-off of sediments and nutrients that pollutes the waters of the reef lagoon. We cannot hope to ensure the reef's long-term future without decisive action on global warming. It is the federal government's job to ensure Australia's carbon emissions reduce in line with the international agreement on keeping global warming to well below two degrees. We are still waiting to see the federal government do its job. Given the scale of bleaching being experienced, the clear link to global warming and the lack of a coherent effective national policy, I have today written to federal environment minister Greg Hunt, calling on him to convene an urgent meeting of Australia's environment ministers so we can discuss developing such a policy together. I have requested this meeting to be in Cairns as soon as possible so that ministers and officials can see firsthand the devastating effects of warmer ocean temperatures caused by climate change on our Great Barrier Reef. I will continue to keep the House informed as this issue unfolds.

Supporting Families Changing Futures

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (2.39 pm): I am pleased to table the latest update on the child and family reforms, *Supporting families changing futures*, published today online.

Tabled paper: Queensland Government: Supporting families changing futures, Advancing Queensland's child protection and family support reforms [\[534\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Government: Supporting families changing futures, Advancing Queensland's child protection and family support reforms—Summary [\[535\]](#).

The update shows that more families are getting access to crucial supports when they need them and fewer families are being referred to Child Safety Services. It also outlines our key priorities over the next two years, including actions that further strengthen our focus on prevention and early intervention, tackling domestic and family violence, and addressing the continued over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families in child protection services. *Supporting families changing futures* is our way forward in delivering on the 10-year child and family reform agenda. The publication shows our commitment to those reforms and highlights some of the important new initiatives and programs that the Palaszczuk government has introduced to ensure the reforms remain on the right track.

Last year, the government allocated \$6.6 million over two years to help all Queensland parents and carers learn new skills and build confidence to raise healthy, well-adjusted children through free access to the PPP, or Positive Parenting Program. So far, 6,000 parents have accessed the program. As part of the child and family reform agenda, we allocated \$31.3 million over four years on initiatives to tackle domestic and family violence, which is prevalent in many of the families that come to the attention of Child Safety. This financial year, we have also invested half a million dollars to provide specialist domestic and family violence training and resources for front-line family support and child protection workers across the state.

We continue to build on the evidence base to inform future directions. In this area we are providing more than \$420,000 over the next three years to help establish the inaugural Leneen Forde Chair of Child Protection Research at Griffith University. Professor Clare Tilbury from the university's School of Social Work and Human Services will take up the position this month.

Those are just some of the key elements of our *Supporting families changing futures* reform agenda that will deliver real, positive outcomes for Queensland children and families. While progress is being made, we know that there is still more to be done, particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. The entrenched over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in the child protection system is nothing short of a crisis and I am determined that this government will make serious inroads in addressing it.

Over the coming weeks and months, I will continue to speak with community members and leaders about how we can help more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families keep their kids at home and safe, instead of seeing them end up in the child protection system. I commend this publication to the House.

Innovation

 **Hon. LE DONALDSON** (Bundaberg—ALP) (Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries) (2.42 pm): The Palaszczuk government is committed to supporting our primary producers through pioneering research, development and innovation. The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries is a powerhouse of research and development for the sector. I am continuously impressed by the innovative work being conducted by our researchers. Most recently, we have enjoyed great acclaim for the work done to bring the Queen Garnet plum to market. Developed by our horticultural researchers, the Queen Garnet has become something of a sensation in retail circles. Dubbed the super plum because of its high antioxidant levels and potential health properties, the Queen Garnet is now widely available in shops and is in very high demand. Our commercial partner, Nutrafruit, says that, as well as domestic sales success, there is a lot of international interest from many major stone fruit growing countries in the world. The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries is the owner of the plant breeders' right to Queen Garnet plums and, through commercial arrangements with industry partners, the Queensland economy and the industry stand to benefit significantly from growing Queen Garnet on a wider scale.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! One moment, Minister. I apologise for interjecting on your speech. Member for Nanango, Leader of the Opposition and member for Mermaid Beach, I urge you not to make unnecessary interjections.

Ms DONALDSON: Similarly, our aquaculture researchers have taken the little-known fish species cobia from the wild to a high-quality, award-winning farmed product in the space of just eight years. I was pleased to visit, along with the member for Pumicestone, the Bribie Island Research Centre, where, along with CSIRO and industry partners, the department has developed this fishery to the point where the fish is already being sold in high-end capital city restaurants. Consumer testing of cobia found that it performed exceptionally well against other well-known products such as kingfish and salmon. It is delicious and, having tasted it, I can easily understand why so many people are excited about its potential. In just eight years, we have moved from nothing to a million dollar industry and, in the next ten years, that industry could be worth \$50 million.

Last month, I joined the members for Mundingburra and Townsville to see the great innovative work being done at JCU in Townsville. JCU researchers have developed an algae that cleans and purifies water and also has the potential to be used as a food source for cattle. Later that day, I visited MBD Energy's algal based water cleaning at Pacific Reef Fisheries in Ayr to see the industrial application of JCU's research. Innovations such as this demonstrate why the CRC should be in Townsville.

We are also doing some very interesting work on the pest control front. Last month, I announced that the department had released specially bred sap-sucking bugs to help control the destructive coral cactus in the Longreach area. This is an Australian first. It is an alternative approach to conventional control methods such as herbicides and burning, which can be ineffective and expensive. The cochineal bug offers the best chance of combating the weed, which is a threat to grazing industries and is invading much of western Queensland.

HEALTH, COMMUNITIES, DISABILITY SERVICES AND DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION COMMITTEE

Report

 **Ms LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (2.45 pm): I lay upon the table of the House report No. 15 of the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee.

Tabled paper: Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee: Report No. 15—Subordinate legislation tabled between 16 February 2016 and 15 March 2016 [\[536\]](#).

This report covers the portfolio subordinate legislation tabled between 16 February 2016 and 15 March 2016 considered by the committee. The committee did not identify any significant issues regarding consistency with fundamental legislative principles or the lawfulness of the subordinate legislation. I commend the report to the House.

LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Office of the Information Commissioner, Report

 **Mr FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (2.46 pm): As chair of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee, I lay upon the table report No. 3 of 2015-16 to the Queensland Legislative Assembly by the Office of the Information Commissioner titled *Follow-up of review recommendations Department of Education and Training: review of agency adoption of recommendations made under the Right to Information Act 2009 (Qld) and the Information Privacy Act 2009 (Qld)*. The committee chair is required to table the report under the Right to Information Act 2009 and the Information Privacy Act 2009. I commend the report to the House.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated April 2016, from the Information Commissioner, Ms Rachael Rangihaeata, to the Chair of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee, Mr Mark Furner MP, enclosing a report prepared under section 131 to the Right to Information Act 2009 (Qld) [\[537\]](#).

Tabled paper: Office of the Information Commissioner Queensland: Report No. 3 of 2015-16—Follow-up of review recommendations: Department of Education and Training—Review of agency adoption of recommendations made under the Right to Information Act 2009 (Qld) and the Information Privacy Act 2009 (Qld) [\[538\]](#).

NOTICE OF MOTION

Electricians and Contractors



Mr NICHOLLS (Clayfield—LNP) (2.47 pm): I give notice that I shall move—

That this House—

1. notes that Queensland is already well serviced by thousands of registered local electricians and contractors who provide effective, high-quality electrical services, and provide jobs, training and skills to apprentices in Queensland; and
2. calls on the Palaszczuk Labor government to abandon its plans to create a taxpayer funded monolith company to compete against mum-and-dad small business electricians and local electrical contractors.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance



Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (2.47 pm): One has only to listen to today's ministerial statements to see the competitive tensions. Let us contrast feel-good job-creating statements by the Premier, the Treasurer and the education minister with the statement by the Minister for the Environment, the member for Mount Coot-tha, who demonised the people of North Queensland for their contributions to our economy. It epitomises what is happening in the Queensland economy as a whole, when after nearly 18 months we do not have a jobs plan or an economic plan from this government.

So far, all we have seen are short-sighted hollow-log raids by the Treasurer and a government that is simply handing in the LNP's homework. Last night's Queen's Wharf debate was a good case in point. At some stage, those opposite will have to come up with their own policies to boost the economy and create jobs. At some stage, members such as the member for South Brisbane will have to stop worrying about holding on to their inner-city seats and start delivering policies that are good for all of Queensland. I will reflect on some of the stories that I have been hearing from people across the state to give an indication of what is happening, particularly in regional communities.

A fortnight ago today, the member for Burdekin and I attended a chamber of commerce function at the Larrikin Hotel in Bowen. That is a place where pubs have been closing, hotels have been closing and small businesses have been closing. About 60 people attended that meeting. It was encouraging to see the number of people who turned out, alongside Andrew Wilcox, the new Whitsunday Regional Council mayor.

While I have no doubt that the hospitality of Bruce and Helena played a large part in attracting such a crowd, what it really showed me was that the hardworking small business owners of Bowen were determined to have a say. There were local tourism operators, shopkeepers, farmers, accountants, tradespeople and mums and dads and grandparents present. One of them told me quite frankly that he was a Labor voter but he feels as though they are not being listened to by this Labor government.

The frustration these Queenslanders are feeling at the lack of action from this do-nothing, be-nothing government under a know-nothing Premier is palpable. This sentiment was echoed everywhere I travelled. Regional Queenslanders are tired of being seen as the conscience salve for the south-east. Their livelihoods are being destroyed because the member for South Brisbane and the member for Mount Coot-tha need green preferences to keep their jobs.

Stalling on Adani and Abbot Point and the total ban on uranium exploration says that the Palaszczuk government is doing nothing. A \$3.6 billion reduction in capital purchases says that the Palaszczuk government does not care. Begging the federal government for a bailout says that the Palaszczuk government is not governing at all.

Fifteen months ago the member for Inala promised Queenslanders the world, but all she has delivered so far is a world of pain for the people of regional Queensland, and they deserve better. That is why we have restored Royalties for the Regions. That is what we will deliver for the people of regional Queensland and North and Far North Queensland.

Gold Coast



Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games) (2.50 pm): It is no thanks to the member for Surfers Paradise and his nay-saying and negativity that the Gold Coast is booming. Queenslanders, interstate visitors and people from across the world are visiting that great city. They are moving in droves to the coast. We see that property values are forecast to skyrocket.

To cater for this expansion the Palaszczuk government is putting a huge level of investment in and focus on the Gold Coast and its surrounds. It was great to hear the Premier announce today that the community cabinet will go to the Gold Coast in May. We will be in Southport and listening to Gold Coasters. There will be a lot of experience of them not being heard by those members opposite who represent the Gold Coast. Certainly a lot of people across the whole of Queensland, including on the Gold Coast, were not listened to by the previous government.

The opportunities for and focus on the Gold Coast is not just housing and tourism. As a government, we are focused on diversifying the economy. The region is becoming a centre for research, a hub for the knowledge economy and a home for innovation. The government is investing in essential services such as health, education and research.

That is why we are putting in \$10.2 million in extra funding over the next two years to reduce outpatient wait times for Gold Coasters. This will ensure that some 6,700 extra patients will be given outpatient appointments and surgery before 30 June next year. Some \$50 million has been pledged for a new school in Coomera. It is set to open in 2020. We have unveiled the master plan for the Gold Coast Health and Knowledge Precinct, which will support more than 20,000 jobs and help future proof the Gold Coast economy. The government has changed the way the Gold Coast now connects with investment in Gold Coast Light Rail stage 1 and now stage 2.

This level of investment will see the region transform for the better. The Gold Coast has become more than just Australia's playground. The Palaszczuk government will be up to the challenge of making sensible investment and forward-planning decisions to ensure that we drive home the advantage that that great region has. We will not only develop as a result of the great opportunity of the former Labor government initiative of hosting the 2018 Commonwealth Games but also develop a great platform and great infrastructure to support the whole community.

Labor and the Palaszczuk government are doing the best job to deliver and enhance the Gold Coast and the Gold Coast's future. I encourage all honourable members to get down to the coast and enjoy some of the great fruits of the infrastructure that this government delivered and make sure they have a great time.

Mr Cramp interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Caloundra, I warn the member for the Gaven under standing order 253A. Please cease your unnecessary and disorderly interjections. If you persist I will take the appropriate action.

Public Hospital Waiting Lists

 **Mr McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (2.54 pm): The Leader of the House mentioned waiting lists. That is exactly the point that I want to raise today. Since the ALP came into government back in February 2015 there has been an attack on the record of the LNP government with regard to surgery waiting lists.

Now we have an independent body that came out with a report on this yesterday. The Queensland Audit Office laid to waste all those claims and highlighted the fact that the work done by the LNP under Lawrence Springborg cut waiting lists significantly after 20-odd years of debacle under the ALP. It showed that the number of people waiting longer for surgery in 2013 was 7,042 and that that number had fallen to 175 by June 2015. The work that we had done under Lawrence Springborg had cut that long wait for surgery significantly. We now find that in December 2015 that figure had blown out yet again. There are now 356 Queenslanders waiting longer for elective surgery now than there were in June 2015. This is under the watch of this Labor minister. There are the ghosts of Wilson, Lucas and Robertson hovering all over that mob over there.

The figure for those waiting for elective surgery in June 2014 was 30,782. In December 2015 that figure had blown out by another 7,000 Queenslanders. We can go back over the history of Labor with regard to this matter. I smell the past coming back to haunt Queenslanders with regard to elective surgery. We have another Labor minister and more debacles.

The minister has had many cracks at the surgery on time guarantee offer by the LNP. The history of this matter shows that we did exactly what we said we were going to do. We were going to cut the waiting lists for Queenslanders.

More importantly, in March 2012 only 77 per cent of Queenslanders were receiving their surgery on time. By February 2015 that figure had gone from 77 per cent to 97 per cent of Queenslanders getting their surgery on time. In 2014-15 we left a surplus in the Health budget of \$320 million. This is after taking all the action the LNP government did under Lawrence Springborg to deal with this matter.

In the *Courier-Mail* today the director-general makes the point that we do not take into account the outcomes of surgery. I say to him, 'Release the data.' If he says we are wrong then release the data and then we will quiz that as well.

Public Hospital Waiting Lists

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (2.57 pm): I am delighted to be able to say a few words in the House today—some truth, not spin, about the state of waiting lists in Queensland. The member for Caloundra just said in the House, in reference to the Queensland Audit Office report, that there were 356 long waits now in Queensland. I will check the transcript. You said there are 356 long waits for surgery now. If that is what you said, that is deliberately misleading the House. You read the report. You know that number was at December 2015, not now. If you said 356 now, I will write to the Speaker on that.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, I know you are on a roll, but I would ask you to refer to the member for Caloundra by the appropriate title.

Mr DICK: Thank you, Mr Speaker. If the member for Caloundra said that, I will write to you.

What are the numbers now? What happened? When we came to office in February 2015 there were 324 long waits for surgery, not 74. Again, that is misleading the House. The members opposite deliberately leave out children waiting for surgery at Lady Cilento Children's Hospital. Some 324 were waiting as at 2015. I have said that in the House previously. What is the number today? As at 1 April the number is 186—from 324 to 186. That is the number as at 1 April.

In terms of outpatients, the member for Southern Downs left 100,000 people waiting in the waiting room. The member for Caloundra was in the cabinet. He did nothing about them. He completely ignored them. This government will not ignore them. This government will not turn its face away from Queenslanders waiting for a specialist outpatient appointment. There were 100,000 when we came to office; there are 85,000 now. That is what this government delivered. When demand is going up, the lists go up, but the number of patients waiting longer than clinically recommended—and that is the measure: patients should not wait longer than doctors have recommend—has gone down. The number has gone down for both surgery and outpatient appointments.

What was the legacy of the member for Southern Downs? A risky opening of the Lady Cilento Children's Hospital, a risky closing of the Barrett Adolescent Centre, a trail of sacked health workers across the length and breadth of Queensland, and savage cuts to mental health. If the member for Caloundra wants to defend the Leader of the Opposition, let him do that because Queenslanders know that legacy. That is why Queenslanders voted Labor at the last state election, because we will be genuine, we will be realistic and we will be straight with the people of Queensland about these waiting lists. What Queensland needs is the truth, not more spin doctors whom all of those members opposite represent.

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call the Leader of the Opposition, member for Caloundra, you are warned under standing order 253A. You were deliberately trying to talk over the top of the minister while he was giving his private member's statement. He did not do that to you.

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

 **Mr SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (3.00 pm): When this government was formed just a little over 12 months ago, there were many promises made to you, Mr Speaker, and to Queenslanders about a whole new standard of honesty, accountability, integrity and also taking responsibility for actions. What have we seen with regard to new standards? We did not see those new standards being applied in relation to the member for Cook. We certainly did not see those new standards being applied in relation to the member for Bundamba. We have certainly not seen those new standards being applied in relation to the Deputy Premier and her quite appalling actions.

What we have here is a government and a Premier in particular who has lost control. We have a Premier who has lost control of her government. We have a Premier who has lost control of her party. We have a Premier who has lost control of the economy. We have a Premier who has lost control of jobs in Queensland. Who is in control? The radical union bosses are in control in this state. The extreme green leaders are in control in this state. The outlaw motorcycle gangs, the criminal motorcycle gangs, are in control in this state.

We know that we have a government that is not in control of the things that matter to the people of Queensland. That is why after about six months and four iterations we have a Minister for Tourism who cannot even successfully roll out a tourism investment strategy. We had four iterations last year and she has given up now. Four months down the track we do not now today have a tourism investment strategy.

We have a government that is putting at risk the people of Queensland with regard to public safety. We have worsening unemployment. We saw the figures—last week a 0.5 per cent increase in the number of people who are unemployed in Queensland. If you look at regional Queensland, in North Queensland I understand that up to 25,000 jobs have been lost over that period of time, to the extent that the figures are even hiding the reality. We have more and more Queenslanders that have given up looking for work because this government is frozen at the wheel. We have a government that is paralysed, a government that has absolutely no idea how to get an idea. They are clueless as to how to get a clue in Queensland. That is what we see with this government.

In contrast, we have a situation in Queensland where the LNP does have a plan to power up the economy, to roll out the jobs and to manage the debt. Queenslanders have been waiting with bated breath. They are going to be waiting a lot longer for this government to be able to match that.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr SPEAKER: Question time will finish at 4.03 pm.

Minister for Housing and Public Works

 **Mr SPRINGBORG** (3.03 pm): My first question without notice is to the Minister for Police. Can the minister inform the House whether he has sought or received advice as to whether the Minister for Housing and Public Works has breached section 55 of the Criminal Code for the obstruction of a member of parliament?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I believe this matter reflects on matters that are before the Ethics Committee. I would seek your interpretation as to whether this question should be ruled out of order, as it would have been in the past.

Mr SPEAKER: I will allow the minister to answer the question.

Mr BYRNE: I understand the nature of the question. It is my understanding that all matters surrounding allegations that have been made are before the Ethics Committee. There have certainly been no approaches to me and I have made no approaches to the Queensland Police Service on the matter.

Deputy Premier

Mr SPRINGBORG: My second question without notice is to the Premier. Given the numerous complaints and widespread concern within the Labor Party about the conduct of the Deputy Premier, will the Premier say how she has satisfied herself that the Deputy Premier has acted appropriately on all occasions?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. This matter is less specific than the matter that was raised before in relation to the Minister for Housing and Public Works. This is directly in relation to the Deputy Premier and relates to matters that are before the Ethics Committee. That is the proper place for these matters to be dealt with, not the House.

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, I need to make it very clear that the Premier is not able to speak on any matters which may impact on the matters currently before the Ethics Committee. Can you please clarify that your question is not related to any matters currently before the Ethics Committee and repeat the question?

Mr SPRINGBORG: It actually is, because it—

Mr SPEAKER: With respect, if it impacts on matters before—

Mr SPRINGBORG: No, Mr Speaker. It does not relate to those particular matters.

Mr SPEAKER: Will you please repeat the question, Leader of the Opposition?

Mr SPRINGBORG: Mr Speaker, if I understand what you asked, you are asking whether it relates directly to the matters or specifically to the matters. It does not, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: Repeat the question, please.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. You directly asked the Leader of the Opposition to repeat the question. He then went into debating the matter. I suggest that we move on.

Mr STEVENS: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Since when does the Leader of the House have the right to direct the Speaker how to conduct the business of this House?

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, members. Members, the clock is ticking. We are in question time. I am in your hands. Leader of the Opposition, will you please repeat your question.

Mr SPRINGBORG: My question was simply: given the numerous complaints and widespread concern within the Labor Party about the conduct of the Deputy Premier, will the Premier say how she has satisfied herself that the Deputy Premier has acted appropriately on all occasions?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The Leader of the Opposition's question is laden with inferences and imputations. I would suggest to you that you consider that matter and that you rule the question out of order.

Speaker's Ruling, Question Out of Order

Mr SPEAKER: I rule the question out of order as there are imputations contained within it.

Queensland Economy

Mr KING: My question is to the Premier. Will the Premier outline any recent indicators of Queensland's economic performance?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for his question about the economy and jobs. When I travel the length and breadth of Queensland, the No. 1 concern people have is jobs. It is about jobs for them, jobs for their children and setting in place the dynamic for diversifying this economy that we have in Queensland into the future. That is exactly what my government will do. As I said in my ministerial statement earlier this morning, next week we are holding our first Advance Queensland innovation and investment summit right here in Queensland. It is obvious that those opposite are oblivious to it. Today I invite the Leader of the Opposition to attend to see the ideas that are happening in Queensland. I invite him to come along to the innovation and investment summit so that he can satisfy himself that this state is booming. This state is filled with people who have entrepreneurial spirit, innovation and ideas, and they want to create jobs and power this economy further.

We have created more than 60,000 jobs in this state and that means a lot to Queensland families. The unemployment rate is now six per cent—down from 6.6 per cent which we inherited from those opposite. If they want to talk about the contrast between my government and those opposite, it is very clear: we care about people; we care about jobs. I remember the three years of the Campbell Newman government. I remember them because some of them who sat at the cabinet table who made the decision to cut thousands of jobs in this state are still here.

They want to talk about regional Queensland. We understand that regional Queensland is hurting, but they are hurting because of the impact caused by Campbell Newman and those opposite. The member for Clayfield is still here, the member for Southern Downs is still here, the member for Surfers Paradise is still here and the member for Kawana is still here. The member for Callide wanted to leave but, unfortunately, I am told they would not give him the application form to apply to run for a federal seat. The member for Toowoomba South is leaving. He does not want to hang around here. We are still waiting to see the resignation letter. When is that going to turn up? We are still waiting to see in black and white when he is saying goodbye. Perhaps when he goes to Canberra he can start fighting for our fair share from the federal government when it comes to jobs and infrastructure in this state, because this opposition is absolutely hopeless.

Ministerial Diaries

Mr LANGBROEK: My question without notice is to the Premier. Given the Minister for Housing and Public Works omitted the name of union official Michael Ravbar from his February ministerial diary, will the Premier now direct that all ministers ensure that the names of union officials are properly disclosed?

Ms PALASZCZUK: It is a requirement under this government that ministerial diaries are put up in the public realm because we believe in transparency and honesty. What I am sick and tired of, and what Queenslanders are sick and tired of, is the same LNP. This is the same Campbell Newman LNP. The names may change but it is the same LNP—

Mr STEVENS: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Only yesterday you delivered your directions in relation to relevance. Please put the Premier in the right direction.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Premier, I ask you to ensure your answer is relevant to the question, not the topic you want to talk about.

Ms PALASZCZUK: The diaries are put up publicly and I expect my ministers to disclose those diaries as they are required to do.

China, Health Services

Mr PEGG: My question is to the Premier. Will the Premier outline any opportunities for Queensland businesses in China in the area of health care and any examples that the Premier is aware of?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Stretton for his question about jobs for Queenslanders working abroad. When I was in China recently I was pleased to go to an area about 45 minutes outside of Shanghai to open a brand-new dental practice. That is not only the first dental practice for Queensland but also the first for Australia since the signing of the CHAFTA agreement. That means that our health services are in demand in China. This satellite suburb outside of Shanghai that I went to—this is to describe the growth so we can put the opportunities for the future into perspective—is going to be, in a pretty small area, the size of Brisbane's population.

I give full credit to the practice owners, Kent Farmer and Marcus Tod—who also have offices across Brisbane—who are now in Shanghai. Their courage in taking up the opportunity to get into that market is an enormous credit to them. Their practice will pave the way for other companies and other health practices here in Queensland and Australia to explore the opportunities they will have over there. As I said, I am advised this is the first time an Australian healthcare provider has taken advantage of the chapter and set up shop in China. Ethos is also the first Australian company to receive a private health licence in Shanghai. When we talk about opportunities, it is not just in tourism but also in health services. We will continue to drive that to encourage investment over there because it will mean more jobs and more opportunities.

Whilst I am speaking about opportunities in China, it is great to see that TAFE is also entering the market in China. People will not have to come over here to Queensland to study; they will be able to get a real Queensland experience by studying at TAFE in China. There are enormous opportunities and ones that my government will continue to grasp with both hands.

As I mentioned previously, the middle class in China will reach some 800 million people in the years to come. That presents enormous opportunities for our aged-care services, our health services, tourism, exports and agribusiness. We need to make sure that we are completely unified in our approach of Queenslanders embracing opportunities in China but also welcoming the investment that we will receive from Chinese companies into Queensland which will mean jobs for Queenslanders.

Royal Commission into Trade Union Governance and Corruption, Report

Mr WALKER: My question is to the Premier. It has been four months since the release of the trade union royal commission report which outlined widespread misconduct that has taken place in every polity in Australia except for the Northern Territory. Apart from voting down the LNP motion in this House seeking a response, what action has the government taken to respond to the grave findings of the commission?

Ms PALASZCZUK: My understanding is we are still waiting to see the federal government response in relation to that. Perhaps the member might ask his federal colleagues or Malcolm Turnbull. Perhaps when they come to Queensland we can ask them, because we need a federal government response first. It was not set up under the state government; it was a federal royal commission. Once again, attack, attack, attack from this opposition. All they know is constant attacks. There are no new ideas, no talk about the economy—

Mr STEVENS: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I refer to your ruling and advice yesterday. We are not here to debate the matter. We are not talking about attacks. Please answer the question.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Premier has nothing further to add.

State Infrastructure Plan

Mr CRAWFORD: My question is to the Deputy Premier. Will the Premier update the House on the implementation of Queensland's infrastructure plan?

Ms TRAD: I thank the honourable member for the question. As this is the first time on my feet since his recent nuptials in this very beautiful parliament, I pass on my public congratulations to the member for Barron River and his lovely wife, Rosie.

I was very pleased to go up to Cairns last week to join the member for Barron River, the member for Mulgrave and the member for Mundingburra, who was there as the Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland, to inspect the Bill Fulton Bridge. This is an issue that the member for Barron River has raised with me, and I know that he has also raised it with the member for Mulgrave, the Treasurer, on multiple occasions. The member for Barron River has made it clear that this is a key congestion problem and, in fact, I did experience that firsthand when I was trying to get to the media conference. There was quite a lot of congestion and that is because the Bill Fulton Bridge is a congestion point where four lanes merge into two and it has become a problem.

I was very pleased to have a look at it to see whether duplicating or upgrading the Bill Fulton Bridge could be considered within our \$180 million Significant Regional Infrastructure Projects Program as part of the State Infrastructure Plan. That is a very important component of the \$500 million State Infrastructure Fund which we announced last month when we launched the State Infrastructure Plan—the first State Infrastructure Plan that Queensland has had in more than three years.

Other really important infrastructure projects have been identified in the State Infrastructure Plan for the state of Queensland—projects like Cross River Rail, the Ipswich Motorway, the Bruce Highway, the Townsville stadium and the M1 Pacific Motorway merge. I know that those opposite have been running Malcolm Turnbull's strategy in the Queensland parliament today, but I want to talk about the Queensland infrastructure projects that the Turnbull government should give due consideration to which they have been silent on. We know that the Premier has personally raised a number of infrastructure projects with Malcolm Turnbull at a national level, and we have had silence.

What have we had? We have had the Turnbull government giving Western Australia \$491 million and also the contract for the Pacific patrol boat replacement. He is giving Western Australia contracts and money without any sort of ties attached to it, but he will not stump up for the Townsville stadium and he has not responded to our State Infrastructure Plan and our request for him to fund the Ipswich Motorway, the M1 motorway merge and other key projects. I am calling on those opposite. After that insipid and somewhat perplexing attack by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition this morning, it is no wonder that the federal government does not know what its colleagues at a state level want it to do.

Minister for Racing

Mrs STUCKEY: My question is to the Minister for Racing. As a minister of the Crown, did the minister disclose a direct personal financial relationship with Mr Steven Wilson to the Integrity Commissioner prior to the minister's recommendation of Mr Wilson's appointment being taken to cabinet? If so, will she now table the disclosure?

Ms GRACE: I thank the honourable member for the question. I am not sure exactly what she means by—and I am trying to think of her actual words—a personal direct financial relationship with a publicly listed company. I fail to understand how that becomes a personal financial investment or relationship when it was disclosed on the Register of Members' Interests. My husband and I did have a few shares in Wilson HTM, I think it may have been, which is a publicly listed company and able to be bought by anybody in this House, and that was clearly identified on the register. How that becomes a personal private financial relationship is honestly beyond me. As soon as I was appointed minister, I sold those shares in line with the ministerial guidelines. My updated details on the Register of Members' Interests clearly show that those shares and anything that could have been a conflict with me being appointed as Minister for Racing were all sold and I have discarded all of those shares.

This is really an unbelievable slight on a very innocent relationship that I have had with a very outstanding Queenslander in Steve Wilson. They are attacking even their own these days, because Steve Wilson is an outstanding Queenslander who I had the honour of sharing—

Mr STEVENS: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. There was no reflection or imputation at all on Mr Wilson, which the minister is now trying to—

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I rise to a point of order!

Mr STEVENS: I have not finished my point of order, Leader of the House. There is no imputation or reflection on Mr Wilson by the question that was asked. The question specifically was about the Integrity Commissioner and those sorts of matters and there was no imputation on Mr Wilson. The minister should answer the question and finish it at that.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you. I will listen to the point of order from the Leader of the House.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: Mr Speaker, there is no point of order that is appropriate for the Leader of Opposition Business to raise in relation to the matter. The minister is clearly answering the question and is staying relevant to the question. There is no point of order in relation to the matters that he raises.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, members. There is no point of order.

Ms GRACE: I think any imputation or suggestion that Steve Wilson was appointed chair of Racing Queensland because somehow I had a personal financial relationship with him is disgraceful and outrageous.

Mrs STUCKEY: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. There was definitely no imputation. My question was very clearly asking the minister whether she disclosed or discussed with the Integrity Commissioner—

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Currumbin, that is a frivolous point of order. Resume your seat. Minister, do you have anything further you would like to add?

Ms GRACE: Any suggestion is offensive and is insulting to a fine Queenslander who has outstanding credentials to take on the role of chairman of Racing Queensland. I did consult the Integrity Commissioner—

Mrs Stuckey interjected.

Ms GRACE:—because I also have shares in a fund manager called Hyperion. You buy shares and you have no control over how that is invested. I wanted to be sure—not because of the question of the member for Currumbin—that if I held on to those, because I had no direct influence on how the funds were invested, I was not breaching ministerial guidelines. It came back that I was not.

Mrs Stuckey interjected.

Ms GRACE: I completely disassociate myself from any of the allegations made by the member for Currumbin. If there is a member in this place who will scrape the bottom of the barrel when it comes to questions, it is the member for Currumbin. It is an indictment on Steve Wilson, and she should be ashamed of herself.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Currumbin, you are now warned under standing order 253A for your continual interjections. You were trying to talk over the top of the minister, who was trying to answer a question that you asked.

Northern Australia, Federal Funding

Mrs GILBERT: My question is directed to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer outline investment in Northern Australia by the federal government?

Mr PITT: I thank the honourable member for Mackay for her question. Yesterday we saw another example of North Queensland being duded by the Turnbull government. They are a reactionary government in full election mode. We have seen them make a decision to construct Pacific patrol boats in the Indian Ocean, not the Pacific Ocean, making sure they are looking after marginal seats in Western Australia, where they have already given around half a billion dollars outside the GST pool to give them some more money for roads. We have also seen the federal government playing catch-up in terms of banking reform. The Prime Minister followed Bill Shorten's lead—belatedly, admittedly—announcing a banking sector inquiry, albeit a half-hearted one.

To prove the point further, after we criticised the inaction on Northern Australia and when we saw the lack of any legislative agenda whatsoever, we have seen them try to push the Northern Australia infrastructure facility legislation through both houses of parliament in one day, but they failed to do so. I am always happy to provide some advice to the Turnbull government about their daily agenda in parliament. Without saying it was all our doing, on numerous occasions in February, in March and in April in this House and as recently as yesterday, I have been pushing, as have other members of this government, for the Turnbull government to move on the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility Bill and to get that back on the agenda and get it passed. On no fewer than six occasions I put out media releases this year calling for movement on the NAIF. We have now seen that bill put into the lower house and passed, and it went to the Senate late yesterday, but, of course, the Senate has now risen until the budget. This is a shambles.

The Turnbull government are now in the absurd position of entering an election campaign without having legislated their claimed big ticket item for the north. This is a very important piece of legislation—one that has the support of all sides of politics and one that enables \$5 billion in concessional loans to be made available to look at investment and look at the untapped economic potential of Northern Australia and particularly, as we are interested in, North Queensland.

We could say the same about tax reform. First it was the most important issue facing Australia—until it was not. We saw them change their policy in a period of only three days. The Northern Australia green paper was delivered in 2014, a white paper in 2015 and now we have seen no paper in 2016. I was at the launch of the white paper in Cairns sitting near the then prime minister, Tony Abbott. It is a big worry that three senior cabinet ministers who spoke at the launch and believed in the potential of Northern Australia are no longer there: Andrew Robb, gone; Warren Truss, gone; Tony Abbott, gone. What we see is the fact that we now have people trying to suggest they are favouring Northern Australia and favouring North Queensland, but their words are not followed with action. The *Courier-Mail* was right today. The Queensland voters hold the key to the federal election. I just do not think the Prime Minister gets it yet.

Racing Queensland, Board Appointments

Mr LAST: My question without notice is to the Minister for Racing. I refer to the cabinet handbook dealing with conflicts of interest and I ask the minister: when did she advise the Premier of her conflict in relation to the recent board appointments to Racing Queensland, and how were these conflicts resolved?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I rise to a point of order. We have had one question ruled out of order today on the basis of it involving imputations and implications. I suggest that you might consider that as well.

Speaker's Ruling, Question Out of Order

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, member. I rule the question out of order on the basis of imputation.

Jobs

Ms PEASE: My question is of the Minister for Employment. Will the minister inform the House about the new jobs that are being created in Queensland under the Palaszczuk government and any alternative policies on job creation?

Ms GRACE: I thank the member for Lytton for her question. I know that she has a passion for job creation. She often speaks to me about the opportunities in her area. It is wonderful to work with her on job initiatives, together with the Attorney-General, in delivering for the area of Lytton.

Labor, and the member for Lytton knows it, is a party that fights for jobs—jobs now and jobs for the future. We are the party that ensures workers get a fair go, driven by the belief of a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. While those opposite spent three years destroying jobs, we have spent our time creating jobs: over 60,000 new jobs in Queensland since the state election. That is nearly 2,000 full-time jobs created every month compared to the 360 full-time jobs lost every month under the LNP.

Our trend on the unemployment rate is at a two-year low. It is great to see that the unemployment rate is falling in suburbs where the unemployment rate is often higher than the state average. These are not my figures; they are the figures of the ABS and the federal government's Small Area Labour Markets report for the December quarter 2015, which clearly shows jobs are being created where high needs exist. It revealed marked falls in unemployment in suburbs around the south-east that have traditionally faced significant employment challenges. I speak of suburbs like Bundamba—and I acknowledge the member for Bundamba—Ipswich and Brassall. In Bundamba the unemployment rate fell by 3.4 per cent in the 12 months to December. In Ipswich unemployment fell 2.7 per cent. In Brassall the unemployment rate fell 2.2 per cent. In Dakabin and Kallangur—and I know the member for Kallangur has a passion for jobs in his area—the unemployment rate has come down half a percentage point in 12 months. Earlier this year I was pleased to host an employment forum in Pine Rivers specifically targeting multicultural employment. It was great to see the member for Pine Rivers actively involved in that. We also had a job expo in her area, which went exceedingly well.

The member for Kallangur and those on this side of the House understand that the job to create more employment is an ongoing one. That is why like the member for Surfers Paradise I, too, have been travelling around Queensland. I have gone to Maryborough, Gladstone, Mackay, Townsville and Mount Isa—and we are going to hold one soon in Charters Towers—where we have held employment forums. Let me tell honourable members what they have told me: that those opposite have no credibility

when it comes to addressing unemployment. They left us with the highest unemployment rate. The people in those areas were so glad that we were having the employment forums in those areas. They never saw anybody from over there. When we asked them, 'Do you remember the last employment minister?', they could not remember at all.

Toowoomba Range, Rail

Mr WATTS: My question without notice is to the Minister for Transport. Given that the funding has already been allocated for the lowering of the tunnels in the Toowoomba range railway to allow access for agricultural shipping containers, can the minister advise when the tunnel construction will commence?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I want to thank the member for Toowoomba North for his question and for his interest in this very important project. It is one that he and I discussed on the ground in his electorate at Highfields when I visited that part of the great city of Toowoomba over Easter. It was good to see the member for Toowoomba North and to talk to him about a range of matters that were occurring in that area and to be part of the opening of the transport museum at the Highfields heritage village. It was great to be a part of that event and to be there to represent the Palaszczuk government and join with both the member for Toowoomba North and the member for Toowoomba South, who was just gearing up for preselection mode. I congratulate the member for Toowoomba South on his efforts.

One of the matters that I discussed with the member for Toowoomba North is that the Queensland government has a very clear objective about facilitating the efficient movement of freight in Queensland to support our economic growth. With freight volumes expected to grow it is very important that we focus on this task. This task is very important. The Toowoomba range capacity and clearance project reflects the government's commitment to working with the agricultural sector and rail service providers to develop options to enhance the efficiency of rail haulage for agricultural products. I can assure the member for Toowoomba North that the Department of Transport and Main Roads has undertaken economic analysis to ensure the investment supports the needs of the industry—

Mr WATTS: I rise to a point of order. I am aware of the project. I am aware the minister visited Highfields. What I am interested in is when the construction will start. That is my question. That is the answer I am after.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I thank the member for Toowoomba North for his attempt at guidance. The outcomes of this appraisal process on this very important project are currently being considered by government. What I can reiterate is the demonstration of this government's commitment to the rural sector and to getting rural products onto rail by our investment in, for instance, the passing loops and the loop required for Oakey Beef. The support I am getting from people across the whole of the Darling Downs and the Western Downs for what we have done to support Oakey Beef has been very, very strong. That is a demonstration; that is a down payment on what we will do and what we will deliver to support getting more agricultural freight onto rail, and the next step will be the importance of this project to deliver the tunnels.

Advance Queensland, Startup Festival

Mr MADDEN: My question without notice is to the Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy and Minister for Small Business. Will the minister update the House on how Queensland start-ups will benefit from the Advance Queensland Startup Festival?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the honourable member for the question. I know that, as a former small business owner, he understands how important early stage support for small businesses, which includes start-ups, can be to enable them to grow and succeed.

The inaugural Queensland Startup Festival will be held as part of the Advance Queensland Innovation and Investment Summit next week. The summit—and in particular the Queensland Startup Festival, which is being held on the final day of the event—will provide an opportunity to showcase our local success stories to the world. As we have heard, the festival is well and truly oversubscribed. Over two days it will bring together more than 1,200 key business leaders, investors, entrepreneurs, government and industry leaders and an outstanding group of international speakers. This combination of expertise, experience and interest in our state will provide an unprecedented global perspective on innovation opportunities in Queensland. Most importantly, it will provide Queensland start-ups with a unique opportunity to connect directly with global investors to help take their innovative ideas and turn them into commercially viable products and services.

The inspiration for the festival came from the start-up community itself. It has been designed with community involvement to better help start-ups to nurture their ideas, attract the investment needed to grow and partner to scale into global markets. It will provide a dynamic platform for attendees to showcase their talent, learn from internationally renowned speakers, be inspired by the latest thinking and technologies, build new networks and partnerships and identify new business opportunities. The festival will showcase innovation in Queensland to an international audience and build a stronger entrepreneurial profile for Queensland.

Innovation and investment attraction are key to supporting the diversification, growth and development of Queensland's economy. The Startup Festival demonstrates the Palaszczuk government's commitment to providing the best possible environment to support Queensland's start-ups realise their global potential. This flagship event will unite the Queensland start-up and entrepreneurial community and strengthen national and international connections. It will act as a catalyst for innovation, entrepreneurship and collaboration and provide an opportunity to showcase local achievements as well as Advance Queensland's programs and initiatives.

We are living in an exciting but critical time. We need to ensure that we are prepared for the new economies and industries of the future and that we are preparing our current and established industries for what is happening on the horizon. That is why I am excited by the potential for Queensland start-ups to attract investment, and I look forward to updating the House on future partnerships delivered from the festival.

(Time expired)

Regional Queensland, Health Services

Mr PYNE: My question is of the Minister for Health. Will the minister advise when Cairns Hospital is likely to receive level 6 funding, which I believe is the same level of funding that Townsville receives?

Mr DICK: I thank the member for Cairns for his question. I know he has been advocating for this in his community, and I thank him for the opportunity to address the issue so that we can have a discussion about that. The four largest hospitals in Queensland operate at a level 6 clinical services capability framework level. That is how we grade hospitals in Queensland. There are four which are at level 6: Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, Princess Alexandra Hospital, the Gold Coast University Hospital and Townsville Hospital. As all members will recognise, they are the four largest hospitals in Queensland.

Transitioning a hospital to the highest level of service has a range of significant implications for service delivery, staffing, equipment, infrastructure, operational costs and potential capital costs. I know it is an important thing to Cairns, but the advice I have received is that you need about one million people for those hospitals to operate at that level. If we look at the HHSs in the Far North Queensland region—which is broadly defined by the Townsville Hospital and Health Service, the Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service, the North West Hospital and Health Service and the Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Service—about 800,000 people live from Townsville north. If we have two of those services in Townsville and Cairns that would have significant implications and may result in inefficiencies. There may be clinical safety issues because unless you get the patients coming through at sufficient volume, there is a challenge in effectively delivering those services. My view is that there is a longstanding relationship between Townsville and Cairns at this point in relation to the delivery of services. Cairns plays a complementary role at level 5 with Townsville at level 6, and of course those level 6 services are in Cairns at the moment.

I would say to the member for Cairns that we are looking carefully at service profiles. We continue to fund significant investment in Cairns. In our last budget there was a 6.8 per cent increase—\$45 million—to \$667 million for the Cairns and Hinterland HHS; a \$6.8 million increase to hospital capacity to support improved flow from the emergency department; \$2.8 million in recurrent funding for mental health community care unit services; \$1.3 million to operate the new PET CT scanner—which I opened with the member for Cairns and the member for Barron River—and \$450,000 to enhance public mental health services. We also conducted a summit in Cairns in relation to patient flow through the hospital, and that resulted in a Low Acuity Response Unit being implemented by the Ambulance Service. I would say to the member for Cairns that we will keep a close eye on service delivery, and where we can improve services for the people of Cairns and the far north we will do so.

Regional Queensland, Transport Infrastructure

Mr SAUNDERS: My question is of the Minister for Main Roads. Will the minister update the House on how the government is delivering safer roads for the residents of Maryborough and Hervey Bay?

Mr BAILEY: I thank the member for Maryborough for his question. The member for Maryborough is a passionate advocate for roads in his area, and he is doing such a great job representing his area that I think he is the best representative in 20 years. I call him the relentless Bruce Saunders. It was a pleasure joining him one month ago on 18 March to announce something that the LNP never achieved in three years, and that is the upgrade of the Hervey Bay-Maryborough Road and Urraween intersection. For three years there was inaction. Those opposite had the greatest majority in political history and they achieved nothing in that time, but in 12 months the member for Maryborough has delivered the upgrade of the Urraween intersection. This is a key intersection with a bad accident record just outside his electorate in Hervey Bay. This was announced in the local *Fraser Coast Chronicle*, and I table it for posterity.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Fraser Coast Chronicle*, dated 19 March 2016, titled 'Fix it: Minister joins Maryborough MP at "dangerous intersection" \$12.5m for road repair' [\[539\]](#).

There I am with the member for Maryborough in the *Fraser Coast Chronicle*. You can imagine my surprise when last week my office received a call from a local journalist quoting the current member for Hervey Bay calling on—wait for it—the Palaszczuk government to fund the Urraween Road intersection.

Mr SORENSEN: I rise to a point of order. I find those remarks offensive and I ask for them to be withdrawn.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, will you please withdraw the comments that the member for Hervey Bay finds offensive.

Mr BAILEY: I withdraw. It was announced a month ago in the member for Hervey Bay's local paper in black and white that we doing a \$12.5 million upgrade of the Urraween Road intersection, and there he is calling on us to do it. It was not just the member for Hervey Bay; it was the member for Maroochydore as well. The shadow minister was also calling on us to upgrade the intersection a month after it was announced.

Mr SORENSEN: I rise to a point of order. I find those comments offensive and I would like them withdrawn because the question was, 'When is the job going to start?' Tell the truth!

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Hervey Bay, you are running a little bit close to the line. You are scheduled to ask the next question. If you persist with your behaviour you may be ruled out of order for disorderly conduct.

Minister, the member for Hervey Bay has asked you to withdraw further comments which he finds personally offensive. I did not hear them as personally offensive, but if he has found them personally offensive will you please withdraw whatever it was.

Mr BAILEY: I am not sure what he is referring to either, Mr Speaker, but I do withdraw.

Here we have the member for Maroochydore—24 years in this parliament, a shadow minister—calling on us to fund an intersection we upgraded four weeks ago. You have to keep up in this place.

Ms SIMPSON: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The minister is misleading the House. It is offensive and misleading of the House. I ask that he withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: Will you please withdraw the comments the member for Maroochydore finds offensive?

Mr BAILEY: As per standing orders, I withdraw, but it is very clear—

Mr SPEAKER: No, you cannot say 'but'. Just continue.

Mr BAILEY: I have tabled the newspaper article. This government has funded a key piece of regional infrastructure. That did not happen in three years under the previous government. The member for Maryborough ought to be congratulated for his hard work. It is no wonder members from the other side are deserting the ship, trying to go federal. They are trying to leave their sinking team.

HMAS *Tobruk*, Dive Wreck

Mr SORENSEN: My question is to the Premier. Can the Premier advise if the state government will support the decommissioned warship HMAS *Tobruk* being sunk in the Hervey Bay and Bundaberg area in order to provide a tourist dive wreck?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Hervey Bay for the question. I advise the House that I have received a letter from the Commonwealth government asking whether or not Queensland would be interested in one of these particular warships being sunk off our coast as a potential tourism attraction. I understand that there are a couple of sites currently under consideration. I know that Hervey Bay is one. I know that the Gold Coast is another.

I give an undertaking to the House and to the member that I will consider those issues very carefully. I will speak at length with my tourism minister and the Minister for State Development. I believe it is a great opportunity that the Commonwealth government has afforded the state, but let us give it careful consideration.

I also advise the House that my government will put this out to tender. I think that is the fair thing to do. It is very fair and it gives opportunities to councils up and down the state to consider these issues to make sure we can deliver great tourism attractions to our state which will attract divers and so on.

Youth

Mr BUTCHER: My question is of the Minister for Communities, Women and Youth. Will the minister update the House on what the government is doing to improve opportunities for young people, particularly in regional, rural and remote Queensland?

Ms FENTIMAN: I thank the member for Gladstone for the question. I thank him for his involvement in the youth forums that have been happening in Gladstone over the past couple of months.

I am very proud to stand in this House and say that this year, for the first time ever, Queensland will have a youth strategy developed by the real experts on youth—that is, young people themselves. It still amazes me that, under the previous government, the LNP's consultation on youth policies extended so far as a single forum on the Gold Coast. The Palaszczuk government cares about young people and wants to hear their views. That is why our youth strategy consultation is statewide and takes a whole-of-government approach to tackling the challenges young people face.

We have now started wrapping up our consultation, with the conclusion of National Youth Week. What a busy week it was. Last weekend I kicked off Queensland's launch of National Youth Week at the skate park in Yeppoon with free ice-cream and pizza. It was a wonderful opportunity to meet and hear from young people about what they care about, some of the challenges they see and how we can come together and find solutions. It was wonderful to be there with the member for Keppel, my good friend Brittany Lauga, who is the youngest member in this place. It is great to see how passionate she is about the young people in her electorate.

I also had a great time finishing up Youth Week with my Logan MPs at Springwood State High School and a forum with the members for Logan, Springwood and Algester. Again we heard great ideas from our young people, who are really inspiring and have some wonderful things to contribute.

We are already seeing some major themes emerging from this consultation, particularly around jobs and skills—something the Palaszczuk government is addressing. For example, we have revitalised the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program, which has proven results in terms of getting young people into work. We know that labour initiatives do not just help young people now; they also help young people into the future. A recent report released by the Brotherhood of St Laurence confirms this when it states that under Labor we have seen youth unemployment go from 14.1 per cent down to 13.2 per cent. We know that there is still a lot more work to do, and we are absolutely committed to delivering for young people and employment.

National Youth Week was a great opportunity to discuss what needs to be done to help young Queenslanders. It was also an opportunity to recognise and celebrate their achievements. Sadly, this will be the last year that National Youth Week receives funding from the federal government after a recent round of cuts. The amount of money the Turnbull government saves is really extremely small in the grand scheme of things, but the message it sends is loud and clear: young people and their futures do not matter to the Turnbull government. I would encourage those members opposite to talk to their federal counterparts about making sure National Youth Week is funded into the future.

Oakey Army Aviation Centre

Mr WEIR: My question is to the Minister for Health. I note that Queensland Health has issued a document entitled 'Oakey Army Aviation Centre contamination incident' only to doctors. It warns that people should not drink or prepare food with bore water from the potentially affected area. I table a copy of this notice.

Tabled paper: Queensland Health: Information for medical practitioners—Oakey Army Aviation Centre contamination incident [540].

Can the minister advise why this warning has not been issued to the local residents?

Mr DICK: I thank the honourable member for his question. If I recall correctly, I have actually written to the member for Condamine about this matter. The contamination in the land there goes directly to the operation of facilities owned and operated by the Commonwealth government, operated by the Australian Defence Force. It is not a responsibility of the state—the state has not caused this problem—but state agencies will be part of the response. The primary lead in this matter is the Commonwealth of Australia.

As I have explained to the member for Condamine, it is important for him to pursue this matter with his federal coalition colleagues. In this case it would be, if I am not mistaken, the member for Groom. The member can talk to his parliamentary colleague about that. I am sure that he will be able to take that up for him.

That is the responsibility of the Commonwealth government. Successive Commonwealth governments have contaminated land and water by the use of foam and other products at these facilities over many years. The Commonwealth has contaminated; the Commonwealth must clean. State agencies—the department of environment, the Department of Health and any other relevant departments of state—will play their part in responding, but we are not the lead. We will support the Commonwealth government, as is the case—

Mr STEVENS: I rise to a point of order on relevance by the minister. The question stated that the minister has advised the local doctors in the area, and the relevant document was tabled. The question was, clearly: can the minister advise why the warning has not been issued to local residents. It was not about responsibility; it was about why the minister's warning has not been issued to local residents.

Mr SPEAKER: I find that the minister's answer is relevant. There is no point of order.

Mr Cripps interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Hinchinbrook, if you persist with your interjections you will be warned.

Mr DICK: The member for Condamine clearly knows about the matter. He is at full liberty to discuss this with every one of his constituents, as is the federal member for Groom. If we need to do more we are happy to do more, but we will look for the lead of the Commonwealth government in responding to this in the community.

North Queensland, Jobs

Mrs LAUGA: My question is of the Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland. Will the minister update the House on what the Palaszczuk government is doing to create jobs in North Queensland?

Mrs O'ROURKE: I thank the member for the question. Last month I had the pleasure of joining the member for Keppel in Rockhampton, where I attended the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility round table. I share her passion for investment in the north. Last week I also had the pleasure, along with the Deputy Premier and the Treasurer, to be invited by the member for Barron River to Redlynch, where he showed us the need to upgrade the Bill Fulton Bridge in his electorate. It is projects just like this that we are looking to include in the \$180 million Significant Regional Infrastructure Projects Program, recently announced as part of the State Infrastructure Plan. I have been regularly meeting with the Deputy Premier to ensure that North Queensland gets its fair share out of this program.

Last week I also welcomed the Deputy Premier to Townsville where she joined me and the member for Thuringowa to talk about local infrastructure needs. It was here that we announced the Palaszczuk government was investing \$5 million through the Catalyst Infrastructure Program into a vibrant new space at James Cook University which will be referred to as the Ideas Market. Once this infrastructure is in play, it will have the capacity to allow the possibility for more support and more construction, allowing possibly 1,200 construction jobs over four years and about 800 ongoing jobs in fields like research, retail and health.

Last month I was also pleased to welcome another cabinet colleague the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries to Townsville and to JCU. Minister Donaldson joined me to call on the federal government to establish the Cooperative Research Centre for Developing Northern Australia in Townsville. Townsville's strong academic sector, international connectivity, diverse economy and industry expertise make it the most logical place for the centre to be based, and that is the argument that I took to the federal government earlier this year in Canberra and again in Rockhampton when I met the federal Minister for Northern Australian, Matt Canavan, last month. Having the CRC based in Townsville would support growth and foster economic development which would lead to jobs.

We have also been calling on Malcolm Turnbull to prioritise the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility legislation to pass through federal parliament this month. I am pleased that the legislation is currently before the Senate and I hope we have the certainty that we need soon. North Queenslanders cannot wait until after the 2 July federal election. The federal government promised that this facility would be up and running by 1 July and it needs to do everything in its power to make this happen.

North Stradbroke Island, Draft Transition Packages

Dr ROBINSON: My question is directed to the Minister for Environment. Australian Workers' Union state secretary, Ben Swan, publicly stated that he was contacted by the Minister for Environment on 1 December 2015. The minister subsequently stated 'that the AWU was happy with the draft transition packages'. Can the minister advise the House who told him that the AWU was happy with the government's plans?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I rise to a point of order. This relates to a matter that relates to a bill before the House—

Mr CRIPPS: I rise to a point of order.

Dr ROBINSON: I rise to a point of order. It does not.

Mr CRIPPS: I rise to a point of order.

Mr HINCHLIFFE:—in relation to the North Stradbroke Island—

Mr SPEAKER: One moment. Member for Hinchinbrook, I will take your point of order after I hear the point of order from the Leader of the House.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: The transition plans relate directly to the need to transition upon what is proposed in the legislation in relation to the closure of—

Mr CRIPPS: I rise to a point of order.

Mr HINCHLIFFE:—the leases for sandmining on North Stradbroke Island.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, Leader of the House. What is your point of order, member for Hinchinbrook?

Mr CRIPPS: The Leader of the House is misleading the House. The economic transition plans and the workforce transition plans are not part in any way, shape or form of the bills introduced by the government or the crossbenches that are currently before the House.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you. I will allow the question. Minister, are you happy with the question? Do you understand it?

Honourable members interjected.

Dr MILES: I am hesitant to debate the matter before the House given that it is those opposite who moved a motion in this chamber to have the committee deal with the ETS at the same time as the legislation. It is very difficult to fairly answer the question.

Dr ROBINSON: I rise to a point of order.

Mr SPEAKER: There is one minute left, or there might be two minutes.

Dr ROBINSON: Just for clarification, did you rule the question out of order? The minister, who is obviously hiding from the Australian Workers' Union, did not want to answer the question.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I rise to a point of order.

Dr ROBINSON: I just seek your ruling.

Mr SPEAKER: What is your point of order?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I was wanting to draw to your attention that the member for Cleveland's supposed point of order should be out of order in itself.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you. I do not need your assistance at the moment. I will allow the question—

Dr ROBINSON: Mr Speaker—

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Cleveland, will you please just repeat your question so the minister can answer it?

Dr ROBINSON: I am happy to do so. Australian Workers' Union state secretary Ben Swan publicly stated that he was contacted by the Minister for Environment on 1 December 2015. The minister subsequently stated 'that the AWU was happy with the draft transition packages'. Can the minister advise the House who told him the AWU was happy with the government's plan, and, Minister, do not mislead the House?

Mr SPEAKER: Members, question time has finished.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Further Answer to Question; HMAS *Tobruk*, Dive Wreck

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (4.04 pm), by leave: I rise to make a ministerial statement and clarify comments I made regarding the decommissioning of navy vessels in Queensland. I can advise the House that my director-general has indicated to the defence department that the state government will take part in the tender process being run by the federal government and in turn we will consult with local governments. As I said, if the opportunities stack up, we will talk to the tourism minister.

CRIME AND CORRUPTION AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 1 December 2015 (see p. 2970).

Second Reading

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (4.05 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

This bill delivers on our election commitment to Queenslanders to deliver a truly independent corruption watchdog. The Crime and Corruption Amendment Bill 2015 delivers a number of election commitments to restore the independence and integrity of the Crime and Corruption Commission. I am proud to be in a government committed to an independent and empowered corruption watchdog and Queenslanders have sent a very loud message that they want a government committed to transparency and accountability. Queenslanders recognise that a powerful independent corruption watchdog is an essential element of our modern democracy in this state. Briefly, the bill addresses these commitments by providing that the CCC chief executive officer is not a commissioner and requiring bipartisan Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee support for this appointment; limiting temporary appointments for the commissioners and CEO to three months unless there is bipartisan PCCC support; reinstating the CCC's corruption prevention function which was removed by the former government in 2014; reinstating the CCC's research function to as it stood prior to the former government's 2014 amendments to enable the CCC to perform its research independently; and removing the requirement for complaints about corruption to be made by way of a statutory declaration to ensure people are not discouraged from reporting corruption. The bill also restores gender-neutral language to the title of the CCC chair and deputy chair which was removed by the previous government in 2014 and removes the current prohibition on the CEO subdelegating the financial accountability functions under the Financial Accountability Act 2009.

I thank the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee for its consideration of the bill and note with regret that the committee was not able to give bipartisan support to recommend the bill's passage. It is unfortunate that the committee was unable to reach bipartisan support for the bill, particularly as it delivers on our public commitment to Queenslanders and makes straightforward and sensible changes that will enable this important watchdog to independently and effectively perform its functions. Although the committee did not make any recommendations in relation to the bill, I will address matters raised in its report. I note that the statement of reservation by non-government members considered that aspects of the bill should be dealt with as part of the PCCC's current broad

review of the CCC which is due for report by 30 June 2016. I acknowledge that some of the amendments in the bill touch on matters within the scope of the PCCC's review and that several submissions to the committee recommended legislative changes that will build on amendments in this bill—for example, additional recommendations about the CCC's corporate governance and powers that should accompany the CCC's reinstated prevention function.

This bill does not seek to adopt all of those submissions nor address all of those broader issues. The PCCC will continue to do its work considering issues of governance and the government will consider a report from that committee when it is provided. This bill is about delivering what this government promised Queenslanders. It is important that we act now to address the impact of the former government's attacks on the independence of the corruption watchdog that politicised the CCC and impacted adversely on its ability to perform its functions. Certainly, the PCCC review may recommend other amendments to the Crime and Corruption Act that are considered necessary to support the CCC in performing its vital functions, some of which may complement the changes made by the bill. However, that is not a genuine reason to delay the amendments in this bill.

Those opposite are twisting themselves inside out trying to use the PCCC review of governance as political cover for refusing to accept the important changes that we took to the election and which were supported by Queenslanders—changes that go directly to the independence and effective operation of the CCC. Those opposite should admit to the people of Queensland what their position is all about: their continued deep-rooted, ill-thought-out, historical opposition to having an independent corruption watchdog. They should just admit what it is all about. Year after year the LNP members and their conservative forebears tried to attack the independent watchdog. In government, under the member for Kawana, the CCC was treated like a political plaything. The LNP's approach to the CCC became emblematic of the Newman government years and its disrespect for transparency and openness in government.

I note that the statement of reservation by the non-government members opposed the amendment to remove the requirement for complaints to be made by statutory declaration. The removal of the statutory declaration requirement, in accordance with this government's election commitment, will help ensure that there are no barriers to genuine complaints about corruption being made. Those opposite claimed in government that there was still an opportunity for anonymous complaints—people just have to sign a statutory declaration. I am not sure members of the public who were worried about providing information about their boss who might be committing fraud, or information about organised crime, would really feel like their complaint is anonymous when they have to sign a statutory declaration with their name and address to state why their complaint should be anonymous.

The reality is that the formal, technical and legal aspects of a statutory declaration may overwhelm some people and discourage them from coming forward with issues of corruption that need to be addressed. The CCC has also indicated in discussions with me that it has no concerns whatsoever that allowing anonymous complaints to be made again would significantly increase the number of complaints being made and that there are sufficient safeguards in place to deal with those issues if that were to occur.

This is not what we want in a modern democracy and Public Service where we want to avoid corruption. The government does not consider that continuing to impose the requirement for complaints to be made by statutory declaration is the most appropriate way to address these risks. That is why this amendment is being made now. There are existing offences in the Crime and Corruption Act regarding the making of vexatious or frivolous complaints. Of course, there may be other policy responses that could be adopted in this area, but that can be considered by the PCCC review.

We are also delivering on our election commitment to restore bipartisanship in the appointment of important positions at the CCC, including the CEO. We are also removing the ability of a government to appoint someone on a temporary basis beyond three months. That is to ensure that a government cannot simply continue to appoint someone who lacks bipartisan support on an ongoing basis by abusing the temporary appointment process. Under the Crime and Corruption Act 'bipartisan support' of the PCCC is defined to mean—

- (a) support of the members of the parliamentary committee unanimously; or
- (b) support of a majority of the members, other than a majority consisting wholly of members of the political party or parties in government in the Legislative Assembly.

The statement of reservation also supports an amendment to the definition of 'bipartisan support' in the Crime and Corruption Act. That is on the basis that bipartisan support does not necessarily require the support of opposition members of the PCCC if other non-government PCCC members, such as

crossbenchers, provide support. The current definition of 'bipartisan support' in the Crime and Corruption Act has been in the act for over a decade. We are delivering on our election commitment to restore bipartisan support in the appointment process and those opposite have some gall trying to claim the high ground on this issue. It was the LNP government that abused the temporary appointment process, that attacked not only the CCC's independence but also the PCCC to the extent that, when the committee did something that the member for Kawana and then premier Newman did not like, they sacked the entire Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee.

In contrast, this government takes the independence of the CCC seriously. We have made solid and appropriate appointments. However, I am still seeking to fill one ordinary commissioner appointment. That has not been supported by the PCCC, but I respect the role of the PCCC and I will bring another nominee forward and hope that the PCCC will consider the individual on their merits.

This legislation delivers important changes that will enable the independent watchdog to get on with their job. This bill restores integrity and independence to one of our most critical integrity bodies and for that reason should be supported by all members. We are restoring the ability of the CCC to initiate its own research plan without needing the approval of the minister. Under the previous government, when ministerial approval was required, for the three years that the LNP was in government the CCC did not have a research plan approved. There was no research plan. We believe that the Crime and Corruption Commission should be able to establish its own research plan and not have that in any way stalled by the government of the day. It should have that independence.

At this point, I also want to indicate that it is my intention to move an unrelated amendment during the consideration in detail of the bill to the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2009 to extend the justices of the peace QCAT trial for a further six months. I will be seeking this amendment, because the provisions in the QCAT Act that facilitate the justice of the peace QCAT trial will expire at 13 May this year pursuant to section 206BB of the QCAT Act and section 20 of the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Regulation 2009. I am giving the House the consideration of highlighting that amendment now and indicating what it is. This is an important amendment as I consider that, to ensure that we have proper time to consider the trial and its future, we have to extend the current trial under the act to ensure that it continues while that consideration is being given. Without this amendment, that JP QCAT trial will cease in May.

The non-government members will be briefed on this amendment as soon as I and the shadow minister have made our contributions in this debate. I understand that, more than likely, those on the other side are going to oppose this bill but I hope, with this amendment, there can be support in relation to the extension of the JP QCAT trial. On that basis, I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr WALKER** (Mansfield—LNP) (4.17 pm): I rise to lead the debate for the LNP on the government's Crime and Corruption Amendment Bill 2015. There are five key objectives to this bill and I want to outline them and explain our position on each of them and why we have come to such a position.

At the outset, I think that it is important to state that, currently, the PCCC is undertaking a statutory review of the act and that it is due to report by 30 June 2016. It beggars belief that you would try to implement piecemeal changes to an act before a statutory review was undertaken and completed. I know that the government has election commitments in relation to temporary appointments and the structure of the PCCC. However, those amendments could have been undertaken after the review of this act was undertaken by the PCCC or as part of that review.

The five key objectives of the bill are, firstly, to provide that the CCC chief executive officer is not a CCC commissioner; to require bipartisan support of the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee for the CEO appointment; to limit temporary appointments for the CCC chair, commissioners and CEO to three months unless there is bipartisan PCCC support; to reinstate the CCC's corruption prevention function as well as the CCC's independence when undertaking its research function; and to allow complaints to be made anonymously to the CCCC.

We in the LNP will support only objectives 1 to 3 of the bill in relation to the structure of the CCC and the requirement for bipartisan support of appointments if the definition of 'bipartisanship' in the legislation is amended. The stunt that was pulled last year by the government in relation to the appointment of a permanent chair of the CCC—to sub off one Labor member of the PCCC for the member for Mount Isa—was something that was clearly an abuse of the objectives of the act. It was nothing more than exposing a legal loophole to satisfy the bipartisan support requirement in the act in relation to this appointment.

Mrs D'Ath: We wouldn't have a chair of the PCCC.

Mr WALKER: It does not matter whether we would have a chair or not, the bipartisan rules are the bipartisan rules. We have heard from the Attorney-General today that, despite the exposing of that clear loophole and its use by the government in this way, the government, in full knowledge that that loophole is there to be abused and, in fact, having abused it, is not prepared to fill that gap. I think that brings shame upon the government that claims to be bringing bipartisanship and transparency.

It is clear that a simple solution to this could be made. We support a definition of bipartisan support that is similar to that in the Western Australian act. The Department of Justice and Attorney-General noted in its submission to the committee that—

The appointment of the Commissioner of the Western Australian Corruption and Crime Commission requires, if there is a parliamentary standing committee, the support of the majority of the Standing Committee and bipartisan support. Bipartisan support under the Western Australian legislation means the support of:

- a) members of the Standing Committee who are members of the party of which the Premier is a member; and
- b) members of the Standing Committee who are members of the party of which the Leader of the Opposition is a member.

I suspect if you asked any reasonable person what bipartisan support means that is what you would get; they would expect that that was the support of both the government party and the opposition party. But there is a loophole in our act which allows that to be bypassed. The loophole is there. It was seen by the government and it was used and abused by the government. They should be held to account for that and we will not support their moving forward on this matter until they fix that.

More broadly, objectives 4 to 5 of the bill, which relate to the reinstatement of the provisions that were scrapped by the LNP following review by former High Court judge, the honourable Ian Callinan, and UQ law professor Nicholas Aroney, we believe should be deferred until at least after any recommendations are made by the PCCC as part of their statutory review of the act. It is quite nonsensical to do this in a piecemeal way without looking at the whole when, in fact, the review is so much upon us in any case and these amendments could be seen in the full context of that review.

It should be noted that, unlike the LNP, which instituted a proper independent review of the CCC, the changes that we see today are being brought forward simply to undo previous amendments put in place by the LNP. They come from the political side of the equation, not through any independent or thorough review of these matters. Any major structural reforms to the CCC should wait until after the PCCC review is finalised.

Let us not forget that the concerns that we raised about the CCC or the then CMC being used as a political tool to smear opponents during election campaigns brought about the independent review undertaken by Callinan and Aroney. That is not a historical matter. The LGAQ CEO, Greg Hallam, recently remarked that the 2016 local government elections were the worst he had seen for this particular abuse of process. We note that on 8 February 2016 the CCC and the LGAQ went to the extraordinary step of issuing a joint media release urging candidates to conduct a clean campaign. In that they stated—

Making baseless complaints to the CCC, and then publicising the fact a complaint has been made, will often cause reputational damage to others and also negatively impact on the person making the complaint. It can also be a criminal offence to knowingly make a complaint that is not true.

'The CCC is not discouraging people from making genuine complaints. We will treat all genuine complaints confidentially and assess them independently and with complete objectivity', Mr MacSporran said.

'Our advice is simple, be honest and don't risk your own campaign by making false complaints. Don't promise special favours in return for election donations or support. Tell the community who is supporting you and declare all gifts and donations.'

'Finally, if you do have genuine concerns, we want you to bring them to the CCC confidentially.'

Members will remember, particularly those on this side of the House, the nasty smear campaigns that were the hallmark of the 2012 election campaign and that were resoundingly rejected by the people of Queensland. We know where they came from, who the architect of those was: the Deputy Premier, Jackie Trad, in her then capacity as the assistant state secretary of the Labor Party. They were a shameful abuse of these processes. Fast-forward to the 2016 campaign and the words of the LGAQ CEO: the worst election he has seen for this kind of smear campaign. Members can draw their own conclusions about the motives behind this, but the most recent questions raised were about two referrals, one for the Lord Mayor of Brisbane and the other for the mayor of Ipswich. Both of these referrals emanated from the department of local government, the very department presided over by the Deputy Premier and Minister for Local Government, and were then publicised in an attempt to smear someone during a political campaign. I say to the Deputy Premier that the people of Queensland

rejected this tactic in 2012 and the people of Brisbane again rejected it overwhelmingly, and I say proudly, in 2016. It is time for the Deputy Premier to get another playbook and look at the way in which she does business in the state. We have seen that not only in the material I just referred to but also in disclosures made over the last few days.

Why is this relevant to this bill? It is relevant because objective 5 of the bill deals with the process for making complaints to the CCC and in that context the ability for baseless or frivolous complaints to be discouraged. Following the implementation of the 2014 changes by the LNP, the 2014-15 annual report noted as follows—

Significantly, jurisdiction in the area of public sector integrity moved from official misconduct and its prevention to a focus on serious and/or systemic corruption. As a consequence of these changes, the CCC received 40 per cent fewer complaints in 2014-15 than it did the previous year.

They were the words of the late Dr Ken Levy, then acting chair of the CCC, in relation to the mechanism put in place by the LNP to allow the CCC to focus on significant issues. I acknowledge that this is a difficult balancing act. On the one hand you have to balance a process that discourages baseless and frivolous complaints; yet on the other hand people need to have confidence in anonymity when they are making a complaint and the protections that come with that process.

The Callinan-Aroney review dealt with this matter and I turn to their thoughts on this vexed question. They stated—

Also obvious early was the very high number of complaints processed by the CMC. As we suspected, the vast majority of them were trivial, vexatious, or misdirected. The CMC employed, the Chairperson said, a system of triage, which usually resulted, in practice, in devolution. The reception and disposition of so many such complaints are functions that have to be performed by someone. That comes at a considerable public expense. We have concluded that ways should be found to deter baseless complaints, not least so that proper and sufficient attention can be given to the genuine and substantial ones.

...

The CMC, more than once, has claimed inadequacy of resources as a reason for not undertaking some investigations. Resources of the State and its taxpayers are not unlimited.

Our contention is that there has been no independent review and no reasoned analysis on this issue and as such the changes seem simply once again to be being brought about because they were changes made by the LNP.

On the issue of the research functions, the review undertaken by Callinan and Aroney said—

As to that we think that the research function of the CMC should be reduced and sharpened. We recommend that research by the CMC should be confined to research in relation to a particular matter or matters as sanctioned for a specific inquiry, before commencement, by the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice.

On top of the issue around dealing with baseless complaints, this seems to be another issue where the government is simply undoing for the sake of undoing. The changes put in place by the LNP were derived from recommendations made through a thorough independent review. They were not the brainchild of any particular member of the government; they came from the fine reputations and fine legal minds of former High Court judge Ian Callinan and one of Queensland's leading law professors, UQ Professor Nicholas Aroney. Until those changes are made, namely the changes to the requirement in the act for bipartisan support on appointments—and that does not appear to be forthcoming—and the deferral of objectives 4 and 5 until at least the PCCC review is tabled, then the LNP is not able to support the bill.

Finally, I turn to the matters just tabled by the Attorney-General. Although I have not had the chance to read them in detail, I acknowledge that the Attorney-General has offered us a briefing to make sure that we are on top of them. However, as the Attorney-General expected, a brief reading of them would lead me to think that the LNP would be very happy to support the amendments. The trial of justices of the peace acting as members of QCAT was instituted by our government. I think that that trial was long overdue and well worthwhile. As members of the House would know, historically in the United Kingdom justices of the peace sat as magistrates and dealt with minor matters in that country. As we all know from our own electorate involvement with justices of peace and relevant organisations, they are sensible law-abiding people from our communities who are able to make common-sense decisions in relation to matters. Those matters may not have huge significance in terms of money, but they may have huge significance in terms of their importance to people who want a quick and sensible resolution of disputes, rather than going through a Rolls-Royce legal system.

I commend the Attorney-General for this amendment. I will reserve final word on it until we can look at the detail. Subject to that, I expect that it is a move that will attract the support of the opposition.

 **Mr FURNER** (Ferry Grove—ALP) (4.30 pm): This afternoon, I rise to speak in support of the Crime and Corruption Amendment Bill 2015. As chair of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee, I will add some commentary around what the committee dealt with. The committee received seven submissions and held a public hearing on 17 February this year. The objectives of the bill are: to provide that the Crime and Corruption Commission chief executive officer is not a CCC commissioner; retain a five-member commission and three part-time commissioners, two of whom are ordinary commissioners; require bipartisan support of the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee for the CEO appointment; limit temporary appointments for the CCC chair, commissioners and CEO to three months, unless there is bipartisan PCCC support; reinstate the CCC's corruption prevention function, as well as the CCC's independence when undertaking its research function; allow complaints to be made anonymously to the CCC; restore gender-neutral language to the title of the CCC chair position; and support the efficient performance of the CCC's day-to-day financial management by removing the current prohibition on the CEO sub-delegating the financial accountability functions under the Financial Accountability Act 2009.

This bill implements our election commitment in regard to what we believe are fair and transparent messages and processes in dealing with these important integrity issues. This government is strongly committed to a robust integrity system where oversight bodies can perform their vital functions independently and free from political interference. Over a period, successive Queensland Labor governments have introduced landmark reforms to ensure those in government do what they mean to do while serving the people of Queensland and not themselves. Unfortunately, we did not see that from the previous LNP government. Campbell Newman removed the CCC's important corruption prevention function, which removed its ability to proactively support public sector agencies in the prevention of corruption, creating a crucial gap in Queensland's integrity system. The bill proposes to reinstate the CCC's important corruption prevention function, which will enable the CCC to build the capacity of units of public administration to prevent corruption. By requiring the CCC to obtain ministerial approval for its research, the Newman government went one step further by also removing the CCC's independence and flexibility in being able to set its own research agenda. The CCC should never have had its independence stripped or its important corruption prevention and research functions limited, as occurred in 2014.

Turning to some of the matters within the bill, section 223 of the Crime and Corruption Act relates to the membership of the commission and provides for the COE to be a full-time commissioner. If successful, the bill will change that. Clause 18 of the bill seeks to amend section 223 to rightly retain the CEO position, while providing that the CEO will not be a commissioner. This is considered to be in line with best practice and best governance arrangements, as it ensures that the CEO position is accountable to the five-member commission. None of the submitters to the inquiry raised any concerns in respect to the proposal that the CEO not be a commissioner.

Turning to corporate governance, under the current arrangement the commission consists of five commissioners: a full-time chair, a part-time deputy chair, a full-time chief executive officer and two part-time ordinary commissioners. Clause 18 of the bill proposes to retain a five-member commission, by providing for the commission to have an additional ordinary commissioner in place of the position that the act currently specifies is held by the CEO, who would no longer be a commissioner. In its briefing, the department stated that the maintenance of the five-member CCC ensures a broad range of experience within the commission, derived from the additional ordinary commissioner who would be appointed in place of the CEO.

Turning to bipartisan PCCC support, currently the act allows the PCCC to veto the CEO's appointment nomination. Clause 23 of the bill proposes to amend section 228 of the CCA to remove the current ability of the PCCC to veto the CEO's appointment nomination, and provides that the appointment nomination can only proceed with bipartisan PCCC support. This is consistent with the provisions in respect of appointing commissioners. The bill also seeks to amend the appointment arrangements for temporary acting commissioners. Clause 28 of the bill inserts a new section 237 that provides that a person may not be appointed to act in the office of the CCC chair, deputy chair, ordinary commissioner or the CEO.

Turning to the corruption prevention function, under the existing law the CCC does not have responsibility for the prevention of corruption in units of public administration, UPAs, including the responsibility to raise the standards of integrity and conduct of a UPA. That function was transferred to the Public Service Commission. The bill seeks to amend section 23 of the act to provide that the CCC

has a function to help prevent corruption. There is widespread support for the bill's proposal that the CCC regain a corruption prevention function, including in submissions to the PCCC review. In its submission to the PCCC review, the QLS outlined its concerns with the current law, stating—

Fundamentally, the Society considers it critically important to ensure that the CCC remains an independent, apolitical corruption watchdog.

Turning to anonymous complaints, there was a bit of toing and froing in respect to this particular proposal. Nevertheless, adequate evidence demonstrated that this proposal should be approved. The bill proposes to remove the requirement for complaints about corruption to be made by a statutory declaration, which would mean that people could make anonymous complaints to the CCC regardless of whether exceptional circumstances existed. The rationale of that amendment is to foster a culture that encourages complaints about corruption to be made. No other Australian jurisdiction requires complaints to anti-corruption bodies to be made by statutory declaration, so why should Queensland be different? At the public hearing on this inquiry, Professor Sampford emphasised the significance of confidentiality when initially making a genuine complaint to the CCC. He stated its importance for the integrity of the political process, to increase the chance the corruption conduct will be caught and reduce the chance of mischief, such as evidence being destroyed. He further stated—

The other thing, as I have said, is that if the person who is accused possibly is corrupt the last thing you want to do is alert them to it.

That is a common-sense change in respect to the anonymity of complainants.

Turning to gender-neutral language, the 2014 amendments to the act changed the reference from 'chairperson' to 'chairman'. Amendments in this bill propose to ensure gender-neutral language in the CCA to reflect contemporary legislative drafting practices. I am pleased to commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr KRAUSE** (Beaudesert—LNP) (4.39 pm): As a member of the committee that examined the Crime and Corruption Amendment Bill I rise to make a few comments in this debate. As members have heard, the opposition will not be supporting the bill in its present form. That is the case for a number of reasons. Primarily, it is because most of the issues dealt with in this bill are also the subject of a three-yearly review of the CCC currently being carried out by the PCCC. The PCCC three-yearly review process would have been the most appropriate avenue for discussion of many of the issues in this bill.

I want to touch on the issue regarding anonymous complaints. There were a number of divergent submissions to the committee on this issue. In the present act a statutory declaration is required to be made in respect of a complaint except in some circumstances. There are exceptions to the present regime to enable anonymous complaints to be made.

It was noted in the report that no other Australian jurisdiction requires complaints to anti-corruption bodies to be made by statutory declaration. I acknowledge that point. We heard a number of varying opinions, in particular from Professor Sampford, who submitted to the inquiry, and the Local Government Association of Queensland. As the report sets out, Professor Sampford emphasised the significance of confidentiality when making a genuine complaint to the CCC.

We need to make it clear that there are two distinct issues being spoken about in the report in relation to this matter of statutory declarations and complaints. One is whether a statutory declaration should be required. As I have said, there are exceptions for where one is not required. The other is the importance of maintaining confidentiality when complaints are made to the CCC.

Professor Sampford emphasised the significance of confidentiality. It is important for the political process and also to increase the chance of corrupt conduct being caught and reducing the chance that people carrying out corrupt conduct or conduct that may be investigated by the CCC destroying evidence or taking other action to cover their tracks. He suggested that there should be an investigation of some sort of mechanism for a criminal sanction to apply where people breach that confidentiality, in order to safeguard the complaints process. I think that is a suggestion that the government should look at very seriously. The PCCC should look at that very seriously as part of the three-yearly review.

We have seen time and time again members of the public and people who are involved in the political process make complaints to the CCC about other people involved in the political process and then broadcast it broadly, particularly around election time. Seemingly, the CCC is being used as a political football. This is the point that the LGAQ made in opposing the proposed amendment to take away the need for a statutory declaration. They think that it will lead to an increase in the number of frivolous and vexatious complaints made.

The Attorney-General referred before to the fact that there are penalty provisions already in place for the making of frivolous and vexatious complaints to the CCC. In the inquiry process the CCC advised the committee that they have never been used. The offence provisions for the making of frivolous and vexatious complaints have never been used. The LGAQ opposes the proposed amendment due to the number of frivolous and vexatious complaints it sees made, particularly around council election times. We need to look at the issue of confidentiality and whether a provision can be framed—I am sure it can be—to safeguard the confidentiality of complaints and so that the making of a complaint to the CCC is not used as a political football, as we have seen it being used in the past.

The other issue that I want to speak about briefly is the bipartisan appointment process. When I listened to Attorney-General's contribution earlier it was apparent that she was accusing the LNP of using the CCC as a political football and of abusing its independence. In actual fact, I think there is ample evidence to show that it is Labor that uses the CCC as a political football through the smear of candidates that has been undertaken over a number of election campaigns, most notably the 2012 state election and the 2016 Brisbane City Council election.

Its refusal to accept public recommendations, as I understand it, from their hand-picked chair of the CCC to tighten up the regulations around complaints to the CCC is absolutely abominable. Mr MacSporran, the chair of the CCC, was appointed by the government. As I understand it, in the public proceedings of the PCCC he has made very strong comments that the CCC should not be used for political purposes and political complaints, especially during election times, and that changes should be made to the governing act, the Crime and Corruption Act, to regulate these complaints. I do not know why the government will not accept his point of view.

As a former member of the PCMC I can understand the weight that is attached to the comments of the chair of the CCC. We can only conclude, I think, that those members opposite will continue using the CCC to smear their political opponents into the future for base political purposes.

We only need to think back to 2014 to realise that it is Labor that uses the CCC as a political football. When we talk about the appointment of the chair or the CEO or a commissioner, think back to when the LNP government nominated Mr Favell, a longstanding Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Commissioner—

Mr Walker: Impeccable guy.

Mr KRAUSE: He had impeccable credentials and was held in good regard by all sides of this chamber. He was nominated by our government to be the chair of the CCC after the former chair had been acting in that role for quite a long time. The Labor Party rejected his nomination in the committee process. That was a political decision no doubt just like their political decision to act against the spirit of the law and the definition of 'bipartisan support' of the parliamentary committee that is in the present act in appointing Mr MacSporran as the chair of the CCC.

I make no reflection on Mr MacSporran. This is not about him; it is about the process. It is about the process that was abused by those opposite while in opposition to block the appointment of a perfectly good candidate as the permanent chairman of the CCC for base political purposes. Now it is Labor that refuses to amend the definition of 'bipartisan support'. This is an executive government that is willing to allow the executive to completely dominate the CCC.

This is what they accused us of doing. This is what they are doing by not amending the act. They substituted the member for Mount Isa onto the PCCC to allow their hand-picked nominee to be appointed as the chair of the CCC. In fact, they do not just hand-pick the chair of the CCC; they also hand-pick the members of parliament who are meant to be the check on the executive because they nominate all of the members of the PCCC who can approve that appointment.

It is a process that has the executive in control of the CCC lock, stock and barrel. This is a Labor government that is perpetuating this process. There is no separation of powers when it comes to the CCC and the Labor Party—no separation of powers whatsoever. There are no checks and balances on the power of this executive to appoint members to the CCC.

We have given them ample opportunity to adopt another position. It has been spelt out for them in the statement of reservation in the committee's report. It has been spelt out for them what they need to do to fix this situation, but they refuse to do it. We know that it is Labor that uses the CCC as a political football. It is Labor that is in control. It is this executive government control of the CCC that they do not want to relinquish. They have had this control for well over 20 years now. They do not want to relinquish it even though we though, in our statement of reservation, delivered them the perfect opportunity to make truly bipartisan appointments to the CCC.

We will be opposing this bill on a number of grounds, primarily because these matters should be dealt with by the PCCC in their three-yearly review. There are a number of other issues which the government needs to address including confidentiality and the appointments process.

 **Mr BROWN** (Capalaba—ALP) (4.50 pm): First, I acknowledge the hard work of the secretariat, particularly Bernice, the chair of the committee and my fellow committee members. I rise today to speak in support of the Crime and Corruption Amendment Bill 2015. Having served on the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee last year and now serving on the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee, I have an intense interest in the topics raised in this bill. My time on this committee coincided with a controversial period in the committee's history, but I am confident that in this legislation we have a set of proposals that meet our election commitments and the community's expectations of them.

The CCC was politicised in the last term in the parliament under the previous government, and this bill seeks to restore the independence of the commission. The CCC, in its various incarnations over 2½ decades, is a Labor led innovation, a product of the downfall of the Bjelke-Petersen years and the Fitzgerald inquiry. I am proud that again Labor serves the community by standing up and fighting back for transparency and accountability.

This bill stipulates that the CCC's chief executive officer is not a commissioner, in line with the best practice public governance arrangements, but guarantees a five-member commission to ensure a range of experience and skills are brought to the CCC's governance. This bill also requires bipartisan parliamentary committee support for the appointment of the CCC CEO, moving away from the winner-takes-all approach of the previous government. We will also limit future temporary CEO appointments to three months to prevent long-term partisan appointments being made to the CEO role—a tactic that can undermine and erode public confidence in the impartiality of the CCC in the execution of its duties.

We will through this bill restore the CCC's corruption-fighting role and its role to build resilience and resistance in our public administration against corruption. The previous government talked tough about fighting organised crime but, over years, organised corruption can be just as corrosive to the public good. We will also reinstate the CCC's independent research function and remove the need for ministerial authority to do the same. This will encourage innovative best practice in our state's law enforcement entities. I cannot imagine that any of us are against innovation in this place.

We will also allow anonymous complaints about corruption, meaning that complaints will no longer need to be made by statutory declaration. This does discourage whistleblowers from making complaints as, by the nature of the complaints the CCC receives, they are mostly—

An honourable member interjected.

Mr BROWN: Some are truthful. I take the interjection. That is the very reason. We cannot let there be any dysfunction by one truthful complaint to the CCC being lost because of the barrier of a statutory declaration. We should encourage citizens to complain about power and not be afraid of it.

This bill gives the CCC CEO the same financial delegation powers as other departmental accountable officers have in the rest of our Public Service. Why should our watchdog have lesser powers than those it is supposed to be watching over?

Finally, and while this may seem a small point, language matters in ensuring our governance presents a relevant image. The CCC chair position will no longer be referred to as 'chairman' but as 'chairperson'. It is a small point—and I am sure a contentious one for those traditionalists—but, if we are to project an image to the rest of the world, let it be one that says Queensland moves with the times. Gender-neutral language is such a small thing we can use to demonstrate that, and there is no reason not to. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Miss BARTON** (Broadwater—LNP) (4.55 pm): I rise today as a member of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee to oppose the proposed changes to the Crime and Corruption Act. At the outset, I thank my fellow colleagues on the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee and, of course, acknowledge the work that has been done by the secretariat to help prepare this report.

There are a number of issues that I would like to raise in my contribution this afternoon. I will not touch on everything that is contained in the bill because I am aware that my good friend and colleague the shadow Attorney-General has touched on a number of matters in his contribution, as has the deputy chair and the member for Beaudesert.

At the outset, I want to touch on the definition of 'bipartisan support'. When we were going through the process of adopting this report and considering what recommendations or changes we would like to make with respect to amendments, it was very disappointing that the members of the government were not prepared to entertain a notion that we should define 'bipartisan support' as that being the

government and the officially recognised opposition in this state. This government talks about wanting to be a consultative government and wanting to live up to community expectations. When you talk to people about what they think 'bipartisan' means, they think that it means the government and the opposition. They think that it means Labor and the LNP.

Clearly, this government is so concerned about being able to take advantage of the system, is so concerned about being able to ridicule the integrity of the system and abuse the integrity of the system, that it will not even entertain the notion of defining 'bipartisan support' in the ordinary way that everyday Queenslanders would. If you look at the Oxford Dictionary when it comes to the definition of 'bipartisan', it talks about two major parties who disagree on the majority of things coming together. Quite frankly, given that we have a hung parliament, I cannot think of a better definition of 'bipartisan'. When you consider the importance of the role of the chairman of the Crime and Corruption Commission or the role of the commissioners of the Crime and Corruption Commission, these are incredibly important roles not only within the framework and the system of managing crime and corruption in this state but also generally across-the-board. When you think about the lack of goodwill that the government has with respect to the definition of 'bipartisan', it is really quite disappointing that it would ignore what is generally the understood definition by the people of Queensland.

We have seen already in this term of government this Labor government completely take advantage of the obscure definition, and they have. In an attempt to divert attention away from the fact that the official opposition would not support their nominee for the chairman of the Crime and Corruption Commission, they substituted one of their own members with a member of the crossbench. I had constituents contact me absolutely appalled that the system would allow them to do so. The whole point of the Leader of the Opposition and the Premier making nominations with respect to the respective members of the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee is to ensure that there is true representation across the parliament. To have members solely nominated by the government—with respect to the substitution, the member for Mount Isa was a substitute nominated by the government—approve the appointment of someone who holds quite a very important role in our state is absolutely disgusting.

The government should hang its head in shame not only for seeking to take advantage of the system but also for not recognising that it has done the wrong thing. What it should do is amend the definition of 'bipartisan' so it is truly reflective of what the understood definition of bipartisan is, which is members of the government and members of the officially recognised opposition coming to an agreement. Given that we are talking about very important positions, it is absolutely disgraceful.

I want to touch on the reinstatement of anonymous complaints and the fact that they will not be keeping investigations and complaints confidential. I was on both the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee and the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee in the last parliament when we considered the changes that made the Crime and Misconduct Commission into the Crime and Corruption Commission. One of the reasons we considered that we should have statutory declarations outside of very extraordinary circumstances is to ensure there are no frivolous complaints and to ensure there are no vexatious complaints. Referring someone to the Crime and Corruption Commission is a very big deal. It is incredibly serious. What we have seen in the past is political parties, most notably, as my good friend and colleague the member for Beaudesert pointed out, in the lead-up to the 2012 state election and most recently in the lead-up to the 2016 Brisbane local government elections, take advantage of the fact that they can refer someone to the Crime and Corruption Commission and they can then talk about it.

We have always had in our system a belief that one is innocent until proven guilty, but the reality is that, when you talk about someone having been referred to the Crime and Corruption Commission, when you talk about someone having to go to the star chamber of the Crime and Corruption Commission, mud sticks. We have seen time and time again political opponents use referrals to the Crime and Corruption Commission in a frivolous and vexatious way to play political games and to besmirch the reputations of their political opponents. It is absolutely disgusting that someone would be able to do that (1) without needing to put their name to it and without needing to stand up and defend the allegations that they make and (2) without needing to keep the contents of the investigation and the complaint confidential until that investigation is completed.

People absolutely take advantage of the system and it is disgraceful that in 2016 people are using complaints to besmirch people's political reputations. On the Gold Coast during the most recent local government elections we saw people refer to previous Crime and Misconduct Commission investigations of many years ago where people had been cleared. They tried to use those investigations and those complaints to smear someone's reputation.

It is disgraceful, because it makes an absolute mockery of the Crime and Corruption Commission if people are going to take advantage of it and use it as a political football. It is absolutely disgraceful that the Labor Party in this state does not give a damn. It does not care because it is the Labor Party in this state which takes advantage of this. They use it, as I say, to besmirch the reputation of their political opponents. We have consistently seen these things play out in the media. We have consistently seen submitters to this inquiry—like Professor Sampford and the Local Government Association—say that it has significant implications for the integrity of the system. As I said, it is absolutely disgraceful.

There are two other things with respect to the bill as proposed that I want to touch on. As the shadow Attorney-General has pointed out, the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee is currently undergoing a statutory review. I think it is absolutely disgraceful that this government does not think its own members on the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee will be able to undertake this review freely and be able to make sound recommendations. I know that the member for Toowoomba North, who is the chair of the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee, intends to make a contribution to this debate so I do not intend to stray too much into what he may canvass. Given that the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee is in the process of, or is about to undertake, its statutory review, it makes absolutely no sense that this government does not trust that committee of this parliament—a very senior and serious committee of this parliament—to go through its statutory review process to consider important matters such as anonymous complaints, the definition of 'bipartisan' and whether investigations should be kept confidential.

The only other thing I want to touch on with respect to the substantive bill was the change of language from 'chairman' to 'chair'. I appreciate that members of the Labor Party think that the word 'chairman' apparently means 'man' but it does not. The word 'chairman' as defined by the *Oxford Dictionary* is a person chosen to preside over a meeting. It really concerns me that this government has nothing better to do than go through legislation and find what it thinks is gendered language and change it and say that they are the great saviours of gender equality in this state.

Quite frankly, it does not matter to women on this side of the House whether the person is a chair, chairman or chairperson. What matters is not their title but how they do the job and the way in which they carry out their functions. It is irrelevant whether that person is a woman or a man. It is irrelevant whether the title that person holds is chairman, chairperson or chair. There are bigger things we need to think about when it comes to the Crime and Corruption Commission than whether we have gender-neutral language. It is nice to know that they have nothing bigger to deal with. This is another example of the Labor Party being frozen at the wheel if this is the only thing they have to worry about.

Before I complete my contribution, I would like to touch very briefly on the amendments that the Attorney-General has tabled. Like my good friend and colleague the shadow Attorney-General, I have not had a chance to look at them in great detail but prima facie they seem like very fair amendments. I think we can all agree that the JP QCAT trial has been a very worthy one. I think we can all appreciate in a bipartisan fashion as members of the LNP and the Labor Party that justices of the peace do a very good job in our community. They have a very important role to play in our community. I put on the record my acknowledgement and thanks to justices of the peace, particularly those in my community, who make the time to volunteer as justices of the peace, whether it is at shopping centres, the courthouse or making themselves available to meet with people who find them on the justices of the peace register and simply need someone to sign documents. As I say, they play such an incredibly important role that I have paid for both members of my team to train and qualify as justices of the peace so there is a readily available justice of the peace service for people in my community, if they cannot make it to shopping centres or are unable to go online and find out where a JP is, at my electorate office between 8.30 and 5.30, Monday to Friday.

As I said, I will not be supporting the changes to the Crime and Corruption Act as proposed by the government. I do, however, look forward to hearing how the government will try to explain away its changes as the rest of the debate continues.

 **Ms LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (5.08 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Crime and Corruption Amendment Bill 2015. This bill gives effect to the government's election commitment to restore once more the independence and integrity of the Crime and Corruption Commission and rights a serious wrong carried out by the former LNP government in 2014. I will not go into all elements of the bill—my colleagues have ably done so—but instead will confine my comments to three key areas of reinstating the CCC's corruption prevention function, reinstating the CCC's independence when undertaking its research functions and allowing complaints to be made unanimously to the CCC as well as making a few comments in regard to the use of gender-neutral language.

In 2014 the Newman government removed the CCC's responsibility for the prevention of corruption in units of public administration and, in so doing, created a critical gap in Queensland's integrity system. In 2014 the Attorney-General handed himself control of the CCC's research program, removing the independence and flexibility of the commission. The ability to make anonymous complaints about corruption to the CCC was also removed and instead replaced with a requirement to make such complaints by way of statutory declaration unless the CCC decides otherwise.

Following passage of the bill, the then attorney-general issued a media release titled 'Government listens on CMC reforms' and said that the new CCC would be a modern, unmuzzled watchdog. While 'muzzled' may have indeed become correct under the former government, I think we all know the mendacity of the former attorney-general's statements.

In its submission to the 2014 Newman government bill inquiry, the Queensland Law Society said—

The Society, has serious concerns about ... aspects of the Bill ... the Society considers it critically important to ensure that the Commission remains an independent, apolitical corruption watchdog.

...

The Commission's purpose should be equally focused on dealing with organised crime and corruption.

...

Restricting the research function of the Commission to require prior approval of the Minister for research undertakings may reduce the independence of the institution.

The Queensland Ombudsman in his submission stated in regard to the requirement that complaints be made by way of statutory declaration—

I believe that this is a retrograde proposal as it will have the effect of deterring all citizens, not just those with inappropriate motives, from making complaints about alleged corrupt behaviour to the Commission.

The Bar Association in its submission stated—

The Bill deletes several of those safeguards placed in the Act to achieve the Commission's independence from partisan considerations and influence that were placed in the Act in the wake of the 1989 report. The deletion of these provisions is the first of the concerning tendencies referred to ... the internal structure of the Commission is changed by the Bill to place increased influence and authority in the Chairman, the Chief Executive Officer ... and in the Minister. The two developments cause the Association much concern.

That is the Queensland Law Society, the Queensland Ombudsman and the Bar Association so far. We on this side of the House can certainly see why the Queensland public rejected the former government's version of listening, but I will go on.

The CMC submission to the 2014 inquiry cited in regard to the requirement for a complaint to be made way of a statutory declaration that in 2012 approximately seven per cent of complaints received were from anonymous sources. Based on its experience, the commission believes that the amendments 'may inhibit the CCC's ability to effectively investigate some complaints of serious corruption and that it would be prudent for it to retain some flexibility in this area'. The submission also went on to make the point that the bill would leave Queensland as 'the only state that does not have a primary function to deal with serious corruption'.

The submission from Tony Fitzgerald, which I would encourage everyone to read, certainly makes for instructive reading. It labelled the bill in its present form 'a gross abuse of power'. I am not sure who the former LNP government was listening to when it took steps to diminish the independence of the CCC. It certainly was not the CCC itself. It was not the Queensland Law Society or the Bar Association or the Queensland Ombudsman.

The independence of the commission must be protected by all sides of politics. The commission's independence is vital to ensuring the integrity of Queensland's public institutions. Successive Labor governments have understood that and have protected that independence through the introduction of landmark reforms in Queensland. The commission is there to serve the people of Queensland and not the government of the day.

I commend the Attorney-General for bringing in these reforms. This bill reinstates the CCC's corruption prevention function by amending section 4 to provide that one of the main purposes of the act is to continuously improve the integrity of and to reduce the incidence of corruption in the public sector. All the corruption entities in Australia have a function to prevent corruption, and this amendment puts Queensland back in step with the rest of the country in this regard. I note that the CCC in its submission to the recent bill inquiry indicated that there is a continuing role for the CCC in corruption prevention within the public sector and that it should be reinstated.

The bill reinstates the CCC's research function to what it was prior to the 2014 amendments so that the commission can once again determine its own research priorities, independent of political interference. The bill also removes the requirement for complaints to be made by way of a statutory declaration—once again, fostering a culture that encourages complaints about corruption to be made. No other jurisdiction requires complaints to corruption entities to be made by statutory declaration. In its submission to the PCCC review, the CCC stated—

In our experience, complaints accompanied by a statutory declaration are not of any higher quality or value to the CCC.

They said that they 'have no greater probative value nor are they more reliable for the requirement'.

This bill will also rectify the regressive and narrow-minded move by the former government to override the well-established legislative drafting practice of using gender-neutral language in statutes. The decision to change the term 'chairperson' throughout the act to 'chairman', though attempted on the quiet, may seem to some to be minor but to my mind it was retrograde and offensive. The use of language—particularly language promoted in legislation and by government—carries significant weight and has a normative effect. Most levels of government in Australia have promoted a bipartisan policy of using language that promotes equal opportunity values for decades now. The Bar Association in its submission to the PCCC review commented—

The use of the terms "chairman" and "deputy chairman" are outdated terms. More significantly the amendment to instate their use is an unnecessary provocation to the very many in the community who think so and an unfortunate use in turn of legislation given that could be its only purpose. The use of gender stereotyping language in legislation should be avoided to reduce the prospect of gender stereotyping in the community.

It is disappointing that the former government and all its members saw fit to support amendments that not only diminished the independence of the commission but also saw a return to the use of outdated language that supports stereotypes that exclude women from public life and is no longer representative of the values of the broader community. This bill will see a return to the use of gender-neutral language to reflect contemporary practice.

Today we take another step in rebuilding the capacity of one of our most important integrity bodies charged with preventing and addressing corruption in Queensland. The commission's independence is vital to ensuring the integrity of Queensland's public institutions. Its independence should be protected by all sides of politics. Successive Labor governments have understood this. The Queensland public demands it, and those opposite ignored it at their peril. I thank the Attorney-General for taking a strong stand on behalf of Queenslanders and restoring the independence of the Crime and Corruption Commission. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mrs SMITH** (Mount Ommaney—LNP) (5.16 pm): Firstly, I would like to thank and commend the secretariat for their hard work and dedication in putting this report together. The committee staff always work tirelessly behind the scenes to support and assist committee members, and I certainly thank them for that. The previous speakers have adequately outlined the objectives of the bill. As a member of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee, I was fortunate to be directly involved with the formation of this report. I also read the submissions and listened to the witnesses over the course of this inquiry. I do have a few concerns with this bill and I would like to raise them today.

Regarding the statutory declaration and confidentiality, I have grave concerns with respect to provisions contained in the bill that remove the requirement to provide complaints to the CCC by way of a statutory declaration, except in exceptional circumstances, and that will now provide for anonymous complaints. I believe the issue of maintaining confidentiality of complaints also requires further investigation. The LNP's position on both of these matters is supported strongly by the Local Government Association of Queensland and Professor Charles Sampford. I listened to the LGAQ and Professor Sampford and both raised valid points to the committee—primarily that removing these provisions will give rise to the number of complaints and the opportunity for some to make vexatious complaints. The LGAQ advised the committee that the LGAQ is 'opposed to the proposed amendment to allow anonymous complaints about corruption to be made to the CCC, by removing the requirement for complaints to be made by way of a statutory declaration.'

It goes on—

The LGAQ believes that this will encourage frivolous and vexatious complaints in relation to local government, particularly at politically sensitive times such as the lead up to a council election.

Along with the LGAQ, I understand and take matters of corruption very seriously, and I feel this provision strengthens the integrity of the CCC in dealing with complaints of corruption and should not be removed. Further, the submission of Professor Sampford that complaints, in relation to crime and

corruption, should remain confidential to safeguard the progress of crime and corruption allegations is sensible. Anyone who wishes to make a complaint and believes their allegations are of substance should complete a statutory declaration and their complaint should remain confidential to protect the integrity of the system.

I think it is disappointing but not surprising that government members of the committee were unable to agree with this recommendation to prevent the politicisation of the CCC. Complaints to the CCC should never be treated as anyone's political plaything. However, we all know that some in this place have form with this sort of grubby, underhanded tactic, treating the CCC as a political football. We only have to look back to the 2012 election to see the disgusting smear campaign headed by the member for South Brisbane against the former premier. To prevent this absolute abuse of the system happening in the future and in the interests of fairness and impartiality, complaints should be made to the CCC with confidentiality.

I also asked the library for some information to gain an understanding of how regularly the CCC has been used with regard to local government officials and elections. It is quite surprising. I will give a little bit of a list. On 7 March Whitsunday Regional Council former deputy mayor Andrew Wilcox was referred. The Brisbane City Council Lord Mayor—and we all saw that scandal and smear for two days in the paper—was also referred to the CCC on 26 February. Whitsunday Regional Council former mayor Jenny Whitney was also referred on 23 February. I want members to have a look at a couple of these dates: 7 March 2016, 26 February 2016, 23 February 2016—all council issues. When were the council elections held? 19 March. Honourable members can add two and two together on that one.

We also saw on 20 April the late mayor Steve Jones was referred. In Cook shire we saw it in September 2014—and who could forget the scandal and 10-month-long investigation that made the papers every day regarding Ipswich Mayor Paul Pisasale? We also had the Whitsunday Regional Council former mayor Mike Brunner referred. All of these were around the times that elections were being called and in all of these cases no outcome of wrongdoing was found. I think the average person on the street can come to their own conclusions on that. Again, that is a very good example of why the CCC should provide that confidentiality if a complaint is made.

My two colleagues on the committee, the deputy chair, the member for Beaudesert, and the member for Broadwater, have talked about bipartisanship. I, too, will raise concerns briefly with regard to the bipartisan appointments that are made to the CCC. As referred to in the committee report, this provision allows the government to substitute a crossbench MP with a government member of the PCCC with a view to forming a majority to satisfy the definition of 'bipartisan support'. I contend that the conventional understanding or the implied definition of 'bipartisan support' is that that support is provided by both members of the government and the opposition. As such, concerns were raised by opposition members of the committee that the changes made to ensure the bipartisan support of the PCCC in the appointment of the CEO could be skirted around by deliberately substituting a crossbench MP for a government member. Who would have thought? We saw that happen. I am concerned about this and cannot support this aspect, either.

As I said, at the end of the day my colleagues have probably summed up very well the other points about which we raised concerns. On the balance of the evidence from the committee inquiry, I will be opposing the bill.

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (5.23 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Crime and Corruption Amendment Bill 2015. The Crime and Corruption Amendment Bill delivers one of the Palaszczuk government's key election commitments, that is, to restore the independence and integrity of the Crime and Corruption Commission. The proposed amendments to the Crime and Corruption Amendment Bill are paramount in creating the foundation for fair and just governance that the people of Queensland and, indeed, Australia expect.

This bill is about removing temptations and holding administrations accountable. It is about ensuring the public can have confidence in the integrity of government and the public sector. In a time that sees a growing trend in public perceptions that government and public sectors in general lack transparency and are prone to corruption, this bill is more important than ever to ensure that we earn and keep the trust of the people of Queensland. As noted recently in a report by Transparency International, corruption continues to dominate media coverage throughout the world, increasing interest in this issue and sparking a raft of new research into both public and private sector corruption. Transparency International also offers insight into what needs to happen to reverse corruption. They note that, while it is not the sole responsibility of governments, they are the ones with the greatest power to influence and create enabling environments for others in eliminating corruption. They also state—

They—

governments—

must fulfil promises, and ensure efforts aren't undermined in practice. Anti-corruption commissions are a prime example here: while their creation across the region is commendable, ongoing political interference and inadequate resources has meant many are unable to fulfil their mandate. This has to be addressed.

They are wise words indeed, and this is exactly the unfortunate reality we saw happen under the Newman government back in 2014. We saw the Crime and Corruption Commission stripped of its independence, stripped of its ability to anonymously investigate and research matters of concern and stripped of its ability to fully support the public sector agency in eliminating potential corruption within their departments. This is what the Palaszczuk government is determined to rectify.

This government intends to remove any potential government interference in the undertakings of the Crime and Corruption Commission and to ensure that the CCC has the resources and the platform to fulfil their mandate. The Crime and Corruption Amendment Bill will restore the independence and the effectiveness of the Crime and Corruption Commission. Of equal importance, this bill will also implement changes that will see the CCC playing a greater role in preventing corruption through improving systems and transparency within the public sector and through making it easier for members of the public to report matters of corruption of which they become aware.

It is within the abilities of those of us in the chamber to provide leadership and to create an enabling environment within the state of Queensland to combat crime and corruption. It is vital that we remain passionate, vigilant and committed to ensuring that all levels of administration uphold the values of the people of our great state of Queensland. Ensuring that the Crime and Corruption Commission's chief executive officer is not a commissioner is consistent with best practice governance arrangements. The commission will consist of the chairperson, deputy chairperson and three, rather than two, part-time commissioners who are ordinary commissioners. This again will ensure that the commission has a broad range of expertise and skill.

The Crime and Corruption Amendment Bill takes a significant step in making the changes needed to re-establish in the people of the state of Queensland faith in their government, faith in leadership and faith that it is in the interests of the people and the broader community that they always be put first. I am proud to support the Crime and Corruption Amendment Bill 2015.

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (5.27 pm): I rise to oppose the Crime and Corruption Amendment Bill 2015. I note that the committee could not reach agreement on whether the bill should be passed, and there is very good reason for that, which I will expand on shortly.

When we talk about changes to crime and corruption legislation, we need to ensure that the appropriate consultation and consideration has been undertaken in a transparent way and without prejudice. The Crime and Corruption Commission is an extremely powerful and important statutory body set up to combat and reduce the incidence of major crime and corruption in the public sector in Queensland. Its functions and powers are set out in the Crime and Corruption Act 2001. The CCC investigates both crime and corruption, has oversight of both the police and the public sector, and protects witnesses. It is the only integrity agency in Australia with this range of functions. I want to remind the House of those functions that fall within the ambit of the CCC. In short, the CCC investigates organised crime, paedophilia, terrorist activity and other serious crime referred to it for investigation; receives and investigates allegations of serious or systemic corrupt conduct; helps to recover the proceeds of crime; provides the witness protection service for the state of Queensland; and conducts research on crime, policing or other relevant matters. Any changes to the legislation governing that body need to be the subject of rigorous assessment and evaluation and not at the whim of individuals or political parties with a particular agenda.

I have a particular concern about the proposed changes that would allow complaints to be made anonymously to the CCC. I have witnessed firsthand the devastating impact that an anonymous complaint to the CCC can have on an individual, and the recent spate of complaints to the CCC during the local government elections is further evidence of the dangers and potential impacts of allowing anonymous complaints to be made without any fear of repercussion. The use of the CCC as a political tool to smear an opponent is disgraceful and improper, and it is my firm opinion that those people who make vexatious and frivolous complaints to the CCC should be pursued and, if necessary, charged with making a false complaint. In fact, LGAQ CEO Greg Hallam recently said that the 2016 local government elections were the worst he has seen for this.

I do not support this bill because the PCCC is simultaneously undertaking a wider statutory review of the CCC's operations and is due to report to the House by 30 June 2016. It is my belief that any major structural reforms to the CCC should wait until after that review is finalised. Importantly, the

changes proposed in the bill do not come from any independent review of the CCC. This is simply another example of undoing previous amendments made by the LNP government because this government has no plan other than to undo what we did in government. Advice from stakeholders during hearings is that a number of other issues were raised; for example, relating to corporate governance, the powers of commissioners, the chair, CEO and Parliamentary Commissioner and whether the CCC's functions in relation to crime and corruption should be carried out by separate entities. It is patently obvious that there are deeper and significant issues that will not be addressed by this particular bill, and this simply adds weight to the argument that we should wait until the statutory review is completed. It defies logic that the government would seek to have this bill passed, when in two months time a full and comprehensive review is due to be delivered which in all probability will recommend significant changes to the Crime and Corruption Act.

In 2014 the former LNP government amended the Crime and Misconduct Act 2001 to put in place some of the recommendations from the review undertaken by former High Court judge Ian Callaghan and UQ law professor Nicholas Aroney, and we should give due recognition to the recommendations submitted by these learned gentlemen.

As a member of the PCCC I am privy to information regarding ongoing investigations, corruption in this state and growing issues such as paedophilia, which I am sure cause all of us in this chamber significant concern. We need to ensure that the CCC is adequately resourced, supported and has the level of expertise necessary to carry out its functions with minimal interference from this place. As our primary corruption-fighting body in Queensland the CCC plays a crucial role in keeping our state safe, and I only have to refer to the threat that outlaw motorcycle gangs pose to our citizens to reaffirm the importance of the work that the CCC performs. Consequently, it is vitally important that we get this right and not rush in for the sake of political expedience. The CCC should not be seen as a political football, and for that reason I urge all members here tonight to oppose this bill on the grounds that it makes practical sense to await the outcome of the statutory review of the CCC.

 **Ms FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (5.32 pm): I rise to give my support to the Crime and Corruption Amendment Bill. I am quite dismayed at some of the speeches that we have heard in this House tonight, because I think this bill goes to the heart of what the Palaszczuk Labor government is all about: being a transparent and accountable government. That is what we promised to the people of Queensland when we went to the election last year. The audacity of some of the speakers from the other side to imply that by supporting this bill this government has somehow something to do with a lack of transparency and integrity is laughable.

This goes to the heart of what Queenslanders expect from a government that they can trust, and that trust was breached during the term of the previous LNP government. Just before the election last year it led to Tony Fitzgerald saying that the LNP government had set a new low for integrity. Leading up to that campaign not one single person that I spoke to in the Bulimba electorate failed to tell me that they had completely lost trust in a government which they felt should be accountable. Let us look at some of the things that the LNP government did during that term. In a very short period of time it managed to undermine just about every single democratic process in this state. What are some of the things that we are looking at? They attacked the independence of the judiciary. They increased the threshold for disclosing political donations from \$1,000 to \$12,400, making it easier—

Mr POWELL: I rise to a point of order. Mr Deputy Speaker, I seek your guidance as to whether the independence of the judiciary or disclosures of political donations are the subject of the bill before the House.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I do not have the bill in front of me.

Mrs D'ATH: I rise to a point of order. During the debate on this bill those opposite have already made the point about the independence of the judiciary, so I think that should be considered on both sides. They are happy to talk about it on their side.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Bulimba.

Ms FARMER: Not only did they increase the threshold but there were 23 secret donations made to the LNP that they cannot find receipts for. They are some of the problems that—

Mr WATTS: I rise to a point of order. I would ask the member for Bulimba to point out where in the act it refers to what she is talking about in the bill. It is not there. This is not relevant to the bill before the House.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Elmes): Order! I would ask the member to stay clearly on the bill. I have the bill now; I will start to look at it very carefully.

Ms FARMER: Thank you for your guidance, Mr Deputy Speaker. I am going to the point of integrity and accountability. This bill talks about restoring the independence of the CCC and ensuring that it has the full range of powers and the capacity to perform its important anti-corruption function, and these things were stripped from the CCC in the last government. The point I was making is that it followed a pattern of behaviour. Not only were we talking about the lack of transparency in matters like political donations and the independence of the judiciary; we were talking about the lack of transparency in the very way that it ran government. They changed the composition of parliamentary portfolio committees, giving themselves majority control; they changed the estimates process so that it became almost impossible for there to be scrutiny of the estimates process; and they made inappropriate appointments. There are a range of things which completely destroyed the trust of the Queensland people in that government.

We all know about the dramatic sacking of the PCCC in an overnight action. You do not have to have a long conversation with some of those opposite who were in the last government before you are told how excruciatingly embarrassed they were about how that was managed. I think that stands at the top of the actions that were taken to undermine the functions of the CCC in this state. They removed the CCC's corruption prevention function, and this bill is going to reinstate that function. They watered down the independence of the CCC including: removing the need for bipartisan support for the appointment of the chair and commissioners; allowing the long-term appointment of temporary anti-corruption commissioners without bipartisan support; and removing the CCC's independence and flexibility to be able to set its own research agenda by requiring the CCC to obtain ministerial approval for its research. This bill enables the CCC to determine its research agenda without fear of political interference, and there was plenty of form in that government for political interference.

Those opposite took away the ability of complainants to make anonymous complaints and made it a prerequisite that complaints be made by statutory declaration. I understand some of the issues around that action, but the problem is that the previous government showed itself as one that was willing to seek retribution if anyone even remotely looked like they were going to disagree with it. The consequences of taking away anonymity were enormous and a threat to anyone who seriously wanted to make a complaint about alleged corruption in the Public Service or anywhere else.

Other members have talked about that truly spiteful move to change the language around 'chairperson' and 'chairman'. That is overturning a practice which is common not only across government but also across most sectors these days. That just reflected their truly misogynistic attitudes. It was such a small, spiteful and unnecessary thing.

Many members on this side of the House have made points about the important functions this bill will perform to restore the confidence of the Queensland public in government and its processes, so I will not talk anymore about those. I thank the committee very much. There was obviously a lot of detail to cover and a lot of consideration undertaken, but there was a clear commitment to addressing the government's election commitments. I also thank the Attorney-General, who is setting a cracking pace in making sure there is legislation coming through this House which restores transparency and accountability to government in Queensland. I commend this bill to the House.



Mr PERRETT (Gympie—LNP) (5.40 pm): I rise to speak to the Crime and Corruption Amendment Bill 2015. I do so as a former member of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee and as a former local government councillor. This experience underpins my grave concerns about the use of the complaints process. I wish to focus on two areas regarding the complaints process: firstly, proposals to remove the need for a statutory declaration to accompany a complaint; and, secondly, the need to provide a deterrent to the making of unfounded and frivolous complaints.

Under a cloak of secrecy and carrying little responsibility, too often the Crime and Corruption Commission is used for scurrilous complaints. That is why the LNP is concerned about the proposed provisions that remove the requirement to provide complaints to the CCC with a statutory declaration except in exceptional circumstances. These changes mean that it will now provide for anonymous complaints. These amendments should be rejected. If the proposed amendments become part of the Crime and Corruption Act 2001, the LNP believes that the issue of maintaining confidentiality should be further investigated.

Complaints should remain confidential to safeguard the progress of the crime and corruption allegations, but there needs to be both a mechanism to protect those investigations and a deterrent to vexatious and false complaints. As Professor Charles Sampford of Griffith University said, confidentiality is important for the integrity of the political process. It is important to increase the chances that corrupt conduct will be caught. It is important to reduce the chance of mischief such as evidence being destroyed or alibis being made up.

The right to confidentiality carries a responsibility. This leads to my second concern about combating unsubstantiated complaints. Too often within local government circles it is commonplace to hear of the complaint process being misused for both political purposes and vindictiveness. It is used to give legs to conspiracy theories and for pure mischief-making. This diminishes the seriousness of genuine complaints. It devalues their legitimacy and the worries of honestly concerned residents. It takes up valuable time and resources that should be spent on real and legitimate complaints.

That is why the Local Government Association of Queensland is concerned at the removal of statutory declarations, noting that this 'will encourage frivolous and vexatious complaints in relation to local government, particularly at sensitive times such as the lead-up to a council election'. Its prediction is easy to believe, as in the run-up to the last two council elections the number of allegations spiked by 80 per cent in 2008 and 40 per cent in 2012. The LGAQ advised that it 'believes that the exceptional circumstances provisions contained within section 36(3) of the Crime and Corruption Act 2001 provide an individual with the appropriate protections and safeguards'. It goes on—

Notwithstanding, the LGAQ and Queensland councils take matters of corruption very seriously and in no way wish to discourage complaints about corruption. Any complainant who believes their allegation has merit should have no issue in completing a statutory declaration which is a relatively straightforward process.

As predicted, we saw yet again during the recent local government elections allegations and complaints made to the CCC and then being publicly aired in the media. The LGAQ's chief executive officer, Greg Hallam, described the 2016 elections as the worst he has seen. The Deputy Premier's own department of local government made two very damaging referrals, which were quickly leaked to the media, regarding the mayors of both Brisbane and Ipswich. Those leaks and allegations were deliberately designed to cause maximum damage to reputations and make the mud stick. They ran for a number of weeks before everything was then cleared. Unfortunately, as there is no deterrent, in the prism of an election period complaints are clearly designed to inflict reputational damage. It is not really about weeding out corruption. We need some sort of deterrent mechanism because the current system has not worked.

During the public hearing I specifically raised my concerns about this with the chair of the Crime and Corruption Commission, Alan MacSporran. I asked—

My question is around the politicisation of the CCC, particularly around frivolous complaints. I have had 12 years in local government and I have seen the CCC used as a mechanism to attack political opponents, rightly or wrongly—wrongly when they are frivolous complaints, particularly when they are mentioned in the media as 'under investigation' or 'referred to the CCC'. It is very difficult to be able to counter those as an individual and particularly as someone who is involved in the political process. What mechanisms can be used to prevent those sorts of issues that are deliberate tactics from political operatives, be it inside or outside the direct line of politics?

Mr MacSporran advised—

... we have proactively run campaigns ... to educate candidates and the public as to what is expected and, in particular, to warn candidates that they should not use the CCC as a political vehicle to gain some advantage for themselves or to cause detriment to their opponents. I issued a video on our website ... We conducted a joint press conference with the LGAQ ... we did ... radio interviews ... it pointed out the unfairness and often unnecessary reputational damage from false complaints being made to us with the object of gaining an advantage, how that could backfire on the candidate, how the public would be cynical and entitled to be cynical.

...

As part of our message we have also reminded people that it is a criminal offence to make a false allegation to us, and it is a serious criminal offence.

The problem is that, despite saying it is a criminal offence, not one person has been referred to the courts. I asked—

Given that it is a serious criminal offence, are there examples of where there have been frivolous and vexatious complaints based on trying to gain political advantage over someone else, they have been referred to the courts and there have been successful convictions?

The chairman was not even aware that the legislation, section 216, had been in existence for a long period of time, but he did advise—

To my knowledge there has not been a prosecution under that legislation.

...

It has never been used, to my knowledge.

...

The time is rapidly approaching when maybe it is time to prosecute because it is a grossly unfair thing to do if there is nothing in it, if it is baseless.

We need to provide an adequate deterrent for the confidence of the community and the people who operate within the political sphere. Until we can refer frivolous complaints and have prosecutions, all of the education programs in the world will have no teeth. That is why the LNP believes that the legal framework and proposed criminalisation measures suggested by Professor Sampford should be investigated by the PCCC. The CCC has a valuable role, but that role should not be used as a political tool.

 **Mr RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (5.48 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Crime and Corruption Amendment Bill 2015. It is a pleasure to speak to this bill. As some members of this House will know, in the 53rd Parliament I was a member of the predecessor committee, the PCMC, and of course last year, in the first year of the 55th Parliament, I was appointed to the PCCC. It is a great committee. It is a good role to play in ensuring integrity and accountability for Queensland.

I start by acknowledging not only the good work of the Attorney-General in bringing this bill to the parliament but also the good work of Labor in opposition in formulating some outstanding election commitments to restore integrity, accountability and transparency to government in Queensland. We took to the election some very strong election commitments around restoring integrity, transparency and accountability to government. Of course, we needed to, because of the trashing of those institutions by those opposite when in government.

Listening to the speeches tonight just emphasises to me how those opposite still do not get it. They just do not get it at all. They do not get the importance of integrity, transparency and accountability to government. They just do not get it. To hear the contributions of those opposite about why they will be opposing this bill just highlights to me not only the damage that they did to those wonderful institutions when they were in government but also how they remain committed to ensuring that whenever they are in government integrity, transparency and accountability are not at the fore of their decision-making. In opposition we made a number of election commitments, and I am so pleased that this bill is implementing the next tranche of election commitments. For the purposes of the record, I note that those commitments included restoring the bipartisan support of the PCCC to the appointment process for the CEO of the CCC; limiting temporary appointments for the CCC chair, commissioners and CEO to three months unless there is bipartisan support; ensuring that the CEO is not a CCC commissioner; reinstating the CCC's corruption prevention function as well as the CCC's independence when undertaking its research functions; allowing complaints to be made anonymously to the CCC; and widening the definition of 'corrupt conduct'.

My colleague the member for Bulimba made a great contribution to this debate. For the purposes of time I am not going to restate a lot of the history that the member for Bulimba provided to the House during her contribution other than to say that these changes that are contained in the bill before the House today will go a long way to improving integrity, transparency and accountability in Queensland. I want to touch on two of those improvements, the first being to allow anonymous complaints about corruption to be made to the CCC.

Before the changes by the previous government, complaints were always allowed to be anonymous to the then CMC and before that the CJC. That is very important because people taking the step of raising a question of transparency, integrity or accountability about a concern that they might have should be afforded the opportunity to make those complaints anonymously. Not only does that create a culture of people being prepared to make complaints; it also creates some assurances for those people that they may be able to avoid any retribution that may follow should that complaint be made public. Restoring the right of complainants to make anonymous complaints will go a long way to not only enhancing integrity, accountability and transparency in Queensland but also encouraging greater numbers of complaints, and we should not be fearful of complaints. This is the thing the opposition does not get: it thinks it is a great thing to try to limit the number of complaints. It is actually something we should be encouraging. We should be creating a culture where if people have concerns about the integrity of a government department or the integrity of a government officer or the integrity of an elected representative—

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Elmes): Order! Member for Kawana.

Mr RYAN: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. We should be creating a culture where people feel comfortable to make a complaint and where they have the confidence to make a complaint. We should be encouraging that. I would much rather someone make a complaint and for it to be investigated and found to be unsubstantiated than for someone who feels fearful to not make a complaint and for the bad behaviour to continue. We should be creating a culture where people feel comfortable to make complaints and we should not be saying to people that we will make it more difficult by imposing

penalties if they make a statutory declaration and that if something they perceive is incorrect or lacking in integrity is then proven otherwise there will then be consequences that go along with that. We should be creating a culture of complaint because a culture of complaint enhances integrity, transparency and accountability when it comes to ensuring that government does business the way it should.

The other thing I want to speak about briefly is restoring bipartisan support of the PCCC to the appointment process for the CEO. The CEO of the CCC is an important role. It is an important role which should be filled in a way which ensures that the people of Queensland have absolute faith in how the CCC does its work. Restoring that bipartisan approach will not only create a better CCC but also encourage greater faith in the CCC. This is necessary reform for Queensland. Not only does it honour our election commitments but it goes a long way to repairing the damage that the other side did in government to our integrity institution, the CCC. I encourage all members to support this bill.

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (5.55 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Crime and Corruption Amendment Bill 2015. It should be noted that the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee is currently undertaking a statutory review of the Crime and Corruption Act 2001 and this committee is due to report back to the Queensland parliament by 30 June 2016. This statutory review is occurring at the same time as this bill is being debated. That is why the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee could not reach agreement on whether or not the Crime and Corruption Amendment Bill 2015 should be passed. I believe, as does the LNP, that any major structural reform to the Crime and Corruption Commission should wait until after this review is finalised.

What the Palaszczuk Labor government is proposing with this bill is to deliver on a broad range of legislative election commitments. These are commitments that I have discussed with many of my constituents in my electorate of Moggill and I agree entirely with them that these amendments do not strengthen the Crime and Corruption Commission. That is why I and my LNP colleagues are unsupportive of Labor's proposals.

It is important to note that the proposed changes to the Crime and Corruption Amendment Bill 2015 have not arisen from an independent review of the Crime and Corruption Commission, which is what one would expect. Alternatively, the amendments that the then LNP government implemented in 2014 came about following recommendations from a review that was undertaken by former High Court judge Ian Callinan and UQ law professor Nicholas Aroney. These 2014 amendments were implemented after over 60 public submissions were received and 17 well-documented recommendations were received from that review of the then Crime and Misconduct Act 2001. That review, which was undertaken in 2014, noted that very early on a high number of complaints processed by the then Crime and Misconduct Commission were trivial, vexatious and/or misdirected. It should be noted that the reception and disposition of so many such complaints are functions that have to be performed by publicly funded staff and that comes at considerable public expense to the taxpayer. The review then offered strategies as to how to deal with baseless complaints so that proper and sufficient attention could be given to the genuine and substantial complaints. I have to ask if the Palaszczuk Labor government is once again just undoing previous amendments undertaken by the former LNP government because Labor has no plan other than to undo what the previous government accomplished.

Recently during local government elections the Crime and Corruption Commission was again used as a political tool to smear opponents. In fact, the Local Government Association of Queensland's Chief Executive Officer, Mr Greg Hallam, stated that the 2016 local government elections were the worst he had seen for this and after it was expressly asked of candidates not to use the Crime and Corruption Commission for this purpose. It was on 8 February 2016 that the Crime and Corruption Commission and the Local Government Association of Queensland issued a joint media release urging candidates not to make baseless complaints to the Crime and Corruption Commission. To further compound baseless complaints, some individuals then sought to publish the fact that a complaint had been made so as to cause maximum reputational damage to others.

At the time it was well reported that the Crime and Corruption Commission was not discouraging people from making genuine complaints but it was asking them to be honest and not to risk their own campaign by making false complaints. As we are well aware, that request was not heeded and, again, like in 2012, the Crime and Corruption Commission was used in a smear campaign against the sitting Lord Mayor of Brisbane. It is also no secret that, during the 2012 state election campaign, certain Labor Party members used the Crime and Corruption Commission as a tool to smear political opponents.

It is important to note that, during the recent local government elections, some complaints to the Crime and Corruption Commission emanated from the department of local government—the department that the Deputy Premier administers. In my professional experience, often what goes

together with respect to antisocial behaviour and associated cluster B personality disorders can be elucidated as harassment, bullying, intimidation, the use of foul language and vexatious complaints. For some in our community, this can be their dysfunctional modus operandi. I conclude as I commenced by saying that any major structural reform to the Crime and Corruption Commission should wait until the statutory review of the act is finalised by 30 June 2016.

Debate, on motion of Dr Rowan, adjourned.

MOTION

Electricians and Contractors



Mr NICHOLLS (Clayfield—LNP) (6.00 pm): I move—

That this House—

1. notes that Queensland is already well serviced by thousands of registered local electricians and contractors who provide effective, high-quality electrical services, and provide jobs, training and skills to apprentices in Queensland; and
2. calls on the Palaszczuk Labor government to abandon its plans to create a taxpayer funded monolith company to compete against mum-and-dad small business electricians and local electrical contractors.

I was first elected to this place almost 10 years ago—and I notice the member for Ashgrove over there, who was elected at the same time. At that time she was a bright young spark. How things have changed! I thought she was going to take offence at that. In my first speech in this place on 11 October 2006 I said—

We should strive for the best and government must get out of the way when those services can be better delivered by private enterprise. We must allow and we must encourage the small business operators of Queensland to go about doing what they do best, innovate and compete, without the cold hard hand of government regulating them out of existence.

Those were the principles that I believed in a decade ago, they are the principles that I spoke about in my first speech and they are the principles that we are talking about tonight—that is, the opportunity for the hardworking small businesses, the more than 400,000 of them in this state, who make up the vast range of innovation, of employment, of training across this state. They make a huge contribution to our local communities—from Currumbin to Cooktown, from Brisbane to Bedourie—and make up the social and economic life of our state.

Tonight, those business are under threat and they are under threat because of a capricious, heavy-handed plan by a Labor government that, when it comes to dealing with the private sector, is out of control. We already know in Queensland that the small business community thinks that the government has a policy to put them out of business. We already know that business conditions, as viewed in Queensland, are the second worst in Australia. We already know that unemployment is on the rise and that, while this Labor government dithers, small business is doing it tough.

We are finding out through the media that the government has an even worse plan—to set up a government owned monolith to compete against registered, trained, licensed, hardworking mum-and-dad electrical contractors. In speaking to tonight's motion, we have to understand why that is the case. It is because Labor effectively misled the electorate. We need to remember what it said in the lead-up to the 2015 election campaign. Labor promised all things to all people. It promised to pay down debt by \$12 billion over 10 years by using the future dividends of government owned businesses. We knew then—and Labor has found out now—that those dividends are not going to be in the same amount that Labor thought they would be. Those dividends are shrinking. The Australian Energy Regulator has already made that decision for Labor. The debt is still heading towards \$80 billion. Labor promised to reduce the size of the ministry to 14. That has gone by the way. Labor promised to merge the power generators CS Energy and Stanwell, but had to walk away from that—as we knew it would have to when the ACCC said what a crazy idea that would be and that it would not allow that to happen. Despite making the absurd promise that it could save \$150 million a year by driving efficiency savings, Labor promised no forced redundancies in government owned businesses. That has proven not to be able to be done as well.

What is Labor doing? It is creating a government business to house all of those employees whom it would otherwise have to put out of business because its promises cannot be kept. What is Labor going to do? It is going to drive mum-and-dad small businesses out of business. It is going to put at risk those people's jobs—people such as Owen Blamires, who came down from Wondai to stand beside Andrew Powell, the member for Glass House, and me. He almost cried when he said that, if this proposal goes ahead, he would have to put off six of his people. We have people who are at the cutting edge of innovation, who are delivering electrical contracting services the length and breadth of the state.

We had the absurd claim from the member for Mulgrave that those services cannot be provided by anyone else, yet if members go on to the Clean Energy Corporation's site to look for accredited service providers they can find them the length and breadth of state. How many are there? There are 70 in Townsville, one in Clermont, one in Capella, one in Moranbah, one in Blackall and one in Chinchilla. There are two in Longreach and two in Charters Towers. There are 11 in Mount Isa, one in Cloncurry and one in Winton. There is Peter Worth from Peter Worth Electrical in Hervey Bay, Tammy Stanton from Platinum Electricians at Wynnum West, Janelle Miller at Wishart, Ian Kennedy at Yatala and Chris Lehman from Arana Hills. They are all providing those services.

This is a flawed plan that is designed to put small businesses on the rack. It destroys opportunity and destroys innovation. This heavy-handed socialist government does not know what it is doing in the state of Queensland.

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Minister for Sport) (6.06 pm): I move—

That all words after 'apprentices in Queensland' be deleted and the following words inserted—

'and supports the Palaszczuk Labor government consulting with key stakeholders during the Ergon-Energex merger process, including Master Electricians Australia and relevant electrical contractor associations, to discuss the opportunities that exist for the merged Ergon-Energex to work with electricians and retailers to grow the industry.'

I rise to defend the principle on which this government was elected and that is that public assets remain in public hands. At the last state election the people of Queensland were very clear in their rejection of the member for Clayfield's Strong Choices campaign, which was to try to sell off \$38 billion worth of assets. This government is committed to strengthening these publicly owned electricity distribution businesses by merging Ergon and Energex. As part of this merger a new energy services division will be created, which is going to be about positioning Queensland to embrace the emerging technologies and the changing energy industry.

We are only able to do this because we have these energy assets remaining in public hands. Imagine if those energy assets were not in public hands? What would the member for Clayfield be arguing about then? He would be arguing about who was going to be taking the business. He is worried about the government taking the business through these GOCs. A private company would have been flooding the market and other companies would be trying to compete. This motion that has been moved is an absurdity.

When the merger was announced at the midyear review, we made it very clear that the new energy services division was about creating the types of government owned energy businesses that Queensland would need over the next 30 years. It is likely that the focus of the energy services business will be on new and innovative products and services to grow the overall market, particularly in regional Queensland. The energy services division will look at how the energy network as a whole can embrace new technologies such as battery storage, smart metering, large-scale commercial solar and other renewables. The energy services division is going to be delivering up to 500 new jobs over the next decade, the vast majority of them in regional Queensland.

The business will look at offering new services where there are limited offerings. I heard the member for Clayfield rattle off a list of names. There are gaps in the market for a range of energy services, but we are not looking to compete with mum-and-dad electrical service providers. That has never been the case. It is scaremongering by the LNP. That is typical, because it lost the fight at the election and now it is trying to regroup and garner some support for what it wants to do and that is to partially privatise—and in many respects fully privatise—those businesses, which it did not get away with doing at the last election.

It is not our intention to take work from existing licensed electrical contractors who do solar or electrical work at the household level. I love how the members opposite are jumping to conclusions before we have even finalised the merger and released the business case. They expected us to be worried about their scare campaign. We are getting on with the job of creating a \$24 billion energy company that all Queenslanders can be proud of.

We greatly respect the work of the master electricians. They have been at the front line in rolling out hundreds and thousands of solar installations over the past several years across all parts of Queensland. Why? That is as a result of Labor's proactive approach to putting in place incentives for solar uptake and growing a new industry for Queensland. That was opposed by those opposite, particularly the member for Clayfield, who called people who took up the government's offer 'latte sippers'. Not everyone who has solar is a latte sipper.

This work that existing licenced electrical contractors do at the household level will continue, their relationship with the merged Ergon and Energex will continue, as will the other valued electrical work they do in the homes of Queenslanders. This government is committed to working with stakeholders, including Master Electricians Australia and other stakeholders, and talking with them during the merger process. I have a meeting tomorrow with Malcolm Richards from Master Electricians Australia.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr PITT: We have been negotiating. We are a government that consults. Those opposite are the government that went off and did its own thing. That is what they became known for: the know-it-all Newman government. It clearly has not changed under the member for Southern Downs.

Importantly, the final direction of the merged entity is still being finalised. I want to be clear about that. A parent company for the merged group is expected to be in place by 1 July 2016. We have legislation before the House that deals with that so I want to be careful. The merger of Energex and Ergon was an election commitment of the Palaszczuk government. We are getting better than expected savings through that process over five years. We expect that we will create this new energy services business which is not about competing with existing electrical contractors. That is a scare campaign by those opposite; clearly it is out of desperation. In question time this morning half of their questions were ruled out of order and the rest of them were nonsensical. I think the member for Hervey Bay and the member for Toowoomba North were the only two members who asked a sensible question. Those opposite have no idea what they are doing because they are absolutely floored that they lost. They are still not over it. We are working hard and will continue to work hard until this merger is a success.

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (6.11 pm): I rise to speak in support of the motion moved by the shadow minister for infrastructure, planning, small business, employment and trade and the member for Clayfield, Tim Nicholls. So here we go again: another ill-informed Labor Party policy—policy on the run—that will rip the heart out of small business in regional Queensland; another disastrous policy that will close down the heart and soul of many regional towns across my electorate. Labor's crazy plan to merge Energex and Ergon and then allow the new company to unfairly bid against local regional sparkies for bread-and-butter electrical work shows the contempt they have for small business and country towns—

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Gregory, one moment, please. I can hardly hear you, but I can certainly hear the member for Nanango. I can also hear the Minister for Innovation. Member for Nanango, one of the problems with sitting so close to me is that I hear a lot of your idle chatter. I realise that other members who sit further away I do not hear and I have given you a pretty high degree of latitude. I would urge you not to take advantage of that.

Mr MILLAR: This is a very passionate issue, of course, for our regional communities. These are bread-and-butter electrical works that our sparkies do. This absolutely shows the contempt that the Labor Party has for small business and country towns right across this state. We will now see Labor direct all government departments to use this government owned, taxpayer funded monstrosity, putting hundreds of small businesses and families out of a job, out of income and forced to leave these regional towns because the Labor Party's decision to allow this to happen will give them no choice but to find work in bigger cities.

In my electorate we are already well serviced by hardworking mum-and-dad contractors who compete on a level playing field and employ locals, including up-and-coming apprentices, and provide important services to our local community. In the seat of Gregory we have people like Bill White, who has been in a successful local electrical business on the Central Highlands for 30 years employing local people. We have Enwise Electrical, a company established by a young family over 10 years ago, who employ local people, local apprentices and who generate income for the local families in Emerald. We have people like Scott Black, whose business has embraced the renewable energy sector and has invested heavily into setting up his business employing local people. We have Belyando Electrical in Clermont, a mum-and-dad operation, with decades of service to our local community. We have Peak Downs Electrics in Capella, Scott Armstrong in Blackall and Saunders Electrics in Longreach. These businesses are under threat because the Labor Party wants to move in on them and send them out of town.

What about smaller communities like Barcaldine, Longreach, Tambo, and Blackall where there are only one or two electricians in town? Their work includes government work at schools, government offices and government accommodation facilities. That work is critical for their business. Labor plans to put these contractors in an impossible position of competing against the Ergon-Energex giant. This is

not good for competition. Less competition means one thing: higher prices. These people will be run out of town and the only businesspeople will rely on is Ergon, and Energex and the price will be so high that they will not be able to afford it.

Out in the bush towns it means people will have to sell up and move away. Not only does it have an impact on those families but also the whole town. One less family means less kids at the local school, less money spent at the local supermarket and one less family playing sport. Surely the first priority for these electricity companies is getting the basics right which for regional Queensland is a secure power supply, not continuously experiencing outages in the west. We do not want them branching into services already provided by local electricians who are doing a good job.

Many people will see this as a potential abuse of market power by the state government setting up its own business to compete head-to-head with small electrical businesses. Our e-petition to the Queensland parliament calls on the state government not to throw Queensland small businesses and their workers under the bus. Mum-and-dad businesses would never be able to afford to borrow the money to sustain losses in the same way the state government can. The only possible result from head-to-head competition is small businesses would be sent to the wall.

Here is an idea for Ergon and Energex: they should be concentrating on making sure the electricity supply in Western Queensland is continuous and does not continue to go through the electricity outages that we have seen for the last 12 months. When we talk about outages of electricity we are talking about 24, 48 or 72 hours. That has an impact not only on mums and dads but also on businesses. I suggest that the government concentrate on making sure that the supply is continuous and we do not see outages. Do not go into a market where we already have good small businesses who are competing in that market and doing a good job. How about concentrating on getting the initial job done first and making sure that we have continuous electricity. Do not sell out small business in Western Queensland; we need them.

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games) (6.17 pm): The Palaszczuk Labor government is committed to consultation and that is why we are happy to support the amended motion before the House. This government supports small business. Mum-and-dad electricians are no exception. We greatly respect the work of master electricians. They have been at the front line of rolling out hundreds of thousands of solar installations over the last several years right across all parts of Queensland as a direct result of Labor's proactive incentives for solar uptake and to grow a new industry for Queensland. As a consequence, this market is very competitive and well serviced by existing contractors.

That is why it is very important that we all should, as a state and in particular as members of this House, reject the LNP's scare campaign. The proposed energy services business will not be in competition with these established businesses. This side of the House understands solar energy. It is important to make sure that it is part of the state's energy future. I wish I could say the same about the member for Clayfield. He thinks he is up for the battler here. He is claiming he is defending the small businesses installing solar across Queensland, but two years or so ago it was a different story. In this House, on this side of the chamber at the time, he derided users as latte sippers and the chardonnay set. It was disgraceful. It was something that I found very, very useful, may I tell members, when I was visiting people across the electorate of Sandgate, people who had solar installations on their roof.

Government members interjected.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: In Logan, in Algester, in Yeerongpilly, in Brisbane Central as well, that was a line that hurt and damaged that government and it showed how out of touch the member for Clayfield was. According to the member for Clayfield, residential solar installations are nothing but a plaything of the elite and had nothing to do with battlers. How wrong he was! Statistics from the national REC Agents Association show that 53 per cent of solar installations occur in regional and rural communities. The highest concentrations of residential solar were not found in our leafy suburbs. The member for Clayfield does not get solar, yet here he is saying that the sky is falling in.

There is another factor at play here and we know what it is: the member for Clayfield is also 'Mr Strong Choices'. That was the greatest of lost loves. That was the one that got away from the member for Clayfield. It was the great power sale that never was. It never was because the people of Queensland stopped it and they stopped it by electing a consultative Labor government. This side of the House knows that Queenslanders want our important public assets to remain in public hands. That is why we are proud to defend Ergon and Energex as strong publicly owned electricity businesses. By merging those businesses, we will ensure that they provide benefits for Queenslanders for many years to come.

It is interesting to note that opposition to the privatisation of public energy assets was stronger in regional Queensland. That is because those people know how important it is to have strong public utilities providing the services that regional Queenslanders rely on more than any other and that provide jobs for their communities. Workers in the electrical industries to whom the member for Gregory referred are very important to all of their communities. We stand by them and support them; however, so too are the Ergon power workers in those communities. Those people make a huge difference in response to natural disasters and it is very important that we support them.

That is why this government is also proud to see the establishment of the headquarters of the new energy services business in Townsville. The government is committed to jobs in the regions. The benefits of the energy services business will be not just for Townsville but also for all Queensland. Over the next decade we anticipate creating up to 500 positions in regional Queensland as we see the broader energy industry grow with innovation at its fore and engaged with a great sector of mum-and-dad electrical contractors who can take advantage of those opportunities.

(Time expired).

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (6.22 pm): I rise to oppose the amendment moved by the Treasurer and instead support the original motion moved by the member for Clayfield. Most importantly, I rise to support the mum-and-dad electrical contractors of this state and to support the Master Electricians organisation and the work that it is doing to try to defeat this harebrained scheme of the Palaszczuk Labor government.

It is probably best to explain why this is important by referring to what Malcolm Richards himself has said today. I will tell the House what a monolithic government run organisation, a merge of Energex and Ergon, would do in competition with mum-and-dad small businesses around this state. For starters, that organisation would have a brand power that any small business in this state would die for. The minute the Ergon brand is rolled out across regional Queensland, people will jump at it rather than using Wondai Electrical Services. That is completely and utterly unfair.

Secondly, whilst the small business owner is literally living on 30 to 60 days worth of credit, this business would be backed by a limitless supply of taxpayer dollars, particularly as it will be run by the Palaszczuk Labor government, which is propped up by the ETU and its other union mates. Any time that monolithic organisation would require more money, it would go cap in hand to the Treasurer, saying, 'Please, sir, can I have some more?,' and they would get it. Small businesses would not get that kind of assistance.

Thirdly, and possibly most concerning, is the very real conflict of interest that would arise. Currently, small business electrical contractors must go to the likes of Ergon and Energex to get approval to install solar panels and other emerging technologies. If that same approval rested with the monolithic organisation, can members guess what would happen? As the member for Mermaid Beach said, it will be Caesar judging Caesar. That is, it would be very easy for the organisation to refuse to approve an electrical contractor but keep the business itself.

I turn to the Treasurer's belated comments, as published in the *Australian* this morning. There is a bit of a pattern forming. Stories are printed with a quote that the Treasurer was unable to comment before the deadline, but then the next morning he does comment, having realised how big a mess he has created. This morning, the *Australian* quoted the Treasurer as stating—

As part of the merger of Ergon Energy and Energex, a new energy service business will be created to take advantage of opportunities of emerging technologies and the changing energy industry.

I can tell the House that it is not government businesses that are at the front of emerging technologies; it is gentlemen such as Mr Owen Blamires from Wondai Electrical Services, whom I met this morning. Such people have been driving emerging technologies throughout Queensland—not only in central and western Queensland; throughout Queensland—and not the government.

The Treasurer also stated—

The new energy services business will not target existing solar installers or electrical contractors in established markets. The business will look at offering services where there are limited resources or capacity available to customers, such as in remote areas of Queensland including indigenous communities.

There is no place within the state of Queensland where there are limited resources or capacity, because there are 1,200 existing contractors across the state, all of whom are willing to go wherever they must go to provide a service. A contractor who operates out of the Burnett services all of western Queensland out to the border. The Treasurer must not tell me that there are parts of this state that cannot be serviced by existing electrical contractors! He is setting up a business that will compete against mum-and-dad small business owners in this state.

Let us remember that it is not the government that provides the bulk of apprenticeships and traineeships across the state; it is mums and dads. Eighty-five per cent of apprentices and trainees are employed by businesses that are run by people such as those we met today and those that are members of the Master Electricians. The government must get serious about supporting small business. It must throw out this harebrained idea and back our electrical contractors across the state of Queensland.

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply) (6.27 pm): It is a bit rich to get a lecture from the opposition after it lost 1,300 renewable energy jobs in three years. At a time when the world was moving to clean energy, the LNP lost 1,300 renewable energy jobs in three years. That is quite a remarkable achievement. When they say they represent the Master Electricians yet only recently they called solar users 'latte sippers' and 'champagne drinkers', I sense a contradiction.

What we are really seeing here is a proxy debate for the opposition's support for the privatisation of our energy companies. That is what this debate is about. Logically, if this company was privatised, which is what the LNP would do, wouldn't they be competing against the Master Electricians throughout the state? Of course they would be! That is exactly the case. To their shame, the LNP persists in its opposition to keeping our power assets in public hands. Sixty-five per cent of regional Queenslanders support keeping our power assets in public hands.

The member for Gregory ought to consider the privatisers in his party room. Currently his constituents are subsidised to the tune of \$600 million a year through the uniform tariff policy, because those assets are being kept in public hands. If the member for Gregory wants a good service in regional Queensland, the best thing that he can do is support our assets being kept in public hands.

Let us look at the energy services business logically. On what is the hysteria and the extremism that the opposition is putting forward today based? At this point, there is no firm proposal with any detail. It is simply a matter being considered, as would any large energy company that is looking at this issue right now. Renewables are coming. Batteries are coming. Storage is coming.

If we put the LNP position logically, what they are saying is that the merged entities should ignore renewables, ignore batteries, ignore storage—they should cede the revolution that is coming. What they are saying is that the energy company merger should ignore an extraordinary amount of work that is about to happen.

Instead of giving us an ideological campaign against public assets, what they should be telling the Master Electricians is the truth—that is, there is going to be a lot of work as batteries get more economical every year, there are going to be a lot of solar PVs going in, there are going to be a lot of storage units going in, there are going to be a lot of energy management systems going in, there are going to be a lot of battery arrays going in. There is a lot of work coming.

We will run these companies well. We will work in that space. We are already testing batteries from five different manufacturers in Cairns. We are already partnering with Sunverge Energy, Arena and Ergon in terms of solar PV and battery arrangements. We are at the cutting edge of what is going on. We will run these public assets well. We will make sure that we are in this space.

Mr Cripps interjected.

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock! Member for Hinchinbrook and your debating colleagues from the government back bench, I would urge you to have your discussions outside before the vote is taken. If you persist you may not be here when the vote is taken.

Mr BAILEY: The member for Glass House was suggesting somehow that the government would be propping up these businesses. He obviously does not understand, despite being around the cabinet table previously, that Ergon and Energex are run under commercial charters.

Mr Boothman interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock! Sorry to interrupt your thought process, Minister. Member for Albert, you have had a pretty good go all day, and especially during this debate. You are now warned under standing order 253A. Persist and you will not be here for the vote either.

Mr BAILEY: If you listen to the opposition, it is like the Joh days—'Goodness gracious me, this socialism from the Labor Party!' Let us look at some of the socialist paradises that have publicly owned utilities—countries like Belgium, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, New Zealand, Singapore, South Korea, Sweden, Taiwan, the UK and the US. They are all extraordinary socialist utopias according to the opposition.

We will keep our assets in public hands. We will get the basics right. I say to the member for Glass House, these are the basics: keep our public assets in public hands, keep residential prices stable or falling and not have 43 per cent increases and direct them when necessary as we have done—in New South Wales and ACT prices will rise because they are not in public hands—and grow the renewable market. That is what we stand for. That is what the LNP is still opposing.

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

AYES, 42:

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

INDEPENDENT, 1—Gordon.

NOES, 41:

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

Pair: Stewart, Nicholls.

Resolved in the affirmative.

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

AYES, 42:

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

INDEPENDENT, 1—Gordon.

NOES, 41:

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

Pair: Stewart, Nicholls.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Motion, as agreed—

That this House—

1. notes that Queensland is already well serviced by thousands of registered local electricians and contractors who provide effective, high-quality electrical services, and provide jobs, training and skills to apprentices in Queensland; and
2. supports the Palaszczuk Labor government consulting with key stakeholders during the Ergon-Energex merger process, including Master Electricians Australia and relevant electrical contractor associations, to discuss the opportunities that exist for the merged Ergon-Energex to work with electricians and retailers to grow the industry.

Sitting suspended from 6.40 pm to 7.40 pm.

TRANSPORT LEGISLATION (TAXI SERVICES) AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 16 September 2015 (see p. 1871).

Second Reading

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (7.40 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

The Transport Legislation (Taxi Services) Amendment Bill represents a serious commitment to upholding the law as it stands in Queensland by providing a disincentive to offer an unlicensed taxi service. There was general consent amongst the community that without this bill or similar provisions rideshare services will have a significant impact on the livelihoods and possibly the safety of many Australians. While a review into point-to-point transport is underway, it is imperative that the regulations and laws of the day are upheld until the review is complete.

Be aware that this does not necessarily have to be a philosophical debate here tonight on the merits of Uber or otherwise. In fact, you could be a supporter of Uber and still support the intent of this bill tonight. This bill tonight is about upholding the laws that we make in this place, in this House, and sending a signal to the domestic and international business community that we will not tolerate businesses arrogantly bypassing our laws to take advantage of existing businesses that we have in this state. It is very important that we send that signal here tonight. The taxi review is coming. Things can happen after that. Until then, if it is an unlawful activity, there should be a signal sent that we are willing to uphold the laws that we make here and crack down on it.

The bill is about being grown-ups in government, earning our pay, doing what may not be popular with certain groups in the community, doing what may make you feel uncomfortable—this is mainly for people who cannot think beyond their own cheap cab fare ride and not think about the serious impacts this has well beyond the reaches of just this bill. The signal that this sends to the rest of not just Queensland but Australia is very important: the government holds the reins and we will not be dictated to by multinational corporations with their business plan. They must abide by the laws that we make in this place.

What is a taxi? A 'taxi service', as defined under the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994, means—

... a public passenger service, other than an excluded public passenger service, provided by a motor vehicle under which the vehicle—

- (a) is able, when not hired, to be hailed for hire by members of the public; or
- (b) provides a demand responsive service under which members of the public are able to hire the vehicle through electronic communication; or
- (c) plies or stands for hire on a road.

As we have said all along, if you are not a taxi service, you have nothing to worry about with this bill. I find the message that we get from Uber very confusing. They are so worried about this bill and at the same time they say they are not a taxi service, but this bill only refers to unlicensed taxi services. If what they say is correct—that they are not a taxi service—they have nothing to fear with this bill. Their position is entirely contradictory. That was tried and tested in the committee hearings, and the members of the committee saw that. Uber's constant comments and interference—they have had great impact in the media on this bill—just go to show how contradictory their position is.

I want to put the taxidriviers and owners across Queensland into perspective. They are not the millionaires Uber makes them out to be. These are people who have been operating a service under the regulations of government, who trust the government to protect the very same industry it has worked to build. Let us reflect on this for a moment. This is an argument used by a lot of people—that they are greedy owners, that they are greedy capitalists who build a business and draw an income from a bundle of rights that they pay for, and they will pay a price for that because they know they are protected by regulation. Doesn't that sound like a lot of other businesses out there? Doesn't that sound like the pharmacy industry, the hotel industry, the bottle-o industry, retail shops and commercial buildings?

If I buy a commercial building, I buy a bundle of rights because I know they are protected by laws such as planning instruments—laws that we make in this House—so I have the confidence to invest in that. If we are sitting by while this multinational comes in and says, 'We don't really care about your laws. We are going to come in and undermine all of that,' we are sending a signal to all of those investors out there that we are not willing to uphold those laws or police them or make an effort here. Be careful when you are investing in things because we are not sure whether we are willing to uphold those laws. That is how important this is here tonight. That is how important this signal is. I have received hundreds of letters from some of the distressed taxi owners. With the indulgence of the House, I would like to read one of the letters. It states—

We have owned and driven taxis for the past 35 years. They have educated our children through private schools, and universities, for this we are grateful, however we worked long hours and most weekends.

My husband and I now find ourselves after balloting for licence plates through the Queensland Government and purchased "in good faith" the licence plates, and now find that this asset has eroded by \$200,000. How do you think this feels to us that we now cannot be retired and in our 70's go and start driving again, and earning a living.

If the government can sell the plates on one hand and now legitimise an industry that does NOT have to pay, firstly the registration and numerous insurance policies that regulated taxis pay, and 6 monthly routine inspections that regulated taxi plate holders are required to and also pay security and accreditation licences to the Queensland Government.

Basically the current government are sitting on their hands—

at all levels across all Australia—

or perhaps holding out their hands to an international company, that cannot be even held accountable here in Australia to pay taxes in this country.

When we had drivers driving for us and regular transport inspections, there is accountability for the mileage the cab does and the expected revenue the Australian Taxation Department receives each year.

Uber drivers have no accountability to Australian Tax because it's all paid through PayPal.

I would also like to remind the government of its obligation to the disabled in our community. Is Uber going to outfit their vehicles at a cost of \$50,000 for hydraulic lifters for wheelchair dependent clients. Of course they are not. This in itself is discrimination, having a brother who relies on this transport.

Where is the decency and moral obligation for the government to uphold this hard working and safe transport industry.

Please keep the regulated taxi industry going, or sell taxi plates to the uber company and let them run their business the same as we Australians.

I would like to talk about the quality of service that is provided by Queensland taxis and to look at how that compares across the world. The Taxi Council of Queensland embarked on a research tour of some of the most publicised taxi jurisdictions around the world. I have a copy of that report with me. I only hope this research is taken into account when the outcome of the OPT, Opportunities for Personalised Transport, review is to be decided. Other places like New York, San Francisco and Singapore all could not hold a candle to the Queensland taxi industry in terms of standards.

The standards in Queensland have been driven by the industry itself. They have made recommendations to the government over the years that the standards have been based upon. They have been lifting the standards for themselves for many years. This is despised by many people out there or spoken down as being a negative. We have been working to put these regulations in place for a very good reason over the years—the same reason we have security measures or lockout laws at a pub or any other issue that provides public safety. We do it for a reason. People are now saying that this is terrible because it adds to the cost. It can be only one or the other.

The Queensland taxi industry is well recognised as one of the leaders globally in taxi regulation and offers the highest of standards. No other jurisdiction visited within that review had minimum service levels and universal service obligations, one of which being the provision of a 24-hour service. If members want to look into a crystal ball in the future in a world that has only Uber, there is no obligation on them to offer a 24-hour service. If you are stuck at the airport at 3 am, look forward to surge pricing or perhaps no car turning up. There is no regulation to address that.

Queensland is a world leader in wheelchair accessible taxi services offering the only service that is not subsidised by the government. It is subsidised by the drivers themselves. At the moment they are covering the cost for us in government. It is cross-subsidised by the regular service.

I am running short of time. Uber is saying \$60 billion. Where is that coming from? It is coming from overseas. In New South Wales they are now legal. We will police taxi services in Australia but Uber will not pay tax because they are an overseas company. This is unfair legislation. Be careful of the shiny bauble. Look into the future at what will be produced and you will not like it.

(Time expired)

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games) (7.51 pm): I rise this evening to support the intent but not the substance of the Transport Legislation (Taxi Services) Amendment Bill 2015, as proposed by the member for Mount Isa. The bill, as it currently stands, aims to deter unlicensed taxi services through the allocation of demerit points to the drivers of those services including imposing double demerit points for repeat offenders.

I note that the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee has examined the bill and tabled its report on 16 March 2016. As noted by the committee, there are two key issues facing the Queensland government in relation to personalised transport services. The first is the overarching task of identifying and introducing an effective and efficient regulatory framework for personalised transport services. The more immediate and complementary task is to enforce the current regulatory framework to ensure that all providers of personalised transport services comply with it.

Last year the Queensland government established an independent task force to examine and consult across the state as to the future of personalised transport services in Queensland. The need for the review in part was driven by the emergence of new technology based innovations that are challenging the current regulatory model and a visible change in the needs and expectations of consumers using taxi, limousine and rideshare services.

Mr Jim Varghese AM was appointed as chair of that independent task force which will undertake the review by investigating the current taxi, limousine and rideshare market; identifying what an efficient and effective market should look like; ensuring the regulatory framework supports the needs and expectations of the community and industry; and outlining the recommendations for government consideration.

The review will be guided by the principles of accessibility, accountability, customer focus, innovation and safety. To ensure that the principles accurately reflect the viewpoints of key stakeholders, a draft version was released late last year. The feedback was reviewed and some suggestions have been incorporated into the final version of the guiding principles. These principles will be checked back against by the task force throughout the review to ensure that the direction of the review aligns with what is most important to Queenslanders.

The Queensland government is delivering on its election commitment to work with all participants in the taxi industry to ensure that laws are upheld, competition is fair and the needs of customers are put first. The review will ensure Queenslanders are provided with safe and efficient personalised transport services and with a sustainable industry to deliver the services.

A discussion paper about innovation in the industry was released in March this year. Online discussion forums about topics raised in the paper were held in March, and two panel discussions were held in Brisbane and Cairns in early April. The task force is now in the process of preparing an options analysis paper which will be publicly released before midyear. Statewide consultation will occur in the weeks following the release.

Using feedback gathered during public consultation, the task force will report to government in August. The report will serve to guide us towards a modern and effective personalised transport framework. The Queensland government will carefully consider and respond to the task force report and recommendations. The government acknowledges that new technology must be used in a way that complies with all applicable laws and, most importantly, maintains customer safety.

The bill being debated tonight aims to address the immediate task of enforcement. While I am supportive of the intent of this bill, I do not support the use of demerit points in this manner as it is inconsistent with the primary intention of that scheme—namely, to deter drivers from committing offences with high road safety risks. Demerit points are a powerful mechanism for ensuring safety on our roads and the effectiveness of that deterrent should be preserved.

In its report, the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee recommended that I undertake an urgent review of mechanisms for enforcing compliance within the current regulatory framework, that I take immediate action to ensure that compliance with the regulatory system is enforced and that I provide a report to the House during this debate. I am pleased to be able to report that these recommendations have been progressed and are now complete.

Since July 2014 over 18,000 hours of compliance effort have been applied to the enforcement of unauthorised passenger transport services. However, as noted by the committee, there are a number of issues affecting the ability of my department to enforce compliance of the current legislation. As such, a number of amendments to the existing legislative framework have been identified. In summary, these amendments would align with the intent of the private member's bill and will fulfil the three main objectives relating to illegal taxi services.

The first is to enable and facilitate prosecutions by simplifying complexities within the existing legislation and reducing the elements of proof and introducing evidentiary aids. The amendments will also support compliance activities by enhancing the powers of transport inspectors. Lastly, these amendments would aim to deter noncompliance by increasing monetary penalties.

Passenger transport legislation contains specific requirements that set maximum age limits for taxis and other public passenger vehicles. I can announce that today I have directed the department to implement an amnesty relating to maximum taxi age limits. The maximum age limit for taxis is six years for a conventional taxi and eight years for a wheelchair accessible taxi. Departmental data indicates a number of taxis are approaching their age limit this year. If the age limits under the legislation are enforced, taxi operators will be required to replace those vehicles at significant cost and at a time of uncertainty for this industry pending the outcome of the current personalised transport review.

The amnesty will be for a six-month period effective immediately in order to cover the period of the Varghese review and any future changes that may flow from the review. The amnesty will not compromise the safety of taxi services as affected taxis will still be required to obtain a six-monthly certificate of inspection, ensuring the highest safety standards are maintained.

I foreshadow that it is the government's intention to support the second reading motion and enter into the consideration in detail stage of this debate. I can foreshadow for the benefit of the House that should the clauses concerning demerit points be rejected by the House then the government will move the amendments that I have just outlined. Those proposed amendments will immediately resolve any complexities and enable the effective enforcement of illegal taxi services, thereby addressing the pressing issues and recommendations of the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee.

What we have seen in relation to this matter over a number of months is the challenge of dealing with an industry in transition. I think the Queensland government has been prudent and sensible in undertaking a considered, engaged and very consultative review process to look at the way the issues for personalised transport shift and move in the state, but in the meantime innovation does not excuse illegality. That is why I encourage all members to vote down changes to the demerit points system in the consideration in detail stage of this debate. I ask members to support the government's amendments to deal with this important issue.

 **Mr PYNE** (Cairns—Ind) (7.59 pm): I rise to speak in favour of the legislation introduced by the member for Mount Isa. He is a proud defender of the taxi industry in his electorate, just as I am a proud defender of the taxi industry in the city of Cairns. I would first like to repudiate this notion that Uber is some sort of clever technology. It is not. It is an illegal ride-sharing service. I could quite easily come up with an app to connect drug sellers with drug buyers. I believe I could make a lot of money with that, but it would not be allowed because it is illegal and it is wrong. Members in this place need to uphold the law and support this legislation that has been brought forward.

If we want to look at technology, I have to say that we will not find a better use of technology by a taxi service than that used by Cairns Taxis. Bob Roberts, Layne Gardiner and the people at Cairns Taxis offer a fantastic service. We even get a text telling us that our taxi is 0.08 kilometres away. You could not get a better service than the one you get from Cairns Taxis.

I know that a lot of members, like me, will catch a taxi to the airport when they leave this place. I ask those members who are catching a taxi to the airport to think about the prospect that someone in the lane next to them is being taken to the airport by an Uber driver. How can that possibly be allowed to happen? How can such unfair competition be allowed? The taxi owner is paying all of their fees, making sure they are in a fully regulated industry, doing criminal history checks on the drivers, but who is driving the Uber vehicle next to them? That is not fair competition and it should not be allowed.

I would like to speak about all of the local families and small businesses in Cairns and elsewhere in Queensland who have worked hard all their lives to make a living out of their taxis, who have sent their children to school and who have paid off their houses. These people invest in their local community. Uber does not invest in any community. Let us remember all of these hardworking people who pay their taxes. We owe them a debt, a serious obligation. We need to fulfil that obligation to the taxi owners and drivers of Queensland tonight. I see some of those very people in the gallery tonight, and this is a great opportunity for us to show our support for taxi owners and drivers throughout Queensland.

The other point I would like to touch on—and this was also mentioned by the member for Mount Isa—is the public service role played by taxis in Queensland. Many taxis fulfil a regulatory obligation of providing wheelchair access. As I said at a rally held outside this place a couple of months ago, if Uber cannot take every passenger, they should not be allowed to take any passenger. To allow a discriminatory service like Uber is against the ethics and morality that we espouse. Whether it is for people in wheelchairs or for the elderly, taxidrivers go out of their way to do that little bit more. The truth is that Uber do not want that work; they are not interested in those jobs. They will come and take the cream. They will sleep when it is not profitable and come in and take the cream on a Friday and Saturday night and whenever they think they can make the most money. They are not going to service the less profitable routes; they will service the profitable routes. It is another reason they should not be allowed here in Queensland.

I mentioned that taxi owners and drivers pay their taxes, but what does Uber do? The people who drive and own taxis pay taxes and those taxes go towards the industry and also towards paying teachers and nurses and for the services we need. If we allow companies like Uber through the door—the multinationals that do not pay taxes in this country—where will it end? Are we going to fall at the first hurdle? If you fall for this, what will happen when the next new company comes along? Will they get out of paying taxes too? It certainly is not acceptable in my view. I say to members here tonight that

we need to support this legislation because it is through the loss of points that we will deter people from driving for Uber. That is the way to send this illegal ride-sharing business where they belong—out of business.

Mr PEARCE (Mirani—ALP) (8.05 pm): I rise to speak to the bill and in support of the amendments foreshadowed by the Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games. The policy objective of the bill is to increase penalties targeting illegal taxi operators and thereby deter noncompliance with the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994. Before I go into the bill, I wish to make a comment on the behaviour of Uber throughout the inquiry process and in recent days. I am certain that members aggrieved by the behaviour of Uber can speak for themselves. What I am concerned about is the behaviour of an international based business seeking to bully its way into Queensland. They seek to provide a service that is unlawful and one that will cause Queenslanders to see their superannuation expectations eroded.

Uber is causing properly licensed service providers to lose annually tens of thousands of dollars. Families are going without because the taxi licence holder and paid drivers are forced to take home a smaller pay packet. I put to honourable members that this is not the Australian way. This is not the way we should treat taxi companies and workers who live in this state, who pay their taxes and who contribute to the local economy. I am a fair and reasoned person.

An honourable member: Hear, hear!

Mr PEARCE: Thank you very much. You were a bit slow with that; I did wait. One of my greatest dislikes—and I have lived with this all of my life—is seeing people being done over by forces greater than themselves. I consider the actions of Uber to be grubby. They are lacking respect for established authority and they are a business that deserves no support or respect from government. This is Australia; it is not some other country. We have a little bit of courage in this place to make decisions and look after the people who are contributing to this state. Over recent days, some members in this House have received 6,000 to 10,000 email messages. I was sitting here last night and I could hear a computer going ping, ping, ping.

An honourable member: Very annoying.

Mr PEARCE: It was annoying to me because I was trying to have a bit of relaxation. This has happened over the last 18 hours. It has been a farce; it has been a joke. If Uber think they have helped their argument, I can tell them that they have done themselves a lot of damage. I have spoken to a lot of members here today and they are not very happy. The member for Burleigh, the deputy chair of the committee I am the chair of, had 10,000 of these messages come through today. He is a member of parliament. He has to be looking after his electorate. He does not want these idiots sitting on the end of a telephone pumping out messages that do not mean anything. They ought to be ashamed of themselves.

This is not about services for the community; this is about dollars—dollars for the people who run Uber, dollars for the people who want to provide the service but not pay for their licences, cameras and all the other things for which taxidrivens have to pay. The taxi owners and taxi companies have worked their butts off in difficult times to be where they are today. They depend on the superannuation that they are putting away. The government is not going to turn around and help them out. Uber is sitting in some country across the world banging their lips, talking about how good they are and yet we as Australians are letting our people go down the drain. I am not at any time ever going to support people who want to come into this country and take away the things that we believe in and the things that we as Australians want to do. We all believe in a fair day's pay for a fair day's work.

An honourable member: Go again.

Mr PEARCE: You want to go again? I have only a few minutes left. I want to make a few comments with regard to Uber so we can set the scene for what is happening. The committee report states—

Ridesharing has been identified as an app-based, on-demand service in which a driver uses the spare capacity of a private vehicle to supply transport to a passenger. The model is based on the ideas that by using existing private cars and generating real-time trip request data via an app, the supply of ridesharing vehicles closely tracks demand for rides ...

That report states that Uber claims—

No service facilitated by Uber can accept street hails or utilise taxi ranks. Requests are not allocated through a taxi dispatch model; riders need to be pre-registered to be able to request a ride; bookings cannot be made in advance; and ridesharing driver-partners do not facilitate anonymous rides, accept cash transactions—

and as they build up a relationship with their community I bet it is not too long before they start stepping outside those guidelines. It goes on—

Since the Uber platform does not permit street hails and rank work, it does not compete with taxis for these services, which make up the vast majority of the point-to-point transport market.

They might as well be in the taxi line from what I have heard because they are sitting up the street just behind the taxis, across the road or around the corner. Who is trying to pull the wool over the eyes of people like me? I do not accept it. I might be getting a bit old, but my eyesight is still pretty good. The report went on—

The department provided advice that there are 3,261 taxi licensees in Queensland and there are market-entry restrictions in place that look at new entrants into the taxi market in terms of having to meet particular thresholds for triggering the requirement of a taxi contract. There are two ways in which a taxi licence can be purchased in Queensland, either through licence transfer on market or through a Government offer of licences via a public tender process.

That is a fair and even way to do it. That is the way that has to be done because it is about giving people a fair go. The average price paid for a conventional unconditioned taxi licence in Brisbane is around \$480,000 to \$500,000, and I bet that has dropped in the 12 months or so since Uber started sniffing around the streets. Licences in other parts of Queensland attract much lower prices. The collective value of a licence is something like a trillion dollars, and I am not even going to try to read that figure out.

I want to say that I really appreciate what the minister has done tonight in undertaking to take immediate action to enforce compliance with existing regulatory requirements that apply to all legal providers of public passenger services. He had to do that and I respect where he is coming from. A cease and desist order was issued to Uber yet the illegal taxi services continue to operate. They do not care. They have the money; they can flout the law and go back to drinking their little chardonnays. That is the type of people we are dealing with. We are not dealing with fair dinkum people.

A government member: We're not dealing with workers.

Mr PEARCE: We are not dealing with workers and that is what worries me the most. The amendments proposed to the bill will enhance compliance efforts by increasing the deterrent effect of the offence by increasing the maximum penalty from \$18,848 to \$23,560—or 160 penalty units to 200 penalty units—and the infringement notice fine from \$1,413 to \$2,356. If I were an Uber driver spending most of my time sitting at home watching television, I would be pretty scared to have to pay out that sort of money. I would rather use it to go and have a bet.

Mr Butcher: On Honey Toast?

Mr PEARCE: On Honey Toast. The amendments will also widen the powers of transport inspectors by allowing them to request a person to give certain information if they suspect an offence has been committed. If they need to get any advice on an offence, they should talk to the cabbies; they will tell them. They will also allow them to request a person to produce their driver's licence if they reasonably suspect that a person has committed or is committing an offence. Collectively, these changes will allow the government to be more effective in enforcing these rules. I support the intent of the bill and look forward to supporting the amendments.

(Time expired)

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (8.15 pm): It is a great honour to be here tonight to stand up for the small business owners of this state and this country. I acknowledge the service that they provide—a wonderful transport service that is legal and regulated. They do a wonderful job, year in and year out. It has also been good to be part of putting this bill together—as a KAP member—to protect our taxi industry.

The Transport Legislation (Taxi Services) Amendment Bill 2015 is not about denying companies access to enter the taxi market in Queensland. It was also never to be an anti-Uber bill. From the beginning this bill was about ensuring that there was a fair and level playing field for the taxi industry.

This bill seeks to introduce demerit points targeting illegal taxi operators and, therefore, deter noncompliance with the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994. Last year the state government issued 1,500 infringement notices to Uber drivers. That was the transport department not really even making an effort, so honourable members can imagine how many illegal taxi operators are out there in this state. It is unbelievable that this has been allowed to get this far. The sad part is that we have seen many good taxi businesses that have paid over \$500,000 for their licences almost wiped out. I am hoping tonight that we can save and protect the taxi industry from illegal operations.

Illegal taxi operators erode the integrity and the viability of the taxi licensing scheme administered by the Queensland government. This threatens the standard and safety of taxi services across this state. It is evident that the existing penalties are not sufficient to deter the increase in illegal taxi services in Queensland. Letting this continue would mean that the government would undermine its own revenue base and its own legislation.

Illegal taxi services are operated by large multinational, transnational corporations that do not pay GST. The small Australian retailers pay up while Uber profits go overseas. The taxi industry, however, provides \$90 billion in GST to the Commonwealth government. What does Uber pay? Nothing; their profits go overseas. Those who have purchased taxi licences are finding that their licences are becoming significantly devalued and worthless.

I want to talk up the taxi industry. I hope that we can nail illegal taxi operators and bury them in a coffin. I really want to see that. This is about their superannuation. All their life savings have been put into this. If illegal taxi operations are allowed to continue in this state, there is going to be no superannuation for these taxidriviers. No wonder I am fighting and they are fighting—I hope we are all fighting—to stamp out illegal taxi operations in this state.

Taxis are legally required—and this is the difference that is so important—to provide a community service obligation, CSO, and provide transport for over one million wheelchair bound passengers per annum. If the taxi industry is deregulated this will significantly deplete transport options for those with disabilities and they are packing death. Taxis are required to have GPS tracking devices, pay levies for taxi ranks and have compulsory third-party insurance, fitted cameras, rolling 24-hour criminal checks on drivers and fatigue management policies. The average cost of a taxi licence is \$480,000 to \$500,000. Uber pays nothing, yet we are asking the taxi industry—which must comply with these regulations—to compete. The committee heard evidence in Townsville that all taxidriviers must have criminal history checks and that they are constantly checked, whereas Uber drivers are not. Children and schoolkids are being picked up by people whose criminal history has not been checked. We do not know who they are or where they are from. Naturally it is going to be cheaper to use Uber if we are not paying for all of this and we do not have to factor in the cost of regulation.

As a parliament we are here to protect the small business owners, who are the backbone of this country, and help them out. We should not look at this from the political side of it, the stupidity of it or the number of votes in it; it is all about doing what is right. That is the reason we were elected to this parliament. I admire the member for Mirani, who said that he did not support profits going overseas—he supports Queenslanders. I reiterate what is contained in the committee's report on pages 6 and 7. It states—

A large number of taxi industry stakeholders provided evidence that the cost of compliance with Queensland's regulations are high and non-compliance provides ride sharing services with a competitive advantage. Many submitters alluded to the fact that they are not against competition—

they all welcome competition—

in the industry but support competition being on a level playing field cost—

we do not have a level playing field here—

where all participants are required to abide by legislated regulations, particularly those relating to safety, insurance, licencing and taxes.

...

CABS 2000 Pty Ltd provided a detailed list of the elements of Universal Service Obligation (USO) whereby the taxi industry is required, through its agreement with the Queensland Government—

They have an agreement with the Queensland government. Does Uber have an agreement with the Queensland government? Do illegal taxi services have an agreement with the Queensland government? Page 7 of the committee's report continues—

... to provide an accessible service to the community all of which add a cost to providing the taxi service. Elements of the USO include:

- *Maintenance of a network of call centres and lost property services*
- *Services specifically for the sick, elderly and disabled—*

Does Uber do that? No. It continues—

- *Operating in areas not serviced by traditional public transport*
- *On-demand service 24 hours a day, 365 days a year*
- *Strict safety requirements, including for taxis operating in large service areas, GPS locators, security cameras; payment of a security levy to the State Government*
- *Provision of receipts on request*
- *Age limits on vehicles (currently six years, or eight for wheelchair accessible vehicles)—*

I appreciate what you said, Minister, with regard to the moratorium. It continues—

- *Drivers to pass criminal history checks, meet licence requirements and complete driver training*
- *Methods of dealing with customer complaints*
- *Insurance costs and requirements.*

Who is picking up our children? We do not know who they are, but these drivers up here have criminal history checks. This is why this is so serious. At the hearing in Townsville Mr Thatcher said—

I am an owner/operator within the Charters Towers service area. I also manage Gold City Cabs in Charters Towers ...

I just want to make the point that it is not so much Uber that is the issue but illegal taxi services ...

I just put a new wheelchair vehicle on the road. There was no change out of \$83,000.

They are going to lose that service—

(Time expired)

 **Mrs LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (8.25 pm): I rise this evening in support of the intent of the bill and welcome the foreshadowed amendments from the minister, noting that the government will be voting against the use of demerit points in this legislation but seeking to enhance enforcement measures for the act.

I thoroughly enjoyed being able to travel with the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee around the state when we undertook the inquiry into this bill. We travelled extensively around the state, holding public hearings in Brisbane and the Gold Coast and all the way up to Cairns, Townsville and Mackay. During those public hearings we heard from a large number of taxidriviers and people who are concerned about Uber and its impact on the taxi industry. We received over 550 submissions throughout the submission period, and I note that we received approximately 2,000 form letters from Uber supporters.

The government regulates the taxi industry to provide safe, affordable and reliable services to all Queensland passengers. Taxis provide important services to communities throughout the entire state from the Gold Coast to Thursday Island and towns and cities in between. I thank all of the taxidriviers in Rockhampton and the Capricorn Coast who have come to see me expressing concern about the threat of Uber in Central Queensland. The emergence of illegal taxi services like those provided by Uber has created challenges for government and the Queensland taxi industry.

The government's response was to undertake immediate action to enforce compliance with the existing regulatory requirements which apply to all legal providers of public passenger services. I note that quite a bit of compliance action has been undertaken by the Department of Transport and Main Roads investigators. I understand that more recently those investigations have been impeded by way of those investigators being blocked from the Uber app. During the hearing of the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee I asked Mr Brad Kitschke from Uber whether Uber is actively blocking compliance investigations by the Department of Transport and Main Roads in Queensland. He failed to understand the context of my question, which I thought was relatively straightforward, but he did say—

There have been some incidents of people using the platform outside of the terms of service. When someone uses the platform outside of the terms of service, they are not allowed to use the platform any more.

I was quite concerned about that, because Uber appears to be deliberately preventing people—that is, transport inspectors—using the platform outside of Uber's terms of service, that is, compliance investigations undertaken under Queensland law. I wonder if perhaps we are in 'Uberland' where Uber makes the rules. No, we are in Queensland, and Queensland transport inspectors are conducting investigations in compliance with Queensland law.

A cease and desist order was issued to Uber, yet illegal taxi services continued to operate. I have to disagree with the member for Dalrymple when he says that Department of Transport and Main Roads inspectors have not been trying. We know that more than 18,279 hours of compliance activities have been carried out as of 4 April 2016. It has been difficult for them because on many occasions those investigations have been impeded by Uber using the app to block them.

We know that 530 drivers have been issued with penalty infringement notices, with 440 of these repeat offenders; 17 drivers have had their penalty infringement notices waived; and 189 drivers elected to have the matter heard in court. It is a concerning trend that a large number of drivers are now electing to have this matter heard in court.

In total, penalty infringement notices issued are valued at over \$1.7 million, with almost \$1.5 million already paid. Compliance efforts have been hindered by avoidance tactics of Uber drivers, as I was saying, and by limitations and complexities within the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994. The amendments that I rise to speak in favour of this evening are all about improving those compliance efforts and improving the prospect of prosecution.

Recently, transport inspectors within the Department of Transport and Main Roads undertook a joint operation with the Queensland Police Service and issued a further 10 infringements and 15 defect notices to alleged drivers of Uber services. Infringements issued were largely in relation to defective vehicles, which is also concerning because these vehicles are not undergoing the same safety checks that taxis are required to under Queensland law. The joint operation between the Department of Transport and Main Roads and the Queensland Police Service has contributed an additional 372 hours of compliance activity.

The proposed bill will enhance compliance efforts by increasing the deterrent effect of the offence by increasing the maximum penalty from close to \$19,000 to \$23½ thousand, from 160 penalty units to 200 penalty units, and the infringement notice fine from \$1,413 to \$2,356. The proposed bill will also widen the powers of transport inspectors by allowing them to request a person to give certain information if they suspect an offence has been committed and allowing them to request a person to produce their driver's licence if they reasonably suspect that a person has committed or is committing an offence. Collectively, these changes will allow the government to more effectively enforce the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act as it applies to the provision of illegal taxi services. I am very interested to see how the opposition responds in terms of the amendments proposed by the minister.

The Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee noted the advice provided by the Department of Transport and Main Roads that ridesharing services that operate outside Queensland's taxi service regulations are operating illegally and that enforcement action has been attempted through a cease and desist order. The committee understood also that a number of factors have limited the effectiveness of enforcement measures. We noted that the department is currently investigating options, including possible amendments within the existing legislative framework, to ensure compliance can be carried out effectively. The amendments proposed by the minister essentially achieve that. That was what the committee wanted. The committee voted unanimously to support a recommendation that the minister investigate improving compliance enforcement, and that is what is on the table here this evening.

I support the foreshadowed amendments of the minister which will enhance enforcement, give transport inspectors the ability to uphold the law and potentially increase the chance of prosecution. I commend the amendments to the House.

 **Mr EMERSON** (Indooroopilly—LNP) (8.33 pm): I rise to speak on the Transport Legislation (Taxi Services) Amendment Bill 2015. I thank the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee for its examination of this legislation. This has been a very challenging set of hearings. The fact that we see so many people in the gallery here tonight—I acknowledge them—indicates how important this issue is and the emotions involved in this issue.

Often when there is enthusiasm to embrace new technology, innovative ways and different approaches we can very easily lose sight of the human impact—on families, on businesses and on communities. We saw so many submissions, and so many people took time to come and talk to the committee either here in Brisbane or in other parts of Queensland to discuss this very important issue.

Let me be very clear: the LNP is not averse to competition, innovation or new entrants to the taxi industry, but we must ensure that all parties are on a safe, fair and level playing field. The foremost priority as part of that has to be passenger and driver safety. Having said that, the LNP does accept the findings and recommendations of the committee's inquiry into the KAP bill on rideshare apps and this issue.

I do take note of what the minister said tonight. The minister has indicated that he opposes the central part of this bill, which relates to demerit points. That is what the committee found as well. The committee recommended against this bill on the basis of some of the elements in it. The minister has said that he opposes the provisions relating to demerit points and that, if this bill is successful in passing the second reading stage, he will seek to amend those clauses.

It is important to remember what the LNP did on this very important issue when it was in office. While in government, the LNP did more than any other state government to ensure that all operators were operating within the law. Operators that did not meet the existing standards or requirements were

instructed to cease and desist from operations, and the appropriate enforcement action was taken. In the last 12 months of the LNP government more than \$260,000 worth of fines were issued to 95 drivers for driving without the correct driver authorisation and/or providing a taxi service without a licence. I can still remember meeting with the other transport ministers from across Australia to discuss this issue. To be honest, I was surprised and a little bit shocked to find how little other states were doing on this issue, when Queensland was working to enforce the laws we had in place.

It is significant that on page 22 of the committee's report there is an acknowledgement from the Taxi Council that the transport and main roads department was doing its job and doing it well. The proviso on that was that it was doing it and doing it well until Labor came to office. When Labor came in, it stopped the enforcement. It stopped enforcing the rules. That is the evidence given to the committee. I urge the minister to read the report at page 22.

Mr Pearce: Anybody can pick a page and read it.

Mr EMERSON: I urge the member for Mirani to do that. As I said previously, the LNP does accept the committee's findings in relation to the KAP bill in that demerit points are not the only answer when it comes to illegal taxi activity. The committee found that the transport minister, Stirling Hinchliffe, needed to look at all options available to his department and that it was not good enough for the Palaszczuk Labor government to do nothing on this issue.

The minister has come into the chamber tonight and foreshadowed amendments that he says will make it easier to prosecute and to increase fines but not to impose demerit points, which is the central part of this bill. The tragedy of this issue is that it should have been resolved last year. The five-year Queensland taxi strategy expired at the end of last year. This issue should have been resolved by the time that strategy expired.

The LNP was determined that if we had been in power this issue would have been dealt with by then. The LNP would have looked at this issue in a holistic way—taking an approach that looked forward, not back, guided by those principles of a belief in free enterprise, innovation and also recognition of the protection of property rights. That was our plan and that was also the expectation of the industry—that it would be resolved as part of the end of that five-year taxi strategy. That continued to be the expectation of the industry when Labor came to power because that was what the Premier said and that is what the Deputy Premier and the then transport minister also said—that the Labor government would deal with it as part of the five-year strategy. The strategy was running out at the end of last year and they said that the problem would be dealt with. The certainty would be given. The issues would be resolved. They told us that the uncertainty would be resolved but, like so many other issues with this government, it has been asleep at the wheel.

Instead of acting like it promised, the government—and I note the minister got handed this by the Deputy Premier when she fled the issue; when she could not handle the issue and it was too tough for her she ran away—at the eleventh hour late last year announced just before the expiry of the five-year strategy that it would have an inquiry into the issue. This is one of the more than 80 inquiries the government has already announced and that inquiry would not report for another 10 months—long after the taxi strategy expired. The uncertainty we see today is solely the result of Labor's failure to act—its inaction.

We have the greatest sympathy for those that Labor has failed again and again such as the taxi industry, because this issue should have been resolved last year. Tonight we will see amendments from the Labor government to this bill that it says will make it easier to prosecute and increase penalties, but it is rejecting the centrepiece of this bill—the demerit points. The reality is that this government should have sorted this out last year but failed. The uncertainty should have ended last year. It should have been resolved last year, but Labor once again showed it is a do-nothing government.

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (8.41 pm): I rise to speak in support of the intent of the bill and in support of the amendments foreshadowed by the Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games. Taxi services are vital to my community. They provide an important service across my electorate. From doctors appointments, shopping or nights out, our local taxis service a broad section of the bayside—young, old and everyone in-between—and they do an outstanding job. Transport services should be safe for everyone who uses them, as well as the drivers who provide these services. Passenger and driver safety is a priority of this government.

There are numerous safety requirements that authorised providers of public passenger services must comply with to ensure Queensland passengers are safe. There are rigorous processes involved for accreditation and authorisation which are in place to ensure the safety of passengers and drivers

alike. There are more than 2,700 operators who are accredited to operate taxi services in Queensland. I have met and spoken with many of my local owner-operators and drivers in the bayside who comply with these requirements, and I want to outline some of these requirements to the House. Accreditation includes passing an initial criminal history check, and currently there are more than 15,000 drivers authorised to provide taxi services in Queensland. An authorisation includes passing an initial criminal history check and then ongoing checks on a daily basis.

Further, all drivers must pass national minimum English speaking standards and have knowledge of destinations and roads in areas and must complete driver training courses. The drivers must display a driver identification display card that includes the driver's photo, name and driver authorisation number. Taxis must comply with vehicle design and safety standards and must have duress alarms and be equipped with security cameras. These vehicles also have built-in GPS systems and can be tracked and they must pass a certificate of inspection every six months conducted by the Department of Transport and Main Roads. Taxidivers must have a zero blood alcohol limit and must not be under the influence of drugs and fatigue management practices apply to taxidivers.

As I have indicated, this fairly rigorous and stringent process is a requirement for each and every accredited and authorised taxi and driver. There is also great work that the taxi industry has done to contribute to the community. For example, to help reduce alcohol fuelled violence in taxi queues in late-night entertainment precincts, 27 secure taxi ranks operate in Brisbane, the Gold Coast, the Sunshine Coast, Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, Rockhampton, Toowoomba and Ipswich. Secure taxi ranks are supervised by rank marshals and security guards and ranks are equipped with CCTV and, in most cases, safety barriers. The secure ranks operate on a Friday and Saturday night and for special events such as concerts and football matches. The government also contributes over \$800,000 each year towards the cost of operating secure taxi ranks in key entertainment precincts throughout the state.

The emergence of illegal taxi services like those provided by Uber has created challenges for the government and the Queensland taxi industry. The government's response was to undertake immediate action to enforce compliance with existing regulatory requirements that apply to all legal providers of public passenger services. A cease and desist order was issued to Uber, yet illegal taxi services continued to operate. Contrary to the member for Indooroopilly's comments, enforcement continues today. In fact, more than 18,278 hours of compliance activities have been carried out as at 4 April 2016. Some 530 drivers have been issued with penalty enforcement infringement notices, with 440 of these being repeat offenders. Some 17 drivers have had their penalty infringement notices waived and 189 drivers elected to have the matter heard in court. In total, penalty infringement notices issued are valued at over \$1.7 million, with almost \$1.5 million already paid.

Compliance efforts have been hindered by avoidance tactics of Uber drivers and limitations and complexities within the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994. The proposed amendments to the bill will enhance enforcement efforts, increasing the deterrent effect of the offence by increasing the maximum penalty from \$18,848 to \$23,560—that is, from 160 penalty units to 200—and the infringement notice fine from \$1,413 to \$2,356. It will also include widening the powers of transport inspectors by allowing them to request a person to give certain information if they suspect an offence has been committed and allowing them to request a person to produce a driver's licence if they reasonably suspect that a person has committed or is committing an offence. Collectively, these changes will allow the government to more effectively enforce the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994 as it applies to the provision of illegal taxi services.

There is a wealth of opportunity surrounding innovation with regard to the OPT review and Queensland has a real opportunity moving forward with innovation. I know that the current OPT review headed by Jim Varghese is aware of these opportunities and the innovation paper was the first major paper released in March. At the heart of this paper is five components that look at a wide range of topics and opportunities—gamification for transport, the sharing economy, autonomous vehicles and the transition arrangements from interstate reviews. The report looks into these major upsides and downsides of the current key transport trends and focuses on the sharing economy and the role of government within it. Innovation is important.

I can remember a time when the internet and internet shopping did not exist. That is showing my age! However, when this service became available, there was a huge amount of concern from retail outlets that this disrupter would destroy the retail sector. However, we know that that is not the case. The retail industry has survived online sales and many have gotten on board and also offer online stores now. However, innovation does not make improper actions legal.

I recognise the outstanding work that the taxi industry does, the commitment from owner-drivers and the owners who provide an important service to our community within legal parameters. I am very fortunate in the bayside to have a sensational group of fantastic taxi providers who look after my community, who take care of the elderly, who drive them with care and thought and concern, who look after the people with a disability and provide that service after-hours, in the dead of night, whenever it is required and I know that my daughter and my son are safe when they get into a taxi. I support the intent but not the substance of the bill and support the foreshadowed amendments to the bill.

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (8.49 pm), in reply: I rise to summarise the debate. I would like to address firstly whether these ride-sharing services pass the national interest test and do that in the context of the quality of the service that is provided by the taxi industry. Tonight, it was mentioned that the taxi industry provides \$90 million a year in GST to the Commonwealth. If, as Uber suggests, it provides a superior service and it should be allowed to operate and operate without the regulations that the taxi industry operates under to provide us a service that is safe, then it has an unfair competitive advantage. In that case, the taxi industry cannot compete with Uber. That is the only logical conclusion that we can make. Someone better tell me where that \$90 million in tax revenue is to come from. The money generated from those Australian owned taxi businesses will go offshore. I ask members to please tell me where that money is going to come from. At the moment, we seem to be selling off everything and interests are going offshore. If members want to let the taxi industry go as well, then they should please tell me where the money from the taxes that the taxi industry pays is going to come from. We have to pay for our services somehow. I would love someone to address that issue.

Taxis are legally required to provide a community service obligation. Someone is also going to have to explain to me who is going to come up with the money to pay for the buses and disabled services that are currently subsidised by the taxi industry. I ask someone to please tell me how those subsidies are going to be paid. Who is going to sacrifice some of the budgetary allocation for their electorate to pay for these services? That will have to be done. Old people and disabled people rely on a taxi service, but it is not going to be there. Twenty per cent of a taxi service fleet has to be able to provide transport for disabled people. Uber does not have to comply with that requirement. Uber provides services for disabled people, but they are not required to do so under any regulation. There is no control over Uber's services for disabled people. Members should be ready for that as well. When they say, 'We must let Uber operate,' they should be able to tell disabled people what they are going to do to help them, because the cost of providing them with transport is going to have to come out of their taxes somehow.

Taxis have GPS tracking, fitted cameras and 24-hour rolling security checks on their drivers. Taxidriviers often help police. They are a good contact for police when they are out and about scoping. That is regulated, because the government has that interface. There is a central body. That happens right now. Members should talk to the police about that. The police benefit from that assistance provided by taxidriviers. If members are going to kiss goodbye the taxi industry, they can kiss goodbye that assistance also. They had better have a replacement for that assistance as well.

I want to shine a light on Uber. It is trendy, it is sparkling and everyone loves it. The Uber wave is coming, but let me explain what it means. Uber has seen a gap in the market. It can bypass regulations. The rest of Australia is going to let Uber operate and it is trying to target Queensland. Uber thinks Queensland is a soft target. It does not care about our laws. Uber operates without any regulations. We are all mesmerised by the new paint job on the cars and how wonderful the service is that it offers at the moment, but we are starting to hear calls from Uber drivers themselves saying, 'We need regulation.' Let us reflect on that for a minute. This company is benefiting from having no regulations. It bypasses the laws. It is going to push out the taxi industry—an industry that we have tried to look after and in which we have invested hundreds of millions of dollars and given security as we do with all other industries. We are going to throw the taxi industry out the window. We are going to let it go, because Uber has a competitive advantage by operating outside of the regulations.

But now we have Uber drivers saying, 'We want regulation.' They have formed a union to say, 'We need to get better pay and we need regulation.' That is farcical. The participants in the industry themselves are saying, 'We want regulation.' The journey has already started for them to inherit exactly what we have now in the taxi industry. But we are going to hand over our taxi industry to a \$60 billion multinational company. We are going to rip the value of taxi licences off these people who are sitting up in the gallery. They have invested their superannuation and their life savings in those licences. We are going to rip that off them and hand that capital value over to Uber, because it bypasses the laws. Uber has forced us to change the laws to suit them. Then they will operate here, suck up all of that

value, and send it overseas. That is what is happening. That is Uber's plan. That is why Uber is a \$60 billion worldwide company. A lot of people have been soft targets. I hope we will not be a soft target in Queensland.

I refer to the letter that is contained in the committee report. It states—

We ask the Queensland government to help protect Uber drivers' rights to enable us to offer a safe and friendly alternative travel option for the travelling public.

That sounds very familiar to what the taxis are providing right now. The letter continues—

It is our belief that governments should not abdicate their legal, moral and societal responsibilities and allow any company to become lawful in the state of Queensland without regulations to protect workers' rights.

This is a letter written by Uber drivers. If the situation were not so serious, I would almost find it funny. The letter states further—

Uber is a huge multinational company that has decided to dominate the transportation industry in countries all over the world. One of Uber's major strategies is to classify its drivers as contractors. We believe that it is the responsibility of the Queensland government to protect drivers' rights for the sake of both drivers and their families and so that customer safety and satisfaction may be maintained and continually improved.

As we expected, the conditions of workers will continue to decrease. Uber has said, 'We are not taking 20 per cent of the cut; we are now taking 25 per cent of the cut of every fare.' It has already started. Uber is already flexing its muscles. It has a monopoly over the market. Anything that resembles some benefit to Australia is now being eroded.

I refer to the New South Wales experience of Uber. Recently, the New South Wales government decided to legalise Uber's car hire operations, which breached the taxi hire laws of New South Wales. I find it quite extraordinary that a government in Australia will enforce taxi laws—if taxidrivers do not have their insurance in place, if they do not have their 24-hour rolling checks in place, if they are not offering a 24-hour stand-by service they will get fined for being in breach of the law—but Uber bypasses those regulations to compete with the taxi industry and the New South Wales government pats them on the back and tells them to keep going. I find that offensive. In New South Wales, a foreign corporate monopoly on taxi hire has been created. Fifteen thousand full-time jobs have vanished into part-time employment.

In a deregulated taxi market, we can expect services to plummet. As has been the experience of so many things that have been deregulated in Australia, the taxi industry is going down the same road. As a government, our responsibility is to make laws and we expect our transport officers and our police to uphold those laws that we make. Otherwise, what is the point in coming into this place and passing legislation? Amazingly, for two years unregistered taxi services have been operating in broad daylight. Such is the boldness of their operations that their head office in Brisbane is right next door to the police station.

To allow Uber to continue to operate means that the government is undermining its own revenue base and its own legislation. Transport officers have issued over \$1.7 million in fines to drivers using the UberX platform in Queensland. Apparently, to date all of those fines have been paid by the company, not the individual, which to me speaks volumes. Furthermore, Department of Transport and Main Roads officers gave evidence to the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee that employees of Uber have disabled the access of transport officers to the UberX platforms. I find that little pearler particularly offensive. Someone is out there breaking the law and these pesky law officers started fining them. In return they block them. They stop the course of justice. They stop police officers doing their job.

We are all sitting by and saying that it is all right—until tonight. I find it offensive that they are willingly stopping our law officers doing their job in broad daylight and we are standing by and watching. That is the genesis of this bill. This must be stopped. You could love Uber, you can think Uber is a good service, but breaking existing laws has to be dealt with by this government right now as a matter of principle.

One of the inadvertent effects of encouraging this sort of law breaking activity, and it was mentioned in the committee hearings when I was present, is that people are starting to now fake Uber. It is a free-for-all. If governments are not going to uphold the laws that we are making let us all have a go. Now we have a fake Uber in Cairns. They are not part of the Uber system but they hand out a card saying, 'We are Uber. Come and hire us. The transport officers are not getting us anymore so it is all in, boys. Do what you want.' That is the signal we are sending to the public. I table that business card being handed around in Cairns.

Tabled paper: Photographs, undated, of an Uber services business card [\[541\]](#).

That is the sort of activity that is generated when we turn a blind eye and do not clamp down and tighten laws to address this sort of behaviour.

I would like to speak briefly about the demerit points. We have heard why things have not worked in the past. We have brought this bill forward to provide some grunt, some traction, that empowers our law officers. The transport minister says that the government supports the intent of the bill. The intent of the bill is to make this effective. This is our way of addressing that. There is a safety issue. The other day a man in Mount Isa was charged for using an app while he was driving. We do not condone that. We make laws and issue demerit points for that. He was an Uber driver using the app they use when they are an Uber driver. That occurred in Mount Isa. That is a safety issue that we need to address. Some other demerit based offences that we have are learner licence holders failing to clearly display their L-plates, driving a vehicle in a way that makes unnecessary noise or smoke on Queensland roads and drive, park or permit the use of a vehicle that is defective but not unsafe.

The intention of the Transport Legislation (Taxi Services) Amendment Bill 2015 is to reinforce the current regulations and safety provisions that have been placed on the taxi industry in the past to ensure they work within the safe operating limits identified within the act, to maintain consistency within the passenger transport system, including ensuring current safety measures such as GPS technology, fatigue management and driver protections are upheld.

I want to reiterate the point of investor uncertainty. There is much debate about foreign investment. You cannot mess with that because it diminishes investor certainty. We must not compromise investor certainty within the mining industry. I ask people in this House to consider what it does to investor certainty if a government will not act to strengthen laws when a multinational corporation comes to our shores with a business plan that bypasses existing laws and acknowledges it is an illegal activity by paying a lot of the fines. I ask: what is next? Uber hotels? I can sell booze out of the bottom of my house cheaper than the pub. I can put on a great party. I can set up an app for it. It will be a hip party that everyone on the street will come to. I will not have to operate under those pesky regulations and laws that cost me, so I will be selling my booze a lot cheaper. I do not think the pubs in town will like it too much. I could start selling pharmaceuticals out of my house. It would probably be a lot cheaper than the pharmacies, but I do not think the pharmacy owners will like it too much. What is next? Will we have Uber pharmacies and Uber hotels? We are not willing to fix it in the taxi service at the moment. We are saying, 'That's all right. That's how it is now.' That seems to be the prevailing attitude that allows this activity to happen.

At last count I am told Uber is worth \$60 billion. They have capitalised the value of other businesses, revenue from existing businesses, by coming into that market, encroaching on their markets and taking their market share. That is fine if you are abiding by the laws. It is entirely perverse for a government to watch this happen. They have the competitive advantage by bypassing the laws. They are sucking out those hundreds of millions, and perhaps billions, of dollars of superannuation of Australians and giving it to some multinational that can avoid paying tax in Australia. I think that is perverse. Again, we had better have an answer to how we are going to collect the tax revenue to pay for all our services.

The prevailing attitude of the Uber users, as one of my friends texted me, is 'What are you doing? It is a good, convenient service.' The main default argument used by Uber representatives in the committee hearings was, 'Listen, the change is coming anyway. It doesn't matter if you like it or not as a government, it is coming so just get used to it.' I am paraphrasing, but that is the message. Think about that. Is Uber telling the Queensland government what to do? If it is, I had better cash in my salary, move out and give up. I thought we made the laws here and that we protected these regulations. I thought we were the custodians of the regulations and the laws, not Uber, not the populace because they think it is really fun and it is a new hip app out there. They do not make the decisions; we do. Someone has to be a grown-up and say, 'I'm sorry. You might get a cheaper ride for tonight, but in the long run this does not serve the national interest.' That is the question that needs to be addressed. 'The tide is coming' is not a reason to do it. It is a scary thought that someone could come to our shores and say, 'This is just how it is.'

A lot of people are saying, 'Hey, Rob, I get a cheap ride out of this at the moment.' Isn't that a selfish attitude? Are we thinking about the greater good here? Is there anyone thinking about their fellow Australians or Queenslanders? Don't we think about that anymore? Are we just thinking about our cheap ride? Even if you are just thinking about yourself, at least think five or 10 years ahead. We cannot put all these arguments into a hundred characters on Twitter or Facebook to capture the attention of the Uber users out there, but they really need to think and we need to be grown-ups and tell them to be careful what they wish for because they are not necessarily inheriting a better service. Yes, it seems

better now, but only because they are bypassing the laws and regulations. There is a cost to all this. We are going to be asking for more taxes down the road because we are not going to get it from the taxi industry anymore. There will not be that same amount of multiplier off the economic activity on Australian shores anymore so we will be looking for more tax.

These things need to be thought about in their entirety. There is also the inadvertent cost of people losing their jobs and investor confidence. Someone has to be a grown-up and not follow this populist line and be scared of people texting or emailing saying, 'I like using it. It is a funky new app.'

We have mentioned surge pricing. That is another example of being careful what you wish for. Already people are saying, 'I used to use Uber but, geez, I got stung for 300 bucks the other night.' There are multiple examples. The flaws in the system are already happening now. We must not leave it too late, until after the horse has bolted. If it rolls out too much and we do not stamp on it tonight, the horse will have bolted and we cannot pick up the pieces afterwards.

Many taxidrivers have already gone under. I am not sure whether it has been raised tonight that the banks have stopped lending on taxi licences. The values are spiralling down to zero. As I said earlier, I hope members who own commercial property or houses or have any other business that is protected by regulation contemplate that when they are voting tonight. We all enjoy security around investments of all types of businesses or property that is enshrined in regulations we make in this House. We must stand up now and say, 'Hang on, there is a taxi review coming up. You can wait for that. Until that time you are an illegal activity and you must stop,' which they have not. They have said, 'We have deeper pockets than you, Queensland. See you in court.'

Are we going to walk away from that or are we going to stand up and say to the rest of Queensland, 'We are in charge here. We are the government. You have trusted us to be the government. You have given us your vote and we will do the job for you.' Tonight, we have a duty to perform. I appreciate that the minister agrees with the intent of the bill and I hope that tonight we can send that message. I appreciate what the minister said about the moratorium. Even though it may be important to only a small number of people, it is important that we deliver it for the four people concerned.

In summary, this is a shiny new ball. Perhaps I am wrong and it will end up being a good service, but I do not think it will. I think people need to be careful what they wish for. Tonight's debate is not about whether or not we like Uber. This debate is about clearly enforcing our laws. Let us not blame the past actions of anyone, whether that be the current government or previous government. We have to address an issue that is before us right now. We can either walk away from it or we can put something in place that will strengthen the laws and send a message to the rest of Queensland that we are going to do things responsibly. We want to send the message that states, 'Yes, there is a taxi review and things may change, but until then you are illegal and you cannot operate.' I cannot start up a business in another field and operate outside the regulations and nor should they, especially given the fact that they are an overseas company that is taking money off Queensland taxi owners. Tonight I urge members to consider all these matters. I hope that we can send a message to the rest of Queensland that we are willing to be a mature government, that we are willing to be the grown-ups and that we are willing to take a stand against \$60 billion multinational companies that want to come into Queensland and tell us how to run the government and what our laws should be.

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

AYES, 45:

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

KAP, 2—Katter, Knuth.

INDEPENDENT, 2—Gordon, Pyne.

NOES, 41:

LNP, 42—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Costigan, Cramp, Crandon, Cripps, Davis, Dickson, Elmes, Emerson, Frecklington, Hart, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Mander, McArdle, McEachan, McVeigh, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Perrett, Powell, Rickuss, Robinson, Rowan, Seene, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Walker, Watts, Weir.

Pair: Stewart, Nicholls.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clause 1, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (9.17 pm): With the indulgence of the House, I table the government's response to the committee report, which I omitted to table during the second reading debate.

Tabled paper: Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee: Report No 21—Transport Legislation (Taxi Services) Amendment Bill 2015, government response [542].

I move the following amendment—

1 After clause 1

Page 4, after line 5—

insert—

1A Commencement

This Act commences on 28 April 2016.

I table the explanatory notes to the amendments.

Tabled paper: Transport Legislation (Taxi Services) Amendment Bill 2015, explanatory notes to Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe's amendments [543].

Amendment agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—



Mr KATTER (9.18 pm): I seek leave to move an amendment outside the long title of the bill.

Leave granted.

Mr KATTER: I move the following amendment—

1 After clause 1

Page 4, after line 5—

insert—

Part 1A Amendment of Motor Accident Insurance Regulation 2004

1A Regulation amended

This part amends the *Motor Accident Insurance Regulation 2004*.

1B Amendment of sch 4 (Dictionary)

Schedule 4—

insert—

taxi means a motor vehicle used as part of a business in the course of which bookings are accepted for a service that consists of using the motor vehicle to transport passengers from 1 place to another for consideration.

This amendment relates to motor vehicle insurance. Under section 25 of the Motor Accident Insurance Act, a vehicle must be insured under the correct class for the purposes of insurance. Taxis fall within class 3 and are described as 'cars and station wagons only'. However, that term is not defined in the definitions contained in schedule 4 of the regulation, which means that a vehicle providing an illegal taxi service may not fit within the definition of a taxi. The amendment means a vehicle providing a taxi service as defined in schedule 3 of the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994 is required to have class 3 insurance. With this change, drivers of vehicles operating as unlicensed taxis can be fined for not having the correct class of CTP insurance pursuant to section 25 of the MAIA. Furthermore, the TMR can then demand payment of the correct registration. This simple change will help to create more of a level playing field for the taxi industry. At the same time, it will be a disincentive for those providing illegal taxi services and will deter recidivism.

Basically, we are trying to create disincentives to balance the playing field. People riding in illegal taxis are not properly covered by insurance. The taxi industry is forced to make sure that they have the correct insurance to fully cover their passengers and their drivers. This makes sense. This is one of a suite of amendments that we would like to see, as it will help to maintain fairness within the industry and ensure the safety of people who use taxi services, whatever form they take. It passes the fairness test.

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

AYES, 45:

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

KAP, 2—Katter, Knuth.

INDEPENDENT, 2—Gordon, Pyne.

NOES, 41:

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

Pair: Stewart, Nicholls.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Non-government amendment (Mr Katter) agreed to.

Clause 2, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—



Mr KATTER (9.24 pm): I move the following amendment—

2 After clause 2

Page 4, after line 11—

insert—

2A Replacement of s 64 (Provision of taxi services)

Section 64—

omit, insert—

64 Administering taxi services

A person administers a taxi service if the person carries on a business of accepting bookings for a service that consists of using a motor vehicle to transport passengers from 1 place to another for consideration.

2B Amendment of s 65 (Taxi services to be provided only by taxis)

Section 65(1)—

omit, insert—

- (1) If a person who administers a taxi service receives a request from a person for a service that consists of using a motor vehicle to transport passengers from 1 place to another for consideration, the person administering the service must not—
- (a) provide the service to the person using a vehicle that is not a taxi; or
 - (b) suggest to the person that the person accept the service using a vehicle that is not a taxi.

Maximum penalty—160 penalty units.

This amendment defines administering taxi services to target individuals administering and operating unlicensed taxi services. This amendment amends sections 64 and 65. Section 64 will be amended so that administrators of illegal taxi services are also in breach of the bill to address this issue at the root. This amendment of section 64 defines the provision of taxi services as a person administers a taxi service if the person carries on or is involved in the administration of a business in the course of which bookings for taxi services are accepted. Consequently, the amendment of section 64 as detailed will result in all those who are involved in the administration of a taxi service, legal or otherwise, being classified as persons who administer a taxi service. In order to create the offence, section 65(1) replaces the term 'taxi' with the following—

... a person for a service that consists of using a motor vehicle to transport passengers from 1 place to another for consideration, the person administering the service must not—

- (a) provide the service to the person using a vehicle that is not a taxi; or
- (b) suggest to the person that the person accept the service using a vehicle that is not a taxi.

Maximum penalty—160 penalty units.

That is equivalent to \$18,000.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: In relation to the first part of the amendment that the member for Mount Isa has moved, as far as the government is concerned it is unclear why a definition of taxi is required in that place. More significantly, the amendments have a very broad application. They would capture things like school bus charters, community transport and broader transport services. That is something that I think the House would not want to see captured. It is important that this proposed amendment be defeated.

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

AYES, 45:

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

KAP, 2—Katter, Knuth.

INDEPENDENT, 2—Gordon, Pyne.

NOES, 41:

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

Pair: Stewart, Nicholls.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Non-government amendment (Mr Katter) agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—



Mr KNUTH (9.31 pm): I move the following amendment—

1 Before clause 3

Page 4, before line 12—

insert—

2C Amendment of s 70 (Requirement for taxi service licence or peak demand taxi permit)

Section 70(1), penalty—

omit, insert—

Maximum penalty—

- (a) for a first offence—50 penalty units; or
- (b) for a second offence—100 penalty units; or
- (c) for a third or later offence—200 penalty units.

This amendment basically increases the fines for those caught driving illegal taxis. As mentioned earlier, some 1,500 illegal taxis have been fined, but this has not been a deterrent. At the moment, the current maximum fine for breaches of section 70 of TO(PT)A is 160 penalty units which is approximately \$1,848. We do understand that the maximum penalty is solid. However, it is rare to find a fine that exceeds \$2,500. This amendment ensures stronger and tougher fines that are implemented. It also provides the court with a clear definition of the first offence, the second offence and the third offence. The first offence is 50 penalty units, which under this amendment will be \$5,890. The second offence is 100 penalty units at \$11,780. The third offence will be 200 penalty units, which will be \$23,560 for operating an illegal taxi.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: As the member for Dalrymple has suggested, this amendment proposes a scalable maximum penalty in relation to section 70. The government will oppose this amendment because we are alternatively, as I suggested during the second reading debate, proposing a new maximum penalty of 200 penalty units for all offences which is more severe than the amendment moved by the member for Dalrymple. That principle also does not offend against the principle of the separation of powers. Here we are in fact prescribing to courts what sorts of penalties they will impose based upon the circumstances. That is a principle which this side of the House stands by, and I hope that we might see all sides of the House stand by.

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

Resolved in the negative under standing order 106.

Non-government amendment (Mr Knuth) negatived.

Clause 3—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (9.37 pm): I seek leave to move an amendment outside the long title of the bill.

Leave granted.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I move the following amendment—

2 Clause 3 (Insertion of new s 70A)

Page 4, lines 12 to 21 and page 5, lines 1 to 24—

omit, insert—

3 Replacement of s 70 (Requirement for taxi service licence or peak demand taxi permit)

Section 70—

omit, insert—

70 Taxi service may only be provided using a taxi

- (1) A person must not provide a taxi service using a motor vehicle that is not a taxi.
Maximum penalty—200 penalty units.
- (2) In a prosecution for an offence against subsection (1), proof that a service—
 - (a) was for the carriage of passengers for a journey; and
 - (b) was provided by the hire of a motor vehicle, and a person to drive the motor vehicle, for the journey;
 is taken to be sufficient proof that the service was a taxi service.
- (3) However, it is a defence to a prosecution for an offence against subsection (1) for a person to prove the service provided by the person was—
 - (a) a cross-border taxi service; or
 - (b) an excluded public passenger service.
- (4) Subsection (1) does not apply to a person providing a taxi service prescribed under a regulation as a taxi service to which this section does not apply.
- (5) To remove any doubt, it is declared for subsection (1) that a person who provides a taxi service using a motor vehicle includes a person who drives the motor vehicle.

The objectives of this amendment are to deter noncompliance with the requirement to be licensed to provide a taxi service and to enable enforcement against anyone who does not comply with this requirement. The amendment does not change the intent of the current provision. Specifically, new clause 3 makes the following changes to achieve these objectives. It clarifies the existing offence of providing an unlicensed taxi service under section 70 of the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994. In particular, it clarifies that the offence applies to the driver. It simplifies the elements of proof in a prosecution for this offence, resolving existing complexities and facilitating prosecutions of the offence. The simplified elements of a taxi service include that the service was for the carriage of passengers and involved the hire of a motor vehicle and a driver. It provides a defence for a prosecution in certain circumstances—for example, a person operating a community transport service or a limousine service is not intended to be captured by this offence. The maximum penalty for this offence will increase from 160 to 200 penalty units, as I foreshadowed in addressing the previous amendment. I also note very importantly that from the outset this amendment seeks to remove the demerit points from the proposed legislation.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 3, as amended, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (9.39 pm): I seek leave to move an amendment outside the long title of the bill.

Leave granted.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I move the following amendment—

3 After clause 3

Page 5, after line 24—

insert—

3A Amendment of s 128 (Power to require information from certain persons)

Section 128(1)(b), 'public passenger'—

omit.

3B Insertion of new s 129AA

Part 4—

*insert—***129AA Power to require production of driver licence**

- (1) This section applies if an authorised person reasonably suspects a person in control of a motor vehicle, or a person who reasonably appears to be the person in control of a motor vehicle, has just committed, or is committing, an offence against this Act.
- (2) The authorised person may require the person to produce his or her driver licence.
- (3) If the person is unable to comply with the requirement immediately but holds an open licence, the person may comply with the requirement by producing the licence to the chief executive at a place nominated by the authorised person within 2 business days after the requirement is made.
- (4) The person must comply with a requirement under subsection (2) or (3), unless the person has a reasonable excuse.
Maximum penalty—60 penalty units.
- (5) The place nominated under subsection (3) must be an office of the department that is reasonable in the circumstances.
- (6) In this section—
driver licence see the *Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995*.
open licence see the *Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995*.

3C Amendment of s 153A (Facilitation of proof)

Section 153A, heading, 'proof'—

*omit, insert—***proof—dangerous goods offences****3D Insertion of new s 153B**

After section 153A—

*insert—***153B Facilitation of proof—general**

- (1) In a proceeding for an offence against this Act—
 - (a) an allegation or averment in a complaint stating any of the following matters is evidence of the matter, and, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, is proof of the matter—
 - (i) at a particular time, a stated thing was or was not a vehicle or motor vehicle;
 - (ii) at a particular time, a stated vehicle or motor vehicle was or was not of a particular class or description; and
 - (b) a certificate purporting to be signed by the chief executive stating that, at a particular time, a stated motor vehicle was or was not a taxi is evidence of the matter; and
 - (c) evidence that a number plate showing a particular registration number was attached to a motor vehicle, at a particular time, is evidence that the motor vehicle is the motor vehicle noted in the register of vehicles, at that time, as having that registration number; and
 - (d) a document, or a copy of a document, purporting to be an invoice, receipt or other record of an amount that is or was payable, or has been paid, for a service for the carriage of passengers, is evidence of a matter stated in the document or copy.
- (2) In this section—
register of vehicles means a register of vehicles kept by the chief executive under a Transport Act as defined under the *Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995*, schedule 4.

3E Insertion of new ch 13, pt 16

Chapter 13—

*insert—***Part 16 Transitional provision for Transport Legislation (Taxi Services) Amendment Act 2015****206 Application of s 70**

Section 70, as in force on the commencement, applies only in relation to an offence that happens after the commencement.

3F Amendment of sch 3 (Dictionary)

- (1) Schedule 3, definition *excluded public passenger service*, paragraphs (a) to (d)—
renumber as paragraphs (b) to (e).
- (2) Schedule 3, definition *excluded public passenger service*—
insert—
- (a) a charter bus service;

This amendment inserts new clauses 3A through to 3F. New clause 3A supports compliance and enforcement activities by clarifying the circumstances within which a transport inspector may require a person to give information about certain transport offences. This includes the offence of providing an unlicensed taxi service, allowing information to be gathered about the commission of this offence.

New clause 3B enhances compliance and enforcement activities by inserting a new power for a transport inspector to require a person to produce their driver's licence. The power can only be used where a person in control of a motor vehicle is suspected of committing an offence against the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994. Under this provision, drivers may be required to produce their driver's licence where they are suspected of providing an unlicensed taxi service.

New clause 3C makes a minor consequential change to a heading to include a reference to dangerous goods offences. New clause 3D introduces evidentiary aids which provide for certain matters to be used as evidence in a court proceeding. These include evidentiary certificates to deal with non-contentious matters that are not in dispute—for example, that something was not a taxi. This clause will facilitate prosecutions for passenger transport offences including the offence of providing an unlicensed taxi service.

New clause 3E provides that the revised offence of providing an unlicensed taxi service only applies to offences committed after the amendments commence. New clause 3F clarifies that a charter bus service is not regulated as a taxi service, which is consistent with the original policy intent that we started with before tonight.

Amendment agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (9.42 pm): I seek leave to move an amendment outside the long title of the bill.

Leave granted.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I move the following amendment—

4 Part 3, heading (Amendment of Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995)

Page 6, lines 1 to 3—

omit, insert—

Part 3 Amendment of State Penalties Enforcement Regulation 2014

This amendment replaces the heading of part 3, as the new part 3 amends a different act—the State Penalties Enforcement Regulation 2014. Amendment 5 inserts a new clause 4 which provides that part 3 amends the State Penalties Enforcement Regulation. Amendment 6 inserts new clause 5 which increases the infringement notice fine for the offence of providing an unlicensed taxi service to 20 penalty units or \$2,356. This increase is intended to deter noncompliance. In addition, the new offence of failing to produce a driver's licence will incur an infringement notice fine of four penalty units or \$471. That covers amendments Nos 4 to 6 which replace part 3.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 4—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (9.44 pm): I seek leave to move an amendment outside the long title of the bill.

Leave granted.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I move the following amendment—

5 Clause 4 (Act amended)

Page 6, lines 4 to 6—

omit, insert—

4 Regulation amended

This part amends the *State Penalties Enforcement Regulation 2014*.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 4, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 5—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (9.44 pm) I seek leave to move an amendment outside the long title of the bill.

Leave granted.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I move the following amendment—

6 Clause 5 (Amendment of sch 4 (Dictionary))

Page 6, lines 7 to 19—

omit, insert—

5 Amendment of sch 1 (Infringement notice offences and fines for nominated laws)

- (1) Schedule 1, entry for Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994, entry for section 70(1), column 2, '12'—

omit, insert—

20

- (2) Schedule 1, entry for Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994—

insert—

s 129AA(4)

4

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 5, as amended, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (9.45 pm): I seek leave to move an amendment outside the long title of the bill.

Leave granted.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I move the following amendment—

7 Part 4, heading (Amendment of State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999)

Page 6, lines 20 to 21—

omit, insert—

Part 4 Amendment of Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Regulation 2005

This amendment replaces the heading of part 4.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 6—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (9.46 pm): I seek leave to move an amendment outside the long title of the bill.

Leave granted.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I move the following amendment—

8 Clause 6 (Act amended)

Page 6, lines 22 to 23—

omit, insert—

6 Regulation amended

This part amends the *Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Regulation 2005*.

This amendment inserts a new clause 6 which provides that part 4 amends the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Regulation.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 6, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 7—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (9.46 pm): I seek leave to move an amendment outside the long title of the bill.

Leave granted.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I move the following amendment—

9 Clause 7 (Amendment of s 31 (Effect of cancellation of infringement notice))

Page 7, lines 1 to 6—

omit, insert—

7 Omission of s 96A (Services for which taxi service licence not required)

Section 96A—

omit.

This amendment inserts a new clause 7 which omits section 96A of the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Regulation. It is a consequential amendment in relation to cross-border taxi services.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 7, as amended, agreed to.

Third Reading



Mr KATTER (Mount Isa—KAP) (9.47 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. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games) (9.48 pm): I move the following amendment, which is a replacement of amendment No. 10 as circulated in my name—

10 Long title

Page 3, long title, from 'amend'—

omit, insert—

amend the *Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994* to facilitate the prosecution of persons who provide a taxi service using a vehicle that is not a taxi, and to amend the *State Penalties Enforcement Regulation 2014*, the *Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Regulation 2005* and the *Motor Accident Insurance Regulation 2004* for particular purposes

Amendment agreed to.

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

Motion agreed to.

CRIME AND CORRUPTION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 1246, on motion of Mrs D'Ath—

That the bill be now read a second time.



Mr WATTS (Toowoomba North—LNP) (9.49 pm): Today I rise to make a brief contribution on the Crime and Corruption Amendment Bill. We have seen many people in this House clamouring for the high moral ground in this debate. We have heard phrases like integrity, bipartisanship, community confidence, abuse for political gain, abuse of power, transparency and accountability—these in themselves are very worthy things for us to talk about in this place as we try to address the very nature of our crime and corruption watchdog. The question really is: does this bill add anything of value in turning these words into actions?

As we debate the bill, I would like to quote briefly from history. When he first discussed the CJC, which is now the CCC, Mr Fitzgerald said—

The exclusion or reduction of party political considerations and processes from the decision-making process with respect to the administration of criminal justice is an important consideration underlying the establishment of the CJC. Accordingly, executive authority and connection with the CJC must be limited to what is necessary to finance it, provide administrative and resource needs, and that necessary for public financial and other accounting purposes.

What Mr Fitzgerald was really saying was that this thing should not be a political football. It should rise above the partisanship of this chamber and we should make sure that the integrity of our state is well protected by being able to agree on how we should function. There is another person I would like to quote from, just to bring this into stark reality. The quote is—

The House needs to be acutely aware that the tasks given to this committee will require it to operate as much as possible in a non-partisan, non-political way. I stress those words. On page 309 of his report, Commissioner Fitzgerald used words that need to be given great attention by the House, because they are very significant and will have a significant influence and bearing on the operation not only of the Commission but also of the Committee.

That was Peter Beattie 26 years ago talking about making sure that we do not end up in a partisan fashion discussing how the CCC should operate and how it should function. We wanted to make sure that we have a body that the people of Queensland can have great confidence in because the people of this House have been able to agree in a bipartisan way on how best to make sure it operates. That might not always be possible but it should always be what we pursue.

I believe bringing these amendments in whilst there is a statutory review already underway is pre-emptive. Unfortunately, although it might satisfy some desires of some people to unwind what was done in this House before, I do not think it is really helpful in making sure that the CCC functions as efficiently and effectively as it can. In just a few short months, the report will be finished and the government will be able to look at it and put its response together and draft the necessary legislation to be able to deal with any of the issues that have been identified.

While there is a structural review and complete overview of the commission going on, I think it is pre-emptive to come in here with the five objectives of the bill. It is not that I have any great objection to the specifics of the bill. I have not turned my mind to the specifics of the bill because we are in the middle of writing a report about the whole commission. I say that with the greatest respect to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee, who I am sure worked very hard on this bill. They could only address what was put in front of them as the amendments; they could not address the whole structure of the CCC. That is the job of the statutory review.

For me to ask someone whether these are good ideas when they are put in isolation causes a problem because you cannot look outside those ideas. Then we have other branches of government looking at things that all form part of what we all desire. If we want business to operate effectively in our state and people to have confidence in how our state functions, we need to make sure we have a strong, independent, bipartisan supported integrity commission that is able to look at serious crime and serious corruption. I will quote Fitzgerald again. He said—

Organised crime is a special threat since it leads to the perversion and corruption of the basic institutions of our society. Its sophistication, adaptability and wealth make it extraordinarily difficult to combat. Organised crime cannot exist on the scale which it does without the knowledge and help of otherwise honest citizens, both individual and corporate. Organised crime can afford the best in equipment, technology and advice, sometimes provided by unethical professionals.

Again, if we are going to make changes to the CCC, it should be done as part of a large review. It should be done so we do not weaken the institution either in the eyes of the public or in reality. It needs to be done as part of a whole process where we can look at what it is we are trying to achieve. I am sure no-one in this House thinks we should achieve a partisan body that can be abused and used in a political campaign to take cheap shots at an opponent to try to gain power. We all know that, if someone gains power by using an institution of the state in an illegal way, that would be completely offensive to the people of Queensland. The frivolous complaints and reporting of political opponents in the lead-up to an election is something that I think needs to be looked at very seriously so that neither side and nobody at any level of government in Queensland has the ability to abuse this very important institution.

As I said, I do not wish to pass comment at this point on the proposed five amendments and the objectives. What I am concerned about is wanting the people of Queensland and the members in this House to have confidence in this institution. I want people who are running businesses to know that, when they put a tender in, someone behaving in a corrupt manner will not be advantaged. I want people to know and trust that serious crime in this state will have a watchdog chasing it out of this state. As I said, bringing in piecemeal amendments is really not the way to review this most important institution. This is one of the cornerstones that makes a modern democracy function well, and the cornerstone has to be upheld. It has to be done in a bipartisan way. It has to be done in a way that we all agree is best for our society. I really hope that, as we go through the review, we can come up with some bipartisan recommendations that the minister will consider and legislate.

Mr Power interjected.

Mr WATTS: I am happy to take the interjection.

Mr Power interjected.

Mr WATTS: Does the member not think it is time to rise above the petty politics?

Mr Power interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! The member for Logan.

Mr WATTS: I think it is time to rise above some of that and let's get some bipartisan agreement on how this thing should function, some bipartisan agreement on what we should do with frivolous political complaints, some bipartisan agreement on how we think it should be structured in terms of its governance model. I am happy to debate that within the overall review where members from both sides of this House can express opinions and hopefully we can reach an agreement on what is corrupt behaviour, what is official misconduct and some of these very important and difficult topics. I hope we can get that sorted out in the wider review so that we can come in here with some legislation that strengthens this institution, because it is a foundation stone that will make our state effective and efficient. It will allow it to compete with countries overseas and people here can have confidence in it. I think it has been a plaything of the political elements that operate in Queensland and I think that is a shame. I look forward to some good legislation after the review is complete.

 **Mr MADDEN** (Ipswich West—ALP) (10.00 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Crime and Corruption Amendment Bill 2015. I would like to begin by thanking the chair of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee, the member for Ferny Grove, Mark Furner, and his fellow committee members. I would also like to thank the secretariat staff: Bernice Watson, Kelli Longworth, Gregory Thomson, Kellie Moule and Lorraine Bowden as well as the Technical Scrutiny Secretariat, Renee Easten, Michael Gorringer and Tamara Vitale. I would also like to thank the individuals and groups who made written submissions to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee, as well as the witnesses who appeared before the committee.

The committee's task was to consider whether the bill had sufficient regard to the rights and liberties of individuals and the institution of parliament. Unfortunately, in this case the committee was unable to reach a majority decision as to whether the bill should be passed.

In 2014 the Campbell Newman government made a number of critical changes to the structure and operation of the Crime and Corruption Commission, the CCC. These changes included a change to the membership of the CCC. It also removed the requirement that nominations for the CEO would require bipartisan support of the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee and, significantly, it introduced a requirement that complaints be made by statutory declaration. The legislative changes made by the previous government also included removing the CCC's corruption prevention function and narrowing the CCC's research capability.

The Palaszczuk government made a number of commitments prior to the 2015 state election concerning the CCC. The government has already implemented some of these commitments, for example, the Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2015 provided for a pension for the CCC chair and by the government appointment, a permanent CCC chair who commenced duties on 1 September 2015.

This Crime and Corruption Amendment Bill amends the Crime and Corruption Act 2001 to restore the CCC's independence and integrity. It legislates that the CCC chief executive officer cannot be a CCC commissioner. The bill requires the appointment to have bipartisan support of the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee. The bill requires that the term for temporary appointments of the CCC chair, commissioners and chief executive officer will be limited to three months unless there is bipartisan support from the CCC for an extended period. The bill also reinstates the CCC's corruption prevention function as well as the CCC's independence when undertaking its research function. As well, the bill will restore provision for complaints to the CCC to be made anonymously.

There have been some regrettable periods in the history of Queensland politics, notably through corruption and lack of accountability, most famously during the Joh Bjelke-Petersen era which only came to an end with the Fitzgerald inquiry and the subsequent reforms. At times the Fitzgerald reforms have been systematically wound back and undermined by regressive governments and those backward steps were accelerated by the Campbell Newman LNP government. This was a period in Queensland history when the government did not treat transparency, integrity and accountability as priorities.

The Campbell Newman government rolled back the Fitzgerald reforms, most obviously by neutering the Crime and Corruption Commission. This is why the Palaszczuk government is committed to restoring the CCC's independence and integrity. As the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice,

Yvette D'Ath, said in the first reading speech, the Crime and Corruption Amendment Bill delivers on a broad range of legislative election commitments by the Palaszczuk government to strengthen the CCC. She said that after the upheaval of the Newman years and the undermining of important integrity measures across government, the Palaszczuk government is delivering on our commitment to restore accountability and integrity.

Most importantly, the government is supported by Queenslanders who simply want to restore respect for important public institutions including the judiciary, an independent Public Service and, crucially, a strong, independent public watchdog by way of the CCC. The Campbell Newman government ended the CCC's important corruption prevention function. This stopped the CCC from actively supporting public sector agencies in the prevention of corruption and created a critical gap in Queensland's integrity system. The bill reinstates this important corruption prevention function of the CCC. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr PEGG** (Stretton—ALP) (10.05 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Crime and Corruption Amendment Bill. This bill, like so many others that have been introduced in the 55th Parliament, rights the wrongs of the previous LNP government.

Mr Hart interjected.

Mr PEGG: Of course, we have righted the wrongs of the former LNP government on a whole range of issues, as the member for Burleigh would know, in relation to industrial relations, job security, civil unions and the rights of those injured at work through no fault of their own. Of course, I could go on and on about the wrongs we have righted—

Mr Hart interjected.

Mr PEGG:—although, as the member for Burleigh has pointed out, previously I have spoken extensively about these issues in this House.

What this bill has in common with so many of those bills I have mentioned is that it is unfortunate that this bill is even necessary. The corruption prevention and research functions of the CCC should never have been nobbled as they were by the former LNP government in 2014. The CCC should never have had its independence interfered with. It has been very interesting to hear those opposite talk about bipartisanship and independence. It is very easy to come up here and talk the talk, but of course the real test is whether they can walk the walk, and on so many occasions those opposite have failed to do that.

I congratulate the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee and in particular their chair, the member for Ferny Grove, on their report. I was reading through the report. As I have come to expect from the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee, it is quite a good, detailed report. Then I got to page 21, which was entitled 'Non-government members statement of reservation'. That is when I began to disagree with some aspects of that particular report. I was reading through and I saw that there was a reservation about the removal of the requirement for statutory declarations. There were concerns raised about the definition of bipartisan support. There was a statement at the end saying—

Non-government members also are of the view that aspects of this Bill should be dealt with as part of the PCCC three year review of the CCC rather than through this separate Bill being brought to Parliament while the three year review is ongoing.

I was very interested to see the signatories of that non-government members' statement of reservation. The signature of the member for Broadwater was there. That was not really a surprise to me. Also there were the signatures of the member for Mount Ommaney and the member for Beaudesert. It made me reflect on the obsession of the former government—and it continues—with what I can only really refer to as civic red tape. There is a situation where those opposite want to get in the way of people exercising their civic entitlements. We have not just seen it in relation to complaints to the CCC. Of course, we had those opposite trying to make the people of Queensland produce ID when they went to vote in elections as well, which is another wrong that the Palaszczuk government has righted that I referred to earlier.

The problem is that while people like the member for Burleigh and the member for Lockyer were obsessing over issues of civic red tape, people like the member for Clayfield and other former ministers of the Newman government were sacking 14,000 public servants and introducing reductions to the capital program. I think the real lesson for former members of the Newman government such as the member for Burleigh and the member for Lockyer is that it is important to see the wood for the trees. While they were obsessing over these issues of civic red tape they were ignoring the broader systemic issues of the Newman government, and of course that is a big reason they are sitting over there on the opposition benches right now.

As I mentioned earlier in the debate, the former LNP government removed the corruption prevention function in 2014, and this decision by the former LNP government created a gap in the integrity system in this state by removing the ability of the CCC to support public sector agencies to build the capability of public sector agencies to prevent corruption. This bill will restore this vitally important corruption prevention function and allow the CCC to support public sector agencies to proactively prevent corruption.

Unfortunately, as was so often the case with the former LNP government, they did not just stop with removing the corruption prevention function; they also introduced a requirement for the CCC to obtain the approval of the minister for its research. The CCC should be able to make their own decisions in relation to research without political interference, and this bill will allow the CCC to do just that. I find it hypocritical that those opposite—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! I ask the member to withdraw. That is unparliamentary language.

Mr PEGG: I withdraw that remark unreservedly. As I said earlier, it is very important to not only talk the talk; you also have to walk the walk. Unfortunately, in 2014 so many of those opposite failed to do that. Let us hope they have learned from their mistakes, because history shows that they have not been able to do that.

In conclusion, all of the elements of this bill were important election commitments. The member for Ipswich West eloquently spoke about the history and importance of this anti-corruption body in Queensland. I think it is very, very important that we have a CCC that is independent, impartial and above politics. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr RUSSO** (Sunnybank—ALP) (10.12 pm): I rise tonight to speak in support of the Crime and Corruption Amendment Bill. This will again fulfil another of the Palaszczuk government's most important election commitments, and it will go some way towards restoring public confidence in the Queensland parliament and the public service. I believe that this legislation goes a long way to restoring public confidence not only in the work of the commission, but how the people of Queensland deal with government and government departments.

I decided to enter politics for a number of reasons, not the least of which was because I could not sit idly by and allow attacks on the Queensland justice system and the Crime and Corruption Commission largely because of the atrocious abuses of power that were being perpetrated by the previous government. The separation of power was repeatedly undermined, rule of law principles were ignored and, most relevantly for the moment, we witnessed a prolonged vendetta against the Queensland corruption watchdog.

Queensland's Crime and Corruption Commission had earned the reputation of being one of the state's most powerful independent and respected institutions whose purpose is to keep a check on police corruption and the political abuse of power. Not only did the LNP government repeatedly downplay the commission's functions and attempt to politicise its operations, but in 2014 it also passed some crippling reforms that weakened the independence and investigative power of the body. Information from anonymous whistleblowers was made inadmissible; the responsibility of the commission to prevent corruption was removed; and in an inexplicable move the wording of the act was changed so that the position of 'chairperson' was changed to 'chairman'.

The Queensland Labor opposition, as it then was, was vocal in its disapproval of these attacks, raising the objection that the policies were winding back the clock to pre-Fitzgerald standards of oversight. The then leader of the opposition let loose on the Attorney-General, clueing him into the fact that Queensland has been here before. You do not have to look too far back in the history books to know why the Queensland government needs legitimate accountable mechanisms and a fearless independent body to properly investigate. Our government places a high value on oversight, transparency and checks and balances, and we made this clear to the people of Queensland last year before the election. The Palaszczuk government was entrusted by the electors to return best practice principles of governance to our state, and this includes holding our political officers up to the scrutiny of an oversight body with real investigative teeth.

The reforms proposed by the Attorney-General's bill fulfil these expectations by reversing the worst of the 2014 LNP attacks. Perhaps the most important of these reforms is to allow evidence to be given anonymously. This will greatly improve the investigating power of the CCC and serve as a layer of protection for whistleblowers against retaliation. The Attorney-General's bill goes further than just

winding back the Newman era attacks on the integrity of the CCC: the bill reinstates and strengthens the commission's preventative function; widens the definition of corrupt conduct; and reforms the appointment process and tenure of commissioners and CEOs.

The commission cannot remain independent when members have been hand-picked by the government of the day. The upside of the fiercely partisan nature of our parliament is that neither side will allow the appointment of anyone who can be perceived as holding political bias. Additionally, the improved wages and tenure provisions will serve to attract experienced and distinguished candidates to this top job. The bill also introduces a safeguard for the period of time during which the PCCC selects a new chair and CEO.

In conclusion, I would like to reflect on the submissions made by Mr Fitzgerald in 2014. In his submission, which details the attempts of previous conservative governments to alter the CMC since it was established following the Fitzgerald inquiry, Mr Fitzgerald says—

The Bill before this committee takes the final step needed to remove the commission's independence entirely and bring it completely under government control.

He also stated—

Despite what politicians promise, there are no simple solutions to complex problems and neither Newman nor Bleijie has knowledge or experience of the complexities involved in balancing personal freedom and public safety through criminal justice.

Newman and Bleijie's conduct also suggests that they are unaware of, or unconcerned by, the principles and responsibilities of good governance and intolerant of dissent and decision-makers whom they can't control. Both seem to inhabit a political universe which is divided into "us" and "them", in which those who do not agree with their views or do what they demand are for that reason enemies and legitimate targets for abuse and government retribution.

He hit out at the former premier and attorney-general for launching what he described as unprincipled attacks on the courts and judiciary over the last two years. I recommend these important changes to the House.

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (10.19 pm): I rise to speak in support of this important bill. Let us not forget that the Crime and Corruption Commission and the predecessor bodies that existed in Queensland prior to the Crime and Corruption Commission—including the Crime and Misconduct Commission and the Criminal Justice Commission—arose out of one of the darkest and most shameful periods of Queensland's political history. They were the events that led up to and culminated in the Fitzgerald inquiry. Central to those events was the conduct of the coalition government, particularly the National Party government in the latter part of the 1980s. If there is one thing the members of the LNP practise when in government, it is nobbling independent crime and corruption commissions.

Let us go back into history, because it is important for us to remember history when we come into this House to change the law in Queensland. In 1996 it was the Borbidge government which set up the Connolly-Ryan inquiry into the Criminal Justice Commission. One of its first actions when the Borbidge government came into office—

Ms Simpson interjected.

Mr DICK: I take the interjection from the member for Maroochydore. She was here at that time. One of the first actions that government took was to try to curtail the then CJC. In fact, the then National Party premier, Rob Borbidge, accused the CJC of 'a massive political vendetta' against his government. Of course, that continued. The echo of vendetta continued, and it was mentioned tonight by the member for Sunnybank. That government, of which the member for Maroochydore was a member, cut the budget of the CJC and ensured that a lot of its time was spent defending itself. The CJC had to spend its time defending itself before a royal commission established by the then Borbidge National Party government, the Connolly-Ryan inquiry.

The Newman government continued that tradition by thinking that the independent crime commission, the now Crime and Corruption Commission, was another arm of the executive government. The LNP has difficulty understanding that 'independence' means independence. The best example of the way the LNP regards such bodies is the way it used its very significant parliamentary majority—

Mr HART: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I would ask you to rule on relevance. The minister is all over the place here. Can we draw him back to the bill we are talking about?

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): There is no point of order.

Mr DICK: I am coming to the bill. Members opposite do not want to reflect on, recall or even remember what happened in the last parliamentary term. The member for Burleigh was part of the LNP government that came in here in the middle of the night and sacked the cross-party committee that oversaw the Crime and Corruption Commission—that is, the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee. It sacked them in the middle of the night. That committee comprised two Independents, two Labor members and three LNP members. When the committee failed to do what the Newman government wanted it to do, when it failed to do the Newman government's bidding in relation to the actions of the then head of the CCC, Dr Ken Levy, they sacked it. They sacked all of the members of the committee and appointed another committee, on which there was a majority of LNP members. That is how seriously the LNP regards the idea of independence.

When the Labor Party was in opposition in the last parliamentary term it undertook to undo the impact of those LNP amendments which undermined the Crime and Corruption Commission. Our government is now implementing those election commitments. The Crime and Corruption Commission is a vitally important part of modern Queensland democracy, and we tamper with its operation at our peril.

This bill seeks to restore the CCC's independence and integrity by providing, amongst other things, that the CCC chief executive officer is not a CCC commissioner. It also enshrines into law that there be bipartisan support from the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee for the appointment of the CEO. It also limits temporary appointments to three months for the CCC chair, commissioners and CEO unless there is bipartisan PCCC support. These last two matters of which I speak require bipartisan support. That is the sort of principle espoused by those on this side of the House: the requirement for bipartisan support, not the winner-take-all attitude which had been the hallmark of the only two conservative governments—the Borbidge coalition government and the Newman LNP government—which existed since the advent of the PCCC and its predecessors.

This bill also allows complaints to the CCC to be made anonymously. Furthermore, it restores important provisions which were struck out by the previous government. One of those changes was the change to the system so that complaints about corruption were to be made by way of statutory declaration unless there were exceptional circumstances. The tampering with legislation by those members opposite also removed the CCC's corruption prevention function. The LNP removed one of the key functions of the entity. The LNP also narrowed the CCC's research function to align strictly with supporting the performance of its functions rather than enabling it to research any matter relevant to its functions. The CCC's research activities required ministerial approval and consultation with the PCCC.

This bill will right those wrongs, and I commend the Attorney-General for introducing this bill into the parliament. It will also restore gender-neutral language to the title of the CCC chair's position. Of all the petty and small-minded things the LNP did in the previous government—wasting the parliament's time, wasting the legislature's time—it was to go through legislation in Queensland and change the titles of positions from gender neutral to gendered. That is what they did. They thought that was a relevant use of the parliament's time. That indicates the small-minded and petty approach the LNP are capable of when they are in government in Queensland.

This bill will support the efficient performance of the CCC's day-to-day financial management by removing current prohibitions on the CEO subdelegating the financial accountability functions under the Financial Accountability Act. This bill will achieve its objectives of restoring the CCC's independence and integrity, and all Queenslanders should take pride in that.

It goes without saying that I, like all my Labor colleagues, strongly support the CCC's crime-fighting and corruption-fighting powers. We see both the crime-fighting power and the corruption-fighting power as central parts of how we deliver democracy in Queensland. For those reasons, I commend the Attorney-General and I commend the bill to the parliament.

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (10.26 pm), in reply: I thank all members for their contributions to this debate this evening. Once again I want to take the House to the fundamental amendments in this bill and outline again what it seeks to achieve. This bill seeks to restore the CCC's independence and integrity by providing that the CEO is not a commissioner, consistent with best practice governance arrangements; retaining a five-member commission so that the commission will consist of the chairperson, the deputy chairperson and three, rather than two, part-time commissioners who are ordinary commissioners, ensuring the commission has a broad range of expertise and skills; requiring bipartisan PCCC support for the appointment nomination of the CEO to support transparency and accountability in that

appointment; limiting temporary appointments for the commissioners and CEO to three months, unless there is bipartisan PCCC support for the appointment—this will prevent any future long-term partisan appointments being made; reinstating the CCC's corruption prevention function to enable the CCC to build the capacity of units of public administration to prevent corruption; reinstating the CCC's research function to as it stood prior to the 2014 amendments—this means the CCC will no longer be required to obtain ministerial approval for its research activities; and allowing anonymous complaints about corruption to be made to the CCC by removing the requirement for complaints to be made by way of a statutory declaration. This will foster a culture that encourages complaints about corruption to be made.

The bill also achieves its objective by restoring gender-neutral language to the title of the CCC chair position by replacing references to CCC 'chairman' with CCC 'chairperson' in the Crime and Corruption Act and other legislation. The bill achieves its objective by supporting the efficient performance of the CCC's day-to-day financial management by removing the current prohibition on the CEO subdelegating the financial accountability functions under the Financial Accountability Act 2009. This amendment will mean the CEO's delegation powers are consistent with the delegation powers that departmental accountable officers have under the Financial Accountability Act.

Not only are these sensible amendments but they are amendments that we took to the people of Queensland at the last election. I have heard the debates from those on the other side that we should simply wait for the review to occur and see what comes out of that review, but this is what we took to the people of Queensland. This is what we said: 'If you vote for Labor and Labor is returned to government, we will do this.' We have an obligation to the people of Queensland to deliver on these election commitments, and that is what we do here tonight.

I turn to the member for Toowoomba North's comments, and I note that he is not in the chamber at the moment. I want to thank him for his comments. I very much supported much of what he said this evening—to rise above the partisanship that has occurred in this chamber, to ensure that we have a system that the people of Queensland should have confidence in, to ensure that we do not weaken this system of transparency, accountability and integrity in the eyes of the public. I agree with those comments and I hope that as the new chair of the PCCC the member for Toowoomba North will lead by example with those comments.

I have held similar positions. I have been the chair of the privileges committee in the federal parliament. I have been deputy chair of the public accounts and audit committee. I know what responsibility comes with those positions and I take transparency, accountability and integrity very seriously in my current role as Attorney-General and as a member of parliament. I know what responsibility goes with being chair of the PCCC and for all members, for that matter. I support the comments that the member made. I note that the member is not supporting the bill tonight and that he said that he has not really looked at this bill because he believes that we should await the review, but I hope if the member had looked at this bill in detail he would have seen that these are sensible changes that do exactly what he says he wanted to see here tonight—ensuring that we have a system that the public can have confidence in, that puts politics out of reach, that ensures that we have that accountability and integrity, that we give independence back to our Crime and Corruption Commission as it should have had.

I cannot stand here tonight in my reply to this debate and not address the hypocrisy that I have heard in this debate. For those on the other side to be saying in this debate that it is Labor that has politicised the CCC is farcical. It is farcical because of what those opposite did in government over three years to the CCC—the powers that they took away, the control they put in place so there was ministerial control and intervention over the Crime and Corruption Commission, the fact that when they did not like what was happening with their own Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee as it then was they dismissed the entire committee and replaced it with a majority of government members at the time. How is that bipartisan? How is that ensuring that the people of Queensland can have integrity in the system? That is not integrity. That is not integrity at all. I have heard that the opposition would be supporting this bill if we changed the bipartisan arrangements in what is by majority under this committee and I hope with the new committee that that will not be an issue and that we can get back to the PCCC operating the way it should—that is, leave the politics at the door and actually do its job and consider the facts on their merits.

Opposition members interjected.

Mrs D'ATH: I will stand here and acknowledge that we had a crossbencher represent a government member and we got the chair of the CCC through, but let us stop here and be honest: if the changes that the opposition would like to see come in were already in place, would we have a

permanent chair of the Crime and Corruption Commission right now? I think not because the opposition was more than happy to hold the position of chair of the Crime and Corruption Commission to ransom unless it got what it wanted.

Opposition members interjected.

Mrs D'ATH: I hear the comment, 'Rubbish.' I remind those on the other side what was happening last year. On 17 June 2015 what did the *Courier-Mail* say about the chair of the CCC? It said—

Mr Seeney said he did not believe the committee could be asked to consider who should be the next chairperson of the CCC until it was functioning properly.

On 1 July 2015 the *Courier-Mail* stated—

Liberal National Party MPs Jeff Seeney, Trevor Watts and Ann Leahy are refusing to consider the Government's nominee for CCC boss until Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk approves the Opposition's nominee for committee chairman, Mr Seeney.

This is not a debate around the chair of the PCCC; this is a committee that was refusing to consider an appointment to the chair of our corruption watchdog in this state. I pick up the comments from the member for Toowoomba North: the PCCC had a job to do. Its responsibility was to consider the nominee on the merits that were before it and it acknowledged that the person who was being put forward had the skills, had the experience and was highly respected and regarded by the legal profession and yet it was not willing to appoint him. Those members thought this was just a game being played in this parliament. This was an individual who was being held out there in the public being told, 'We're just going to leave you in limbo.' That person had a practice and had a job to do.

Mr Rickuss: Yes, we've seen you do that to Seeney.

Mr Byrne: He's got a job.

Mrs D'ATH: Yes; the member for Callide has a job. This was someone highly respected who has been put up as a nominee and whose entire work is in limbo because he does not know when he is going to get appointed, if he is going to be appointed and if he can take on cases before a court. It was appalling so, no, we do not support what the opposition is proposing and we should not need to make that amendment, because if the PCCC is doing its job properly and it is leaving the politics at the door we would not have a problem with getting bipartisan support on genuine nominees. I still have one vacant ordinary commissioner. With the passing of these amendments if they go through tonight, I will have two vacancies and I ask the PCCC to consider the nominees who are put forward on their merits, on their skills and on their ability.

An opposition member: Keep the politics out of it.

Mrs D'ATH: I fail to see how I am bringing politics into it when I am asking the PCCC to appoint people on merit.

Mr Walker interjected.

Mrs D'ATH: I have to take that interjection: 'Of course they will.' I remind those opposite that we have a permanent chair of the Crime and Corruption Commission not because those members endorsed that person. They did not. Let us be clear: they did not support the chair of the Crime and Corruption Commission who is in place right now. We did not get their support, so do not say, 'Of course we will.' You have to put it into action. You actually have to show that you can do that, and you will have plenty of opportunities to do it because I am an optimist and in fact this bill creates more mechanisms to require bipartisan support—not less, more. There will be more positions coming before the PCCC for it to consider and need that majority support, which includes a non-government member. There will be plenty of opportunity to show how genuine those members are in getting on with the job and putting the politics aside, and we certainly encourage them to do that.

I will just very briefly pick up on the comments of the member for Broadwater—and I know that the member for Woodridge just touched on them—about the decision that the Newman government made to change the terminology and move away from gender-neutral terminology in relation to 'chair' and 'chairperson' in this bill and other bills. There was no reason to do that. It was not bringing it into line with what was now the norm. In fact, it was moving us back decades. The former government had the debate. It got it through. We seek to correct that tonight. The member for Broadwater asked, 'Why are we wasting time and resources on something that is irrelevant? It should not matter what the names are.' Why did she vote for the change in 2014? Why was she happy for there to be such a debate in this parliament then on this very issue? We would not need to be having this debate right now if it were not for the fact that, in 2014, the Newman government sought to turn back time and move away from

gender-neutral language that has become the norm in not just legislation but business practices and language across our nation. We simply seek to correct a wrong here tonight. That is why we are doing it. It should have never been done in the first place.

What we do tonight is again to deliver on our election commitments. We bring integrity, transparency and accountability to the CCC. We give it the powers and the independence that it needs and deserves to do its job. In the words of the member from Toowoomba North, we ensure that the people will have confidence in the system. I commend the bill to the House.

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

AYES, 45:

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

KAP, 2—Katter, Knuth.

INDEPENDENT, 2—Gordon, Pyne.

NOES, 41:

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

Pair: Stewart, Nicholls.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 45, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—



Mrs D'ATH (10.46 pm): I seek leave to move an amendment outside the long title of the bill.

Leave granted.

Mrs D'ATH: I move the following amendment—

1 After clause 45

Page 24, after line 18—

insert—

Part 2A Amendment of Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2009

45A Act amended

This part amends the *Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2009*.

45B Amendment of s 206BB (Expiry of pt 4B)

Section 206BB(1) and (2)—

omit, insert—

This part expires on 13 November 2016.

Part 2B Amendment of Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Regulation 2009

45C Regulation amended

This part amends the *Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Regulation 2009*.

45D Omission of s 20 (Expiry of the Act, ch 4, pt 4B—Act, s 206BB)

Section 20—

omit.

I table the explanatory notes to my amendments.

Tabled paper: Crime and Corruption Amendment Bill 2015, explanatory notes to Hon. Yvette D'Ath's amendments [\[544\]](#).

As I stated in my second reading speech, these amendments extend for a further six months the JP QCAT trial. An amendment is necessary to ensure that this trial does not cease in May, as it currently would. It seeks to extend the trial until 13 November 2016.

Mr WALKER: The opposition will be supporting the amendment. This was our election commitment in 2012—to implement and develop a trial whereby two justices of the peace sitting together would hear all minor civil dispute matters before QCAT. The trial was restricted to applications with a value of less than \$5,000 and it did not encompass urgent residential tenancy matters. It operated over six months—from 30 June 2013 to 20 November 2013—and it was successfully implemented in five trial sites: in Brisbane, Ipswich, Maroochydore, Southport and Townsville.

To allow JPs to become involved reduces the time taken to finalise these applications. It reduces the cost, it enables judicial officers to deal with more serious matters—not these small matters—and it recognises the voluntary contributions of JPs, who we all know do so much in their own communities. This trial contributed to the government's broader commitment to improve the administration of Queensland's justice system and our front-line justice services.

During the LNP's term in government the trial was independently examined by the department of the premier and cabinet and in 2013 it was extended by our government beyond the scope of the original trial. It appears that the overall time to hear civil matters halved from six weeks to about 3.2 weeks. That helped clear a significant backlog that had been left under the previous government.

There is a point of criticism. It is a disappointment that this amendment has been introduced rather late in the piece. The amendment is really putting in place a holding pattern. We believe that a proper assessment of this trial could have been made and permanency given to this arrangement. Be that as it may, that is what we are left with and we certainly support the continuance of the trial.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 46, as read, agreed to.

Schedules 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (10.51 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. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (10.51 pm): I move the following amendment—

2 Long title

Long title, after '**2001**'—

insert—

, the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2009, the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Regulation 2009

Amendment agreed to.

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

Motion agreed to.

RACING INTEGRITY BILL

Resumed from 3 December 2015 (see p. 3208).

Second Reading

 **Hon. G GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (10.52 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I wish to thank the Agriculture and Environment Committee for its consideration of the Racing Integrity Bill 2015. I note the committee tabled its report on the bill on 15 March 2016. I table a copy of the government's response to that report.

Tabled paper: Agriculture and Environment Committee: Report No. 15—Racing Integrity Bill 2015, government response [\[545\]](#).

The greyhound live-baiting scandal showed that Queensland's previous racing integrity regime had failed. It could not prevent sickening acts of animal cruelty in the greyhound racing industry that so outraged Queenslanders and it could not prevent other suspected illegal activities in the wider racing industry. The MacSporran commission of inquiry into greyhound live baiting exposed a litany of serious deficiencies in Racing Queensland's integrity regime. It found that these deficiencies created an environment that was ripe for the emergence of serious animal cruelty and integrity challenges. Three of the most alarming examples concerning the previous Racing Queensland integrity regime are contained in MacSporran's report. For example, the position of general manager, stewarding and integrity operation—that is, the person charged with overseeing integrity in racing—did not have a role profile. Let me repeat that: the most senior integrity officer in the racing industry had no official job description. It gets worse: nowhere in the role description for the Racing Queensland CEO was there a carving out of responsibility for integrity or risks that affect the Queensland racing industry. This is found at paragraph 506 of the report. Perhaps most alarmingly of all, not one cent of the additional \$17 million which was allocated to increased prize money in 2014-15 was allocated to initiatives associated with animal welfare, integrity management or risk management. This is found at paragraph 577.

What we saw was a clear breakdown in the racing industry's integrity regime in the lead-up to the greyhound live-baiting scandal. This breakdown damaged arguably the most precious commodity the racing industry has: public confidence. That is why we introduced this bill: to restore the public confidence that had been lost in our racing industry. I congratulate the previous minister, the current police minister and member for Rockhampton, on the work undertaken in delivering this bill to the House.

The bill was introduced following a review of Queensland's greyhound racing industry carried out by Alan MacSporran QC and conducted under the Commissions of Inquiry Act. The review was prompted by the airing of the ABC *Four Corners* program in February 2015. This harrowing program exposed shocking incidents of live baiting and alleged widespread cheating and illegal practices in the greyhound racing industry across Queensland, Victoria and New South Wales. These abhorrent practices shocked Queenslanders to the core. Given that the future of Queensland's racing industry was at stake, we recognised that conducting business as usual simply was not an option. We understood that an inquiry was necessary to get to the bottom of how these abuses went undetected. At the time those opposite supported the inquiry. When the inquiry was established the member for Currumbin said—

The LNP supports any action to end the abhorrent practice of live baiting exposed within the greyhound racing industry.

The member for Currumbin went on to say—

Queenslanders have been sickened by what they have seen and are demanding changes.

The Racing Integrity Bill we are debating will deliver the changes Queenslanders have demanded. I say this to those opposite: forget about cheap political pointscoring and support this bill. Doing nothing is not an option. The commission was charged to review a number of important aspects of the racing industry. These included assessment of the effectiveness of the current Queensland racing industry in managing breaches of the Racing Act 2002 and other relevant acts. While the commission was prompted by events in the greyhound racing industry, it was not limited or constrained from examining issues across the three codes of racing.

The final report prepared by Mr Alan MacSporran QC was delivered to the Premier and Minister for the Arts in June 2015. The report, prepared with input from 78 organisations throughout Queensland and hundreds of submissions, found that the current system of self-regulation had failed to ensure integrity in the industry, safeguard animal welfare and maintain public confidence. It found that the current self-regulation approach was inherently conflicted and failed. It found there was a consistent tension existing in Racing Queensland's business between its commercial interests on the one hand and animal welfare and integrity interests on the other. This led to the alarming situation whereby integrity and animal welfare risks were not being adequately assessed or managed. This tension created a culture of permissiveness around some of these issues, with live baiting of greyhounds being the clearest example. While the commission's report stated that there was no evidence of the practice of live baiting being widespread, there was a culture of turning a blind eye in the industry that allowed

it to happen. While the focus of the review was on greyhounds, the commission's report stated, and I met with Mr MacSporran, that the current culture created a high-risk environment for animal welfare or integrity abuses and it recommended a change.

The commission report recommended an alternative model for the governance of Queensland's racing industry, one where the commercial and integrity aspects of the racing industry are completely separated. The Racing Integrity Bill seeks to create a new integrity and animal welfare regulator called the Queensland Racing Integrity Commission, or QRIC. QRIC will consolidate and strengthen the animal welfare and integrity functions currently sitting with Racing Queensland and the Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing. It will be responsible for regulating racing industry participants under the rules of racing and the future integrity act which will be created on commencement of this bill. QRIC's functions will include race day stewarding, investigating breaches of the rules of racing, and non-race day inspections of racing animals. Those functions will also include the testing of animals and participants for banned substances and licensing industry participants, including jockeys, trainers, owners and bookmakers.

QRIC will be led by a full-time commissioner who will have even stronger powers of investigation than those that exist under the current arrangements, where we have a part-time commissioner with no powers, no staff and no resources to do the job that is required. Ross Barnett, one of Queensland's most respected and decorated police officers, has been named the commissioner designate of QRIC. I look forward to him continuing in that role with the passage of this bill. QRIC will enjoy significantly enhanced powers to those currently vested in the part-time Racing Integrity Commissioner under the existing Racing Act. The bill also seeks to provide standardised powers for QRIC's authorised officers that are in line with the powers of authorised officers and inspectors under other Queensland legislation, such as the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001. This will ensure that authorised officers of QRIC have the powers they need to enforce high standards of welfare in the racing industry.

With its integrity and animal welfare functions transferred to QRIC, Racing Queensland will operate under a revised Racing Act 2002 and will focus on the commercial operations of the racing industry. Racing Queensland will be free to focus on its core activities of setting race calendars and prize money, marketing and industry development, and growth. It will continue its oversight role of the management of racing clubs and venues. Truly effective maintenance of integrity in any sport by separating regulation from the commercial side of running the business makes good sense. Why should the commercial arm of the racing industry spend its time and resources on policing the sport when there is a new cop on the beat to fulfil that function?

I assure honourable members that the new arrangements that this bill will introduce will create minimal disruption to industry participants and the racing public. They will not affect the running of race meetings or the day-to-day operations of the industry. The focus of the reforms is to ensure compliance with the rules of racing and giving QRIC the powers it needs to do so. Those opposite have expressed repeated concerns about the cost of QRIC. They have sought to undermine confidence by suggesting that our proposed reforms are unaffordable. Nothing can be further from the truth and I simply say that we cannot afford not to pass this bill.

In accordance with the commission of inquiry's final report, QRIC will be staffed by personnel transferred from Racing Queensland, the Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing and some new positions. These integrity functions will be transferred to QRIC along with the funding already associated with those functions. The funding being contributed by those organisations equates to the estimated cost those organisations would have incurred if they had continued to deliver those services themselves. I make it very clear that the additional costs associated with establishing QRIC will be met by the state government and not by the racing industry. The racing industry will not be out of pocket as a result of QRIC's establishment. In fact, it will be slightly better off.

Racing Queensland is not expected to transfer all of the corporate resources associated with its welfare and integrity business. Racing Queensland is not being asked to transfer the welfare and integrity share of funding for costs such as corporate services, staff, IT costs or accommodation, as it normally would in a standard machinery-of-government change. Those costs are being covered by the Queensland government. If that funding and resourcing had been transferred from Racing Queensland to the new QRIC, Racing Queensland would have to re-establish some portion of those functions to return to normal operating capacity. That would have resulted in additional costs that Racing Queensland could not currently afford.

Further, the Queensland government has waived the financial obligation on Racing Queensland to transfer the cash funding behind the employee entitlements of transferring staff. As a result, Racing Queensland staff are being transferred to QRIC without any funding for their accrued leave entitlements.

That risk is borne by the state, which is another saving for the industry. In the next financial year, the total contribution to be made by RQ in round figures is \$14.75 million. That is what it would normally cost to deliver those services. The Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing will contribute around \$1.2 million. The state government intends to provide the additional funding QRIC requires over and above the current welfare and integrity budget, at least for the next four years to the 2019-20 financial year. For the 2016-17 financial year, the government has budgeted around \$8.9 million of additional funding for QRIC, as well as a waiver of \$1.2 million towards the unfunded leave entitlement liability for staff transferring from Racing Queensland. That \$8.9 million in funding will continue over the forward estimates with CPI increases.

The funds cover the additional costs associated with creating a stand-alone integrity commission and include, in round figures, \$1 million for accommodation and basic utilities; \$1.2 million for information technology; \$1.5 million for staff migrating to Public Service award rates; \$1.2 million for corporate management positions, such as the new Integrity Commissioner, a deputy commissioner and executive support, which currently they do not have; \$1.75 million for corporate services staff and systems to provide services such as payroll, finance, purchasing and day-to-day administration, as well as a raft of corporate compliance required for any statutory bodies, such as maintaining ethical standards, public transparency and accountability, internal and external audits, complaints management and right to information inquiries; \$0.4 million to cover the costs of the police task force going forward; \$0.1 million for fatigue management, which was not provided for by RQ in its current employee arrangements; \$1.5 million for corporate operating costs, being legal, marketing, motor vehicles, office expenses, most of which is insurance, internet and telecommunications, training and development, travel and accommodation; and \$0.2 million to cover depreciation funding. None of the costs associated with this important new measure are being imposed on Racing Queensland or the racing industry. The split as set out between the Queensland government and the Racing Queensland contributions to QRIC is projected to continue over the forward estimates, with only CPI increases year on year. I say to those opposite: if the cost of running QRIC is members' only concern, then they have no reason to oppose this bill.

In addition to the improvement of racing integrity functions, the bill also changes the role and structure of the Racing Queensland Board. The bill confirms Racing Queensland's role as a statutory control body for the three existing codes of racing. However, Racing Queensland will now be able to focus solely on the commercial aspects of racing, in particular growing the size and profitability of the industry and ensuring that racing clubs and venues are well managed. I cannot think of a person better qualified to do that job than the interim Racing Queensland chair, Steve Wilson. Steve Wilson brings a wealth of business and corporate experience to the role and is a very proud Queenslanders. Steve Wilson was also a successful thoroughbred breeding syndicate member and horse owner. His appointment has been widely welcomed by the racing industry. His commercial skills will be crucial in ensuring Racing Queensland harnesses the wagering revenue upon which our racing industry is so heavily reliant.

The betting and wagering market has evolved rapidly from a localised industry into one of the most globalised and competitive industries in the world. To maximise its wagering revenues and financial returns to the industry, Racing Queensland has to get better at navigating that ultracompetitive and increasingly complex environment. Accordingly, the bill provides for a new seven-member structure for the Racing Queensland Board that more strongly reflects its role, which is envisaged to be a purely commercial one. The current all-codes board has two independents and three representatives from the racing industry, being the chairs of the control boards for each code of racing. Thoroughbred, harness and greyhound codes will continue to be represented on the board, with the number of independents doubling to four, including an independent chair. It will also assist in bringing a range of skills to bear that are necessary for good corporate governance and commercial growth, such as legal and business development acumen. That is consistent with best practice principles of corporate governance and it is also recommended practice by the ASX.

I do want to stress one thing. The independent board appointees are not barred from having racing industry experience. Nothing could be further from the truth. I want to clear up the confusion that appears to exist on this matter in parts of the racing industry. Independent members of the Racing Queensland board cannot have had any direct industry involvement in the last two years. However, that is not to say that the independents cannot have any previous racing industry experience, just like the current independent chair. Indeed, it would be considered an advantage. To ensure they are capable of giving the most independent advice possible, no independent can have any official industry role for the two years prior to their appointment. If it is good enough for us, I believe, it is good enough for the Racing Queensland board.

Many of the key provisions of the Racing Act that govern Racing Queensland's commercial and operational roles will remain untouched. Racing Queensland will maintain its unique role in running the three existing codes of racing and its relationship with Ubet. Importantly, the requirement for Racing Queensland to allocate a percentage of its Ubet revenue towards prize money for country racing will remain unchanged.

I would like to make it very clear for the benefit of the House that the reforms included in this bill are very separate from the Racing Queensland Tracking Towards Sustainability plan. Please do not confuse the two. This plan was developed by Racing Queensland in response to significant operating losses and the depletion of cash reserves that occurred under previous boards. The plan includes a wide range of measures to reverse those losses, including adjustments to prize money which had previously been growing at an unsustainable level.

In some cases prize money increased by upwards of 50 per cent under the previous Racing Queensland board. This was clearly unsustainable. I do want to stress, however, that there will be no cuts to country racing prize money. The Palaszczuk government has stepped up to provide a \$21 million country racing support package to support country racing and build capacity in the regions. This means that country racing prize money levels will be maintained for at least two years from 1 July this year.

Those opposite have been running a concerted campaign to sow fear and confusion about country racing prize money, but there are no cuts and the existing purses will remain untouched. What we hope is that Racing Queensland will concentrate on the commercial, marketing and growing of the industry so that we can continue those levels of prize money well into the future. That has to be the aim of Racing Queensland.

The decisions that Racing Queensland has made as part of Tracking Towards Sustainability have been made independently. They have been taken to tackle Racing Queensland's current financial situation and are in no way impacted by this bill. As minister, I am barred under the current Racing Act from giving a direction—and I know the member for Buderim knows this—to Racing Queensland on the setting of prize money or the racing calendar. This independence is maintained under these reforms.

I will turn to the report of the Agriculture and Environment Committee and address the matters contained within it. The committee unfortunately could not agree on whether the bill should be passed, but made eight recommendations to enhance the bill and also sought clarification on several points.

The committee's first recommendation was that the Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing conduct further consultation with racing industry stakeholders on the implementation of the bill and on the development of regulations. The department is conducting consultation on a regular basis and of course will continue to do so. More importantly, this government proposes to carry out a review of the implementation of these reforms within 12 months of commencement to identify and respond to any issues. This review will include consultation with the racing industry and other stakeholders.

This 12-month review will also address the committee's seventh recommendation relating to examination of the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001 to determine whether amendments should be made to enhance animal welfare in the racing industry. This aspect of the review will be conducted cooperatively with the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, which is responsible for the Animal Care and Protection Act.

I have already addressed the committee's second recommendation to outline the costs of establishing the new QRIC. I will address the remainder of the recommendations. The committee's fourth recommendation was that QRIC's education function be broadened to include education about animal welfare and the prevention of cruelty and to include the role of providing training to industry participants.

The government partially supports this recommendation and agrees that the bill should be amended to make it explicit that QRIC's education role includes education about animal welfare and prevention of animal cruelty. An amendment is proposed to section 10 to reflect this recommendation. In fact, except for this recommendation, all of the recommendations of the committee are supported fully. This one is supported in part.

The government believes that formal training of industry participants is best done by Racing Queensland—it has a registered training organisation—with input from QRIC to ensure that the content is accurate and it delivers the outcome sought by the committee. As a result, the government proposes to amend the provisions that specify the functions of Racing Queensland to reflect its role in the training of industry participants.

The government fully supports recommendations 5, 6 and 8 made by the committee and will move amendments to the bill accordingly. These amendments will further exclude the minister's direct involvement with QRIC's disciplinary work by prohibiting the minister from giving QRIC a directive about a decision made under the rules of racing. They will exclude racing clubs from having executive officers that have prior convictions for animal cruelty. They will also amend the rights of appeals about race information authorities to prevent appeals by sports betting corporations about certain aspects of their licensing agreements that would best be resolved through commercial negotiations with Racing Queensland.

The committee also sought clarification on a number of points. Information has been provided around these points in the government's response as tabled. That response clarifies the details of the eligibility criteria for certain staff to be appointed as commissioners or deputy commissioners of QRIC. It also provides further information about the controls in place to ensure that the cost of QRIC to government and industry is minimised. Finally, it provides clarification and assurances around the capability of QRIC to manage internal reviews. The costs in relation to QRIC are at the upper end so we make sure that we cover all of the possible costs that could be incurred.

I will also be moving a number of amendments to the bill to deal with issues that I have become aware of during consultation on the bill. Unfortunately—and I apologise for this—there are 137 amendments to the bill. Of these, 95 amendments stem from two key changes that are largely administrative in nature. The first of these is a proposal to provide a simplified process for the way that racing bookmakers are approved to operate in Queensland. These are good changes.

Under the bill as tabled a racing bookmaker is required to apply for an eligibility certificate from the gaming executive in the Department of Justice and Attorney-General and a racing bookmakers licence from the Racing Integrity Commission. This two-part approval is similar to the system in place under the existing framework in the Racing Act 2002. The proposed change will remove the requirement for bookmakers to obtain both an eligibility certificate and a bookmakers licence and will combine the criteria for eligibility certificates with the criteria for bookmakers licences so that a bookmaker need only obtain one approval from the commission to conduct bookmaking in Queensland.

These amendments will provide a streamlined approach for people seeking approval to become licensed bookmakers as these matters will be handled by the one agency, the commission. I should stress that this change does not alter the requirements that must be met in order to lawfully carry out bookmaking in Queensland.

While this change does not make any changes to standards or requirements, it does result, unfortunately, in a large number of relatively small and specific amendments throughout the bill, to give it effect. Most of these are to remove redundant references to eligibility certificates or to amend sections to change references from 'eligibility certificates' to 'bookmaker's licence' and from 'gaming executive' to 'the Racing Integrity Commission'. While I welcome discussion of the amendments as they are moved, I would remind the House that most of the amendments are a relatively small part of the streamlining change.

The second of the changes that have led to a large number of amendments is a change that has occurred as a result of my discussions with industry since becoming Minister for Racing. The bill, as tabled, had proposed to transition all responsibility for licensing of the racing industry from Racing Queensland to the new Racing Integrity Commission. This licensing responsibility covers participants like jockeys and trainers as well as animals, but it also covered clubs and venues. However, the licensing of clubs and venues is an important part of defining the commercial and operational relationship between Racing Queensland and its many clubs and venues and is very different from the integrity and welfare oversight that the new commission will do. After talking to industry about this issue, it was identified that the licensing of clubs and venues would be better to remain with Racing Queensland and continue to be dealt with under the Racing Act. This amendment to the bill actually maintains the status quo for the licensing of clubs and venues that is in place right now in the Queensland racing industry—and I believe it is the right move.

As with eligibility certificates, this relatively simple change results in a large number of specific individual amendments to the bill that was tabled. These amendments remove the references to licensing of clubs and venues throughout the proposed Racing Integrity Act and reinserts the framework and powers for licensing of clubs and venues into the amendments to the amended Racing Act. While these changes are quite detailed and numerous, they are actually part of a proposal to maintain the current framework for licensing of clubs and venues.

The sport of racing in Queensland has a long and proud history. It is one of Queensland's biggest industries, supporting thousands of jobs throughout the state and providing valuable social opportunities in metropolitan, rural and regional areas. In the short time that I have been racing minister, I have visited many of these areas. But there are clear threats to the continued viability of the racing industry unless the highest possible standards of integrity and animal welfare and public confidence are maintained. That is the clear lesson of the greyhound live-baiting scandal and the MacSporran commission of inquiry.

If we are serious about improving animal integrity, animal welfare, integrity and maintaining public confidence, there is no reason that this bill should not be supported by those opposite. We also need to do everything possible to ensure that the racing industry is strong enough to adapt and thrive in a highly competitive wagering and entertainment market. This government believes that the provisions and measures included in this bill are the best way to provide for a vibrant and profitable industry well into the future. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mrs STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (11.22 pm): The Racing Integrity Bill was introduced into the House on 3 December 2015 by the then minister, the honourable member for Rockhampton. The objectives of the bill are: to establish the new Queensland Racing Integrity Commission responsible for the management of animal welfare and integrity matters within the racing industry; to amend the Racing Act 2002 to reform the structure of the Queensland All Codes Racing Industry Board, including renaming the board as the Racing Queensland Board, and to dissolve the three individual racing code boards, the Racing Animal Welfare Integrity Board and the Racing Disciplinary Board; and, finally, to amend the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001 to provide improved information-sharing capacity and broaden authorised officer powers to investigate and respond to animal welfare matters and breaches of the act related to the racing industry.

The bill proposes to establish a new Racing Integrity Commission which dissolves the existing arrangements and separates the integrity functions of Racing Queensland from the commercial operations into a new separate body. The bill also proposes to implement a seven-member board with three industry members—one from each code—and four independent members. This is seen by a majority of the industry as a move to deliberately shift the power of the board away from input from industry participants. Both of these arrangements were set to be in place by 1 April 2016. However, due to delayed debate of this bill, interim measures were put in place which have already proven why this bill is flawed and should not be passed. The Agriculture and Environment Committee responsible for reporting on this bill were to bring their report back to the House on 1 March. On Thursday, 25 February this date was moved back to 15 March. Despite this delay, the committee could not reach agreement that this bill be passed. May I recognise and acknowledge the significant work of the committee staff on this bill.

As we debate this Racing Integrity Bill 2015, it is important to keep focused on two key words—confidence and integrity. One of them features in the title of the bill. It is critical for Queensland's racing industry to have integrity in both its commercial and animal welfare obligations. We have bipartisan recognition of this between government, opposition and the crossbench. There is no question about that, so let us hope we do not lose sight of that goal. I refer to the budget 2015-16 Service Delivery Statements. The racing service area objective states—

Maintain public confidence in, and ensure the integrity of, the Queensland racing industry.

Yet this Labor government has gone out of its way to destroy confidence in Queensland's racing industry. If Minister Bill Byrne had bothered to talk to people within the industry instead of hiring accounting types, he would have heard of their grave concerns for the industry. I have travelled the state this past 15 months talking to people within the racing industry, and I have held several round tables where all three codes have been able to have their say—none of this divide and conquer, keep-them-separate agenda witnessed by the Labor government.

Unsurprisingly, a total lack of consultation was mentioned a number of times from participants at hearings and also in documents between the department and the Agriculture and Environment Committee. This is a serious issue. The department admitted that, while no consultation has occurred on the detailed content of this bill, consultation has occurred with the community and industry groups, as part of the COI. Remember this was an inquiry into live baiting in greyhound racing, not thoroughbreds and harness. In another question, when asked about industry consultation, the department replied, 'Refer to answer above.' It is this arrogant and offhand attitude that the Palaszczuk government promulgate. It infects every department and associated entities.

Every aspect of the way Labor have handled this inquiry into live baiting in the greyhound industry is disgraceful. They have dragged thoroughbreds and harness into the inquiry and not listened to the very industry they are obliged to support. I note that point 36 in the MacSporran report states—

One of the Commission's most important tasks is to make recommendations that are targeted at restoring public confidence in the Queensland greyhound racing industry.

Why on earth did the Labor government drag thoroughbreds and harness into the investigation and let them languish for over a year, and greyhounds too for that matter? Other Australian states, including the big racing states of New South Wales and Victoria, were also affected by the exposure of abhorrent live-baiting practices within the greyhound industry. They did not punish all the codes. They did not take a big stick to harness and thoroughbreds too. They value their racing industry and the hardworking, dedicated people within it. I have spoken with industry and government representatives in both states and asked them what they thought of the way that this Queensland government was dealing with racing's future. They are gobsmacked a government would deliberately damage such an important revenue stream, not to mention sacrificing countless jobs. Weekly Sunshine Coast newspaper commentator Graham Potter says—

My understanding is that the parameters of such inquiries are pre-set to focus on achieving predetermined aims and, I would assume, are legally bound by that particular mandate.

In his covering letter to the Premier of June 1, 2015, when presenting his final report, Commissioner Alan MacSporran wrote, 'In accordance with Commissions of Inquiry Order (No 2) 2015, I present the report of the Queensland Greyhound Racing Industry Commission of Inquiry' ... and he added his name to the letter with the designation, 'Commissioner, Queensland Greyhound Racing Industry Commission of Inquiry.'

He continues—

In case you missed it, let me repeat it again. It was a Queensland Greyhound Racing Industry Commission of Inquiry.' Not a horse racing inquiry. Nothing to do with harness racing.

Which begs the question, did the MacSporran Commission exceed its powers by implicating all three racing codes and, if so, ARE THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MACSPORRAN COMMISSION, EVEN LEGAL IN THE FIRST PLACE?

It certainly is a question that needs an answer because, in spite of going through government records, I cannot find any amendment expanding MacSporran's original mandate.

I shall now take a few moments to reflect upon the journey that has brought us to this bill. On 16 February 2015 ABC's *Four Corners* program aired footage that was purportedly taken some six months earlier of trainers using live animals to bait greyhounds. Understandably, this footage sickened all who saw it and raised concerns about illegal industry practices. On 2 March 2015 the then minister, the honourable member for Rockhampton, ordered a systems review into the industry. After some urging from the LNP, this review was upgraded in April to the Queensland Greyhound Racing Industry Commission of Inquiry. The commissioner heading this inquiry was Alan MacSporran QC, who completed his final report on 1 June 2015. It contained 15 recommendations. Three of those recommendations were related to governance of Queensland's racing industry and the remaining 12 were related to the welfare of greyhounds. What surprised me and a host of other people was that the only recommendation acted upon by the Palaszczuk government—recommendation No. 2—was the immediate sacking of the racing boards: thoroughbred, harness and greyhounds.

As I have reported to this House on a number of occasions, these sackings were executed in a most humiliating and disrespectful manner towards experienced and well-respected individuals. Minister Byrne could not even give these people the dignity of making the calls himself; he got his staff to do it. Just 24 hours after MacSporran handed his report to the Premier these individuals were callously dumped all under the guise of the live-baiting scandal in the greyhound industry. Why the rush? MacSporran did not say there was a hurry to abolish the boards, but he did say in recommendation No. 1 that a new statutory authority, the Queensland Racing Integrity Commission, or QRIC, be created as soon as possible.

Here we are in the middle of April, almost 11 months since the MacSporran report was tabled. What excuse does the minister and this revengeful Palaszczuk government have for the delay? Then there is the time line through the summer break with final submissions due on 27 January. In yet another cruel twist, interim acting CEO Mr Hall sent letters to regional and country racing clubs in December demanding back payment of public insurance moneys. He then retracted that when it became apparent he had made a mistake, but it did expose Labor's true intent: to cripple our clubs with enforced payments and force them to close. The enormous stress this placed on countless individuals, many of whom were volunteers, just before Christmas was unforgiveable. Obviously that does not move the minister. She does not seem to care what happened to these poor people before Christmas. Meanwhile the industry remained at a standstill—leaderless, rudderless and uncertain of its future.

In late November last year with industry frustration growing to palpable levels and an invisible, non-communicating minister, members of the industry wrote to the minister and the Premier. I quote from a letter from thoroughbred owner Ian McCauley to the Premier on 30 November 2015 which states—

It has become obvious to me that your instructions to the Honourable Bill Byrne are at the core of this deep apprehension, and in some cases fear, that exists across the whole of racing in Queensland.

We are almost mid 2015/16. What do we have? We have a government appointed Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, no board members to assist them and a depleted management team of doubtful capability.

There is no industry confidence that this group can reinstate Racing Queensland to the status it held nationally and internationally before the greyhound revelations earlier this year ... Looking back in hindsight I cannot but wonder if the outcome was predetermined.

It is strange that you instructed Minister Byrne to sack all Queensland boards, and then within 24 hours of your appointment of an acting CEO of Queensland Racing he was able to furnish you with a damning assessment of its financial status. On this basis you instructed Minister Byrne to sack all Queensland boards.

You will be aware that after 6 months in the job he has yet to produce a 2015/16 budget, an Action Plan or any Forward Strategy paper. Many in the industry are aware that the damning report he made to you came from lower management before any review from the CEO and the 4 boards—remember you sacked them. I understand that you have since also removed the staff who prepared the report.

I further point out that the figures that were hastily scraped together by a person who got his marching orders once the government had what they wanted from him have been denied me, despite asking for them to be produced during estimates last year and on other occasions.

At an industry rally at Doomben on 16 December 2015 hundreds of people who rely on racing for their livelihoods came together to express their opposition to aspects of the Racing Integrity Bill that was introduced into the parliament on 3 December 2015. They unanimously agreed upon the following resolutions and QRUG was born. Resolution No. 1: the industry rejects the proposal to implement a board with a majority membership of non-industry knowledgeable people. Resolution No. 2: the industry requires the government within a month to appoint a board under the current structure with appropriate input from industry. Resolution No. 3: until a board has been implemented and given sufficient time to assess the current situation and devise an agreed strategy no changes are implemented. Resolution No. 4 was a motion of no confidence in Mr Hall. The government ignored all of their resolutions.

The Agriculture and Environment Committee, which is charged with reporting on this bill, has undertaken the following processes: an invitation to provide written submissions—the committee accepted 148 written submissions and I understand about 20 were rejected; the convening of a public briefing for one hour by the Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing on Friday, 11 December; further written briefings were sought from the department; and they convened a four-hour public hearing on 17 February this year.

I would like to thank the Agriculture and Environment Committee for permitting me to appear on 17 February and, in particular, the research director who gave me the courtesy of inquiring whether I was intending to seek leave to do so. It is my understanding that some government members wanted to block my attendance at this hearing but they were unsuccessful. In another move that further raised the issue of openness and transparency, committee members did not receive their numerous papers for the hearing until around 8 pm, just 13 hours before the hearing. It reminds me of estimates last year when Minister Jones deliberately stalled question on notice replies and then denied any knowledge of it.

As the hearing got underway, the aggressive bullying manner of the acting chair, the honourable member for Logan, intimidated well-meaning witnesses who came prepared to put forward their case in their own words. People came to be given a fair hearing, but, sadly, this is so typical of the way Labor have treated this industry and the people within it—all stick, no carrot, and certainly no respect. The member for Logan brusquely told each person to give a brief statement, yet some had prepared 10-minute presentations as no directions as to the length of their opening statements had been given to them. Where did it say that presenters were only to give a brief summary? Were they warned they would face a grilling and be treated in such a confrontational manner? Of course not. They would not have turned up if they had.

The acting chair verbed some witnesses, tried to put words in their mouths and extract answers under duress. He cut off one witness from Toowoomba after three to four minutes. He was talking about his family's generational involvement in racing. The honourable member for Logan was removed from the Agriculture and Environment Committee the same day. That is two ministers, two or more committee chairs and committee members in 12 months.

Mr Power interjected.

Mr DICKSON: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member for Logan needs to sit in his seat if he is going to comment on this bill.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! I thank the member for his advice. I am perfectly capable of giving the member that advice myself.

Mrs STUCKEY: Labor members might be used to directing people and bossing them around, as they obviously did to the honourable member for Cairns, but it was highly embarrassing for non-government committee members and for all participating and watching in the Legislative Assembly. Ms Breen from Noosa sent me her email to the minister in which she stated—

I'm very disappointed and angry to hear back from multiple attendees that the above enquiry Govt committee representatives were deploying unacceptable bullying and intimidating tactics to the persons presenting to the committee. This is shameful and not the way to ensure everyone can speak to get their point across ...

Ms GRACE: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I think we have given the member enough leeway. She is coming in here and reporting on what happened or what did not happen in relation to the committee process, but I think these are matters that are best dealt with in other areas if there are allegations to be made. I think this is irrelevant to the bill. The member should come back to the content of the bill. If there are issues in relation to the conduct of committees, there are other avenues in the standing orders under which they can be processed. Madam Deputy Speaker, I ask for your indulgence to bring the member back to the bill and to cover issues in regard to conduct in other avenues available to this House.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order, but I will be asking the member to make sure that she does remain relevant to the bill. However, I think there is plenty of precedent for actually discussing the committee process.

Mr POWER: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I found what the member for Currumbin said highly offensive and I ask that she withdraw.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member finds your comments offensive and I ask you to withdraw.

Mrs STUCKEY: I withdraw. The line of questioning was clearly trying to trap witnesses at the hearing into answering loaded questions about integrity issues.

Mr POWER: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I find this highly offensive and I ask that the member withdraw.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am sorry. I did not actually hear what the member for Currumbin said since your last request for a withdrawal. Could you refer me to what the offensive comments were? I am sorry that I did not hear them.

Mr POWER: She was continuing to allege that I was bullying the witnesses, which I find offensive.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member finds your comments offensive and he asks you to withdraw.

Mrs STUCKEY: I withdraw. It is no surprise when the Labor committee members only followed the minister's orders. The minister's comments on radio 4TAB were sowing seeds of doubt about integrity matters across all three codes. No wonder the questions asked of presenters were skewed towards hypothetical integrity issues. I heard the minister boasting of the new committee chair's racing credentials on radio 4TAB. She said, 'Glenn is certainly very interested in this area and he'll make a fantastic chair of that committee.' She said, 'Glenn is a manager of a, what do you call them, syndicate manager of a syndicate of racehorses and his racehorse is called Honey Toast. And he's very much involved, has it trained in Toowoomba which I'll be visiting next week.' The minister even admitted to backing her colleague's horse, which could be perceived by some as a conflict of interest by the Minister for Racing.

Ms GRACE: Madam Deputy Speaker, I take gross offence to those statements and I ask that they be withdrawn. This is getting ridiculous.

Mrs STUCKEY: I withdraw. I quote the minister from radio 4TAB. She said, 'I backed it on the Sunshine Coast up there and it didn't make it.'

Ms GRACE: I ask that the member withdraw the comments, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member has asked that you withdraw those comments.

Ms GRACE: I find them offensive and I ask that she withdraw.

Mrs STUCKEY: I withdraw—‘But I believe Ben Currie, the same trainer, did it very well with Love Sky.’ The minister said, ‘Glenn is certainly very interested in this area and he’ll make a fantastic chair.’

Ms GRACE: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. There are no buts after the withdrawal.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: I ask the member to unequivocally withdraw.

Mrs STUCKEY: I unequivocally withdraw.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: If the member persists with the same comments, then this question may be asked of her again.

Mrs STUCKEY: Thank you very much. I will refer members to the radio 4TAB interview on 29 February. They will be able to read all 30 minutes of it and hear how the minister backed her new chair. I want to make it clear that I am not in any way impugning the character or the reputation of the honourable member for Gladstone, and I congratulate him on Honey Toast’s win at Toowoomba last weekend. However, the appointment of an MP with current racing involvement to chair this parliamentary committee does raise the question of hypocrisy and double standards here. Why does the minister not feel the same way about the new board members having current racing credentials? Why is it such a good thing that the honourable member for Gladstone has a thoroughbred syndicate yet board members cannot?

Mr BUTCHER: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I do find this offensive because this has nothing to do with me and my horse and what we are talking about in this bill.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Does the member find these comments offensive?

Mr BUTCHER: Yes, I do.

Mrs STUCKEY: I withdraw. As we continue to talk about integrity and double standards, I wonder if members opposite have listened to the hundreds of racing participants voice their opposition to the bill and the way that their industry has been treated by this Labor government. If they have, they should vote against this bill. During the same radio 4TAB interview I just mentioned, the minister attacked all three codes of the industry, accusing them of having serious integrity issues.

Ms GRACE: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take offence to the comments. They are misleading and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Does the member find the comments personally offensive?

Ms GRACE: They are offensive. They are misleading.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: I ask the member to withdraw.

Mrs STUCKEY: I withdraw. Could I seek some clarity? If I am quoting a direct interview from a radio when I have direct quotes, am I not able to—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: If the member finds the comments offensive, you are asked to withdraw.

Mrs STUCKEY: Thank you. Once again, I refer honourable members to the radio 4TAB interview on 29 February, where the minister talked about issues in all three codes and dragged them into the industry. She did not sound at all like an industry champion to me, and I ask members to listen to that. She actually attacked industries on air and suggested that every week she receives integrity issues about them—

Ms GRACE: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I find the comments offensive. They are misleading. I did not attack the industry on air and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: I ask you to withdraw the comments.

Mrs STUCKEY: I withdraw. The minister is misleading the House because this is very clearly explained in the interview.

Ms GRACE: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I find the comments that I am misleading the House personally offensive and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: I ask that you withdraw.

Mrs STUCKEY: I withdraw.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: We could continue with this but, given that we could spend the next half hour toing and froing, I would ask the member to consider how this may roll out if that continues.

Mrs STUCKEY: I am trying very hard to give a true and accurate representation with direct quotes, but they are being rejected by the minister herself. I am going to move on to chapters 2 and 3 of the bill which relate to the new Queensland Racing Integrity Commission and its functions. The costing of QRIC remains a huge worry for the racing industry, and the minister has acknowledged that it is a concern to the industry. She did refuse to tell us how much it will cost. She said that millions of dollars had been put aside and that it will not cost more than it did previously, but then she would not tell us what it cost.

The industry have already had cuts to prize money and race meetings, especially if you live in Toowoomba, a region that has been unfairly treated to say the least. On 29 February, Minister Grace told radio listeners that she knows the overall racing figures and that they are not as bad as predicted—surprise, surprise. The minister said, 'I've had a half yearly report on how we're tracking and we're doing a little bit better than the \$28 million loss.' Last December Ian Hall said on radio with David Fowler that he would release the figures, but he did not do that and he left Racing Queensland on 31 March, taking a small fortune in salaries since June 2015 with him. That was another slap in the face for the industry.

In February, Mr Fowler asked the minister about the \$28 million loss and whether the figure could have been released, suggesting that \$5 million was perhaps the amount of money that could have been announced as being saved. The minister again told him that she was hoping to release figures when they became a little bit clearer 'particularly as *Tracking Towards Sustainability* is what I call a living document'. Considering all the banging on this Labor government has made about cost blowouts supposedly caused by the LNP, you would think they would have a handle on the figures and reveal the cost of QRIC. One commentator from the Sunshine Coast said, 'The current bill has the racing industry paying for all costs. I know the government have said they'll pay some or all, but as you know that is not what the bill said. Where is this amendment?' This is a quote from someone from the Sunshine Coast. They continued, 'Also because this proposed new commission takes in more than just the racing industry, this commission needs to be properly costed and its powers set out in a completely new act.'

They also stated, 'It needs to not be subject to ministerial interference. It needs to be truly independent of any government. A review of any adverse actions by the commission against any individual or entity needs to be reserved to the courts. The act needs better consideration as it will be far-reaching. For that reason it needs to be a stand-alone bit of legislation but further thought out by all.'

What of the poor staff who have spent the summer break wondering their fate? What of their futures? I look forward to hearing more from the minister about that. As I said earlier, the committee could not agree on the passage of this bill and found it did not meet its requirements. It stated—

According to section 23 of the *Legislative Standards Act 1992*, the explanatory note for a Bill must include, in clear and precise language:

- (e) a brief assessment of the administrative cost to government of implementing the Bill, including staffing and program costs but not the cost of developing the Bill.

The explanatory notes for the Racing Integrity Bill 2015 fail this requirement. In fact, they breach the act. The notes provide no assessment of the administrative cost to government of implementing the bill. Instead, the notes advise that the cost of implementation will require funding from the department to address the costs associated with the establishment of QRIC, the transfer of staff from Racing Queensland and the department to the commission.

The committee asked the department to provide it with a brief assessment of the likely administrative cost to government of implementing the bill including staffing and program costs. The committee also requested an estimate of the ongoing costs of QRIC, once it is established, an estimate of the additional costs associated with the integrity system for the racing industry proposed in the bill

compared to the current racing industry integrity system, whether the department estimated the percentage increase in costs that will be incurred by racing clubs under the new administrative arrangements and who will pay for the use of police and animal welfare officers in carrying out their roles under the provisions proposed in the bill. In addition, they asked—

A number of submitters to the committee's inquiry have expressed concern about the costs of the measures contained in the Bill, and that there are no limits or oversights of the costs that can be incurred and passed on to the industry by the proposed Commission. Can you explain how the department will ensure that the Commission is operated efficiently and that its costs are kept to a minimum?

Honourable members may well ask, 'What was the response from the department to this detailed series of questions that have all three codes of Queensland's racing industry concerned?' It was a brief four lines and it goes as follows—

As per the Department's previous advice to the Committee, matters relating to the costs of the Queensland Racing Integrity Commission (QRIC) and the potential costs passed onto the industry are operational matters to be directed to the minister. The Racing Integrity Bill does not dictate the cost of the QRIC.

Does that not just take the cake? Direct your question to the minister, who will duck and weave on costings. The department was prepared to take a question on notice about costs at the 11 December committee hearing and then took over a week to send their reply, which is pretty much the same as this: a non-answer. So much for transparency! So much for integrity! So much for confidence! This Labor Palaszczuk government has an agenda alright: to do untold damage to the racing industry. I find it very perturbing that the cost of QRIC could not be confirmed and questions asked by opposition members during committee meetings were deemed outside the scope of the bill even though the legislative standards say they have breached it.

The contempt of the Palaszczuk government for those who work in Queensland's racing industry, whether they be strappers, jockeys, volunteers, bookies or stablehands, is absolutely disgraceful. Time and again this government has fobbed off genuine questions about costs and been told it was not within the scope of the bill. You have to be kidding! We know that Labor spend like drunken sailors, but this is downright insulting. They have destroyed the confidence of an entire industry and refused to say how much the new authority they have had 10 months to organise would cost.

The outgoing minister offered me a briefing on 4 December 2015 after the tabling of the bill, which I took up immediately, especially given I had been requesting regular briefings since June but had not received a single one. A series of questions were asked and answers given at that briefing but to my surprise when very similar questions were asked at the committee hearing on 11 December the same government representatives gave different answers. I had two witnesses openly taking notes at the meeting and they reported in their minutes that the cost of the new authority would be anywhere from \$16 million to \$20 million. Questions were taken on notice at the 11 December meeting to be delivered back to the committee by 18 December. Not only was that deadline missed but the reply regarding costs of the new integrity authority could not be supplied. No wonder the industry was so nervous about having costs passed onto them.

In reply to a question from the honourable member for Burnett about funding of QRIC, a departmental staff member said it will principally be funded by the control bodies. The exact process for how that happens is still being discussed with particularly Queensland Treasury and that will be dealt with as part of the budget process for 2016-17. The Agriculture and Environment Committee have exposed a breach of the Legislative Standards Act regarding no costing and now we know there was never any intent to cost it.

To say I am disappointed in the behaviour of the new racing minister, the honourable member for Brisbane Central, is an understatement of gargantuan proportions. After the phantom minister from Rockhampton who ignored pleas from the industry to talk to them, the new minister, Grace Grace, appeared to listen—sort of. She goes to race meetings and is trying to butter up the industry stakeholders, but her words are hollow if not followed up by actions that show she really takes their concerns seriously. I know from personal experience that we cannot believe a word she says because her word is rubbish.

Ms GRACE: I rise to a point of order. I find those words offensive, personally offensive, and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! The member has asked that they be withdrawn.

Mrs STUCKEY: I withdraw. This minister admitted to me in a meeting with department staff, my colleague the honourable member for Gaven and an opposition staff member on Tuesday, 15 March 2016 that her department was yet to finalise the figures but that the new racing Integrity Commission would not cost more than the current system. How could she make that statement if she did not know the existing costs? It is an appalling admission of incompetence and untruthfulness. Minister Grace then promised she would supply me with those costs before parliament rose Thursday, but she did not. At the Queensland Thoroughbred Breeders Magic Millions Sales barbecue, which I am sure the minister will remember, on Sunday, 20 March, I again asked her in front of witnesses why she had not forwarded me the costs that she had promised. She said she would get them to me as soon as she returned from Mount Isa, but she did not. She might think it is okay to lie to my face in public not once, but twice. I do not know what other word there is to use; she told great big fat fibs right into my face and the industry knows she is telling falsehoods.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I ask the member to not use unparliamentary language. You could perhaps refer to it as 'dishonesty' if you are going to do that.

Mrs STUCKEY: I resorted to asking a question on notice about the costs, which came back last Friday afternoon. The reply listed figures for the existing integrity regime for 2013-14 and 2014-15 with language that suggested the figures were notional. However, the minister kept saying that the new integrity commission would not cost more than the existing regime. That was another example of left hand versus right hand. Further, the figures provided in response to my question 444 are not able to be reconciled to the chart of accounts or general ledger operating expenditure that was in place at the time the last board was removed from office some 10 months ago. In short, they are meaningless and not able to be used as an apples versus apples comparison. In reality, Racing Queensland staff numbers and costs of administration are higher under Labor's stewardship of racing, a cost to be borne by industry participants. Cost shifting has taken some or all of the department of racing costs and added them to the integrity budget. I look forward to seeing these figures clearly defined in the 2016-17 budget as stated in the question on notice reply. The minister finally plucks the costs out of the air in time to debate this bill.

Still on chapters 2 and 3 regarding QRIC, the Brisbane Racing Club chairman Neville Bell submitted that—

In addition, the Australian Sports Commission ... does not recommend that sports separate their integrity functions from the general governance and management of the sport. The ASC, responsible for the distribution of taxpayer funding for a range of national sports, provides best-practice governance advice to sports on how to manage conflicts and how to implement appropriate mechanisms to manage the full range of requirements of a national governing body.

In yet another reason as to why this bill should be thrown out, the minister has indicated she will tinker with the provisions in clause 17.1 of the bill requiring two or more deputy commissioners. The minister has said that the new commissioner-in-waiting, highly respected police officer Ross Barnett, might decide that he does not need more than one. Once again I say that the left hand did not speak to the right hand when drafting this bill. How long has this Labor government had to bring this legislation forward?

Chapter 4 of the bill deals with the regulation and licensing of bookmakers in Queensland. It is interesting to note that the MacSporran report made no recommendations in relation to the conduct or licensing of bookmakers in Queensland, and there is no suggestion that there are any illegal bookmaking activities being undertaken. However, despite that chapter 4 outlines a number of changes in relation to the regulation of bookmakers in Queensland. I do note that the minister is moving some amendments about bookmakers. Participants in the industry have suggested that the additional red tape and requirements being placed on bookmakers in Queensland are yet another cynical attempt to shut down the country racing industry in Queensland.

Country racing survives on the back of bookmakers being in place. There are generally only one or two bookies who attend country race meets. They are sole operators who have a reputation that carries significant value to the race meet. They are also a part of the fabric that has earned a place in the hearts and minds of locals and visitors, as their larger-than-life characters make the experience that much more authentic whether you win or lose. Some of these bookies travel many thousands of kilometres between race meets and have enduring nicknames like the legendary Ken Elliot, or 'Huff and Puff' to those out west. Where there is also a tote in place, bookies help to drive competition between the odds being offered and also drive growth on the tote as well. They need to be recognised as a vital cog in the wheel that keeps country race meets alive across the state. However, many in the

industry fear that the additional red tape that is being imposed in this bill, added to the reduction in fees for corporates, will squeeze bookies out of the game. Racing Queensland's views on country racing are pretty clear. Page 6 of *Tracking towards sustainability* states—

While country racing provides a social and economic benefit to rural communities, it comes at a significant cost to the racing industry.

Historically bookmakers pay clubs a fee for standing on courses to take bets. Part of the cost-cutting measures being put in place include the scrapping of the On-Course Field Incentive Scheme, or OFIS, which was introduced as the decline in volume of betting on course made it less attractive for bookmakers to stand. Many bookmakers feel that they are under assault from corporates coming onto their patch, and OFIS was a way in which they could continue to compete. The scrapping of OFIS is another slap in the face to country racing in Queensland and another example of how this government has decimated confidence across the entire racing industry.

On-course bookmakers generated a turnover of \$35.6 million for the racing industry in 2014-15, which was a decline of \$20 million from 2011. Keeping OFIS at a cost of only \$800,000 actually gives these guys a chance to compete. Without this assistance many of them will simply stop running a book and country racing would cease to exist. I have heard government members say they value country races and enjoy a day spent there, but I ask: What are they going to do to stand up for our country bookies? Racing officials would know this if they bothered to go west of the Great Dividing Range as part of the so-called consultation that led to the Tracking Towards Sustainability plan which, while not specifically part of this bill, contains elements within it that are to be implemented by the new racing board.

There are only around 140 licensed bookmakers in the state. Racing Queensland's own observations state that a pro-active approach is required to counter the impact of the rise of corporate bookmakers on the wagering return to Racing Queensland, but then in the same document they scrap OFIS. The ramifications for country racing if there are no country bookmakers at non-TAB races will mean that there are no races.

In chapter 5 investigation enforcement has also raised a number of concerns. Given the track record to date of this government's decimation of the entire racing industry, it is not surprising that many within it are gravely concerned about aspects of the new bill with respect to enforcement. A letter from Bob Frappell, a distinguished thoroughbred identity, has revealed flaws in the bill which expose the lack of real industry experience and leadership from this government and Racing Queensland. Industry participants welcome animal welfare and integrity measures but are concerned about search powers which are greater than those of the police in some circumstances, particularly given the actions of the government to unfairly overhaul the harness and thoroughbred industry's integrity regime. He says—

The ALP's Racing Integrity Bill has some very draconian sections which the government has failed to mention. A close examination reveals the powers in this bill will give them more power than the Queensland Police Service and make the VLAD laws look like a set of school rules.

Without the occupier's consent or a warrant, an authorised officer may gain access to any property at any time.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! The level of conversation in the chamber is rising. Could people keep the volume of conversation to a minimum so that we can hear the member for Currumbin speak.

Mrs STUCKEY: These sections give the integrity staff the power to enter any place that has any connection to any part of the racing industry, even indirectly and even if you are not at home. The stopping or moving vehicles division applies if an authorised officer reasonably suspects or is aware that a thing in or on a vehicle may provide evidence of the commission of an animal welfare offence or another offence against this act or the Racing Act, giving them the power to stop any vehicle anywhere for any reason whatsoever.

Powers over race clubs have caused additional angst, especially amongst those clubs scattered across the state. A lack of consultation west of the divide in particular has added to this recipe of discontent and mistrust. Provisions in this bill allow the Queensland Racing Integrity Commission to provide written directions to licensed clubs which may be with regard to the operations of the club or the licensed venue licensed to the club. If the minister would just let me finish instead of interrupting—I never interrupted her—I would say that I am aware there are amendments to be moved. Failure by a club to comply with a direction issued by the Queensland Racing Integrity Commission would in this bill

be a ground for disciplinary action, including the cancellation or suspension of the club's licence. Further provisions would allow QRIC to issue a club with a show cause notice upon believing a ground to cancel or suspend a licensed club's license exists and to stipulate the requirements for a licensed club when holding an race or betting meeting. Failure to comply with this provision would constitute an offence.

In basic terms, the bill outlines a very broad disciplinary process that is wide open to abuse of powers, giving the integrity commission the power to shut down not only the racing side of the club, but its other potential revenue streams like bars and functions, plus it allows them to shut down non-racing related businesses. These are a few examples that raise genuine concerns, and I am very pleased that the minister has listened to those. The minister has been reported as saying there is no intention to use them. The minister may have listened a lot more than her predecessor, but we really hope that she will continue to do so. As Mr Frappell said—

Imagine if these powers were in the hands of a vindictive or vengeful megalomaniac that tried to force a club or stakeholder to do something to which they were philosophically opposed.

We could have a situation that anyone that was opposed to a certain proposal would be victimised with no redress.

I find it interesting that Mr Frappell, who I am quoting, was the very gentleman who was verbally during the hearing, so perhaps we could hear him out this time. He also said—

We could also have the situation that if they do not like you or wanted you removed from any position or any part of the industry you would not be able to prevent it.

This Racing Bill has outlined a catastrophic future.

I move now to animal welfare. As I have stated on numerous occasions, Queenslanders were horrified by the live-baiting scandal that was exposed on the *Four Corners* program on 16 February 2015. No-one denies that animal welfare and the integrity of the racing industry are fundamentally important and crucial to the ongoing operation and success of the industry.

Ms Grace interjected.

Mrs STUCKEY: Minister, it really is very distracting to have you carrying on in the background like that.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! Members please direct their comments through the chair.

Mrs STUCKEY: I find it very distracting to have the minister continually ranting on. Even the greyhound industry acknowledges that fact. In their submission to the parliamentary committee the Queensland Greyhound Breeders, Owners and Trainers Association—I note that the minister keeps mumbling. She is not even interested in what the greyhound owners have to say. They stated—

While the QGBOTA is supportive of change and improvements that are industry best practice to animal welfare, racing integrity and strategic management, it is highly concerned that the changes will not go far enough, nor has the greyhound industry been engaged in the process.

The QGBOTA has developed its own Strategic Plan and Code of Conduct for the greyhound industry and its members.

Our executive over the past series of elections in Queensland has sought and met with elected officials from both sides of politics, raised the exact matters that seek the need for reform and change, but have been ignored.

While changing the current structure is required, we are concerned that there is a continuance of ignoring the greyhound industry's concerns and needs.

The greyhound industry feel that they have been marginalised and that they have been left out of the consultation process when it comes to helping to clean up their own industry. At my racing round tables, greyhound representatives speak strongly about their desire to get rid of those who do not uphold high standards of animal welfare. This is patently obvious with their submissions and the various meetings I have had with industry participants and leaders over the past 12 months. Their submission to the committee added—

Over the past 12 months the greyhound industry has been under attack. It's one thing condemning the industry for live baiting, we agree it is an abhorrent practice. But what time has told us is that it isn't wide spread, less than one half (0.5%) of the industry in Australia have been found live baiting.

The greyhound industry is no different to any other part of society where people will ignore the rules and take the law into their own hands.

Without doubt, this is an emotional issue. No-one wants to see images of animals being treated inhumanely or hear and read reports of animal abuse. Unfortunately, there are those in the community who think prohibition is the only answer. That argument has been proven to fail time and time again.

Tucked away, though, in chapter, 'Amendment of acts', is probably the most contentious aspect of this bill: the composition of the new racing board. Without doubt, this has created public vocal opposition, and not just here in Queensland. It has attracted comments from Racing Australia chairman John Messara, who made the following statements in relation to the changes to *Courier-Mail* journalist Nathan Exelby on 26 February this year. The article states—

'I am dubious about the rationality of one seven-person board governing the three codes,' he said.

'The culture of each code, for one thing, is so different from the others and having only one representative out of seven for thoroughbreds seems a serious under-representation.'

Messara acknowledged that integrity is 'acutely important to the sport' and the high expectations demanded by the community, but said he didn't think 'bureaucratising the function will achieve a better outcome.'

The article continues—

'While I am not privy to the finer detail of Queensland's proposed model, I am personally not in favour of having one integrity unit undertaking those functions for the three codes,' he said.

'There are different rules, different animals and very different participants between the three codes.'

'We have resisted this model being introduced into NSW and we think this has paid dividends in terms of the efficacy of our integrity net.'

A series of questions was asked of the department by the committee in relation to the Racing Queensland board specifically. What is the rationale for having seven members on the board? What is the significance of having seven members? Are there practical reasons why the board could not include additional members to allow greater representation of country racing or other racing interests? What is the rationale for requiring that four of the board members are non-industry members? National Parks responded with a standard line that clauses relating to the independence of the board are directly in line with recommendation 2 of the final report of the MacSporrán inquiry. The example of the Australian Stock Exchange Corporate Governance Council in its corporate governance principles and recommendations was put forward. While this may well be the case, the Queensland racing industry overwhelmingly—

Mr Byrne interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: I ask the Minister for Police to cease interjecting.

Mrs STUCKEY: Queensland's racing industry overwhelmingly rejects this, as do most other Australian states except Tasmania. Tasmania is a beautiful place, but it is not exactly famous for its racing. Why are we not aspiring to states like Victoria and New South Wales? With regard to the question posed to the department about country racing, when asked, 'Can you explain how the interests of country racing are represented in the current administration of Queensland Racing and how will the interests of country racing be fairly represented under the new administrative arrangements proposed in the bill?', the department responded that current representations through the Country Racing Association will not be impacted by the bill or the new regulatory structure.

However, given the diminished representation of the three codes on the new board, surely country racing deserves a boost in its representation. I note that a minimum amount of Ubet revenue allocated to country racing is to be specified in the bill. What is of concern, though, is the fact that country racing funding will now come from Treasury coffers and not Racing Queensland. What guarantee can the minister give that country racing funding will continue past the four years—or the two years she actually guaranteed in her speech tonight?

David Whimpey, the CEO of Brisbane Racing, gave a very well researched presentation to the committee on 17 February, when he tried to reason how MacSporrán came to his decision to abolish the current board structure, noting that MacSporrán had oscillated considerably before coming to his final decision. Mr Whimpey noted—

... why did MacSporrán not consider disbanding the all-codes model and leave the code boards in play? There is absolutely no discussion in any of his rhetoric around that. The obvious answer is that it was outside of his scope, yet we have formed this very clear conclusion ... There was no discussion, just a simple conclusion based on his quote above that the all-codes model was ambiguous and ineffective ... We ask the committee to address this issue in their deliberations. We ask that they consider that, like every other state with the exception of Tasmania, the codes are actually controlled separately.

He said—

Forcing the codes together at the control body is like saying the NRL, AFL and soccer should come together. They all kick a ball, right? A professor I met with yesterday at lunch came to that same conclusion, but they have a very different history, a very different strategic future and a very different way of doing business.

Mr Whimpey continued—

On page 4, item 28, he states—

'The success of the proposed model will depend very largely on the calibre of the personnel.'

He said—

I find that extraordinary. He has also said in the previous seven quotes that the current regulatory framework is fine but personnel failed. I find that to be an amazing disclaimer. The success of this new legislation will, in large part, rely on the personnel.

In recent weeks we have seen an example of wrong personnel selection. Within two days of the minister announcing her hand-picked choice for the thoroughbred representative on the interim board, he had to resign. There are dark clouds hanging over the minister's own integrity and her business relationship with her choice of interim board. On her pecuniary interests register it is there under 'Shareholdings or controlling interest in companies': Flagship Investments. The minister until today failed to reveal whether she sought advice from the Integrity Commissioner prior to making this appointment or if she declared the relationship to cabinet. Her office was reported in the *Australian* of 8 April as saying that the fact the minister and Mr Wilson had served together on boards was not a conflict of interest. That was not an answer to a question—a serious question, I might add.

I want to place on record that the LNP has no issue with the integrity of new board chair, Mr Wilson—he is a highly respected businessman—but it is critical, when this industry's integrity has been forced into the spotlight by the Palaszczuk government, that the minister's own integrity be beyond reproach. This is—

Ms GRACE: Madam Deputy Speaker, honestly. I find personally offensive this imputation that is being made across the chamber. The remarks are personally offensive to me and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Mr STEVENS: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. There was no personal reflection at all involved in the member's remarks.

Ms GRACE: My integrity was questioned.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! The member has asked for the comments to be withdrawn.

Mrs STUCKEY: I withdraw. This is an industry, we would all agree, that relies on its integrity as being the cornerstone to drive confidence and certainty going forward. For that to happen, everyone—I mean everyone—including the minister, should be ever vigilant and make sure they disclose clearly. I do call on the minister—

Ms GRACE: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I think the comments imply that I have not disclosed everything. That is completely misleading. I take personal offence and I ask that the comments be withdrawn.

Mr STEVENS: Madam Deputy Speaker, there was absolutely, categorically, no personal reference in those statements by the shadow minister to the member.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: I disagree. The member has found the comments offensive. I referred to this before. We can go to and fro in this chamber and keep on asking for apologies. I ask the member for Currumbin to keep in mind that some of the comments she is making are going to elicit this response. If we are to keep moving on in this debate, the member could temper her remarks. I ask the minister, aside from the quite valid requests for withdrawal, to cease interjecting.

Mrs STUCKEY: Perhaps to be able to settle this once and for all, I very politely ask for the minister to table the response from the Integrity Commissioner to ensure that any conflict of interest that has been reported in the newspapers has been appropriately managed and disclosed, and I ask that with respect and politeness. Applications for board members were open for months and the minister's selection makes a complete mockery of the process. It exposes Labor's true agenda—jobs for mates—and is another kick in the stomach for an industry that has had enough of being bashed by this vitriolic government. The minister and the Palaszczuk government were warned many times by

individuals and organisations within Queensland's racing industry of the dire consequences of failing to listen and consult. Now they have to make amendments to the criteria for board members. I go back to Mr Whimpey and the MacSporran report. It states—

On page 26, point 190 states—

'From this perspective it is fair to say that the machinery of legislation, policies, and rules of greyhound racing, subject to comments made above, adequately guard integrity and animal welfare, however it is the execution of a system of monitoring and enforcing that has completely failed.'

He said—

We agree with that. Considered in this light, at page 16, point No. 106, MacSporran states—

'Considered in this light, arguably the current regulatory framework is well placed to detect, assess, mitigate and prosecute all breaches of the *Racing Act* and other relevant legislation.'

He goes on further at page 16, No. 107—

'The prevalence of noncompliance is explained by ineffective role clarification and poor execution of strategy and prioritisation of resources.'

Whimpey says—

Those are seven great quotes from MacSporran himself. We must, therefore, ask the question: why change this legislation? Queensland should be very proud of its legislation. After all, it has taken us over 150 years to land here. Our forefathers arrived at this for very good reason. We must, therefore, caution any change, though we are not resistant to change.

As I said, that is a very detailed presentation given by Mr Whimpey from the Brisbane Racing Club. A question on notice taken at the 11 December hearing relating to other jurisdictions' board structures was yet another example of why this bill cannot be supported.

Government members interjected.

Mrs STUCKEY: Honourable members opposite are obviously not interested at all in hearing about a question on notice reply. Laziness and unwillingness to supply well-researched information highlights once again the lack of experience in Racing Queensland. Anyone could have cut and pasted the reply from interstate websites. Included in the answer alongside the racing board composition of other Australian states were examples of Stadiums Queensland and Queensland Rail. Why was Tourism and Events Queensland not included? I would like to see the Palaszczuk government even trying to put people without any serious tourism experience on that board and see what the industry said, but let us see who is on there. We have Mantra Hotel's Bob East as the chair, Brisbane Airport's Julieanne Alroe, Gold Coast Airport's Paul Donovan, Kingfisher Bay Resort's Gary Smith, One&Only Hayman's Anna Guillan, longstanding member Professor Judith McLean, Outback Tourism's Karen Hanna Miller and Cairns cruise operator Michael Healy, who was the failed Labor preselection candidate for Cairns but he is lining up again, I hear, against Rob Pyne.

All of those people on the Tourism and Events Queensland board have current active tourism experience and if you tried to push anything other on to the tourism industry you would have trouble. Can members imagine a tourism board without tourism industry people? Will the Minister for Tourism speak against this bill? I note her department was not even consulted about it despite racing events being among some of Queensland's biggest tourist attractions. There is the famous Birdsville Races, which the LNP elevated to major event status; the Gold Coast Magic Millions, which the LNP made into Australia's richest race day; the atmosphere of the Cairns Amateurs; and the stunning BRC Winter Racing Carnival. My counterpart in Victoria's parliament told me that they also had live-baiting issues. They commissioned two independent inquiries, but their new legislation leaves the structure alone except for greyhounds. Greyhound integrity officers were removed out of the Racing Victoria body. He doubts that the proposed Queensland structure will work. How can a board with one representative from each code have proper industry involvement? Victoria takes its racing industry seriously and wants to see it grow—unlike Labor, which has made it the laughing-stock of the eastern seaboard.

I refer to page 7 of the Agriculture and Environment Committee report and that a lack of consultation regarding this bill was a common issue raised. It is truly disappointing to read the indifference to genuine concerns of industry representatives. The committee commented—

Consultation with the racing industry, community organisations and individuals should have been an intrinsic and routine part of the policy and legislative development process for the Racing Integrity Bill.

Regrettably the Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing did not consult with community or industry stakeholders or the public in relation to the provisions in the Bill. As a result, racing industry participants such as turf clubs, animal owners, jockeys, breeders and trainers, and the bodies representing them, were excluded from the Bill's development.

How can government members opposite support a bill when the parliamentary committee made up of government, opposition and crossbench members makes such a damning criticism in its report? There it is in black and white—no consultation of the very people that this bill affects. The committee's comments continue on page 8—

The department chose instead to rely on consultation processes conducted as part of the Commission of Inquiry. That inquiry focused on greyhound racing, not the entire Queensland racing industry ... This omission by the department is particularly regrettable for the State's horse racing interests.

'Particularly regrettable': that is what the report says. Honourable members opposite need to tell people that when they lose their livelihoods. They should tell that to the good folk who travelled hundreds of kilometres to meet with me in Mareeba and Cairns last week. Club representatives and trainers came from Cooktown, Mount Garnett, Atherton and Gordonvale, just to name a few. All were pleased to at last have an MP to talk to. All are bitterly opposed to this bill. I know how much they want their local MPs for Cook and Cairns to support them and vote this bill down. I want to thank the honourable members for Cairns and Cook for meeting with me. The racing industry in Far North Queensland is counting on them to stop this bill so that proper industry consultation can occur. Please do not let them down. I also want to thank the efforts of industry stakeholders who formed QRUG for the sole reason of giving the racing industry a united voice in the hope that this Labor government would finally listen. I say to all of those hundreds of members: I hope you have heard the sniggering of government members in this House tonight and their disrespect for you and the racing industry. I thank the department and the minister's staff for giving me briefings this week. I found them most helpful and I am very interested in the information as we progress.

In closing—you will all be relieved about that, won't you?—this bill is yet another example of stick-before-carrot approaches that have crucified confidence and outraged an industry that was being very patient and very polite while this government dithered all through 2015. Show me any other industry—show me any other industry—that was put on hold for so long that could survive. If it were not for the dedication and passion of so many racing folk, it would not have. Mind you, the Premier said in June that the industry had to start from scratch, but little did we know they were going to rip it apart. The LNP will not be supporting this bill. We will be supporting Queensland's racing industry, unlike government members. I urge honourable members for the sake of this industry to oppose this bill and do what is right, and that means listen to Queenslanders for a change instead of berate them.

 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (12.28 am): Tonight I rise to speak in support of the Racing Integrity Bill. I find it ironic that the member for Currumbin can stand here and talk about the Queensland racing board not having enough members from the racing industry on it but can say that my involvement in the committee can be seen as biased because I have an interest in a racehorse. Isn't that ironic? I believe that it is the total opposite. I believe that my involvement in racing and racehorses enabled the committee to make a more comprehensive report. To say that a committee chair cannot ask witnesses to make a brief opening statement is ridiculous. Witnesses are allocated a certain time in which to make a brief opening statement and then the committee members are given an opportunity to ask witnesses questions. That is why witnesses are asked to make a brief opening statement. That is common practice in most committees.

Mrs STUCKEY: I rise to a point of order. I find the member's comments untrue and offensive. I ask him to withdraw.

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

Mr BUTCHER: I withdraw. Although the committee could not agree on whether the bill should be passed, I acknowledge the work of the committee in the formulation of this report. I would also like to like to acknowledge the previous chair of the committee, the member for Ipswich, Jennifer Howard, and the temporary chair, the member for Logan, Linus Power, for their work on this bill to reach the point at which I, as the new chair of the committee, could finalise the report and table it. I would also like to thank the committee secretariat, Mr Rob Hansen, Mr Paul Douglas, Ms Maureen Coorey and Ms Carolyn Heffernan, for their work in the preparation of this report.

I stand here tonight as the chair of the Agriculture and Environment Committee, as the member for Gladstone and as a participant in the racing industry to outline the reasons I support the passage of this bill and how I believe that it will strengthen the industry and assist in moving it forward. I believe that tackling the integrity issues in this industry is paramount to its continued success. I have two children aged 18 and 21 and they love going to the local races at Ferguson Park on a Saturday with my wife and me. I sincerely hope that they have the same opportunity to attend the races with their children in the future as I did with my father and my twin brother.

I understand that integrity issues in the sport seriously risks people's livelihoods. The government accepts that and will work with the industry to make sure that those who are doing the wrong thing are found and are dealt with so as not to damage the good work of others in the industry. With wagering, public confidence is an essential element of the financial success of the racing industry. When a punter places a bet on a Queensland Ubet terminal, a portion of that money goes to fund the operation of the industry. If integrity is compromised within the sport, it compromises wagering activity and, therefore, compromises the sport. It is because I am a racing industry participant that I wish to see this bill passed.

There has been much industry discussion around consultation on this bill. I wish to address that consultation, but also acknowledge some confusion around the *Tracking towards sustainability* report, the commercial decisions of Racing Queensland and its relevance to this bill. Alan MacSporran in his report presented a list of industry stakeholders with whom he met during the commission of inquiry. That document provides the structure for this bill. There were 74 stakeholder meetings in areas including Townsville, Cairns, Mackay and Brisbane.

I was the chair of the committee that considered the submissions to this bill. There was a committee hearing, which I did not chair, at which verbal submissions to the bill were made by members of the industry and recommendations were made to the committee. The recommendations in the report on this bill were accepted by the government and one was accepted in part. I thank the minister for that. I believe that, since being sworn in as minister, the Minister for Racing and member for Brisbane Central has had over 35 stakeholder meetings. Consultation on this bill has occurred, suggestions have been made by the industry, and they have been adopted by this government.

Another element of this bill that I wish to speak to is the composition of the all codes board. I note the committee's support of the composition of this board. The committee acknowledges the concerns raised by submitters to the inquiry about the membership of the Racing Queensland Board and the exclusion of racing industry members from holding the position of chair or deputy chair. The committee also acknowledges the findings of the commission of inquiry and the ASX Corporate Governance Council guidelines that support the predominance of non-industry members on the board as proposed in the bill. The committee was satisfied that the number of racing industry members on the board would be sufficient to ensure that the board is well informed of industry perspectives on issues while the remaining board members will provide critical expertise to ensure that the board operates effectively to discharge its responsibilities and provide strong strategic leadership to the racing industry.

With the separation of the integrity functions from the commercial body, Racing Queensland will be provided with the perfect opportunity to focus on making the racing industry more sustainable. Previously, managing both the integrity functions and the commercial aspects of the industry had been a challenging task for Racing Queensland. Therefore, the opportunity to split the functions and to have Racing Queensland focus solely on the commercial elements of the racing industry should strengthen its financial capacity.

The final aspect of the bill that I wish to address is the additional powers given to authorised officers, mainly with respect to the protection of racing animals. We must ensure that racing animals across all three codes are protected and this bill seeks just to do that. I was as outraged as many of us when we saw what happened just over 12 months ago with the live-baiting scandal. The government acted fast and we now have legislation before the House. I commend the former racing minister, Mr Bill Byrne, for acting swiftly to protect this industry. The increased powers for authorised officers will assist in discovering animal welfare breaches early, protect our animals from suffering further abuse and prevent abuse occurring at the outset. Last weekend I attended the Weetwood race meeting in Toowoomba—

An honourable member: You won it.

Mr BUTCHER: I will take that interjection. I am a member of the syndicate that owns the horse that won the Toowoomba Cup. I point out to the member who spoke before me that we own only 10 per cent of that horse. There are 10 members of that syndicate. My interest in this awesome racehorse, Honey Toast, is one per cent, which I think is the nose. I am a proud member of the racing industry in Queensland and I want to see this industry grow.

Whilst at that race meeting I met undoubtedly Australia's best trainer, Peter Moody. For those who do not know this gentleman, Peter Moody was the trainer of one of racing's greatest horses, Black Caviar. Unfortunately, Peter has been charged with offences relating to high levels of cobalt in one of his horses. Cobalt is outlawed because it is toxic. Racing authorities around the world are united in banning cobalt. Since 2013, racing jurisdictions have been setting cobalt threshold levels. Peter's story is one of the main reasons that I support this bill. It is the reason that the integrity side of the industry

needs to be separate from the racing side of the industry. All punters expect the greyhound, harness or thoroughbred that they bet on to have an equal chance of winning on a level playing field, including the way the animals are trained and the way they are raced.

There is no doubt that there are alternative opinions in the industry, but I congratulate those who have worked with the government on this bill that we are debating this evening. For those who believe in integrity in sport, who want to see our racing animals protected and who want to see good financial outcomes for Racing Queensland, I suggest, as I am doing so tonight, that they commend this bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Butcher, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (12.39 am): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Australian Industry Trade College, Cleveland

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Cleveland—LNP) (12.39 am): The Australian Industry Trade College, AITC, has recently opened its Redland campus in the electorate of Cleveland. For many years the AITC has delivered quality trade and senior education training to Queensland students from its Robina base, which has led to many employment opportunities. In the past, many young Redlanders had not had the opportunity to access training and jobs locally to that same degree. They had been forced to commute out of the city towards Brisbane to be part of other programs. This new trade college facility will not only provide future employment benefits and opportunities to the students on site but also have a positive impact in terms of congestion and pressure on the roads for many local families.

The college selects technically talented high school students who are willing to complete their secondary education with it rather than at school. The students' education is broken into two parts. Although curriculum approved educational programs are completed at the college, a partnership arrangement exists with the local TAFE for the students to learn a trade. A significant proportion of time is given to students to learn on the job, giving them essential practical experience. On completion, the students graduate with both their high school education and a job. Statewide, the college offers over 600 apprenticeships and traineeships and has resulted in over 1,100 of their graduates being now employed.

All this could not have been achieved without the hard work of a number of people. Firstly, there are the AITC directors and their staff, who have done an amazing job to open the college in Cleveland. Then there is Stephanie Morris, who has played a key role in raising the concept of the college locally and who continues to promote it. Stephanie saw the need for this type of education and training facility in the Cleveland electorate and approached the Mayor of the Redland City Council, Karen Williams, other councillors and local state members who have all become strong advocates for the college. As part of the process of encouraging the college to expand to the Redlands area, fact-finding visits to the Robina site were very helpful.

The council has kindly provided a facility for the college to operate out of in Cleveland to service all of the Redlands. It is also encouraging to see that local Redland businesses have bought into the concept and are starting to provide training and practical opportunities for these young people who attend the college. There is now another option for our kids in the Redlands to learn a trade and start an apprenticeship. This is good for the Redlands and good for the education of our students.

Samford Valley Target Archers

 **Mr FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (12.42 am): Recently I had the opportunity to represent the sports minister, the Hon. Curtis Pitt, at the Samford Valley Target Archers, which hosted the Australian Open between 4 March and 6 March 2016, with some 129 archers from across Australia. Competing in that competition were the best of the best, including those hoping to represent Australia at the Olympics in August this year. The tournament was part of the Olympics selection process and is a very important event on the Australian archery calendar.

Following the Australian Open, the Samford Valley Target Archers hosted an additional three days of trials, the second of three Olympic nomination camps that are designed to cut the elite athletic pool down to the final Australian Olympic team. The following athletes participated in the camp: Taylor Worth, Ryan Tyack, Alec Potts, Matthew Gray, Semra Ferguson, Alice Ingley, Ella Byrne, Chloe Grabs

and Elisa Barnard. So far, three male places have been secured for the Australian Olympic archery team, and from 8 to 16 April in Tonga female archers competed at the Oceania Continental Qualification tournament for a place on the team.

Ryan Tyack is an Australian archer who is competing in the men's recurve events. He earned a gold medal at the 2006 Junior World Outdoor Target Championships in the male recurve cadet event. Semra Ferguson is an aspiring archer who is training to make it to the Australian team for the 2016 Rio Olympics. Semra is the South Queensland State Champion. She is ranked No. 1 in Australia and at the World Cup in Turkey was ranked No. 17. After shooting in many Australian teams as a junior and winning club, state, national and international titles, in 2010 Semra decided to stop shooting. The dream of being an Olympic champion never went away, so Semra returned to shooting with her sights set on the Rio Olympics in 2016.

Subsequent to the Australian Open, a couple of weeks ago it was my pleasure to return to the Samford Valley Target Archers to try shooting a few arrows down the path. Although I will never be another William Tell or Robin Hood, it was certainly a great opportunity to fire a few arrows down at those targets and learn a new sport.

An honourable member: That adds another string to your bow.

Mr FURNER: It certainly does. I thank Brian Hagaman, the president of the Samford Valley Target Archers, for giving me a bit of tuition on how to fire those arrows. On a number of occasions he tried to correct my stance, because I have previously fired rifles. He pointed out to me the different stance and angle that you have to adopt in order to use a bow and arrow. I found that challenging, but I certainly will be back again at the Samford Target Archers to try again.

Member for South Brisbane; Country Shows

 **Mr SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (12.45 am): On Thursday, 18 February—over two months ago—I made some statements in this House regarding the member for South Brisbane and her behaviour when she was a member of the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee. At that time the member rejected what I said, even though I believed that my comments were true. It was a situation that happens in this parliament many times every day. At the time the member for South Brisbane rejected the comments she did not ask for a withdrawal.

However, two months after an everyday incident occurred in the House this issue is now taking up time—my time and time within the Speaker's office. Therefore, I want to put an end to this nonsense and withdraw unreservedly the comments that I made, as I would have done had the member found those comments offensive when I made them in the House and as I and many other members have done on many occasions. I withdraw the comments unreservedly and I hope that that can be the end of what is a silly issue.

I really wanted to talk about the country show circuit that is underway in my electorate and to make a point to the members of this House so that they can understand that the decisions we make here have a profound effect on small organisations in country towns across Queensland. When we were in government, the former attorney-general and I made the decision to change the way the licensing laws applied to country shows. At that time it was a significant decision. It has made an enormous difference to the way in which those shows now operate. Instead of having people jammed into small, defined, fenced-in drinking areas, we now have a situation where people can attend those functions and can enjoy the ambience of the whole area in a way that is not aggressive and that does not cause the problems that were being caused by regulations that were put in place by people who did not understand the effects. By putting people into cage-like situations, they were creating more problems than they were solving.

We have had some great shows and the difference has been noticeable. Last weekend the Mount Perry show was held. If members want to see the best woodchopping, they should go to the Mount Perry show to see the Dingle family. It was a great show, because the licensed area was able to extend over the whole of the covered pavilion. The Monto show will be held this weekend. I wanted to make that point so that people in this House can understand that the decisions we make here, whether they be big or small, have a profound effect on people in their everyday lives.

Nudgee Electorate, School Leaders

 **Ms LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (12.48 am): Recently, I welcomed to parliament school leaders from Earnshaw State College, Wavell State High School and Nudgee College within my electorate for a school leaders lunch.

An honourable member interjected.

Ms LINARD: It is a very good school. Eighteen years ago, as school captain of the former Banyo high school, now Earnshaw State College, I was invited to a similar lunch by my then local member, the then member for Nudgee, Neil Roberts. As the member now, it was a tremendous privilege for me to have the opportunity to continue this tradition and invite these brilliant young leaders to share their ideas, their values and their reflections on leadership, youth and politics in this hallowed place.

I knew that the schools' leaders would be impressive—after all, they were selected amid significant competition to these important leadership roles within their respective school communities—but they were far more than impressive: they were humble, grounded and understood to a level far deeper than I expected of their years that leadership is far less about them as a leader and far more about those whom they seek to lead and that leadership is, first and foremost, about service. During our time together I reflected on the fact that they will have many good days as leaders—receiving their badges, presiding over special school ceremonies—but that there will be many more hard and challenging days and that the depth of their character, the conviction of their calling and the authenticity of their relationships will be what sustains them in these challenging moments.

I take this opportunity to thank principals Jeff Major, David Bosworth and Peter Fullagar for taking the time to bring their students into parliament and for their willingness to share insights from their leadership journeys. I would also like to thank my friend and colleague the Treasurer for dropping in to meet my students and the Premier for so kindly signing a note to each student. It would be remiss of me not to also acknowledge my colleague the Minister for Education, the member for Ashgrove, who always makes the time to acknowledge and meet with visiting students and who has the vital job of leading our schools in this significant time of education reform under this government's Advancing Education plan, preparing our students today for the jobs of tomorrow.

I would like to say to Angus McHugh, Joshua Bunney, Christopher Duke, Joseph Herbert, Sheryl Gabatero, Brooke Hafner, Callum Mutch, Elizabeth Bennett, Jordan Symonds, Kanya Haines, Michael Greathead and Tiare Wildin, who joined me at parliament, and to Ali Faalogo and Lewis Begg, who were unable to, that I and all of my colleagues in this House leave to them and all future leaders in this great state our legacy, as those who came before us left theirs. We hope that they will be inspired to much greater heights than we can yet imagine. I have great confidence that our future leaders are up to the task.

Coomera Electorate

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (12.51 am): I will continue from where I left my last adjournment speech during the last sittings. I have 31 kilometres of the 66 kilometres of M1 that goes through the Gold Coast and borders my electorate. That is a very large portion of the M1.

I have had an absolute explosion of new residents in my electorate. As a result, I have school buses that are overloaded. I have passengers being left behind and having to wait an hour for another bus. There are no buses available as they are overloaded with children. I have elderly residents who have to travel an hour by public transport to go 200 metres as the crow flies to get to their local shopping centre where the doctor's surgery and so forth are.

I am talking about every area in my electorate. At Eagleby in the north I have full school buses and full suburban services at 7.30 am leaving commuters behind. In Ormeau it takes elderly residents one hour to travel 200 metres because the services travel each side of the M1 instead of crisscrossing the M1 and delivering them to their shopping centre, which is within eyesight of where they live.

In Pimpama a student at the high school was left behind. There were no more buses going her way and she was intending to pick up her five-year-old sibling at another school. That caused her some panic. I forwarded that on to the regional director. In Pimpama elderly residents are unable to get to their local shopping centre. In Coomera it is a 45-minute walk to rail services because buses do not leave early enough to get commuters to work. From Hope Island to Helensvale there are no bus services, even though it is a fully developed area.

The next issue I have in my electorate is police numbers. The police minister advised me that I am getting three new police in the next round. We need 50 additional police right now in the northern Gold Coast just to catch up with the growth in population. In the time that I have been in this place—from 2009 until now—I have experienced a 50 per cent growth in the number of voters and people living in my electorate. The same applies to the electorates of Albert and Gaven. The reality is that we need to catch up when it comes to police numbers and we need to catch up now.

Aitkenvale, Police Citizens Youth Club

 **Hon. CJ O'ROURKE** (Mundingburra—ALP) (Minister for Disability Services, Minister for Seniors and Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland) (12.54 am): I am proud to rise in the House this evening to talk about the excellent work the PCYC in Aitkenvale is doing within my electorate to help teens get back on the right track—something I am extremely passionate about. PCYC Aitkenvale runs a very successful program called SAS ME, which is designed to work with teens aged 12 to 17 who have demonstrated a reoffending trait, predominately while on bail for other offences.

The SAS ME program is a pilot project and is a combination of the existing Support and Strengthening, SAS, and Managing Emotion, ME, programs of the branch. The goal of the program is to support the young person to recognise how to manage peer pressure and avoid situations where they are at high risk of offending or reoffending.

It is one thing for me to talk about the program, but the true reflection of how great this program is and the change it creates is told through the stories of the teens who have been through the SAS ME program. I would like to tell the House about a 15-year-old boy from Townsville who lives at home with his mother along with four male siblings. Three of the siblings are reoffenders. He was referred to the SAS ME program through the Childrens Court in September 2015. He has served time in custody for stealing and break and enters. He admits to a high use of alcohol and marijuana. He has also been banned from two Townsville shopping centres. Since commencing the SAS ME program the PCYC staff report that the teenager is now becoming a leader within the program and shows respect to all the other participants, staff and volunteers. He is always the first to welcome new members and continuously shows great enthusiasm within the program.

His mother has said his whole persona has changed. While in the past he was often angry, he is now displaying the ability to curb the intensity of his anger. His family life has ups and downs, but he no longer reacts badly to these situations. The results speak for themselves. This 15-year-old Townsville boy has stopped reoffending, is making positive decisions in his life and has a new attitude towards challenging situations.

These are the programs that work and these are the programs I am proud the Palaszczuk government supports. To help support the PCYC's great work, I was pleased to donate a framed Queensland State of Origin jersey signed by local football icons Johnathan Thurston, Matty Scott and Michael Morgan. This jersey will be raffled off, with the funds raised going directly to the PCYC youth programs.

As a mother of two teenage children who have followed pathways of education, training and work, I understand that not everyone is so fortunate. As the member for Mundingburra, I could not be more proud of the work this organisation is doing in assisting the most troubled within our community. They take this job very seriously. I would like to thank Gill, Orma and the other staff from PCYC Aitkenvale.

DownsSteam

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (12.57 am): I recently had the pleasure of visiting DownsSteam, which is a tourist railway and rail museum located at Drayton within the electorate of Condamine. My tour guide, Robert Ketton, was ably assisted by fellow rail enthusiasts Peter Eldridge and former Toowoomba Regional councillor and current chairperson of DownsSteam Ros Scotney.

DownsSteam was founded 11 years ago and is a community based volunteer organisation dedicated to the establishment of a tourist railway for the Darling Downs region. It currently has over 150 members, with 40 of these actively involved in all aspects of the day-to-day running of DownsSteam including the maintenance and refurbishment of engines, coaches and carriages, painting and sign-writing, tending gardens and maintaining the beautiful surrounds, conducting tours and catering for guests and visitors. DownsSteam enjoys the strong support of the local community and businesses in Toowoomba and the greater Darling Downs region.

The members of DownsSteam come from a variety of different backgrounds and vocations—from engineers to university lecturers to boilermakers to retailers and caterers. They do, however, all have one thing in common: a great passion for our railway history and the preservation of that history, something very close to my heart. The development of the railway opened up Queensland to the rest of Australia and provided long-needed transportation for produce and people.

In March 1864 the building of the railway line from Helidon up the range to Toowoomba commenced and was completed on 31 July 1866, only taking a bit over two years—an amazing feat without the technology and machinery we have available to us today. This significant infrastructure was a very ambitious project at the time and enabled freight, livestock and grain to be transported down the range to the eastern part of the state.

Without organisations such as DownsSteam and the volunteers who support them, the history of our railways would be lost forever. Currently, many projects are being undertaken by the members of DownsSteam, some larger and more involved than others. However, every project will add value to a visit to DownsSteam. I would encourage anyone travelling to Toowoomba to stop by and take the time to look at what DownsSteam has to offer. It was a truly enjoyable day spent with dedicated people who are very enthusiastic about the conservation of our railway history.

I acknowledge former councillor Ros Scotney, who stood down at the last council election. She was a councillor in the Pittsworth shire and a former mayor, and she spent four years as a councillor on the Toowoomba Regional Council. I thank Ros for her dedication to the local community.

World's Greatest Shave, Kallangur

 **Mr KING** (Kallangur—ALP) (1.00 am): Recently in my electorate of Kallangur a strong community activist named Belinda Norrie has been organising shave for a cure and colour for a cure events to raise money for the Leukaemia Foundation. Belinda has managed to secure the involvement of quite a few local businesses to help with this great cause.

An honourable member: Did you shave your head?

Mr KING: I take the interjection; I will come to that. I would like to thank those organisations for their assistance. In no particular order, thanks go to: Killer Looks Hairdressers for donating their time and skills; Emilio's Cafe and owner Gary Bryant for going above and beyond—I will talk a little more about Gary soon; Diamonds Tavern; Pet Supersavers; Murrumba Downs Pool; Hoppy's Carwash; Priceless Discounts, Murrumba Downs; and Dollars and Sense, Kallangur for donating items to the events.

I was approached early on and was pleased to be able to donate some money to the cause for hair colour spray and was asked to attend a few of the events. I was more than happy to attend as both of my parents, my best mate and many close friends have been affected by cancer in one form or another, and very recently an extremely brave young lady, Jane Linforth, who has been part of our family for over a decade, passed due to this terrible disease. I will always support any cause that tries to help cure those who are affected by cancer, in whatever form it takes.

The first event I attended saw the aforementioned Gary, the owner of Emilio's Cafe in Kallangur—it is a great spot for breakfast and a coffee—get his head shaved and coloured to look like a pineapple. It was an interesting look and one that made me glad, in some way, that nature has helped me as there is little appetite to see my head shaved for charity. Several others participated and many donated to the cause.

The most memorable event was held at Diamonds Tavern, where some very eager participants were also quite generous with their donations. The main reason the Diamonds Tavern event stands out in my mind is that someone suggested that they could raise a significant amount by waxing a strip of hair from my forearm. Caught up in the spirit of the moment, I agreed to allow this. Unbeknownst to me, after they had raised a considerable amount for one arm they then raised a similar amount for the other. Having never been involved in waxing in any form, I did not know what to expect. I must say that I sympathise with anyone who regularly undergoes any waxing. I can honestly say that I will not be lining up for more in the very near future.

That night Belinda raised over \$1,200, and I was pleased to be able to contribute, even though it caused some considerable discomfort and I am still wearing long-sleeved shirts! Belinda Norrie has been a great community advocate for this cause. Certainly she should be recognised for her involvement and activism.

M1 and Beechmont Road, Upgrades

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (1.03 am): I rise to speak about urgently needed upgrades to the M1 motorway and Beechmont Road in my electorate of Mudgeeraba. In recent weeks we have seen the do-nothing, know-nothing Minister for Main Roads continue to bumble and fumble around, particularly with the history of funding for the M1, as he holds up a crucial upgrade between Robina and

Reedy Creek. On 6 April I joined my federal colleague the Hon. Karen Andrews as we once again called on the minister to get this upgrade underway—an upgrade that he admits is shovel-ready with ‘design and early works’ that ‘could begin immediately’ pending a business case and funding commitment from the Labor government. Our calls came after the Labor government neglected to even mention this section of the M1 in its State Infrastructure Plan, despite the federal coalition government listing the upgrade as a priority initiative in the Australian Infrastructure Plan.

In the days that followed, we were stunned to see the minister claim to have submitted a final business case six weeks prior. Unfortunately for the minister, his federal counterpart, the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, the Hon. Darren Chester, has confirmed that a final business case from the Labor government for upgrades on the M1 had been received only three weeks beforehand, once again leaving the minister red faced and caught out telling porky pies. I table the media statement from the Hon. Darren Chester.

Tabled paper: Media statement, dated 13 April 2016, by the Commonwealth Minister for Infrastructure and Transport and Member for Gippsland, Hon. Darren Chester, titled ‘Government committed to easing congestion in South East Queensland’ [\[546\]](#).

We are now two years out from the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games and it is clear that this minister still cannot get his facts straight. Labor remains frozen at the wheel and local residents are stuck in traffic as a result.

This week the Labor government finally caved in to political pressure and announced a quick-fix solution to a string of fatal and near-fatal accidents on Beechmont Road, further west in my electorate in Lower Beechmont, through the installation of guardrails and passing bays. After a yearlong community campaign and a string of fatal and near-fatal accidents, the Labor government has finally recognised that we need to do something about Beechmont Road. That is a win for people power and the community.

Since this Labor government took office in 2015 there have been 26 reported accidents on Beechmont Road in which 23 people were injured and, tragically, three people lost their lives. Since 2009 there have been 93 reported accidents on Beechmont Road, including five fatalities and 77 injuries. This Labor government has dragged its heels for months, as more and more people lose their lives on this dangerous road, refusing to commit any funding despite repeated calls from me, the member for Beaudesert, Jon Krause, and the Better Roads for Beechmont group.

The guardrail installation is long overdue. I am sorry to see that it took three fatalities to convince this minister to finally do something to protect our motorists. Whilst necessary, this quick fix is not enough. I will continue to work with the member for Beaudesert and Better Roads for Beechmont to get the next stretch of Beechmont Road, between Elimbah Court and Jardine Road, properly upgraded to secure the safety of local residents in the long term. I hope that we do not see more fatalities on that particular stretch of road before more funding is given by the government. In fact, of the 14 fatalities in the hinterland in the past 12 months, 12 of have been in the electorate of Mudgeeraba. We need to fix my roads.

MultiLink’s National Youth Week; Anzac Day

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (1.06 am): Tonight I rise to inform the House of a special event that I attended during Youth Week last week and the special services I will be attending over the weekend to honour those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. Firstly, last week I was lucky enough to attend MultiLink’s National Youth Week lunch, where I enjoyed a beautiful Afghani lunch with the MultiLink youth workers and some of their clients.

During that lunch I had the opportunity and the honour to meet with some of our younger new Australians and hear their stories, what they are enjoying about Australia and what is challenging them. I was inspired by their stories. They are brave young men and women who have had to flee their home countries as refugees, leaving behind many family and friends. Since arriving in Australia they have become excited and optimistic about the new opportunities available to them, so much so that many of them are now giving back by helping other young refugees in the Logan community and are studying youth and social work. I again thank Jacqueline, the acting CEO of MultiLink, and her dedicated staff for this warm event. Our soon to be released Queensland Youth Strategy will cater for all young Queenslanders, regardless of their background or circumstances. The lunches, meetings and events I attended during Youth Week, including the special one at MultiLink in Logan, will help me build a youth strategy for all young Queenslanders.

I am looking forward to another busy weekend as my community honours the Anzacs and those who embody the Anzac spirit. On Friday night I attended my first Anzac event at the Beenleigh RSL, at the invitation of David Draper, the hardworking president. It was a special night with lots of food, music and appreciation for the sacrifices that have been made so that we can live as freely and openly as we do today. More Anzac services will be held across Waterford and I will be returning to Beenleigh to attend the dawn and commemorative services and also the Jeta Gardens service. Jeta Gardens is a special retirement village in my electorate. They always produce a solemn Anzac service that includes the whole community. Many members of my community have served or know someone who has, and it is important that we pause and pay tribute to their courage and valour. I hope to see many of my community members join in the many Anzac services planned across Waterford and Logan, so that we can pay tribute to those who made the ultimate sacrifice for us.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 1.08 am (Thursday).

ATTENDANCE

Bailey, Barton, Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Byrne, Costigan, Cramp, Crandon, Crawford, Cripps, D'Ath, Davis, de Brenni, Dick, Dickson, Donaldson, Elmes, Emerson, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Frecklington, Furner, Gilbert, Gordon, Grace, Harper, Hart, Hinchliffe, Howard, 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, Stuckey, Trad, Walker, Watts, Weir, Wellington, Whiting, Williams