



RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT

Wednesday, 31 August 2016

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WEDNESDAY, 31 AUGUST 2016



The Legislative Assembly met at 2.00 pm.

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

ASSENT TO BILLS



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

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

BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Speaker

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

Date of assent: 29 August 2016

“A Bill for an Act authorising the Treasurer to pay amounts from the consolidated fund for the Legislative Assembly and parliamentary service for the financial years starting 1 July 2016 and 1 July 2017”

“A Bill for an Act authorising the Treasurer to pay amounts from the consolidated fund for departments for the financial years starting 1 July 2016 and 1 July 2017”

“A Bill for an Act to amend the Corrective Services Act 2006, the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, the Public Safety Preservation Act 1986 and the Terrorism (Preventative Detention) Act 2005 for particular purposes”

These Bills are hereby transmitted to the Legislative Assembly, to be numbered and forwarded to the proper Officer for enrolment, in the manner required by law.

Yours sincerely

Catherine Holmes

Acting Governor

29 August 2016

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 29 August 2016, from Her Excellency the Acting Governor advising of assent to certain bills on 29 August 2016 [[1400](#)].

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

Same Question Rule



Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have ordered that a ruling regarding the application of the same question rule to cognate bills be circulated. I seek leave to have the statement incorporated in the parliamentary record.

Leave granted.

SPEAKER'S RULING—APPLICATION OF SAME QUESTION RULE—Fire and Emergency Services (Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill

MR SPEAKER:

Honourable Members,

On 2 December 2015, the member for Kawana introduced the Fire and Emergency Services (Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill.

On 23 February 2016, the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services introduced the Fire and Emergency Services (Domestic Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill.

Both bills seek to amend Part 9A, Division 5A of the Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990.

Standing Order 87(1) provides that unless the Standing Orders otherwise provide, a question or amendment shall not be proposed which is the same as any question which, during the same session, has been resolved in the affirmative or negative. A number of Speaker rulings in relation to this issue have been made in recent years. In summary:

- The matters do not have to be identical, merely the same in substance as the previous matter. In other words, it is a question of substance, not form;
- There is no rule preventing the presentation of two bills on the same subject, or indeed opposite intent. However, if a decision of the House has already been taken on one bill, the other is not to be proceeded upon; and
- An amendment cannot be moved to a bill that has already been moved to another bill and defeated or is substantially the same as a bill that has been defeated.

The proposed amendments in both bills deal with the same issue but in different ways.

In accordance with the cognate motion agreed to, the second reading question for the government bill will be put first. Should the second reading question be agreed to, the same question rule will then be enlivened.

At this point, I will make a ruling in relation to the application of the same question rule for the private member's bill if the government bill passes its second reading. Specifically, that the private member's bill will be discharged from the Notice Paper, as the ruling would not allow any further decisions to be made on the bill.

As there will have been no decision taken in relation to the private member's bill, members can move amendments to the government bill to deal with the matters contained in the private member's bill.

If the government's bill fails its second reading, I will make a ruling in regards to any amendments that may be moved to give effect to matters contained in the government's bill. Specifically, that amendments cannot be moved to a bill that are substantially the same as a bill that has been defeated.

PETITIONS

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

Navua Sedge, Eradication

Mr Knuth, from 920 petitioners, requesting the House to research and develop a long-term management solution into Navua Sedge; establish a Navua Sedge pilot program on the Atherton Tablelands and continue spraying roadsides and verges at the minimum rate of five per year [[1401](#)].

The Clerk presented the following paper petitions, sponsored by the Clerk—

Noosaville, Swan Street, Wylah Street and Creek Road, Bus Route

From 187 petitioners, requesting the House to immediately and permanently remove Swan Street, Wylah Street and Creek Road Noosaville from bus routes [[1402](#)].

Abortion Law Reform (Woman's Right to Choose) Amendment Bill

Two petitions, from 628 petitioners, requesting the House to reject the Abortion Law Reform (Woman's Right to Choose) Amendment Bill 2016 [[1403](#), [1404](#)].

Petitions received.

TABLED PAPER

MINISTERIAL PAPER

The following ministerial paper was tabled by the Clerk—

Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services (Mr C R Dick)—

[1405](#) Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee: Report No. 12, 55th Parliament—Inquiry into smoking and tobacco use at universities, technical and further education facilities, and registered training organisations, government response

MINISTERIAL PAPER

Ministerial Expenses; Register of Reportable Gifts



Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (2.03 pm): I lay upon the table of the House the public report of ministerial expenses for the period 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016. The tabling of this report is a requirement of the Financial Accountability Act 2009. The report for the full financial year shows that my government has maintained expenditure at lower levels than the previous government.


I also take this opportunity to table the register of reportable gifts for the financial year ending 30 June 2016 for ministerial offices and the office of the Leader of the Opposition. I commend these reports to the House.

Tabled paper: Public Report of Ministerial Expenses for the period 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 [[1406](#)].

Tabled paper: Ministerial Gifts Register—Reportable Gifts 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 [[1407](#)].

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS


Baden-Clay, Ms A

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (2.04 pm): Today, the High Court has made its determination on the Allison Baden-Clay case. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the end of this long, exhausting and emotional process, especially for Allison's daughters, family and friends.

Many years ago, Allison and I attended the same Inara Svalbe ballet school. My memory of her is of a bright, confident and outstanding young dancer. I was fortunate also to meet her family last year. I could see the pain in their eyes and I know that pain is shared in many parts of our community. Part of that pain emanated from the fact that their fight for justice was ongoing and seemed never ending.

Today, this fight is over. The case is closed. The High Court has said justice will be served. The sad reality is that no court judgement or jail term will bring Allison back. As life goes on—and it will—there will forever remain a void in the lives of those who were privileged to know Allison. On behalf of this parliament, I wish her family and friends well into the future.

Ayliffe-Chung, Ms M and Jackson, Mr T


 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (2.05 pm): People across Queensland and the world were shaken by the tragic events that unfolded in Home Hill last week. Sadly, we learned yesterday that two lives have now been lost. The families of Mia Ayliffe-Chung and Tom Jackson are now both grieving.

It has been reported that Mr Jackson, a British backpacker, attempted to shield Ms Ayliffe-Chung from a knife attack. It has also been reported that, in this selfless act of trying to protect Ms Ayliffe-Chung, Mr Jackson suffered serious injuries that resulted in him also losing his life.

Mr Jackson's reported actions of putting his own life before the life of Ms Ayliffe-Chung represents an extraordinary act of courage and is deserving of recognition for his brave act. That is why I have today written to the Australian Bravery Decorations Council to nominate Mr Jackson for a bravery award.

I have also spoken with Tom's father, Les. Les has asked me to pass on his thanks for the support his family is receiving from the community as well as his thanks for the local police, the paramedics and all the staff at the ICU at Townsville Hospital. These were tragic events and, on behalf of Queenslanders, I offer our thoughts and prayers to the family and loved ones of those involved.

Police Service, Enterprise Bargaining Agreement

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (2.06 pm): The safety of Queensland families and communities is a priority for my government. We respect and value the work of the men and women of the Queensland Police Service to keep our communities safe. Too often they put themselves in harm's way so that we are not.

Today, I can announce that my government will give our police the powers they need and the pay they deserve. An in-principle agreement has been reached between the Queensland Police Union, the Queensland Police Commissioned Officers' Union and the Queensland Police Service on a certified enterprise bargaining agreement for the next three years. The agreement includes an annual increase in wages of 2.5 per annum for Queensland Police Service officers from the rank of constable to the rank of chief superintendent.

Under the agreement, the police classification structure will also be streamlined and modernised. The agreement will also allow for senior constables, sergeants and senior sergeants access to higher pay points, which had not previously been the case. In recognition of a work-life balance for police officers, the agreement will also mean that there will be no rostering of rest days or professional days off on public holidays.

This agreement also recognises the complexity of policing, including counterterrorism, tackling serious organised crime in all its forms, domestic and family violence and the security for the Commonwealth Games. I want to pay tribute to the Minister for Police for his representations on behalf of the men and women of the Queensland Police Service.


International Tourism

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (2.08 pm): I have good news for Queensland. The number of international tourists visiting Queensland continues to grow. In the 12 months to June this year, the number of international visitors to Queensland grew by 11 per cent to 2.5 million visitors, generating \$5.1 billion. Brisbane and the Gold Coast had the largest international visitation numbers on record, reaching 1.17 million and 984,000 visitors respectively. Overnight visitor expenditure on the Gold Coast reached a record \$1.3 billion and the Sunshine Coast also hit historic highs of \$245 million.

We have seen growth in the Asian markets of China, Japan, Taiwan and Korea and the Western markets of Germany, the USA and New Zealand. I am pleased to see that the growth in visitor numbers from China has increased by 26 per cent and from Japan by 19 per cent.

The Connecting to Asia Forum that we held in Cairns last week attracted more than 300 industry leaders. This was further testament to the excitement and growth of our tourism industry. The Minister for Tourism will provide more details this afternoon. This growth is testament to the work our government is doing, including the additional international flights we have attracted to Queensland.


North Queensland Regional Plan

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade and Investment) (2.09 pm): I am pleased to advise the House that the Palaszczuk government has now commenced work on North Queensland's first regional plan. Queensland is a diverse state and each region has its own opportunities and challenges. It is important that we have regional plans that connect council areas, aid in the planning of infrastructure delivery and provide long-term, region-specific directions.

Last Wednesday I was pleased to join with mayors from the five councils involved—Lyn McLaughlin from Burdekin, Liz Schmidt from Charters Towers, Ramon Jayo from Hinchinbrook, Alf Lacey from Palm Island and Jenny Hill from Townsville—along with the member for Townsville, who is in the chamber today, to kickstart this process. Collaborating with local government is the only way to truly bring this plan to life. The regional plan will give councils and the community a chance to address issues specific to North Queensland. It is also a chance for local and state governments to work together to seize opportunities and respond to challenges across the entire region. The regional plan is an important part of the Palaszczuk government's commitment to the north, which also includes a \$586 million infrastructure investment this year alone, supporting around 1,500 jobs. The regional planning process will also build on transformative projects like the Townsville Waterfront Priority Development Area and the new North Queensland stadium along with negotiations currently underway with the Australian government for Australia's first City Deal in Townsville.

The draft regional plan will be informed by the community's views for the future of the region and locals will be invited to share their ideas during the preparation of the plan. In the coming weeks I will be establishing the North Queensland Regional Planning Committee which will meet at key stages throughout the preparation of the plan to ensure it is a truly collaborative effort. I am looking forward to listening to what the people of North Queensland have to say about how we can together build a more prosperous and sustainable region.

Retail Trading Hours

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Minister for Sport) (2.11 pm): Today I announce another positive initiative of the Palaszczuk government with the potential to deliver considerable economic benefits and new jobs across Queensland. For too long retail trading hours in Queensland have been complex, confusing and costly. Trading hours can differ between regions and even within the same region. The Queensland Industrial Relations Commission has delivered more than 30 seven-day trade areas across the state. In addition to the QIRC, the Trading (Allowable Hours) Act 1990 distinguishes between types of shops and the hours they can trade based on the nature of the goods sold and the number of staff employed.


At present, trading hours are based on whether an establishment is an exempt shop with unrestricted hours, an independent retail shop with generally unrestricted trading hours depending on staff numbers or a non-exempt shop, usually large retailers or department stores. To illustrate the complexity of the existing system, there is a list of trading hour categories currently applicable across our state. Most local members would be aware of the difficulties and unfairness the current system can deliver. For example, the Piccone family, who own several businesses, including two IGA supermarkets in the Cairns area, have one supermarket that is classified as an independent retail shop and can trade from 5 am to midnight, seven days a week; the other supermarket is within the Cairns tourist area and is classified as a non-exempt shop and trades from 8 am to 9 pm Monday to Friday, 8.30 am to 5.30 pm Saturdays and 9 am to 6 pm on Sundays—same owners, same type of store, same type of customer catchment areas, but vastly different trading hours.

In 2013 the Queensland Competition Authority published its report *Measuring and reducing the burden of regulation*. It found the potential for large net benefits from reform of trading hours restrictions of approximately \$200 million. For consumers, reforms could mean greater choice and convenience and the benefits of greater competition. For business operators it could mean greater flexibility in meeting consumer demands and the opportunity for increased sales with a potential flow-on to more jobs. Our tourist industry stands to benefit from a streamlining of trading hours. Tourism is a truly regionalised industry across our state so there are clear potential benefits, including new jobs in our regional economies.

We want to ensure our retail sector can secure more scale and economic benefits which also means new jobs in the sector. Today Minister Grace and I announced plans to establish a stakeholder reference panel to consider how Queensland could maximise those economic benefits by addressing anomalies in our state's trading hours. The reference panel will be chaired by former Speaker and minister John Mickel. Key retail, business and industry, tourism and union representatives will be invited to join the reference panel. It is proposed the panel will complete its work so that any changes to trading hours may be in place by Easter next year. Our economic plan is helping Queensland transition to a postmining boom economy. This latest initiative will do that by realising new economic opportunities and new jobs. The government is determined to bring in reforms to our economy that support growth, job creation and build on the results achieved so far. This government is committed to streamlining regulation. This government is committed to cutting red tape for businesses. This government is committed to modernising our economy and creating jobs by ensuring Queensland is open for business.

Tabled paper: Document, undated, titled 'Ministerial Trading Hours—Non-Exempt Shops Trading by Retail—State' [[1408](#)].

Rural and Regional Queensland, Mental Health Services

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (2.15 pm): Notwithstanding the recent rains in rural Queensland, 84 per cent of Queensland remains in drought. The Palaszczuk government is also acutely aware that the drought has taken its toll not only on the economy and on the profitability of individual farms but also on the mental wellbeing of some people in rural and regional Queensland. In last year's budget we allocated \$1.5 million to primary mental health support to be delivered through the Royal Flying Doctor Service. In November last year we backed this with the \$3.5 million Tackling Regional Adversity through Integrated Care scheme. Part of this scheme has funded the appointment of nine new mental health clinicians to help deliver services in rural and regional Queensland.


Last week in Mount Isa as part of the scheme I announced an allocation of \$600,000 to 16 programs across rural and regional Queensland that will allow communities to address mental health issues in a manner that they believe is best for them. We have had a very strong response from around the state to our call for applications for this fund. We were looking for community resilience-building strategies, projects and activities to develop and promote community networks, build awareness of mental health issues and encourage individuals to seek help if needed. The projects selected serve every part of the state that has been most impacted by the drought, from the Darling Downs through to Western, Central and North-West Queensland. The projects include Lifeline on the Darling Downs and south-west Queensland as well as the Callide Valley Men's Shed. I know that the member for Callide is pretty handy with a hammer and he no doubt knows the men's shed well. This latest measure is another initiative of this government to tackle mental health issues caused by the drought in rural and regional Queensland.

While in Mount Isa I also launched the Queensland Rural and Remote Mental Health and Wellbeing Action Plan 2016-18, which provides a framework for addressing mental health issues in rural and regional Queensland. The plan sets priorities and outlines 28 actions to improve the mental

health and wellbeing of people living in rural and remote Queensland. The action plan, developed by the Queensland Mental Health Commission—and I thank the Commission and the Commissioner, Dr Lesley van Schoubroeck, for their work—also identifies opportunities for partnerships with non-government organisations and communities.

Drought remains a serious problem and this government is well aware of mental health issues associated with the drought. Our strategy is to work locally with organisations that have good community links so we can reach individuals who would otherwise be unwilling to contact individual services. We are well aware that the drought is having an impact beyond economic consequences and we will work with people in rural Queensland to support our fellow Queenslanders struggling because of the drought.


International Tourism

 **Hon. KJ JONES** (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism and Major Events) (2.17 pm): Queensland tourism growth continues to surge with international tourism numbers reaching a new high. The latest data from Tourism Research Australia released today shows international visitation to Queensland grew 11 per cent in the 12 months to June 2016; \$2.5 million visitors generated \$5.1 billion in overnight visitor expenditure. We know that by 2020 Asian outbound travel will reach 286 million travellers—100 million more than in 2014. We are determined to grow our market share.

Last week we released TEQ's new Queensland Asia Tourism Strategy, which aims to grow the Asian market to 6.8 billion and support up to 30,000 additional jobs by 2025. This strategy will accelerate our efforts in key growth markets and reinforces that Queensland is the best address on earth for international travellers to experience. In the last 12 months we have seen growth from Asian markets of China, Japan, Taiwan and Korea and western markets of Germany, USA and New Zealand.


Brisbane and the Gold Coast had the largest international visitor numbers on record, reaching close to 1.2 million and 984,000 visitors respectively. On the Gold Coast overnight visitor expenditure reached a record \$1.3 billion and the Sunshine Coast also hit an historic high of \$245 million. I am very excited about that, in a demure way. Queensland recorded strong growth in international visitation from the holiday sector, which is up 14 per cent, and the visiting friends and relatives market, which is up eight per cent. Overall, 14 of Queensland's top 20 international markets recorded increases in overnight visitor expenditure, with China up 26 per cent, the USA up 20 per cent, Germany up nine per cent, Japan up 19 per cent and New Zealand up nine per cent. We are determined to grow tourism and tourism jobs in this state.

Baden-Clay High Court Decision; Youth Detention Centres, Review

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (2.20 pm): I would like to briefly add a few words to the Premier's remarks about today's High Court decision in the Baden-Clay matter. I would like to thank those involved in this case, especially in the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, who have worked so hard on the case. Indeed, the Queensland Police Service needs to be recognised for their hard work, as do the DPP staff who have worked on this matter for years. I have personally thanked the DPP and have asked for my congratulations to be passed on to the staff involved. They should be recognised for the methodical and responsible way that they have handled this very sensitive matter. Of course, at this time our thoughts are with Allison's family, particularly her children, and friends.

On another important matter, on 19 August this year I announced an independent review of Queensland's youth detention centres. The review will be conducted by two suitably qualified persons who can conduct a thorough examination of the serious allegations of mistreatment and of the policies and practices used within our youth detention centres. They will be appointed by the Governor in Council to ensure that the reviewers have the appropriate terms of reference and protections to deal with the sensitive issues involved. It is important that the public has confidence in the administration of youth justice in Queensland and that is why I have ordered the review. The review report will be provided to me by November. I extend my offer of a confidential briefing to the shadow Attorney-General in relation to this review.

National Disability Insurance Scheme

 **Hon. CJ O'ROURKE** (Mundingburra—ALP) (Minister for Disability Services, Minister for Seniors and Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland) (2.21 pm): In Queensland people with disability are incredibly excited about the rollout of the NDIS, which started statewide in July. Already

in Townsville we have seen how life changing the NDIS can be for people with disability and their families. Unfortunately, as many members would have seen in the media, on 1 July the federal government implemented a new ICT system to coincide with the start of the NDIS. Just like the disaster that we saw on census night, the ICT system has been plagued with problems across the country. I am extremely concerned that Queenslanders with disability may be affected as a result of another Turnbull government IT debacle and this is simply not good enough.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, members. Your sentiments are noted.

Mrs O'ROURKE: Social services minister Christian Porter needs to stand up and reassure people with disability in Queensland and across Australia that they will not be delayed from—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: One moment. I apologise, Minister. Members, your sentiments are noted.

Mrs O'ROURKE: Social services minister Christian Porter needs to stand up and reassure people with disability in Queensland and across Australia that they will not be delayed from living the life that they choose. The minister has ordered a review of the ICT issues, but I hope that this does not turn into a witch-hunt against the NDIA and that the minister and his department are held to account as well.

I have written to social services minister Christian Porter expressing my serious concerns for Queenslanders and seeking his assurance that this issue will be resolved quickly. I have also written to the NDIA chair, Bruce Bonyhady, and have followed up with a meeting with him. Mr Bonyhady has provided me with a full briefing and has reassured me that this is only a short-term issue. I understand the NDIA is working on a solution. My department continues to work very closely with senior Commonwealth officials.

This Friday I will be attending the Disability Reform Council meeting in Sydney, along with other state and territory ministers, where I will be seeking further information from Minister Porter. Let me be clear: Queensland is ready and absolutely 100 per cent committed to the NDIS. I am committed to ensuring that the NDIS succeeds across the state, because it is too important not to succeed. Along with other state and territory ministers, I will work closely with the Commonwealth. However, at the end of the day, Minister Porter needs to commit to ensuring the NDIS rolls out on schedule. I look forward to keeping the House updated.

Gold Coast, Police Resources




Hon. WS BYRNE (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services) (2.24 pm): The Palaszczuk government remains committed to keeping all Queenslanders safe. We recognise the critical role the men and women of the Queensland Police Service are taking in tackling crime and dysfunction in our communities. Our government recognises that each part of Queensland has a unique community and each one represents a unique challenge for policing. In this challenging environment, police face increasing scrutiny and nowhere is this more evident than on the Gold Coast.

The Palaszczuk government is delivering safer communities on the Gold Coast. This morning on the Gold Coast I met with Assistant Commissioner Brian Codd and other senior police about our government's tough new laws to tackle serious organised crime. Those laws will be the most robust, the most stringent and the most rigorous in the country. They will target all kinds of serious organised crime, not just outlaw motorcycle gangs but also child exploitation, sex exploitation, drug trafficking and boiler room fraud. We are backing up the new laws by giving police the funding and resources they need, including an additional \$39.1 million over four years, to disrupt and dismantle organised crime across Queensland.

We are seeing the results of our investment and intervention. Since we came to government, 24 additional police officers have hit the beat on the Gold Coast. Last year, 300 body worn cameras were rolled out to front-line police on the Gold Coast. This financial year we have funded the rollout of 2,700 more body worn cameras to front-line police across the state. We have a new police leadership team on the Gold Coast, which is delivering great results and boosting confidence. We have established our now community policing boards across Queensland, linking local communities with local police. An extension of PolAir for the next six years will deliver aerial support for important police operations and surveillance. Our investment in front-line police is backed by strong new laws from our government—laws that are carefully crafted to crush organised crime and outlaw motorcycle gangs right across Queensland.

Moreton Bay Rail Link

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games) (2.27 pm): I am delighted to announce that Moreton Bay's biggest public infrastructure project in more than a generation, the Moreton Bay Rail Link, will open on Tuesday, 4 October. I can reassure the community that the project is powering full steam ahead and in 34 days locals in the region will be able to hop on a train from one of the six new stations in their backyard. Passenger services will officially start on Tuesday, 4 October. However, I am pleased to inform the House that first there will be an open day event on the public holiday, Monday, 3 October, for the community to join in the celebration.

It is not hyperbole to describe MBRL as a once-in-a-generation project. First talked about in the late 19th century, the new line has been well over 100 years in the making and will transform communities along the 12.6 kilometre corridor. With six new train stations at Kallangur, Murrumba Downs, Mango Hill, Mango Hill East, Rothwell and Kippa-Ring, we will be throwing open the gates for neighbours and community members to tour and inspect the new stations as part of the open day celebrations.

As I said, the Moreton Bay region has waited more than 100 years for this rail line to be built, so it is only fitting that they will be the VIPs at this community celebration. Locals will be able to orientate themselves around the new stations, inspect the facilities and services, and even try out the new shared pathway. On the day, they will also be able to catch a free return train service between Kippa-Ring and Petrie stations, which will stop at all stations and allow them to hop on and off to visit community information stalls, food stalls and entertainment along the new line.


The start of passenger rail services on MBRL will also usher in a new-look bus timetable. The bus network changes will support and complement the new MBRL train timetable and achieve a better integrated public transport network for the Moreton Bay region, delivering more buses and high-frequency services and improve transport connections across the community.

When the line opens there will be more than 650 train services between Kippa-Ring and Brisbane each week—trains every six to 12 minutes in the morning and afternoon peaks and trains every 30 minutes off peak and during weekends. The new-look timetable will improve the way locals use public transport in the region with an additional 261 bus services a week and a range of new options, including additional early morning and night-time services and an increased span of operating hours on the six additional routes every weekday.

There will also be more buses on the weekends, with increased operating hours on eight routes throughout the region. Locals will also have better access to weekend buses and 98 per cent of residents will be within a 400-metre walk of a Sunday service. There will be an extra 157 trips each weekday and an additional 104 trips every weekend. This means overnight from when the train line opens four times the number of residents will have better access to public transport services.

I encourage the community to join us for the open day on Monday, 3 October. They will be joined by representatives from our co-funders—the Moreton Bay Regional Council and the Australian government. I know the members for Redcliffe, Pine Rivers, Kallangur and Murrumba will all be there to share in the celebration with locals on this historic occasion. I wish to acknowledge the member for Redcliffe, the Attorney-General, in particular noting the key role she has played in delivering this much anticipated and very welcome piece of infrastructure.

Electrical Safety Week

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply) (2.31 pm): This morning I visited Energex and Ergon apprentices learning the trade on overhead powerlines in Rocklea. They were learning not only their trade but, importantly, the dangers and safety around high voltage power. With Electrical Safety Week next week, it is timely to highlight these dangers to all Queenslanders because, to put it bluntly, accidental contact with live high voltage electrical infrastructure can and does kill.

In the past five years alone, Energex and Ergon have seen a 15 per cent increase in accidental contact with Queensland's high voltage network statewide. Tragically, last week a tree lopper died after accidentally contacting with powerlines in The Gap. Just three days later a sign-writer nearly lost his life when equipment he was operating touched the power network in West End in Brisbane. In regional Queensland this year, two farm workers have been electrocuted as well as a pilot dying from injuries sustained when his helicopter crashed into powerlines on a farm. These deaths have all been workplace related.


In the past year there have been more than 500 workplace related incidents of accidental network contacts including everything from cranes, farming machinery and high loads contacting powerlines to excavators and other earthmoving equipment digging up cables. Fortunately, not all of these ended in a fatality. However, some Queenslanders are still bearing the physical and mental scars while the rest are very fortunate to be alive.

While Look Up and Live is a strong message that we are trying to convey to the public, there are very real electrical dangers below that can be just as deadly. There have been more than 40 incidents of people digging through high voltage underground cables in South-East Queensland in the last 12 months. If you are digging around a yard or footpath there could very well be cables carrying more than 110,000 volts just below the surface. Dial Before You Dig, on 1100, is a free service giving detailed locations of underground services in the area a person is about to work in.

Energex and Ergon are currently working together to produce new safety education advertising, urging community caution around Queensland's power network. In regional Queensland Ergon will have their popular Grim Llama highlighting these dangers. In South-East Queensland, Energex will be warning the community of similar risks. I certainly endorse the Grim Llama campaign. It is a very clever and effective campaign.

Later this week I will be launching the state's largest ever electrical safety educational program aimed at primary school aged children in which 94 per cent of Queensland's schools are participating. The advertisements and the upcoming student education program have simple but effective messages. Ultimately, it is up to every member of the community to heed these dangers and to be aware of the threat electricity can pose, particularly in the workplace, and how easily a life can be saved by being vigilant at work.

Biofuels Industry

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef) (2.34 pm): I am pleased to provide the House with an update on work by the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection to assess the carbon performance of biofuels produced in Queensland and the department's work on finalising the sustainability criteria for the biofuels mandate. This work is critical to support the growth of the important biofuels and biofutures sector for clean energy jobs in Queensland's regions. This government has legislated to ensure that biofuels which are used to count towards the mandate are to be sustainably produced.

The Department of Environment and Heritage Protection recently received a report on the lifecycle greenhouse gas performance of biofuels produced in Queensland and how they compare to other fuels. I am pleased to advise that the findings are good. The findings show that biodiesels made in Queensland from feedstocks, including wastes such as tallow and ethanol from sugar and grain, produce less carbon when used compared to regular low sulphur diesel and unleaded petrol.

These results highlight that biofuels are good for regional development and can also contribute to our vision for Queensland as a clean energy and low carbon economy. Other benefits include opening up new markets for by-products from our agricultural sector. It opens up new markets for the waste industry as well.

The Department of Environment and Heritage Protection is also ensuring that biofuels are produced in a way that are not only good in terms of carbon pollution but also for the environment more broadly. We are currently finalising a sustainability framework to ensure that this is the case, especially considering that some of the feedstocks are grown in environmentally sensitive areas such as Great Barrier Reef catchments.

EHP is consulting with industry and other stakeholders on standards for environmental performance of other inputs such as fertilisers. This work is drawing on internationally recognised standards for managing environmental impacts associated with producing biofuels. The standards will take into account the diverse source and range of biofuel feedstocks and be performance oriented rather than prescriptive. These will be finalised in the near future in time for the mandate's commencement on 1 January 2017. This is good news for everyone—lower carbon energy, environmental standards, jobs, innovation and new economic opportunities for regional Queensland.

Mr SPEAKER: That concludes ministerial statements. Before I call the Leader of the House, I am informed that we have Hannah Bardell MP from the United Kingdom House of Commons observing our proceedings from the public gallery. Welcome.

FARM BUSINESS DEBT MEDIATION BILL

RURAL AND REGIONAL ADJUSTMENT (DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE) AMENDMENT BILL

Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date; Cognate Debate



Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (2.37 pm), by leave: I move—

1. That the Finance and Administration Committee consider the Farm Business Debt Mediation Bill and the Rural and Regional Adjustment (Development Assistance) Amendment Bill together and report back on both bills by 28 November 2016.
2. That, in accordance with standing order 172, the Farm Business Debt Mediation Bill and the Rural and Regional Adjustment (Development Assistance) Amendment Bill be treated as cognate bills for their remaining stages, as follows:
 - (a) second reading debate, with separate questions being put in regard to the second readings;
 - (b) the consideration of the bills in detail together; and
 - (c) separate questions being put for the third readings and long titles.
3. That, notwithstanding anything contained in the standing and sessional orders:
 - (a) the time limits and order for moving the second readings shall be: the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries—60 minutes, followed by the member for Mount Isa—60 minutes, followed by the opposition spokesperson—60 minutes; and
 - (b) the time limits and order for reply to the second readings debate shall be: member for Mount Isa—30 minutes, followed by the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries—30 minutes.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Suspension of Sessional Orders



Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (2.38 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

- (a) That so much of the sessional orders be suspended to enable the member for Toowoomba South to make a statement not exceeding 20 minutes noting his election immediately after question time today; and
- (b) After the statement has been completed, the order of business shall resume with starting times for all other items adjusting according to the time spent on the statement.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Cairns Post Article



Hon. CW PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Minister for Sport) (2.39 pm): Earlier this month my electorate staff received an email from a constituent relating to government owned corporation Ports North, and to help draft a response it was forwarded to the appropriate team within the department of Queensland Treasury for advice. The department, in turn, sought information from Ports North. However, in doing so, a departmental officer inadvertently disclosed that constituent's name and personal email. While Treasury was not aware that the constituent was also an employee of the government owned corporation and the author of the email did not identify as an employee, there is no excuse for what happened. Inadvertently or not, the constituent's personal details should not have been disclosed to the third party. I was furious to learn how the department had mishandled this inquiry.

Like most members of parliament, I receive an enormous amount of correspondence on a range of matters, and I want to assure people in my electorate that their concerns, complaints, requests and suggestions are all handled in the strictest confidence. I welcome all correspondence from constituents

regardless of whether or not I agree with it. In this instance, I certainly did not take any offence. I took the email for what it was: simply someone having their say. Frankly, I think Ports North's response to this email has been an overreaction and not a course of action I would have taken or advised.


This mistake occurred within the department of Queensland Treasury and I have demanded answers. Last night statements were provided to the *Cairns Post*. However, today's article omits any quotes where I have acknowledged that this error was the fault of the department. As such, today's cover page story is factually incorrect. I want to be clear about the fact that neither my electorate office nor my ministerial office have breached anyone's right to privacy. Nor did I have any visibility of actions by departmental officers or Ports North in the preparation of a response.

Worse, the *Cairns Post* article goes on to falsely report that my office has been accused of passing on the email to a government owned corporation. Not only is the allegation untrue; no-one has actually made that allegation of my office. I would like the record to show that at no point have I or anyone in my office identified the person in question, while the *Cairns Post* has named both the employee and the government owned corporation in question. This situation is a departmental error that should not have occurred, and the Under Treasurer has written a letter of apology to the gentleman concerned acknowledging this.

I take the right of all Queenslanders to the protection of their personal information very seriously and have requested to be briefed on the outcome of the investigation of this privacy breach. I have told the Under Treasurer that I expect him to take all necessary measures to ensure nothing like this happens again in the future.


TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITIES COMMITTEE

Unauthorised Disclosure of Committee Proceedings

 **Mr KING** (Kallangur—ALP) (2.42 pm): In accordance with standing order 268(1), I rise as chair of the Transportation and Utilities Committee to report that the Transportation and Utilities Committee has considered an unauthorised disclosure of confidential committee proceedings by persons unknown relating to the early publication of the Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games's estimates prehearing answers to questions on notice; and unanimously resolved to recommend that the matter be referred to the Ethics Committee as an apparent breach of standing order 211.

REPORT


Office of the Leader of the Opposition

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.42 pm): I table the public report of office expenses for the Leader of the Opposition for the period 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016.

Tabled paper: Public Report of Office Expenses, Office of the Leader of the Opposition, for the period 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 [[1409](#)].

NOTICE OF MOTION

Trade Unions


 **Mr EMERSON** (Indooroopilly—LNP) (2.43 pm): I give notice that I will move—

That this House calls on the government to act in the best interests of all Queenslanders—not just the less than one in five who are members of a trade union by:

1. preserving the long standing ministerial powers that protect jobs and prevent significant damage to the Queensland economy; and
2. maintaining important accountability and transparency measures for registered industrial organisations in Queensland.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

World Suicide Prevention Day

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.43 pm): Saturday, 10 September marks World Suicide Prevention Day, for which this morning I attended the launch breakfast hosted by Roses in the Ocean. I think I echo the thoughts of all Queenslanders when I say that one death as a

result of suicide is one too many. It is, indeed, troubling to note that suicide is the leading cause of death in men and women between the ages of 15 and 44, with around 2,500 deaths in Australia each year. As was said at the breakfast this morning, if that were the road toll, we would be horrified and reading more about it. Sadly, a further 65,000 plan or attempt to take their life each year and 400,000 people think about taking their life each year. The tragic impacts of suicide touch entire communities—parents, children, siblings, partners, friends and colleagues. Few of us will have been untouched by the untimely passing of someone who has taken their own life. Indeed, suicide can touch us all.

We as a community must ensure that we do more to understand the causes of such tragedies and how those who choose to end their lives got to the point where they simply could not go on. We need to do what we can to ensure that those who are in need get the support they require, while ensuring all Queenslanders know that services are available to all of those who are touched by suicide. We know well of the wonderful work done by organisations such as Lifeline, beyondblue, the Black Dog Institute and R U OK, but there are so many others that deserve our support for the work they do to help Queenslanders and Australians in crisis.


At today's breakfast, I was honoured to sit with Bronwen Edwards, who founded Roses in the Ocean after her brother Mark took his life eight years ago today. I knew Mark. He was a school mate of mine. Sadly, we fell out of a contact. He was a pilot. In fact, he was the youngest Australian fighter pilot in the Royal Australian Air Force. He was then a commercial airline pilot but now no more with us, not with his family or his friends, leaving a tragic hole. Days after Mark's death his family placed roses in the ocean. This organisation encourages others dealing with hardship and their families to place roses in the ocean to raise awareness of suicide and to serve as a symbol of their preparedness to reach out and ask for help.

This year Roses in the Ocean is going global. The International Association for Suicide Prevention has chosen to adopt Roses in the Ocean as the official sign of World Suicide Prevention Day on 10 September. The mission is simple: prevent suicide. Funds raised are used to host community events and help keep the Suicide Prevention Lived Experience Speakers Bureau, a partnership between Roses in the Ocean and Suicide Prevention Australia, going. Today we heard another moving story from Carlo Martelli, about his lived experience with the loss of his sister Sophia three years ago.

On behalf of my colleagues—indeed, I think on behalf of everyone—I acknowledge Bronwen's outstanding efforts and contribution in raising awareness of this all too often silent killer. The LNP committed money for mental health services in 2014-15 and established the Queensland Mental Health Commission, but there is more to do. I would like to say to all of those supporting the 22-day push-up challenge and raising awareness: congratulations. In a perfect world, we should not have to speak about it but we do. I am grateful for the forbearance of the House this afternoon.

(Time expired)

Criminal Motorcycle Gangs

 **Hon. WS BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services) (2.46 pm): Can I simply show some empathy with the Leader of the Opposition on the speech he just gave. That will not deter me from saying some of the things I need to say this afternoon.

When the LNP formed government in 2012, they came with a number of promises—one of them being to govern with humility, grace and dignity. We all know what then transpired: 14,000 public servants would not agree with that and, \$10,000 in pink jumpsuits later, Queenslanders made a choice about who they felt should govern Queensland.

Much has been said in this House in recent times about outlaw motorcycle gangs. The LNP have been all over the place on this and other organised crime issues, particularly organised crime, and have been for a very, very long time. In March the member for Kawana said on ABC Radio—

It's important to realise that VLAD legislation was not necessarily always about conviction.

He would have said that with the same feigned conviction he used to talk about some of his compromised boot camps. A week later the member for Mansfield told the ABC pm program—

... you can only get convictions if you have crime.

An opposition member: That's right.

Mr BYRNE: You agree with that. The metric for this is that, given that there are no VLAD convictions, there is no bikie crime. It is just a preposterous notion that the Liberal National Party keep putting out into the broader community about organised crime.

Next the member for Mansfield, the shadow Attorney, will be talking about his vision of the doctrine of the separation of powers. We have already seen that recently put forward in a brilliant understanding of where we are at. He went on to say, 'We don't want convictions, we want no crime,' and, 'The fact that the laws have been in effect has pushed the bikies away from creating chaos in Queensland.' I accept that as a point of view. That is a view. However, in February this year the member for Surfers Paradise was reported in the *Gold Coast Bulletin* as saying—

... he was now convinced the bikies had never truly left the Gold Coast ...

...


"I think they are still here,"

They are the member's words, not mine. That is what he said. He went on—

The arrests we have had in the last few days with alleged associations with bikie gangs and the drugs with large amounts of cash show that they never left.

One minute we have not got them, they have left; the next minute they are back. The Liberal National Party—one of the great advocates of civil liberties—is all over the shop on this issue, as it has been since 2009. In Queensland we have an undisciplined, inept opposition with no clear direction and as recently as this year it demonstrated it again.

Baden-Clay, Ms A

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (2.50 pm): This is a day of reflection and relief. Today we learned that the High Court of Australia has reinstated Gerard Baden-Clay's conviction for the murder of his wife, Allison. Today justice has been served for Allison and her family.

I went to school with Allison. She was my school captain. The memory of Allison that the public has come to know over the last more than four years, largely through the tributes of her family and friends, accords entirely with my lasting memories. We were a close-knit school community with her, as our leader, at the centre of it. I remember Allison's smile. I remember Allison's warmth. I remember Allison's guidance. I remember Allison's wholehearted compassion. It has been a long road to set things right, but today justice has been served. Justice has been done. As Kerry-Anne Walker said today—


In a fair and open trial, a jury found that there was enough evidence to convict Gerard Baden-Clay of murder. They felt there was motive and certainly intent. Thankfully today Australia's High Court judges agree with this decision and have reinstated a conviction of murder.

Kerry-Anne added—

Allison loved being a wife and a mother and worked incredibly hard to do both to the best of her ability.

Simple goals maybe, but noble beyond words. That was Allison—beautiful, humble, joyful, indescribable. May she now rest in peace.

Backpacker Tax

 **Hon. KJ JONES** (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism and Major Events) (2.52 pm): I echo the comments made by the honourable member for Nanango. I am sure she has the sympathy of all members of the House at this time.

Something I have spoken about a lot in this House, and about which we are yet to see any action federally, is the impacts of Malcolm Turnbull's backpacker tax. I know this is an issue that is familiar to all members of parliament. This is not only an ill thought out tax in regard to the tourism industry but also in regard to the agricultural sector, which we spend a lot of time in this parliament talking about. This tax which sits at more than 33 per cent will be a direct hit on that industry. I know that rank and file LNP members voted on the weekend for a motion that the LNP abandon this ill-thought-out, job-destroying tax introduced by Malcolm Turnbull. I note that new Senator Barry O'Sullivan—and I must add that Barry O'Sullivan and I do not see eye to eye on many issues; in fact, this is probably the first thing he and I have ever agreed on—has called this a bad tax, and I agree with him. That is why for months and months I have been standing in this House calling on the leadership of the LNP at a state level to stand up to their federal colleagues and call on them to abandon this tax.

I know that they will not do it because I say it is a good idea, but I will give them the benefit of the insights of Monash University, which has done research into the impacts of the LNP's backpacker tax. They spoke to more than 335 international working holiday-makers in Melbourne, Cairns and Port Douglas. They found that 60 per cent said they would not come to Australia if this tax were introduced. Fifty-seven per cent said that they would spend less time travelling in Australia. Sixty-nine per cent said that they would spend less on tours and attractions, and 62 per cent said that they would go to New Zealand instead of Australia—if that is not saying something!

Every year more than 330,000 working holiday-makers visit Queensland, and they are worth more than \$900 million to the Queensland economy. We know that Queensland rural and regional communities rely on the valuable work that they contribute to our agricultural and horticultural sector. We know that they also spend up big on tours and on visiting and spending money.


Mr Cripps interjected.

Ms JONES: I take the interjection from the member for Hinchinbrook. He understands what impact this will have on people in his community.

Mr Cripps: The champions of regional Queensland!

Ms JONES: I am championing it because it makes sense. Everyone except for the LNP in Queensland recognises that this is a bad tax. All I am asking of the LNP in Queensland is to stand united with us against a job-destroying tax for Queenslanders.

Treasurer

 **Mr EMERSON** (Indooroopilly—LNP) (2.55 pm): We have previously seen this Treasurer try to shoot the messenger. Whether it was CommSec detailing how Queensland was losing the economic state of origin or CCIQ revealing the government was seen as anti business and they had no confidence in the member for Mulgrave as Treasurer, headline after headline has detailed how this Treasurer is failing Queensland. Whether it is 'The pits', whether it is 'Hole truth', whether it is 'Pitt's fall'—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! We do not need props.

Mr EMERSON: I am just tabling these, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: Table them and put them down.

Mr EMERSON: I am happy to table this pile of Pitt.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Just table them, member for Indooroopilly.

Mr EMERSON: It is a pile of Pitt. It is a bottomless Pitt, and that is why we have seen those concerns from CCIQ and CommSec.

Tabled paper: Bundle of media articles, various dates, regarding the Treasurer and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Minister for Sport, Hon. Curtis Pitt [\[1410\]](#).

What we have seen today is worse. Even with his own Labor colleagues describing him as a deadweight and incapable, we have seen a new low today. The glass jaw of this Treasurer has been exposed. We saw the story in the *Cairns Post* today about a very clear breach of privacy. A critic of the Treasurer has now been threatened with the sack. A constituent of the Treasurer, Tony Smith, emailed the Treasurer's electorate office because he was concerned about the decline in jobs, the lack of investment and the lack of action. He used a private computer and a private email address to contact the member for Mulgrave's feedback line. Mr Smith hears nothing back from the Treasurer, but then his employer, Ports North, of which the Treasurer is a shareholding minister, threatens him with the sack because of the email. I will table the letters.


Tabled paper: Bundle of letters regarding Mr Neville Anthony (Tony) Smith, an employee of Ports North [\[1411\]](#).

Mr EMERSON: He was threatened with the sack. This is what it has come to under this Treasurer and this Labor government. Private citizens who dare to speak out about how bad things are, are threatened and intimidated. Their privacy is breached and they are harassed. This is clearly a gross misuse of power and position. Premier, how long do Queenslanders have to put up with this Treasurer? Premier, when will you give this Treasurer a show cause notice?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Question time will conclude at 3.57 pm.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Treasurer

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (2.58 pm): My question is to the Premier. I refer to the tabled documents by the member for Indooroopilly including the letter from the chief executive of Ports North to Mr Tony Smith which, amongst other things, threatens his employment with summary termination. I ask the Premier: is it acceptable that a constituent inquiry to the Treasurer ends up with a letter from a government corporation threatening him with the sack?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. Can I state at the outset that the Treasurer has stood in this House today and made a personal explanation about the inaccuracy of the reports that were contained in the *Cairns Post*. I am satisfied with the Treasurer's explanation that he provided to the House today. I know that the Treasurer has impeccable qualities when it comes to doing the right thing. What he did is that immediately he found out about this he contacted the Under Treasurer and the Under Treasurer has made an apology. The mistake happened within the department. I understand that that apology has been given. As I have said, and I will say it again, the Treasurer has made a full and frank explanation to this House today. It was full; it was comprehensive. He put all of the facts on the table in relation to this very important issue.

Treasurer

Mr NICHOLLS: My second question is to the Premier. I refer to the tabled letter signed by the Under Treasurer apologising to Mr Smith and the Premier's most recent reference to the Treasurer having impeccable qualities. When will the Premier direct the Treasurer to personally apologise for the actions of his office and the way Tony Smith has been treated? Wouldn't that be impeccable?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Once again, as I have clearly outlined, the Treasurer has made a detailed explanation. The problem actually occurred in the department. People do make mistakes. People in the department make mistakes but I will tell those opposite one thing: we do not sack the public servants in this state. Do they want to go back through the records of the Leader of the Opposition when he was Treasurer and see how he treated public servants in this state? The Leader of the Opposition sits there and shakes his head. He should be shaking his head in shame, Mr Speaker.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: There were 14,000 people who lost their jobs.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, Premier. We are not going to have a debate.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is how they—

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, please resume your seat. I am going to rule that you have answered the question.

Film Industry

Mr BROWN: My question is to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on efforts to attract more major films and blockbusters to Queensland?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Capalaba for the very important question about attracting more films to Queensland. We know that if we have a permanent film industry in this state it means jobs for Queenslanders. What we have seen over the last few weeks with *Thor: Ragnarok* being filmed right here on the streets of Brisbane is jobs for not just the actors and the cameramen but also the people involved in construction, costume design, catering and transport. When the whole crew moved up from the Gold Coast, it actually meant they were able to have accommodation and dine in the restaurants so there was a whole buzz in Brisbane itself.

I was very fortunate that the Deputy Premier and the Treasurer were able to accompany me to the film set of *Thor: Ragnarok*. Never before have we had so many Hollywood A-list stars on the streets of Brisbane—Chris Hemsworth, Tom Hiddleston, Anthony Hopkins, Cate Blanchett and Mark Ruffalo, just to name a few. We saw Brisbane turn into New York City if only for a few days. It was great exposure for our city. The stories went not just nationally but internationally and it meant a huge economic stimulus for Brisbane and the local businesses. Filming continues on the Gold Coast.

I am very committed to ensuring that we get more movies filmed here in Queensland. That is why a couple of weeks ago I met with Disney executives who had flown out to meet with me on the Gold Coast. We discussed a couple of extra films that could be filmed on the Gold Coast and here in

Queensland. The Queensland government has put our money on the table. We have a \$30 million package over four years to attract the film industry to Queensland. What we need to see is Malcolm Turnbull and the federal government step up to the plate to increase their federal offset, their tax incentive, from 16.5 per cent to 30 per cent.

I have seen reports, and I can confirm, that there is a competition at the moment for a walk-on role for *Thor*. I am quite sure there will be some interest in the House—perhaps also from our journalist colleagues—for those who may want a walk-on role in *Thor* so they can put their talents to use. They can audition and, who knows, the next Chris Hemsworth could be sitting in this chamber.

Treasurer

Mr EMERSON: My question is to the Treasurer. I refer to the tabled letter from Ports North. Will the Treasurer unreservedly apologise to Mr Tony Smith?

Mr PITT: I thank the honourable member for the question. At the outset, can I comment on the demeanour of his questioning today after receiving a very full explanation about what has occurred. The question I would rhetorically ask back to the member would be—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr PITT: Mr Speaker, they ask a serious question yet they make light.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: We will wait.

Mr PITT: As I mentioned earlier, the story that appeared in the *Cairns Post* today is factually incorrect because it talks about there being a privacy breach from my office. There has been no privacy breach from my office—whether it be my ministerial office or my electorate office. Let us make that clear. The member for Indooroopilly and others on the other side are trying to use this as political opportunists but they need to understand that. In relation to the gentleman concerned, I have not used his name in any context because I am making sure I am respecting his privacy in full, regardless of whether it is a matter about how sensitive information or an inquiry is handled. I have not used the gentleman's name deliberately but those opposite have no problems with that.

The question that I would ask would be this: why did the *Cairns Post* write the story the way they did? Is it because the LNP approached them and tried to make a story where there was not one? Quite possibly, that could be the case. That is a question those opposite need to answer. I will be really clear. As I said in my statement earlier today—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr PITT: Mr Speaker, do they want the answer or not?

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I am going to listen to the minister's response.

Mr PITT: Thank you, Mr Speaker. As I said in my statement earlier today, the course of action that has been taken by Ports North—which I have had no visibility of until it has been presented to me—has of course been an overreaction. I would never advise nor would I ever support that kind of approach being taken. In the same way, I asked the Under Treasurer for answers as to why this breach of privacy occurred. He is undertaking an investigation currently but he has unreservedly apologised to the gentleman concerned.

The way we do things in my part of the world when we as a local MP or a minister receive correspondence challenging a comment we have made or a policy position is that we take it on the chin and we move on. I took this for what it was—that is, someone having their say. We on this side of the House allow people to have an opinion, unlike what those opposite did in their time in office. At the end of the investigation period, I will be actually speaking with the gentleman concerned. The way we do things in Far North Queensland is that I will be happy to sit down with him, have a beer and discuss the issues he wanted to raise in his first email to me.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Indooroopilly, if you persist with that you will be warned under standing order 252.

Mr Pitt interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I do not need your assistance, Treasurer. I think we can all do better.

Mr SEENEY: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. You warned the member for Indooroopilly and then the member for Mulgrave made an interjection across the chamber. I would suggest the member for Mulgrave warranted a warning if not similar to the one you gave the member for Indooroopilly then of greater severity.

Mr SPEAKER: I will give a warning to all members and—

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I rise to a point of order, Mr Speaker. I want to draw to your attention that during that interchange clearly the member for Indooroopilly was consistently and constantly interjecting. That was what I had interpreted you were calling him to order on and giving him a pre warning to that effect. The member for Mulgrave made one comment across the chamber which I am sure he regrets. That is not necessarily a requirement for a general warning.

Mr SPEAKER: I will ask the Treasurer to withdraw the comments you made, please.

Mr PITT: I am happy to withdraw.

Construction Industry

Mr KELLY: My question is of the Deputy Premier. I ask: will the Deputy Premier update the House on the commencement of construction projects in Queensland and whether the Deputy Premier is aware of any alternative approaches?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for Greenslopes for the question. Of course, the member for Greenslopes and every other member on this side of the House is actually interested in the Queensland economy and creating jobs in the construction sector for the Queensland economy. The Palaszczuk Labor government is getting on with the job of building Queensland—\$40 billion over four years supporting tens of thousands of jobs. We are getting on with projects like Gold Coast Light Rail Stage 2 and the upgrade to Kawana Way. The data that is coming through from the ABS is showing that our efforts are working.

The data released last week by the ABS shows that construction work done in Queensland increased in the quarter to June this year by 2.7 per cent, up to \$9.47 billion. The same data also shows that engineering construction over the same quarter increased for the first time in 10 quarters following the completion of LNG projects. Public investment over the quarter has increased by 20 per cent. This means more work underway; it means more jobs for Queenslanders. We are bringing Queensland back after three years of inaction under the former Newman government of which the Leader of the Opposition was the treasurer. There are those opposite who still want to keep the handbrake on the construction industry.

I was fascinated recently to read that the member for Southport has asked that the state intervene to stop the construction of a development on the site of the old Southport hospital. I would like to table a copy of the media report for the benefit of the House. The member for Southport, in fact, was the assistant minister who put the block of land on the market. There he is, and I table a copy of that for the benefit of the House.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Gold Coast Sun*, dated 25 August 2016, titled 'Haste on hospital site decision could be a waste' [1412].

Tabled paper: Photograph of the member for Southport, Mr Rob Molhoek MP, at a construction site [1413].

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you. We do not need a prop.

Ms TRAD: Let's be clear; the block of land went on the market in 2014. The assistant minister at the time was happy to sell it. Now he is asking if the Palaszczuk Labor government can intervene to stop it. What did the Property Council have to say about this? They were scathing to say the least. Let me quote—

The local property industry will be disappointed with Rob Molhoek's suggestion that the State Government take its time in developing the old Gold Coast Hospital site ... With the property industry providing jobs on the Gold Coast, projects like the redevelopment of the old hospital site should be embraced—not put on the backburner.

On this side of the House we want these projects to go ahead; on that side of the House they want them to stop.

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I urge the member for Albert when we finish question time to please see parliamentary staff about a cushion. That is because regularly when people interject I can see them; I know who I am talking about. Member for Albert, often I am looking at you and you are looking at me. I am not sure if it is coming from you or some of your associates, so I would urge you to get a cushion.

Foreign Investors, Transfer Duty Surcharge

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: My question without notice is to the Premier. The property industry contributes \$34 billion to the Queensland economy. I ask: is it acceptable that just weeks before the start of a new property investment tax the Treasurer describes its application as being as clear as mud?

Ms PALASZCZUK: It is good to see that the opposition is talking up our good economic figures. It is good to see that she is reading that into the public record. The outline of the foreign investor tax has actually been very well canvassed as part of our budget. Mr Speaker, as you know—

Mr Nicholls interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I apologise for interrupting you, Premier. Leader of the Opposition, I would urge you to allow the Premier a chance to answer the question. If you believe she is not relevant, you can rise on a point of order and ask on the issue of relevance.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Let me make it very clear for those opposite that it is for overseas investors. What we also know is that this foreign investors tax is also on residential property in New South Wales and Victoria. In fact, those rates are substantially higher than in Queensland.

Why is my government doing that? Very clearly we are doing that because we have actually increased the home owner's grant from \$15,000 to \$20,000 to once again put more money into the economy, to get housing construction moving, especially for first home owner buyers. That is the way we were able to deliver that reform.

When I move around Queensland, whether it is South-East Queensland or in the regions, people are telling me that that increase in the first home owner's grant will actually give them the opportunity to own their own home. With more construction happening in the housing market it means more jobs for Queenslanders. It means more jobs for tradies. Those opposite should actually be supporting us in this very important measure because at the end of the day—

Mr Hart interjected.

Mrs Frecklington: You went to the election and said no new taxes.

Ms PALASZCZUK: So rude!

Mr SPEAKER: One moment, Premier. You have paused, so I would like to make two rulings. Member for Burleigh, you are warned under standing order 253A for your repetitive interjections. Deputy Leader of the Opposition, you are now warned under standing order 253A in relation to your continual interjections. If you want to raise an issue in relation to relevance, you know the standing orders; you can rise on a matter of relevance. You have not chosen to do that, so you are also warned under 253A. Premier, have you got anything further you would like to add?

Ms Palaszczuk: No.

Liberal National Party

Ms BOYD: My question is of the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer advise of any recent statements by the LNP relating to any alternative policies that may be planned for Queensland and how these policies would be funded?

Mr PITT: I thank the honourable member for the question, a very hardworking member in this House and someone who is interested in what happens in terms of our economic performance and the improvements that we have seen under the Palaszczuk government as opposed to the former treasurer, who now wants to be the alternative leader of this state.

There are three things we know about the Leader of the Opposition. Firstly, the Leader of the Opposition is running around making policy commitments. Secondly, he has been too lazy to develop an economic plan after 18 months. For a former treasurer that is quite sad and quite concerning indeed. The third thing we know is that he has already racked up an \$8 billion black hole. How has he done that? Let us talk about that a bit further.

That \$8 billion revenue black hole, thanks to the member for Indooroopilly and the member for Clayfield, comprises \$2 billion for their refusal to use the defined benefit scheme surplus for infrastructure spending; \$2 billion for their refusal to back the defined benefit super scheme surplus for debt pay down. Therefore, they still need to find \$800 million that we are saving in interest repayments as a result of our plan. There is \$2 billion for the scrapping of the government's contribution pause to the defined benefit scheme that we announced in last year's budget. There is also the scrapping of the three per cent surcharge on foreign buyers of residential property—and we have just talked about that

in this House—something that will yield \$90 million for the state over the forward estimates. We are not charging Queenslanders, but charging foreigners to pay their way, as they should, for the infrastructure and services that they will use.

The opposition leader attacks his own policy, his 3.5 per cent indexation policy, that he himself put in play across the forward estimates as treasurer. Now he does not like it. He does not like it when we are in government, but he loved it when he was in government. He keeps going. He talked about the fact that it adds an extra \$345 million. There is \$750 million that they oppose in terms of our GOC cash management initiatives. There is also their opposition to the Energex and Ergon merger. That is \$680 million in savings that they are willing to forego. They wanted to sell them. Of course, now they are very interested in what we are going to do with the merger.

The \$8 billion hole is the result of the member for Indooroopilly, the member for Clayfield and all of those opposite who would not back our plan in. They would be very happy to try to take some of this money and use it if they actually come up with any real policy, but right now they are \$8 billion behind the eight ball.

There is no promise, but there is a way they might try and fill this black hole. When they talked about the right-sizing of the public service, I was thinking. They keep saying that we have 8,000 government workers too many, we are 8,000 heavy—that is apparently what that they say—because that is what it was in the year 2000. Why that year? Who knows; maybe you could ask Peter Costello. When we talk about the 8,000, \$100,000 is the multiplier that we use in terms of the salary. On this measure of 8,000, with \$100,000 as the average wage that gets you one tenth of the way back to filling the \$8 billion black hole. They have nothing, they know nothing and they are waiting to be an accidental government.

Treasurer

Mr POWELL: My question without notice is to the Premier. I table a media article from last week in which the Treasurer is accused by senior Labor sources of being incapable and a dead weight.

Tabled paper: Bundle of articles from the *Courier-Mail*, dated 24 August 2016, regarding the Treasurer and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Minister for Sport, Hon. Curtis Pitt [1414].

I ask: Premier, why should Queenslanders have any confidence in your Treasurer when your own colleagues do not?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Our Treasurer has delivered a very responsible and measured budget. In fact, he has delivered two of my government's budgets since coming to office, and I will back my Treasurer over the former treasurer any day of the week. We can go through the whole list of what the former Newman government inflicted upon this state and what this Treasurer has had to do to fix the mess that the LNP government left. If you want to look at a legacy item of the former treasurer you do not have to look any further than 1 William Street, which he wants to name after Campbell Newman. I think it should be called the Newman-Nicholls-Blejje-Seeney-Springborg building, because they were all part of the debacle that they inflicted. At the end of the day—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: We might pause the clock for a moment.

Ms PALASZCZUK: You cannot bring Peter Beattie into it: he had nothing to do with building the building. At the end of the day, Queenslanders will not even own the building, but they have to pay for the rent—

Mr SEENEY: I rise to a point of order.

Mr SPEAKER: One moment, Premier.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Over—

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, one moment. Premier—

Ms PALASZCZUK:—\$2 billion—

Mr SPEAKER: Premier—

Ms PALASZCZUK: Oh, you don't like it.

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, no—

Ms PALASZCZUK: Oh, I left out Seeney.

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, resume your seat!

Ms PALASZCZUK: Sorry, I left out Seeney!

Mr SPEAKER: Premier!

Ms PALASZCZUK: I left out Seeney.

Mr SPEAKER: Premier! Before I ask the member for Callide for his point of order, I would urge the Premier to speak through me. Then she will see if I am on my feet asking for order. Member for Callide, what is your point of order?

Mr SEENEY: I have a number of points of order.

Mr SPEAKER: Let us start with the first.

Mr SEENEY: Mr Speaker, you have warned a number of members of this House for continuing to speak when you are on your feet. I think what we saw from the Premier was the most blatant example of that that I have seen in the term of this parliament.

Mr SPEAKER: What is your point of order?

Mr SEENEY: My point of order is that the Premier should be warned for that, as you have warned previous members for less severe transgressions of that rule.

Mr SPEAKER: What are your other points of order?

Mr SEENEY: Do I get a ruling on that point of order?

Mr SPEAKER: You will get a ruling. Yes, you will eventually. What are your other points of order, member for Callide?

Mr SEENEY: My further point of order relates to the question that was asked by the member for Glass House. The question that was asked by the member for Glass House relates to the Treasurer and the Premier's confidence in the Treasurer. This side of the House is prepared to debate the record of the former government any time the Premier likes—

Mr SPEAKER: I do not need a statement. What is your point of order?

Mr SEENEY: The question was not about the record of the former government. The question was about the record of the current Treasurer, and the Premier should answer the question.

Mr SPEAKER: What is your next point of order?

Mr SEENEY: Those are my two points.

Mr SPEAKER: In relation to the first point of order—

Ms PALASZCZUK: I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, I apologise. I was actually looking to this side of the House. I did not see you on your feet and I apologise.

Mr SPEAKER: The Premier has apologised; I accept the apology. In relation to the other point of order, I rule that the Premier's answer was relevant to the question that was asked. The next question is from the member for Logan.

Nurses

Mr POWER: My question is to the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services. Will the minister please update the House on the government's nursing initiatives?

Mr DICK: I thank the member for Logan for his question and also for his dedication, as so many members in this House have, to nursing in Queensland. The member for Logan knows that if you want to improve health care, if you want to provide better patient outcomes and if you want to make a difference at the health front line, you do it through backing and supporting nurses. I can tell the House that in 2015-16, due to an array of measures implemented by the Palaszczuk Labor government, 2,081 graduate nurses found employment in the Queensland health system. Every graduate from a nursing degree course in Queensland last year was able to get a job in Queensland because of the processes, programs and initiatives being implemented by this government. That is in stark contrast to what we inherited as a government.

We have heard a lot today about people apologising for threatening people about their jobs. What happened under the last government? Under the oversight of the then treasurer, now member for Clayfield, 1,800 nurses and midwives were sacked. They did not get a warning, and I am still waiting for the apology.

Mr Nicholls: At least I was not sacked by the electorate like you were!

Mr DICK: He is yelling out now because he knows that he sacked 1,800 nurses and midwives with no warning and, to this day, no apology. Since he became the leader with the full support—one third—of his parliamentary party, he has returned to his two policy obsessions: selling public assets and sacking public servants. To the member for Clayfield, right sizing means downsizing. We know he was so obsessed with that policy frolic about Strong Choices that he put it on his Christmas card and sent it out to Queenslanders, but all of those nurses who were sacked know that, when it comes to Christmas, the Leader of the Opposition is all sack and no Santa. That is what the Leader of the Opposition is: all sack and no Santa at Christmastime.

We stand with our nurses and support the vital work they do across Queensland. I was pleased to be at Berrinba East State School in the mighty electorate of Woodridge, which is often run down by members of the opposition, but I am supporting the people of Woodridge. We are now implementing the Primary School Nurse Health Readiness Program, where 31 nurses will work across Queensland next year. We are already rolling it out. It will mean that every child in every prep classroom in Queensland will have their vision checked, both in the public system and the non-state system. I thank the Minister for Education for her support, because if we can pick up these problems early their vision can be fixed, we can have them learning and we can have them on the path—

(Time expired)

Treasurer

Mr BLEIJIE: My question is to the Premier. Given that the CCIQ has claimed that the Palaszczuk government is anti business and with the reported chorus of criticism from business leaders and Labor insiders towards the embattled Treasurer, I ask: why should Queenslanders have confidence in her Treasurer if Queensland's peak business body and her Labor Party colleagues do not?

Ms PALASZCZUK: As I said, the Treasurer delivered our first two budgets honouring our election commitment to Queenslanders, and that is generating jobs for Queenslanders. We have created more jobs in 18 months than those opposite did in three years in office. Debt is lower; unemployment is lower; growth is higher. We have heard today from the tourism minister and myself that overseas visitor numbers to our great state are up. We had a tourism summit last week and a number of our caucus members attended. There were over 300 industry leaders backing what we are doing, including the Treasurer, to grow tourism in this state.

At the end of last year we had the North Queensland Economic Summit, focusing on the potential North Queensland has. Earlier this year the Treasurer, the Deputy Premier and all of my cabinet ministers attended our first-ever Advance Queensland Innovation and Investment Summit. We are determined to grow jobs in this state, unlike those opposite. What we have seen today from the member for Callide is extraordinary. Those opposite do not like talking about the past, because it is a constant reminder of the pain they inflicted on Queenslanders.

Today the Treasurer and the Minister for Employment announced that we will be conducting a review of trading hours in this state. You do not get more pro business than that. The people of Queensland can have confidence in all of my ministers, including the Treasurer. They can have confidence in us delivering on what we said we would do. Every single one of my team—every single government member—will work hard to make sure we rebuild the front-line services in this state that were cut so savagely. Members have just heard the Minister for Health talking about the cuts we saw to nurses and doctors. The detriment to the Queensland economy happened on their watch, and those responsible are still sitting in this House. We will continue to remind Queenslanders.

(Time expired)

Education

Mrs LAUGA: My question is to the Minister for Education. Can the minister explain what 'right sizing' means for Queensland and for education in our schools?

Ms JONES: I thank the honourable member for her question. I know that the member for Keppel has been a strong advocate not only for her school communities but also for the teachers who work in those schools. That is why, as the Premier has just articulated, we went to the election with a very clear, strong contrast between what we would do in government and what the government before us had done. We know that when the former member for Ashgrove, Campbell Newman, talked about right

sizing, he meant in Education that we would lose 500 teachers. That is exactly what he and his good mate the member for Clayfield did when they were in government. They cut 500 teachers from classrooms right across this state.

I believe that there is a growing body of evidence that shows that the honourable member for Clayfield does not have the judgement or the temperament to be Leader of the Opposition let alone premier of this state.

An opposition member interjected.

Ms JONES: Members should not take my word for it; they should take it from the member who is interjecting right now, who felt that he should stand against the member for Clayfield when there was a ballot for the position of Leader of the Opposition. As we all know, it was a three-way tilt, and the member for Clayfield scraped over the line by only two votes.

A government member interjected.

Ms JONES: I take the interjection: I understand that he won by three votes. Today three comments have been made by the honourable member for Clayfield that are directly relevant to the question, which was about saying that if those opposite got back into government they would right-size services in this state. We know that right sizing means cutting teachers, cutting nurses and midwives from our hospitals and reducing and cutting the public servants that support them in the great work they do.

Today the member for Clayfield had another clanger, comparing Queensland to Stalinist Russia. He wants to be the premier of Queensland and he is comparing our state to Stalinist Russia? We also saw him act against the good counsel and good advice of Liberal Party luminaries such as Rob Borbidge—a statesman of our state—not to get in bed with One Nation. That advice fell on deaf ears.

There have been three examples this week—there might be a couple more that I will not go into—of the member for Clayfield failing to show judgement and failing to take a measured approach but instead making flippant remarks. I say to the people of Queensland: do not listen—

An opposition member interjected.

Ms JONES: I take the interjection from the person who voted for Lawrence Springborg. I know that you voted for JPL—and the member for Albert, who needs a pillow so he can be seen from where he has been sent to—

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. I think you have answered the question.

Foreign Investors, Transfer Duty Surcharge

Mr KRAUSE: My question without notice is to the Premier. I table a media release from May last year titled 'No new state taxes for foreign property investors: Queensland Treasurer'.

Tabled paper. Media release, undated, by the Treasurer, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Hon. Curtis Pitt, titled 'No new State taxes for foreign property investors: Queensland Treasurer' [\[1415\]](#).

How can business leaders have any confidence in the Treasurer when he so shamelessly breaks his promise to them?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for the question. As I outlined previously, the reason the government introduced that foreign investment surcharge for residential property is so that we can deliver an opportunity for people to own their own home in Queensland. I went through this in detail—to increase it from \$15,000 to \$20,000. Yes, we as a government had to make some tough decisions. That is the—

Mr Bleijie: Five minutes ago it was a tax; now it is a surcharge.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Oh, a tax. The member for Kawana has been very quiet this week. It is good to see that he is coming out of his shell a bit today.

Ms Jones: Crawling out of a hole.

Ms PALASZCZUK: He is crawling out.

Ms Trad interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, members. The Premier has taken the member for Kawana's interjection and is now responding.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I explained it at length. The budget is responsible. We will make sure we continue to grow investment in this state and make sure we deliver jobs throughout Queensland.

Queen's Wharf

Mr SAUNDERS: My question is of the Minister for State Development. Will the minister outline to the House the opportunities that the Queen's Wharf project will provide for Queenslanders?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for Maryborough for his question.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Callide, I would urge you to consider your interjections.

Dr LYNHAM: I know that job creation is a big issue in his region and I know that he is very interested in any opportunity to identify potential jobs and business opportunities for his constituents.

The biggest show in town right now might be the Queen's Wharf Brisbane development here in the CBD, but there is real opportunity for regional Queensland from this development here in South-East Queensland. My Department of State Development and the Queen's Wharf Brisbane consortium partner, Star Entertainment Group, are literally taking this \$3 billion project on the road. Star and supply chain experts from my department are rolling out a regional roadshow advising businesses how they can have a piece of one of Brisbane's largest commercial developments.

The Queen's Wharf Brisbane developers want to showcase what is essentially Queensland, particularly seafood, fruit and vegetables and Indigenous ingredients. As Star's executive chef Steven Jones says of Queensland's produce, 'There is nothing like it in the world.' I am pleased to advise honourable members that their constituents are taking up the opportunity with gusto. So far more than 300 people have attended events in Toowoomba, Maroochydore and Mackay.

Opposition members interjected.

Dr LYNHAM: It is a Latin term; you wouldn't understand it!

There are people who know an opportunity when they see one, because this project is going to create decades of supplier opportunities, whether it is raw products, trades or services. As I said on the Fraser Coast last week, wouldn't the local community there love to see all those tourists in those new cafes and restaurants eating Hervey Bay scallops, Tin Can Bay prawns and Tiaro beef?

There are some real opportunities for the Wide Bay-Burnett. That is why DSD will be in Maryborough on 6 October with Star to hold one of these information sessions. I would highly recommend that local businesses and producers get along and see what this massive project can offer them. I send this same message to Central Queensland, where the member for Keppel is representing me at one of these workshops in Rockhampton next week. There is another at Springfield on 20 October, Gold Coast on 27 October, Townsville on 23 November and Cairns on 24 November. I am sure that everyone in this chamber would like to see their local constituents lining up for this opportunity.

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Cook, member for Redlands, you are warned under standing order 253A for your continual interjections. You are disrupting the House.

Cape York Peninsula, Health Services

Mr GORDON: My question is directed to the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services. Can the minister please outline for the benefit of the House the government's level of commitment to transitioning government-led primary health care to Indigenous community-led primary healthcare delivery on Cape York Peninsula?

Mr DICK: I thank the member for his question and I know that he is very committed to supporting community-led healthcare services in the cape, as we all are. We want to support them appropriately and effectively as a government. I do know that a lot of work has been done and recently there was a strategic high-level meeting involving the AMA, the Northern Queensland Primary Health Network, the Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service and the Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Service to work through issues about better integration of health care in the cape. I would like to see that process progress first, and community-led health services also participated in that, including Apunipima. I would like to see that process work. I would like to see what the outcome of that strategic work delivers first.

One of the challenges we have in health care, as the member for Cook would realise, particularly on the cape, is getting all constituent parts of health care working together, and that is a challenge for our health system. We have two governments that fund health care. We have two providers—the federal government and the state government—funding different levels of health care including the interaction between primary health care, which is where a lot of the work of the community-led health

services in the cape work is done, with acute hospitals and health clinics, many of which are run by the state system in the cape. In the short term we want to work together. We want to see what the outcome of that is. We have to get those systems working together anyway, and this is not just a matter for the cape; it is also a matter for the rest of Queensland. We want to make sure that they work closely together. I do not rule out further transfer of responsibilities. I do not rule out strengthening other parts of the system in the cape doing more work or different work, but at this stage I would like to see all participants work together, see what they have to say and then work out where we go from there.

Skills and Training

Mr FURNER: My question is directed to the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills. Will the minister update the House about the Palaszczuk government's commitment to quality in skills and training funding and the need for certainty in its delivery into the future?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for Ferny Grove for his question. The Palaszczuk government is funding skills and training through the VET Investment Plan for 2016-17 with a total figure of \$110.7 million. This is an increase of \$56.1 million from the previous year. This means this government can work with Queenslanders to get the training they need for jobs now and the careers of the future. Programs that have demonstrated continued success are funded by this Queensland government such as the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative which is providing skills, opportunities and career paths right across the state.

With our continued commitment to skills and training in this state, there are many issues at a federal level that are letting Queenslanders down. As the new federal assistant minister takes her role in what must be said appears to be quite the revolving chair—in fact the sixth training minister in three years—she faces significant pressure on a number of fronts. The first is the looming end to the National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform on 30 June next year. The end of the national partnership will result in an approximately \$105 million shortfall in funding available to training in this state. I remind the House that the federal budget contained zero dollars in the forward estimates from 1 July next year to fund training and skills.

My interstate colleagues and I have sought to also ask that, if the agreement is not to be immediately replaced, at the very least there be an extension to the existing national partnership agreement for at least a year to give certainty to the training industry. Again, we have had no response from the federal government on this issue. In fact, the federal government has not even started negotiations on the next National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform. This is deeply concerning not only to the Queensland government but also to the training sector. I urge the new assistant minister, Minister Andrews from Queensland, to open the lines of communication and negotiate with the states in good faith.

The next issue of concern is the urgent need for reform in the VET fee help system. This system is being exploited by unscrupulous providers, agents and the like and is hurting the reputation of the industry and students. The federal government is aware of this issue but has not acted and acted quickly or listened to the industry. There is only a short-term solution at the moment, with Minister Simon Birmingham saying in vague terms that he would fix the system in upcoming legislative changes, except no detail has been shown to Queensland. I would welcome any sort of communication from the federal government about these proposed changes. It is important that we give certainty to the industry, to the training sector and to the students in Queensland.

(Time expired)

Criminal Motorcycle Gangs

Mr HART: My question without notice is directed to the Premier. The Premier has said that the LNP's strong anticriminal gang laws would have effect until the government's repeal of those laws came into effect. How does the Premier explain the clear flouting of those laws last weekend when 100 or so Hells Angels rode through Waterford without any action being taken?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member very much for the question. First and foremost, the matters that he is referring to are operational matters under the leadership of the Police Commissioner. They are operational matters, not matters that I direct the Police Commissioner to do.

Ms Jones: And nor would you.

Ms PALASZCZUK: And nor would I.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, members. The Premier's answer is relevant.

Ms PALASZCZUK: As I said, at the next sitting of parliament the Attorney-General will introduce into this House laws that will tackle all forms of serious organised crime in this state. These are tough laws that the Police Commissioner has endorsed. They have been worked through methodically. We have taken our time to get these laws right. We believe fundamentally in community safety for our citizens across this state. That is why these laws are going to be strong, they are going to be robust and they are going to be workable.

As I have said clearly over the last few days, and I will say again: we want more convictions, not less. Under the VLAD legislation brought in by the former attorney-general, the member for Kawana, let me tell the House how many outlaw motorcycle gangs were convicted. Zero! If people commit crimes, we want them to go through the due process, face the court and if they are found guilty they will go to prison. Let me reiterate once again: the Attorney-General has been working through these laws very carefully. She has taken on the advice. She will now spend the next two weeks meeting with the Bar Association, the Law Society and other interested parties before the laws are introduced into this parliament and they will face the full scrutiny of a parliamentary committee—unlike those former laws introduced by those opposite, debated on the same day and passed that night.

Police Service

Mr WHITING: My question is directed to the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services. Will the minister advise the House on how the Queensland Police Service is ensuring it continues to provide a strong policing presence across Queensland and maintains policing numbers?

Mr BYRNE: Before I answer the member's question, I just wish that the previous question to the Premier could have come to me because I would have given it much more fulsome treatment and really put you in the—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Minister, I would ask you to answer the question please.

Mr BYRNE: Ask me the questions about my portfolio. I thank the member for the question. The Queensland Police Service works hard to attract and retain highly dedicated officers who work tirelessly for Queensland's safety.

Today, following their successful completion of the recruit training program, the Queensland Police Service will welcome on board 37 first-year constables. These men and women from across Queensland have taken a commitment and dedication to their professional life, ensuring that the rest of us can go about their daily lives with a sense of confidence and reassurance that they are there to try to keep us safe. That is their job. It is a task that at times many of us take for granted—and we should not.

To become a police officer, the state of Queensland requires people to undertake a rigorous selection process that involves interviews and intensive assessment, as well as having to fulfil physical requirements and psychological testing. The training program mirrors the organisational requirements and has evolved over the years to ensure that it remains both realistic and professional in respect of the ever-changing and dynamic nature of society and the Queensland Police Service workplace and environment. Throughout the duration of the course, police recruits are trained in firearms, driving, operational skills and tactics, physical education, computers, police history, policies, procedures and, of course, legislation.

Today's graduates will be posted across the state, including nine to the Capricornia district, five to the Wide Bay district, five to the Moreton Bay district, three to the Darling Downs district, four to the Logan district, four to the Gold Coast district and seven to the South Brisbane district. This government is focused on putting more resources into tackling crime and the causes of crime. The Palaszczuk government committed to an extra 266 police across Queensland in the 2015-16 financial year and we have achieved that.

Queenslanders expect a high standard from our officers: impeccable integrity, professionalism and accountability, to name a few of the expectations. Whether it is keeping a tight rein on organised crime, attending domestic violence incidents, or speaking to school students about the dangers of drugs and alcohol, our police are always on the go. I wish the new recruits the very best of luck. I am sure that they will do the service and their communities proud.

In the short time that I have left, I will make a few comments about some other policing matters and how the police are keeping Queenslanders safe. The more bikie gangs get together, the more information we find out about them. If the members opposite think that the Queensland Police Service is not exploiting the value of that to its maximum degree, they are delusional.

Foreign Investors, Transfer Duty Surcharge

Mr WALKER: My question is to the Treasurer. I refer to the press release from the Treasurer last year titled, 'No new State taxes for foreign property investors,' ruling out a foreign buyers surcharge, saying that such a tax would damage confidence and reduce jobs. Does the Treasurer agree with his own comments from last year?

Mr PITT: I thank the honourable member for his question. The member is quite correct. A statement that was released last year talked about us not looking to move into this space. We thought something was going to happen with the Victorian example. Guess what? It did not happen. The Victorian government brought in a three per cent surcharge. In its subsequent budget, it raised that surcharge to seven per cent. As members heard the Premier outline earlier today, before we were able to introduce the surcharge in our budget the New South Wales government flagged that it was going to be putting in place a four per cent budget transfer duty surcharge on foreign buyers of residential property.

We learned over a year that the investment picture did not fall apart. I attended a Master Builders post-budget event where David de Garis, the senior economist for the National Australia Bank, was asked whether the foreign buyers transfer duty surcharge was going to have a significant impact in Queensland like it has in Victoria. His answer was quite simple.

Mr Nicholls: Do you agree with your own statement?

Mr PITT: Mr Speaker, they ask questions; they do not ever want to hear the answers. Clearly, it is not muckraking, so it must be something else.

The Victorian experience has shown—and David de Garis backed it up with his comments—that people will make investment decisions for a range of reasons, but the price point as the decision-maker has not been the three per cent—now seven per cent—charge. The world has not collapsed and we will have a very competitive arrangement in Queensland. Those opposite continue to try to engage in semantics about broken promises. It is really rich to hear those opposite talk about broken promises. They had a list—

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, Treasurer. I do not want you debating the question. Do you have anything further to add?

Mr PITT: Mr Speaker, I certainly do. The member opposite asked whether this was a broken promise. A lot has changed in a year. The \$90 million that we expect to receive in revenue as a result of this measure is something that the members opposite do not support. It is another \$90 million that goes towards the \$8 billion black hole that they are creating. The members opposite cannot come up with an economic plan. Their only economic plan has been asset sales. Clearly, unless they come up with something else, this House can only assume that their plan is asset sales.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, Treasurer. I think you have answered the question.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr Mander interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, members. Member for Everton, I do not need your assistance.

Public Transport, Fares

Ms LINARD: My question is to the Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games. Will the minister provide an update on the results of consultation on the government's Fairer Fares package?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I thank the member for Nudgee for her question and note her very strong commitment to public transport. From January 2017, the Queensland government's Fairer Fares package will benefit more than 93 per cent of public transport users and provide real cost-of-living relief for South-East Queenslanders. Our Fairer Fares package represents the single largest improvement to public transport fares in a decade.

The community feedback on these changes has been overwhelmingly positive. During the consultation period, there were 30,756 visits to the Fairer Fares web page on the TransLink website, with 3,555 customers providing direct feedback via a 10-question survey to inform future fare planning.

Queenslanders have taken the time to evaluate how the Fairer Fares package may change their fares, with 40,579 calculations being made on the online fare calculator. Impressively, a quarter of all survey respondents indicated that they would use more public transport as a result of the Fairer Fares package. Overwhelmingly, the Queensland public responded favourably to the reduction in the number of zones from 23 to eight, with the lower fares across all of those zones.

However, I am concerned because, as best I can tell, one group has not responded to the government's consultation process. Despite industry, commuter and community groups welcoming and supporting the package, there has been a deafening silence from one group in Queensland. The Queensland LNP has been completely mute on the delivery of the Fairer Fares package to the people of South-East Queensland.

I hunted for some further information. I reviewed the package of things that happened at the LNP's state convention over the weekend. I am sorry to report to the parliament that, unfortunately, there was not a motion—not a peep—about Fairer Fares or public transport. But there still might be hope. The local LNP branch of the shadow minister for transport, the member for Glass House, had a helpful idea. Resolution 79 was to establish an ideas office. There you have it—the ideas office for the brains trust opposite. The Fairer Fare reforms are great news for Queenslanders. They will ease cost-of-living pressures.

Ms Palaszczuk: Did it get up?


Mr HINCHLIFFE: I do not know whether it got up. I think ideas got voted down. They were not big on ideas at the LNP convention. There were probably a whole lot of motions against science as well. I think ideas would be in danger. Fairer Fares is a great package for South-East Queensland. I call on the LNP to jump in behind it.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, members. Question time has expired.

ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF TOOWOOMBA SOUTH

First Speech

Mr SPEAKER: Before calling the honourable member for Toowoomba South, I remind all members that this is the member's first speech and should be listened to with the courtesies reserved for such occasions.

 **Mr JANETZKI** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (3.58 pm): It is an honour to rise today to deliver my maiden speech as the newly elected member for Toowoomba South. I thank the electors for their support and undertake to represent their collective interests to the best of my ability and with humility, integrity and dignity.

My earliest political memory was a fire-and-brimstone speech from Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen at the Maclagan Hall at the foot of the Bunya Mountains. I cannot remember much of it—I was eight years old—but I went home that night in no doubt about the greatness of Queensland; a Queensland that was bold and visionary. Thirty years later I am extraordinarily humbled to follow in the footsteps of bold and visionary leaders in Toowoomba South.

The electorate was created in 1972 and I am fortunate to know the three most recent members, Clive Berghofer AM OAM, the honourable Mike Horan AM and the honourable Dr John McVeigh. I pay tribute to their understanding of Toowoomba and the Darling Downs and their vision beyond the horizon. I thank them for their friendship and wise advice. All of them are figures of substance and this parliament and our state has been enriched by their contribution.

My ancestors settled on the Darling Downs in the mid to late 1800s, fleeing religious persecution. I carry a Polish name but my ancestors arrived from Prussia, now in Northern Germany. Braving high seas in wooden boats and with few possessions they brought their vocations—mostly farmers—their craftsmanship and their cuisine—cured meats, salted potatoes done a thousand different ways and baked goods. My late grandmother's cooking carried me and my mates through university. How I wish the late Alice Marriage was here to see this day with my late grandfather, a great influence on my life. Set against that regret, I am blessed to have my 94-year-old paternal grandmother here today, my godparents and other extended family members in the gallery.

Through the generations my family have worked the land and, like all rural families, devoted themselves to public service: the church, the CWA, the local shire council and the agricultural show movement. That carries through to this day with my father serving as the president of the Darling Downs Sub Chamber of Agricultural Societies, the largest subchamber in Queensland. Thankfully my maiden speech fell on a Wednesday rather than closer to a weekend show as Dad would have had a tough call to make as to which event to attend.

My father cleared our property, milked cows and, with my mother, raised my brother and me on sheer hard work, ingenuity and faith. We did not have much and my parents battled through my brother's leukaemia, a harsh and difficult environment and tough economic times to send me to boarding school at Concordia Lutheran College in the heart of Toowoomba South where I became head boarder boy and school captain.

After school, studying law at the University of Queensland helped me understand the strength of our democratic institutions. Studying economics taught me that we need to make the best of our limited resources to improve everyone's lives. Economics shapes politics, society and ultimately history. Adam Smith and JS Mill resonated more deeply than Marx and Keynes and accordingly sharpened my political world view. Government interference in the proper functioning of a market, or governments attempting to pick industry winners, should be avoided. Governments must stand guard to address market distortions or deficiencies but should otherwise stand clear and let enterprise do what it does best: create jobs, drive entrepreneurship and deliver prosperity to hardworking people everywhere.

Our world is complicated and conflicted, but I have always strived in my professional life to simplify arguments, clarify issues, empower others and achieve compromise where possible. It has been a privilege to work as a lawyer with some of Queensland's finest legal minds at ClarkeKann and Corrs Chambers Westgarth, in senior leadership positions at Heritage Bank and on boards like Opera Queensland with some of our state's finest business and governance minds.

In his maiden speech, the first member for Toowoomba South, Labor's deeply respected Peter Wood, lamented that 'Toowoomba is at a distinct geographic disadvantage when compared with the Brisbane area and the ports between Brisbane and Cairns' and that 'it has not been able to develop and grow at the same rate as has the Brisbane area.' The honourable member went on to catalogue Toowoomba's transport woes, including road and rail shortcomings. That has been Toowoomba's heritage. But what lies ahead is an era of promise where Toowoomba's future is bounded only by the limits of our imagination. The Toowoomba region's population is expected to expand by 40 per cent by 2031. The region is currently experiencing a \$10 billion infrastructure and investment boom, including the long-sought-after second range crossing, and has justifiable aspirations of becoming Australia's largest inland port. The visionary Wagner family's Wellcamp airport has our primary producers, manufacturers and services exporters a 12-hour flight from 50 per cent of the world's population. The proposed inland rail will have these same businesses within a 12-hour rail journey from 85 per cent of Australia's markets.

Our economy's diversity across agriculture, health, construction, property, education, finance and transport fosters a secure investment environment and allows us to absorb external shocks. Our economy remains underpinned by small family businesses that stand to gain from the improvements in transport and logistics capabilities. Fourteen thousand locally registered ABNs speak volumes of the streak of self-determination and ingenuity that has always set our city apart.

This streak of ingenuity can be seen everywhere in 21st century Toowoomba. With the decline of manufacturing in Victoria and New South Wales over the last 40 years Queensland has exponentially grown its share of the manufacturing industry pie. A pie, at least in my view, that remains too small nationally. Locally, Toowoomba's Russell Mineral Equipment, RME, has created revolutionary technology that substantially cuts the time taken to reline a grinding mill, saving miners a fortune in downtime. My former employer, Heritage Bank, is Australia's largest customer owned bank. It also serves as Australia's largest issuer of prepaid cards, drawing on cutting-edge payment systems technology to partner with national brands like Optus, Qantas and Australia Post. Elsewhere in Toowoomba the FKG Group has commenced construction of a technology park that will house data centres and disaster recovery capabilities. It will be home to start-ups that will create jobs for researchers, scientists, game designers, app creators and software developers.

Toowoomba's ingenuity also sees it widely recognised as Australia's social enterprise capital, with a range of businesses giving the dignity of work to those suffering a disability or long-term mental illness. They include the award-winning Bounce cafe and Ability Enterprises which works in partnership

with the Toowoomba Regional Council to employ disadvantaged jobseekers to operate the boom gates of the region's waste facilities and KBH Enterprises to supply the survey pegs for the second range crossing construction. In the heart of Toowoomba South, a social enterprise laundry, driven by the energy of award-winning social entrepreneur Luke Terry—and I acknowledge Luke in the gallery today—is currently under construction. It will employ a further 40 people with lived experience of mental illness and will stand as a beacon to social enterprises across the nation. Social enterprise development has been the most rewarding community work I have ever done. By harnessing the power of the market we can create sustainable jobs for those who need them and the whole community stands to benefit.

Toowoomba is changing in exciting ways. We enjoy a flourishing street food, coffee and craft beer scene popping up in laneways, restored warehouses, antique stores and retro Art Deco buildings. Local coffee institution Ground Up was awarded the seventh best cafe in Australia as voted in the 2016 Top Cafe in Australia awards. The arts, the beating heart of any city, revolves around our beautiful Empire Theatres which was restored by civic leaders well ahead of their time.

Toowoomba's sporting pedigree is legendary and we lay claim to some of Australia's finest Rugby League, Rugby Union, hockey, athletics, cricketing and motorsport greats. That pedigree was recently enhanced as Toowoomba athletes took home gold medals out of the women's Rugby Sevens at the Rio Olympic Games.

Toowoomba may be changing, but one thing that never changes is the beauty of our Carnival of Flowers. In my first shameless effort at boosting local tourism, I encourage all members to head west in the next few weeks to the Carnival of Flowers. If you have never seen Toowoomba in spring, you just haven't lived!

What may surprise honourable members is the diversity of our 21st century city. I acknowledge our city's first peoples, the Giabal and Jarowair. Today our city's Islamic community, led by Professor Shahjahan Khan, is planning the construction of a purpose-built mosque in Toowoomba South. Together with other faith communities and under the strong leadership of my good friend Mayor Paul Antonio, our city works very hard to create a harmonious community where other people's beliefs are respected. We look forward to shortly welcoming Orthodox Christian refugees from war-torn Syria to our fair city.

The diversity of our city is most obvious at one of my primary schools, Darling Heights State Primary School, which has an enrolment of 650 students. Of those, 275 students were born overseas, with 307 students speaking English as a second language. There are 39 countries of birth, with 37 languages spoken in their homes, Arabic, Swahili and Dinka to name but a few. Principal Mark Creedon leads a harmonious community where the diverse ethnic, religious and social groups work cooperatively with a common purpose: the best for every child.

Our city's diversity runs into my own family, with my elder daughter bearing a Nigerian middle name, Itiovie, in honour of a dear friend of my wife and I who was killed in a car accident a few weeks after we all left high school. Itiovie's family, the Jegede family, were 1990s African pioneers in our city, with Itiovie's father lecturing at the University of Southern Queensland and mother working as a GP in our city.

In 2017 the University of Southern Queensland will celebrate 25 years, which will be an opportunity to reflect on how it has brought the world to our doorstep and nourished Toowoomba's intellectual, civic and cultural life. While I may have lectured in banking, finance and insurance law subjects at the university in the past few years, I have fond memories of when I was a student, learning about leadership and teamwork when I played grade cricket for the mighty Phoenix, the University Cricket Club.

Toowoomba's future is bright, but there remain challenges to address. Too often, large-scale development projects are held back through overly complicated regulatory processes. The goal of decentralisation is a work in progress and governments should seek to spread their agencies around the state wherever possible. Toowoomba is always open for business.

Community services funding needs to be appropriately targeted so that the funding better meets the need. Like all regional cities, my community holds serious concerns about homelessness, child and community safety, alcohol and drug abuse, youth unemployment, domestic violence, and mental health. I am committed to helping our incredible community services organisations, too numerous to mention, because the record shows that Toowoomba's heart beats strongly for those suffering among us.

I believe that more needs to be done to improve Toowoomba's public transport system and to develop innovative ecotourism opportunities on our beautiful escarpment to the east of the electorate. There is also work to be done to ensure that the benefits of the extraordinary infrastructure and development boom that we are seeing across our region make their way through to residents and small businesses across the electorate.

Toowoomba South houses the Toowoomba Hospital and the Toowoomba Hospice, 18 aged-care facilities comprising over 1,100 operational places, 24 education facilities and 26 sporting locations. I will be fighting for funding to continue supporting the hardworking men and women who make such a difference to the lives of so many in our city.

No maiden speech can end without giving thanks to the many people who have walked with me on the journey to this House. I thank my campaign manager, Mitchell Haigh, and my energetic team of LNP members, supporters and mates. They are simply the best. The weather on the day of the 16 July by-election was described by none other than the Hon. Ian Macfarlane as 'the worst polling day weather ever'. Mr Macfarlane gamely stuck it out at the booth, as did all the incredibly committed volunteers. I will never forget the efforts of everyone involved that day. They are too numerous to mention by name, but I want to pay one special tribute to a grassroots member of the LNP—and the grassroots are oh so important to our party—Boyd Scheuber, pre-poll volunteer without peer.

I want to thank the LNP organisation, including state President Gary Spence, Lincoln Folo, the inimitable Michael Leighton and Michael O'Dwyer. Their encouragement has made such a difference. I thank the LNP leader, the member for Clayfield, the deputy leader, the member for Nanango, and many of my now parliamentary colleagues for all their help during the campaign, given in so many different ways. In particular, I thank the member for Redlands for his calmness under pressure. Speaking of the campaign, one particularly memorable campaign moment was when the member for Toowoomba North and I decided to go out early one morning in freezing 6 am conditions to do some road-siding. Unfortunately, we had only one pair of gloves between us. We decided to adopt the Michael Jackson approach to campaigning and wore one glove apiece. We got through the cold!

I thank my parents-in-law, Jan and Lyn van der Meulen, and my sister-in-law, Anita, for their love and support. I thank my electorate officers, Kevena Franklin and Janice Nicholson, for all their efforts.

I thank those who have walked the journey the longest, my parents. My mother is the unwaveringly loyal dream planter who believes that education shapes and changes lives. My father is truly the hardest working and most humble man I know. You have both made this day possible. To my brother, Jono, and his wife, Harmony, I am always glad you are on my side. Jono, your tenacity and courage set you apart, mate. I salute you and political volunteers from across the spectrum who are determined to support candidates in nearly unwinnable electorates.

To my wife, Melinda: you have known me since we were 12 years old, from grade 8 English to our years in London as you pursued your opera-singing career across Europe. Through it all, thank you for sharing with me a life of joy, freedom and simplicity. Thank you for sharing this call, which I believe to be an honourable call, to public service. You are and always will be my greatest blessing. Our precious daughters, Elizabeth and Charlotte, are discerning, encouraging, loving and loyal, and as it turns out extremely dedicated, enthusiastic and patient campaigners. When road-siding, I always got more honks on the horn when my two daughters were standing beside me. Mum and I thank God for you both.

One of my teachers at Jondaryan State School, a small country school, incidentally also attended by my predecessor and good mate, John McVeigh, once said to me, 'David, let life be your teacher.' I think there was a touch of exasperation in that comment, but life has been a great teacher to me and I know that this House will be likewise.


I simply aspire to make a small contribution to my community and this House in the years ahead, cultivating a society where family, life, freedom, property rights, individual liberty and economic opportunity are encouraged and where the quiet voices of the disadvantaged, disabled and marginalised might be heard more loudly.

Mr Speaker, no matter whether the time I spend here is short or long, I will be forever humbled to serve the people of the greatest city in the greatest state of all.

FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES (DOMESTIC SMOKE ALARMS) AMENDMENT BILL

FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES (SMOKE ALARMS) AMENDMENT BILL

Cognate Debate

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (4.18 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That, further to the motion agreed by the House on 24 February 2016 regarding the cognate debate on the Fire and Emergency Services (Domestic Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill 2016 and the Fire and Emergency Services (Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill 2015:

- (a) the member for Everton and shadow minister for police, fire and emergency services and shadow minister for corrective services to have carriage of the Fire and Emergency Services (Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill 2015 for its remaining stages; and
- (b) the member for Everton to have the additional speaking times previously allocated to the member for Kawana.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.


Motion agreed to.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION AND REHABILITATION (NATIONAL INJURY INSURANCE SCHEME) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 30 August (see p. 3180), on motion of Ms Grace—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (4.21 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation (National Injury Insurance Scheme) Amendment Bill 2016. When I spoke to the National Injury Insurance Scheme (Queensland) Bill shortly after my appointment as the shadow minister in May, I spoke about the importance of this reform which began under the former LNP government. The establishment of an NIIS is an important step forward in ensuring that no matter a person's situation, when they sustain a serious or catastrophic injury in an accident they will be covered.

This bill is the next step in this process and expands the National Injury Insurance Scheme to include workplace accidents. It aims to ensure that workers who suffer serious personal injuries, as a result of workplace accidents in Queensland, receive necessary and reasonable treatment, care and support payments regardless of fault. We know that oftentimes workplaces can be complex places and accidents can happen. It is important that a transition to an NIIS includes terrible injuries that are sustained as a result of workplace accidents. Under these proposals, we will see injured workers, who can establish that their employer was at fault in relation to their injury, able to elect to opt out of treatment, care and support payments and accept an award of treatment, care and support common law damages. In situations where an injured worker chooses not to or is unable to opt out of their existing care, this will be met through the workers compensation scheme.

This forms part of a move towards the implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme as recommended by the Productivity Commission in their 2011 report. As members will recall, this is a process that was started under the former LNP government. I am pleased to see that this Labor government remains committed to our agenda when it comes to looking out for Queenslanders who suffer serious injuries.

Whilst the LNP has led the way with the establishment of an NIIS and whilst we will not oppose this bill, we are very concerned about a number of its provisions. Of great concern is that this bill proposes to implement the same flawed model for the NIIS for workplace accidents as was used for motor vehicle accidents under the National Injury Insurance Scheme (Queensland) Act 2016.


As I said when I spoke to the NIIS bill in May, it is concerning that this Labor government has failed to deliver the most cost-effective model available for the delivering of the NIIS. This should have been an occasion for bipartisan support but, unfortunately, we have been left to debate this Labor government's model and the costs that will fall on Queenslanders.

At present the model being proposed by the government for the delivery of a NIIS is a hybrid common law and no-fault care and support arrangement. Whilst we do support this bill in principle we still do not support the hybrid model being proposed by the Labor government and neither do the disability advocates that I seek to lend a voice to as the shadow minister.

It is also a shame that this bill reverses the effect of the judgement in *Byrne v People Resourcing (Qld) Pty Ltd & Anor* by prohibiting the contractual transfer of liability for injury costs from a third party, such as a principal contractor, to employers with a workers compensation insurance policy such as contractors. Again, we have a Labor government, following little or no consultation, implementing a policy which will have far-reaching and potentially worrisome consequences for Queensland workers.

We have no evidence that any relevant stakeholders have had their issues addressed in relation to the Byrne amendment, particularly when it comes to the potential for cost-shifting arrangements to leave some workers partially or fully uncovered by insurance. The objective of this bill is to cover more Queenslanders in the event of an injury in the workplace. With Labor's proposed Byrne amendments it remains to be seen whether some Queenslanders have any insurance cover in the event of a serious injury.

Importantly, the government has still provided no justification for its Byrne amendments. As my opposition colleagues have mentioned and will mention, the Byrne judgement of 2014 validated the practices that were already occurring in the industry. Not only is the government proposing these amendments with no consultation or justification, they are attempting to implement them on a retrospective basis. Whilst we on this side of the House support the principles of the bill and the need for a national injury insurance scheme to cater for workplace injuries, the government's flawed model and amendments contained within this bill need to be addressed.

 **Hon. CJ O'ROURKE** (Mundingburra—ALP) (Minister for Disability Services, Minister for Seniors and Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland) (4.26 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation (National Injury Insurance Scheme) Amendment Bill 2016. In 2011 the Productivity Commission recommended that the National Injury Insurance Scheme be implemented in conjunction with the National Disability Insurance Scheme to ensure people with disability, no matter how they receive that disability, have peace of mind that they would receive appropriate care and support throughout their life.

Catastrophic injuries are life changing. The physical, emotional and financial strains on any individual and their family can be utterly devastating. While Queensland's workers compensation scheme is currently the best performing in Australia, many Queenslanders may be surprised to find out that people who cannot establish fault and are injured in the workplace are not guaranteed entitlements that meet their treatment, care and support needs over their lifetime. This bill is all about closing that significant gap. It is about ensuring Queenslanders who go to work can feel safe knowing that if something did go horribly wrong, regardless of fault, they would be supported.


As the Minister for Disability Services, I have been working incredibly hard to oversee the transition to the NDIS in Queensland. I am pleased to say that this great scheme started its rollout in North Queensland on 1 July this year. While the two schemes do not duplicate each other, both have been designed to provide a maximum level of choice and control over the supports provided, allowing flexibility and independence for participants.

Fundamentally, both schemes aim to support people to live the lives they choose, to chase their dreams with appropriate support and not be bound by what others perceive they can achieve. They also take into account that a person's care needs can change over time and as technology advances supports need to be able to change seamlessly.

The implementation of a lifetime care and support scheme for people who are injured in the workplace is likely to have significant benefits to the community through improved health outcomes and improved social and economic participation. It will also promote early interaction with the health and rehabilitation systems to facilitate improved outcomes and help individuals attain their goals, getting them back into the community and back to work.

Earlier this year I joined the Treasurer to launch our government's public awareness campaign on the National Injury Insurance Scheme to ensure Queenslanders better understood the limitations of third-party insurances and the benefits of implementing this scheme. We know that this is a long-term conversation but we are dedicated to getting that message across.

Our government is committed to building a safe and caring community that shows compassion for people with disability, including those who suffer catastrophic injuries and, together, the NDIS and the NIIS are helping to achieve just that. This bill is about providing certainty and peace of mind that care and support will be available under the NIIS to every Queenslander who has or might acquire a serious disability as a result of a workplace incident, and that is something that I am proud to support. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (4.30 pm): I rise to contribute to this debate in relation to the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation (National Injury Insurance Scheme) Amendment Bill 2016. Firstly, we must note that the committee could not all agree that this bill be passed and that there were statements of reservation about this bill not only by the opposition members on the committee—and we have heard a lot about that throughout this debate, particularly by the shadow minister, the member for Kawana—but also by the government members on the committee, who also had reservations about certain aspects of the bill but unfortunately have not had the courage of their convictions in bringing them to the debate here today.

As noted by other opposition members who have spoken so far, we do not oppose the whole bill. We agree that there must be a mechanism to help people who are catastrophically injured during the course of their work. However, we strongly oppose the section of the bill that deals with the Byrne amendment—a section that would see the reversal of the much talked about Byrne judgement. The Byrne judgement of October 2014 validated the use of hold harmless clauses which transfer a third-party's liability, such as a principal contractor, to the worker's employer, such as a subcontractor. The judgement validated practices that were already occurring in the industry. It cemented longstanding practices whereby principal contractors would include clauses in contracts to ensure injured workers around Queensland are suitably protected and insured. However, the bill we are now debating before the House seeks to nullify these clauses by reversing the Byrne judgement and prohibiting the contractual transfer of liability from principal contractors to employers with a workers compensation insurance policy.

If this particular section of the bill is passed, it will mean that someone who is injured may find themselves at risk of not being covered by any insurance. This is because the principal contractors and host employers are excluded from WorkCover coverage. This leads to a complex situation that, if an injured worker of a subcontractor on a site makes a common law damage claim against both his own employer and a principal contractor, that claim, as far as the principal contractor is concerned, sits outside of the WorkCover policy.

A consequence of this has been more than talked about throughout this debate. There is potential here for some principal contractors to lack awareness of the need to secure their own private insurance. Hence, those most at risk as a result of this potential gap are the injured workers. It is an ironic situation for a Labor government—a Labor government where every single Labor member claims to stand up for the workers. Just like I talked about the environment last night, it appears that once again it is those on this side of the House, the LNP, who are standing up for the workers. It is just incredible that the Labor government refuse, and fail, to stand up for those workers. They sit over there and laugh and cackle about it, but they know and the people of Queensland know.


Despite the fact that this government keep reminding us that they are here to consult with Queenslanders, that they are here to talk to Queenslanders, again, we have a bill before the House that has not gone through the proper consultation processes. We heard that. I was listening to the member for Broadwater last night talk about it in this debate where she was explaining how there was a complete lack of consultation. It is not only us who are saying that but also the Housing Industry Association, the HIA, and Master Builders are saying that they were not consulted in relation to this. Again, it is only the LNP who stands up for the rights of workers. The committee process exposed their lack of consultation. As the Master Builders noted, like I have said, they were not consulted on this bill until it was posted on the website. The Housing Industry Association were consulted to a certain degree but not on the reversal of the Byrne judgement which is what I am talking about here today and what we oppose in this bill.

As such, two of the three recommendations agreed to by the committee focus on further consultation. There has been no case made as to why these changes are necessary and why they should be supported and why they should be retrospective. The LNP opposition therefore believe that the Byrne amendment needs to be withdrawn from this bill.

Ms Grace: You don't understand it.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I take that interjection from the minister, who was not in her seat, saying there is a lack of understanding around consultation. I note that the lack of consultation is on the record and it is noted by the committee. It is also noted by the fact that there are Labor members sitting in this House who will not stand up with the courage of their convictions because they put in the report that this bill needed further amendment as well.

The government needs to consult with affected stakeholders. That is obvious. Again, bill after bill after bill comes into the House—we can talk about lack of consultation and giving just 18 minutes notice in relation to amending quite a major bill, but that may be going off the topic slightly, except to go to the point that it is the Palaszczuk Labor government that continually decide to not consult with the people who are affected by the bills that they are bringing before this House. Let us make it clear: the LNP opposition supports the extension of the National Injury Insurance Scheme to those who are catastrophically injured at work, but we do not support the provisions which seek to reverse the Byrne judgement.

 **Mr RUSSO** (Sunnybank—ALP) (4.37 pm): I rise to support the amendments in the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation (National Injury Insurance Scheme) Amendment Bill 2016. The bill implements the National Injury Insurance Scheme for workplace accidents within Queensland's workers compensation scheme. The bill is the next stage in a process of significant social reform which includes the establishment by the Palaszczuk government of the National Injury Insurance Scheme Queensland for motor vehicle accidents which commenced on 1 July 2016. These amendments fulfil Queensland's commitment to the scheme.

Queensland is the only jurisdiction with a centrally funded short-tail workers compensation scheme. Current no-fault statutory compensation benefits available from Queensland's scheme align with the range of treatment, care and support services that are provided for in the national minimum benchmarks for workplace accidents. There is also access to lump sum common law damages, including for future care and support, if injured workers can establish that their employer was at fault in causing their injury.

The amendments in this bill improve on the existing scheme arrangements by extending coverage for workers who sustain particular serious personal injuries. While only a small number of workers will be eligible for additional benefits, this reform will ensure that those injured workers with the greatest needs will be supported over the course of their lifetime.


The changes to the scheme have been carefully designed so as not to displace or duplicate existing entitlements. The new entitlement to treatment, care and support payments is also consistent with the National Injury Insurance Scheme Queensland for motor vehicle accidents established by the National Injury Insurance Scheme (Queensland) Act 2016. This will ensure that people injured in motor vehicle and workplace accidents connected with Queensland will be treated consistently and have access to similar treatment, care and support coverage.

Importantly, unlike the previous government's approach to reforming the workers compensation scheme, introducing new treatment, care and support entitlements will not come at the expense of removing injured workers' existing rights and entitlements. Nevertheless, this important reform is being implemented in a fiscally responsible way as the cost of providing additional lifetime treatment, care and support entitlements to a small group of the most vulnerable workers will be met by employer premiums without impacting on the average premium rate.

The National Injury Insurance Scheme is a companion scheme to the National Disability Insurance Scheme and will have a significant positive impact on the lives of Queenslanders who sustain life-changing injuries as a result of their work. The National Injury Insurance Scheme is proposed to operate as a federation of state and territory based insurance schemes, with national minimum benchmarks ensuring consistency across jurisdictions for coverage, eligibility, level and structure of benefits and standards of care. The amendments in the bill align with the national minimum benchmarks for workplace accidents unofficially agreed by all states and territories. These minimum benchmarks are largely consistent with the agreed national minimum benchmarks for motor vehicle accidents, subject to some jurisdictional differences.

The design of the National Injury Insurance Scheme for workplace accidents in Queensland paid heed to the recommendations of the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee's report on its inquiry into a suitable model for the National Injury Insurance Scheme for motor vehicle accidents—in particular, the recommendation that the government consider the motor vehicle scheme serving as a platform for other proposed National Injury Insurance Scheme arrangements in Queensland. Consistent with this recommendation, the National Injury Insurance Scheme for workplace accidents adopts a similar model to the scheme for motor vehicle accidents.

This package of amendments implements the National Injury Insurance scheme for workplace accidents in line with the related measure which recently passed through the House to provide for catastrophic motor vehicle injuries. The commonalities between the motor vehicle and the workers compensation schemes reflect the coherent vision of the National Injury Insurance Scheme that is being implemented in Queensland. I commend the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation (National Injury Insurance Scheme) Amendment Bill 2016 to the House.

 **Ms FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (4.43 pm): I rise to support the amendments in the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation (National Injury Insurance Scheme) Amendment Bill 2016 that implement the National Injury Insurance Scheme for workplace accidents within Queensland's workers compensation scheme. At the outset I wish to congratulate the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee, which I know has had quite a hectic schedule, on its report. This bill contains some quite complex detail and the committee has done an excellent job on its report. The amendments in this bill demonstrate the Palaszczuk government's ongoing commitment to ensuring that the legislative framework for Queensland's workers compensation scheme continues to deliver fair and reasonable benefits for injured workers while offering the lowest premium cost to employers in Australia.

Queensland is the only jurisdiction with a centrally funded short-tail workers compensation scheme. Current no-fault statutory compensation benefits available from the Queensland scheme align with the range of treatment, care and support services that are provided for in the national minimum benchmarks for workplace accidents. There is also access to lump sum common law damages including for future care and support if injured workers can establish their employer was at fault in causing their injury.

The amendments in this bill improve on the existing scheme arrangements by extending coverage for workers who sustain particularly serious personal injuries. While only a small number of workers will be eligible for additional benefits, this reform will ensure that those injured workers with the greatest needs will be supported over the course of their lifetimes.

The changes to the scheme have been carefully designed so as not to displace or duplicate existing entitlements. The new entitlement to treatment, care and support payments is also consistent with the National Injury Insurance Scheme Queensland for motor vehicle accidents established by the National Injury Insurance Scheme (Queensland) Act 2016. This will ensure that people injured in motor vehicle and workplace accidents connected with Queensland will be treated consistently and have access to similar treatment, care and support coverage. Importantly, unlike the previous government's approach to reforming the workers compensation scheme, introducing new treatment, care and support entitlements will not come at the expense of removing injured workers' existing rights and entitlements. Nevertheless, this important reform is being implemented in a fiscally responsible way as the cost of providing additional lifetime treatment, care and support entitlements to a small group of the most vulnerable workers will be met by employer premiums without impacting on the average premium rate. Weekly payments and statutory lump sum compensation will still be available to seriously injured workers as currently provided for by the scheme. The amendments in this bill offer seriously injured workers the added security and certainty of knowing that their treatment, care and support needs can be funded for their lifetimes and that a dedicated support structure will be available as long as they need it.

Workers compensation insurers will still manage the components of the workers compensation claim that do not relate to providing treatment, care and support, such as making weekly payments. Insurers will be able to concurrently engage the National Injury Insurance Agency Queensland to perform their functions and exercise their powers concerning the provision of treatment, care and support to seriously injured workers. This will leverage the practice and expertise that will be developed by this agency in serving the needs of people seriously injured in motor vehicle accidents to the benefit of seriously injured workers. This will also ensure the agency operates as an effective platform for expanding the National Injury Insurance Scheme in Queensland in the future.

The existing processes for dispute resolution in Queensland's workers compensation scheme operate efficiently and effectively. The review, appeals and medical assessment processes finalise legal and medical disputes faster than any other state or territory scheme. These existing cost-effective and efficient dispute resolution mechanisms will be expanded to incorporate disputes about treatment, care and support. Medical Assessment Tribunals will resolve purely medical disputes about eligibility and necessary and reasonable treatment, care and support.


A range of insurer decisions about entitlement to treatment, care and support payments will be subject to administrative review by the Workers' Compensation Regulator and appeal by the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission. Adopting the existing workers compensation dispute resolution mechanisms will further ensure that lifetime treatment, care and support arrangements are seamlessly incorporated into the scheme. All workers compensation applicants will have access to the same dispute resolution mechanisms, and seriously injured workers will have similar processes for all aspects of their workers compensation claims.

I wish to speak specifically to those amendments in the bill which reverse the effects of the Queensland Supreme Court decision in *Byrne v People Resourcing* and in particular the deeming of hold harmless clauses as void under the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003. The judgement given on 29 October 2014 in the *Byrne* case had the effect of validating the use of hold harmless clauses while indemnifying contractors for the cost of these claims. The judgement means that WorkCover Queensland must indemnify a liability holder if the holder is the employer of the injured worker, regardless of how the liability is assumed.

The impact of the judgement is to encourage the use of hold harmless clauses by principal contractors. This is undesirable as it allows negligent parties to avoid liability, encouraging further negligence, and makes WorkCover Queensland jointly and severally liable for all damages despite there being fully solvent parties joined to a claim, if a hold harmless clause is in effect. Simply, this means negligent third parties do not have to take responsibility for unsafe and negligent work practices.

A key objective of the act is to encourage improved health and safety performance by employers. The *Byrne* decision and the use of hold harmless clauses operates to defeat this objective as there is no financial incentive on principal contractors or host employers to improve health and safety at their workplaces. As a consequence, this is likely to result in increased injury rates that in turn will result in increased workers compensation costs to all Queensland employers. The bill proposes to reverse the effect of the judgement in *Byrne* by prohibiting the contractual transfer of liability for workers compensation injury costs from principal contractors or host employers to employers with a workers compensation insurance policy, such as subcontractors or labour hire employers, and providing that an insurer is not liable to indemnify an employer for a liability to pay damages incurred by a third party under a contractual arrangement.

The amendment furthers the objects of the act by encouraging improved health and safety performance by employers, ensures reasonable cost levels for employers and provides for the protection of employers' interests in relation to claims for damages for workers' injuries. It will achieve these objectives by ensuring that the persons who contribute by their negligence to a worker's injury will be held responsible for the costs associated with that injury and will not be able to have another employer pay for their negligence. The proposed amendments will ensure that the costs associated with a person's negligence are allocated to them and not to the small to medium sized business required to indemnify the larger business or by distributing the cost of the negligence across all other WorkCover premium-paying employers. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (4.52 pm): I rise to support the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation (National Injury Insurance Scheme) Amendment Bill 2016. I first want to acknowledge the outstanding advocacy by a person who has a connection to the Caboolture region and is also a former Australian Paralympic swimmer, Marayke Jonkers. She has a connection to the Jonkers family who have been in the Caboolture region for many, many years and have always been acknowledged for their outstanding advocacy for the community and also their extreme generosity. I would like to start my contribution to this debate by quoting from some statements that Marayke has made in respect of the National Injury Insurance Scheme and the introduction of that scheme in Queensland. She said—

I was fortunate to receive compensation for the injuries I sustained.

However, I feel for anyone who sustains catastrophic injuries in a road crash who needs to rely on public health care, social services, friends and family for day-to-day care and support.

She also said—

For individuals not covered by CTP, the National Injury Insurance Scheme will help them achieve their personal goals and get back into the community.

I would like to thank Marayke for her contribution to this particular subject matter. I note that she is part of the public face of the National Injury Insurance Scheme in Queensland and that she has done a lot of work not only explaining the scheme but advocating for the introduction of the scheme so I would like to acknowledge her.

The National Injury Insurance Scheme has been a long time coming in Queensland. I would like to acknowledge the numerous benefits that will flow from the introduction of this scheme. In particular I would like to note that this was a recommendation of the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee when it reported on its inquiry into a suitable model for the National Injury Insurance Scheme for motor vehicle accidents. The amendments in this bill, which implement the National Injury Insurance Scheme for workplace accidents, deliver on implementing those recommendations in that committee report by providing for the maximum level of choice, flexibility and independence for seriously injured workers about the care and support they receive.

The Palaszczuk Labor government remains committed to protecting the rights of injured workers to have access to fair and reasonable compensation benefits for their injuries while maintaining the financial solvency of the workers compensation scheme and ensuring average premium rates for employers remain at the lowest level of all Australian jurisdictions. This was most recently evident in the Palaszczuk government's previous amendment of the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act to restore the unlimited access to common law damages for injured workers which was taken away by those opposite. That was quite unfairly and discriminately imposed by the previous government on those who suffered injuries. The amendments in this bill demonstrate the government's ongoing commitment to protecting injured workers' rights to claim common law damages by introducing a model for the National Injury Insurance Scheme that preserves a worker's freedom of choice.

The serious personal injuries for which workers will be entitled to lifetime treatment, care and support payments are broad and include serious spinal injuries, traumatic brain injuries, amputations, severe burns and permanent traumatic blindness. The consequences of this range of injuries for a worker's independent functioning and ability to perform daily activities will vary significantly from worker to worker. Even with early intervention and comprehensive and coordinated medical treatment and rehabilitation to maximise their independent functioning, some catastrophically injured workers will require around-the-clock care and support services for the rest of their lives. Other workers will experience a significantly reduced capacity to manage their own affairs and make the necessary financial and personal decisions about how best to ensure they receive the necessary care and support to suit their needs.

However, there will be workers who sustain a serious personal injury—for example, some spinal injuries and amputations—whose recovery can be assisted to the point where they can function independently and autonomously. These workers will be able to exercise personal choice about how they interact with the community again and regain employment, providing they have access to the necessary supports, assistance and modifications to accommodate their individual needs. It is important that there not be a one-size-fits-all approach to delivery and coordination of treatment, care and support services for seriously injured workers, and that due regard is paid to the unique circumstances of each individual who is faced with rebuilding their lives following a catastrophic workplace injury. The amendments in this bill deliver the necessary choice, flexibility and self-determination for seriously injured workers.

The bill retains a seriously injured worker's common law rights to claim treatment, care and support damages if they can establish their employer was at fault by electing to opt out of receiving further no-fault statutory treatment, care and support payments. This election is subject to legislative safeguards which recognise and are designed to minimise the risks and challenges involved in a seriously injured worker making a reasonable and informed decision about seeking damages and being able to manage their lump sums to ensure they can continue to fund their future care and support. I note that during the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee's inquiry into the bill stakeholders expressed their support for the inclusion of these safeguards around a seriously injured worker's common law election.

It is also important to note that seriously injured workers can opt to continue to receive no-fault statutory treatment, care and support payments while pursuing a common law claim for the other heads of damages. By enabling injured workers to be assessed for eligibility to enter the scheme early in their worker's compensation claim, workers who have entitlement for treatment, care and support payments will have the benefit of experiencing having their treatment, care and support needs assessed and coordinated by the National Injury Insurance Agency Queensland. This will assist eligible workers to make an informed choice about their preference for having their future needs funded through the statutory scheme or a common law lump sum.


Seriously injured workers who do not have access to common law damages because their employer was not at fault will be entitled to receive no-fault statutory treatment, care and support payments for their lifetime. The amendments in the bill also provide independence, flexibility and choice

for this group of workers because they will be consulted in the assessment of their treatment, care and support needs. Individualised support plans will be developed which will take into account the worker's specific abilities and limitations and their individual goals.

The amendments in the bill also allow, where appropriate, for the insurer and worker to enter into a self-directed funding agreement where the insurer will pay the worker an agreed amount to fund their treatment, care and support needs for a specified period. Eligible workers who have the benefit of such arrangements will be able to choose the treatment, care and support services and providers that they consider best meet their individual needs relating to their serious personal injury and will be able to directly arrange these services.

In the words of Marayke Jonkers, I note that this bill will go a long way to providing the additional support that those people need. I want to repeat it one more time because I think Marayke Jonkers summarises it well. For those individuals not covered by CTP, the National Injury Insurance Scheme will help them achieve their personal goals and get them back into the community.

I acknowledge not only the Minister for Industrial Relations for her work in respect of this bill but also the former relevant minister, the Treasurer, for his efforts in bringing this bill before the parliament. I also acknowledge the efforts of the committee and the committee chair in the work that they have done to make sure that we have a good bill before the House which will provide those supports to people in need. It is acknowledged and appreciated. I also, of course, acknowledge all those stakeholders who have contributed to the review of this bill as well as the work that has been done leading up to the introduction of this bill and the discussions that took place at a national level. I commend the bill to the House. I hope that all members support it.

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (5.03 pm): I rise to support the amendments in the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation (National Injury Insurance Scheme) Amendment Bill 2016 that implement the National Injury Insurance Scheme for workplace accidents within Queensland's workers compensation scheme. Many in this House are very committed to looking after those most vulnerable in society, especially the disabled. I remember in the 2012 election campaign I did a lot of work going door to door speaking to the electors of Logan. I know the result at the end of that period was not good, but I learnt so much from that process. One of the most important things that I learnt about going door to door was from speaking to those whose family members were disabled or had suffered catastrophic injury and how that had affected their lives.

I would like to bring one case to the attention of the House. When I was doorknocking an elderly woman invited me in. She said, 'You have to meet my stepdaughter.' She had married a gentleman who was divorced and had a severely disabled daughter. It was not her intention to care for a daughter who was severely disabled. However, she stepped in as the stepmother and it had been the most meaningful part of her life to look after this young woman. I met the young woman who had very limited mobility and communication skills and lay in their lounge room unable to stand up. This is a great project that I think members of the House will be very proud of in years to come. Whether people have become disabled through birth, accident or workplace injury, through these mechanisms we are strengthening this state's care of our most disabled.

I seek the indulgence of the House to congratulate the new member for Toowoomba South. I notice he put quite a lot of thought into what he felt was his philosophy and I welcome his contribution. He noted that our market economy, though it has many strengths, has to be rebalanced in order to look after those who are disabled and some others in our society. I thought it was really important that within his maiden speech he took the time to note that our market economy, with all of its strengths, needs to be rebalanced to look after the disabled.

I am also glad that he mentioned other Toowoomba residents—the Nigerians, the Muslims, the Syrians—and the diversity of the Toowoomba community. I did notice that he failed to mention the Queen or Kate and Will, which was on the official LNP checklist. I hope that that will not be drummed into him by the member for Kawana and that he will not be up there speaking about the King and Queen next. I hope this is not the last time that he speaks about genuine Toowoomba residents, especially those who are disabled and need the help and aid of this community.

This bill is the next stage in a process of significant social reform which includes the establishment by the Palaszczuk government of the National Injury Insurance Scheme Queensland for motor vehicle accidents, which of course we know commenced on 1 July 2016. These amendments fulfil the Queensland commitment to the Commonwealth to implement the National Injury Insurance Scheme for motor vehicle accidents and workplace accidents. I want to specifically demonstrate to members how this bill relating to workers compensation complements the recently passed measures for motor vehicle accidents.

The National Injury Insurance Scheme is a companion scheme to the National Disability Insurance Scheme and will have a significant positive impact on the lives of Queenslanders who sustain life-changing results as a result of their work. The National Injury Insurance Scheme is proposed to operate as a federation of state and territory based insurance schemes with national minimum benchmarks ensuring consistency across jurisdictions for coverage, eligibility, level and structure of benefits and, of course, the standards of care.

The amendments in this bill align with the national minimum benchmarks for workplace accidents unofficially agreed to by all the states and territories. These minimum benchmarks are largely consistent with the agreed national minimum benchmarks for motor vehicle accidents. Given the nature of Queensland and our state's role within the Commonwealth, they are subject to some jurisdictional differences. The design of the National Injury Insurance Scheme for workplace accidents in Queensland paid heed to the recommendations of the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee's report on its inquiry into a suitable model for the National Injury Insurance Scheme for motor vehicles, in particular the recommendation that the government consider the motor vehicle scheme serve as a platform for other proposed national insurance scheme arrangements in Queensland.


In terms of family history, we can look at what things in our history have shaped our family. My great-great-grandfather was somebody who suffered the kind of disability for which we are trying to make a difference today. Returning to his workplace in a horse and cart, he was run off the road and suffered catastrophic head injuries. At that time, in 1891, the local newspaper thought he would never recover from those injuries, that he would not survive. He did recover, but his behaviour was changed profoundly. He was, indeed, disabled by this accident. This legislation, including the workplace legislation, goes a long way to ensure that we are a very different society today than we were in 1891. If he were alive today, he would not have to suffer the indignities that he suffered before his death in Queensland in 1911. We know that we are a society that treats our disabled, especially those who are injured through catastrophic motor vehicle accidents, with much more dignity.

Consistent with this recommendation, the National Injury Insurance Scheme for workplace accidents adopts a similar model to the scheme for motor vehicle accidents—that is, it extends no-fault statutory treatment, care and support payments to workers who sustain serious personal injuries. Consistent with the motor vehicle scheme, the amendments in this bill also retain the common law rights of seriously injured workers to elect to claim damages for treatment, care and support. This election is subject to consistent legislative safeguards protecting the integrity of the worker's decision to opt out—we do not want workers to opt out when it is not in their best interests—and the adequacy of the common law damages lump sum to meet the worker's future treatment, care and support needs.

Consistent with the National Injury Insurance Scheme Queensland, the insurer must assess a worker's serious personal injury to determine whether the injury meets the applicable eligibility criteria. Also consistent with the National Injury Insurance Scheme Queensland, the insurer may assess a seriously injured worker as being entitled to treatment, care and support payments for an interim period of up to two years or for their lifetime. The National Injury Insurance Scheme would be the first payer to ensure there is continuity of care and not leaving someone with severe or difficult injuries in limbo before they could receive payments.


Consistent with the National Injury Insurance Scheme Queensland, the insurer must review a seriously injured worker's entitlement to ongoing treatment, care and support payments before the end of the interim period. The bill provides that a worker who accepts an award of treatment, care and support damages must wait at least five years before they can apply for additional statutory payments. This is obviously to ensure that someone who receives a significant lump sum does not then use it in a way that is not for ongoing continual care. The specific criteria the insurer must apply to decide whether to take on liability to make additional statutory payments will be developed in consultation with the National Injury Insurance Agency Queensland as well as relevant stakeholders to ensure that similar considerations apply across both schemes.

These schemes and these acts, both the one I have spoken about in relation to motor vehicle insurance and this one regarding catastrophic injury in the workplace, have immense meaning to me. All his life my father worked with the deaf, and it was through his work, his friends and the education of the disabled that I was exposed to disability policy and disabled people. When I spoke to that stepmother and her daughter on the lounge room floor I committed to working towards the NDIS so that they could have greater care to make their lives more dignified. This bill and other acts are a fulfilment of the commitment I made in that lounge room in Regents Park and which I will continue through to the implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (5.12 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation (National Injury Insurance Scheme) Amendment Bill. I do not think there is any disagreement that we all believe people should be insured when they are in the workplace and they should have their medical expenses met. If they receive an injury they should be able to seek compensation, particularly if there has been negligence, and they should have their income protected. I do not think anybody disagrees with that. Who pays is certainly a question arising in this bill with the movement to a principal contractor. What level of consultation should happen before we start harming businesses that invest in our great state of Queensland? I will reserve most of my comments to clause 5, the damage it will do to business and why, as a matter of principle, we should not be creating sovereign risk by bringing in things that are retrospective and will harm decisions that people make according to the laws that are made in this place one day, only to find themselves on the wrong side of those laws as they travel back in time.

It is always dangerous to bring in retrospectivity because it will create an environment where people do not trust this House to govern correctly. If they do not trust this House in our great Federation of Australia, they have options: they can go to New South Wales and be governed under a different House, or South Australia, or Western Australia or many other places. I am concerned that we in this House do all that we can to reduce sovereign risk to businesses and to reassure businesses that, if they invest in this great state, their investment will be safe, sound and solid and that you can take both this parliament and the government of the day at its word that it will apply the law fairly and evenly to all people. To do that you cannot tell someone that a law exists today and that you will follow the law today, and then change the law and end up in a situation where the person broke the law, but at the time they were doing that it was the law. That is the principle that I find most challenging in any bill, and in this bill that is the part that I object to the most. It should be taken out. People should be able to invest and understand their investment and how it will be treated by the laws of the land of that day as the laws of the land existed on that day. Retrospectivity, while it may be used from time to time, should be used with great caution and only in exceptional circumstances. I do not see great caution or consultation and I do not see exceptional circumstances, so I would be interested in the minister's comments in relation to that.

I want to make it clear that, as someone who has experienced what it is like to be quadriplegic—not through a workplace injury, but through a beach injury—we absolutely owe insurance to people who may find themselves injured through no fault of their own in a workplace, whether that be income protection, medical expenses or compensation so they can have a decent life post injury. I want to be very clear on that, but I am concerned about any retrospectivity in any legislation so I will be interested in the comments of the minister in relation to this bill.

 **Hon. G GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (5.16 pm), in reply: I thank my colleagues for their valuable contributions on what is a significant piece of legislation. This is the next stage in a process of significant social reform for Queensland which commenced with the establishment by the Palaszczuk government of the National Injury Insurance Scheme Queensland for motor vehicle accidents from 1 July 2016.

The bill implements the NIIS for workplace accidents to provide catastrophically injured workers with a statutory entitlement to treatment, care and support payments basically for the rest of their life if need be. This means that workers who have suffered a catastrophic injury will have access to all the medical treatment, rehabilitation and care they need to go about their daily activities and participate in their community in a way that maximises their independence.

Importantly, the scheme retains fundamental common law rights by enabling workers who are not at fault for their injuries to elect to opt out of the statutory NIIS. Providing these participants meet certain preconditions and safeguards, they will be able to seek a common law lump sum payment for the costs of treatment, care and support. This option will not necessarily be the most suitable one for some participants. When an injured worker does not opt out of the NIIS they will continue to receive treatment, care and support for life. There is absolutely no indication that a worker will not receive benefits under anything proposed in this bill; I want to make that absolutely clear.

In relation to other elements of the bill, the bill will provide self-insurers with greater flexibility and choice with regard to financial securities and, for smaller self-insurers, the opportunity to trial going back into a premium-paying arrangement with WorkCover Queensland at no risk of not being able to return to self-insurance if this does not prove viable. It is very good for local governments in particular because they will benefit from this amendment. We are giving them the opportunity to opt in, but if they find this is not for them they can opt out. This is a very good item in this legislation.

The bill also reverses the effect of the Supreme Court decision in *Byrne v People Resourcing* by voiding the effect of hold harmless clauses in contracts that allow negligent third parties—these are principal contractors and host employers that are found to be negligent for the injury caused to the injured worker when a subcontractor or labour hire company has their worker in their workplace; these are negligent principal contractors and host employers found to be contributorily negligent—to shift the cost of liabilities arising from their own negligent actions onto the books of WorkCover premium-paying employers. That cannot continue. I will explain why. I advise the member for Broadwater that the reversing of the *Byrne* decision has absolutely nothing to do with the NIIS legislation.

Mr Bleijie: Why is it in the bill?

Ms GRACE: It is an amendment that is required to be made to the workers compensation legislation. It has to be part of this bill to correct this particular aspect. That is why it is in the bill. If you do not understand that then you should not be in this House.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Elmes): The minister will direct her comments through the chair.

Ms GRACE: Members opposite believe that the *Byrne* decision and its resulting increase in workers compensation premium costs is fair and reasonable. The government disagrees. Negligent employers should be held liable and should not be passing on their liability to premium-paying employers. It just should not happen.

Mr Bleijie: They want to meet with you to work out a solution. They want a solution.

Ms GRACE: I agree. Be careful what you interject, member for Kawana. If they want a solution I will work with the MBA and talk with them. There will be a way we can do this. We will cover it. If we do not do this now, the *Byrne* decision will have significant implications for those left in WorkCover. Unfortunately, the member for Kawana does not understand. I will be at pains to explain it for him.

The bill also makes changes to the way statutory compensation payments are indexed to Queensland ordinary time earnings to ensure that some of the most vulnerable people in our community—injured workers and the dependents of workers killed at work—are not left out of pocket.

I now turn to the matters raised during the debate. I begin with the amendments to implement the National Injury Insurance Scheme for workplace accidents. I note and welcome the fact that the opposition members have expressed their support for introducing no-fault lifetime care and support for those workers who are catastrophically injured at work. This is precisely what the bill does. I thank them for that.

It has been a priority of the Palaszczuk government to ensure that the important social reforms represented by the National Disability Insurance Scheme and the National Injury Insurance Scheme are implemented for the benefit of Queenslanders whose lives are significantly impacted by disability and catastrophic injury. Further, it is the Palaszczuk government that is ensuring the National Injury Insurance Scheme will be in place from 1 July 2016 so that the costs of providing this additional workers compensation benefit are borne by the workers compensation scheme, as they should be, rather than being a cost to the Queensland government and the taxpayer.

There has been widespread consultation with a range of stakeholders about the best model for implementing the National Injury Insurance Scheme for both motor vehicle and workplace accidents. I thank all stakeholders for their vital contributions. We acknowledge that stakeholders have different views—and strongly held views—on the preferred option for implementing the NIIS. However, I must admit that I am a bit puzzled about the position of the LNP on this question. The LNP claims to be the party of freedom of choice. Unfortunately, by opposing the hybrid model, which is implemented by this bill, the LNP seeks to deny freedom of choice to these most vulnerable members of our community.

Let us be clear on what is being proposed. The first point is that the bill proposes a no-fault lifetime care and support scheme. This means that all workers, regardless of fault, are entitled to lifetime treatment, care and support under the NIIS if they suffer a catastrophic injury as a result of a workplace accident. If the employer is found to be at fault, the worker has a choice. They still have the option of staying with the statutory scheme—no ifs, no buts. The worker is entitled to coverage under the NIIS for lifetime treatment, care and support. What is more, the worker can keep their statutory coverage for lifetime treatment, care and support and still claim common law damages for other heads of damages such as pain and suffering. Under the hybrid model, that person also has the option of choosing to exercise their common law rights and seek a common law lump sum for their treatment, care and support.

All we are saying is that workers who find themselves in this extremely difficult situation will have a choice, similar to the NIIS move for motor vehicle accidents. The consequences of catastrophic injuries are very wide. They affect injured workers in a variety of ways. As the member for Townsville

said last night, we believe that those who are fully capable of exercising personal choice about the best option for providing their care and support should have the freedom and flexibility to exercise that choice. That is what this bill does.

We recognise the risks inherent in some lump sum recipients managing their lump sum money for the remainder of their lives. That is why we have included a number of safeguards around the awarding of lump sum payments to protect vulnerable workers. These include not enabling access to treatment, care and support damages if there is 50 per cent or more contributory negligence; and requiring the court to approve the worker's decision to opt out of the statutory treatment, care and support payments.

Consistent with the NIIS (Queensland) Act 2016, this bill also includes a re-entry provision for those workers whose lump sum payments are found to be genuinely insufficient to meet their ongoing treatment, care and support needs for the rest of their lives. Even stakeholders who prefer the non-hybrid model have stated that they welcome the safeguards in this bill designed to protect against the watering down of lump sums by some claimants. I emphasise again that, while there is a difference in views about the preferred model, there is bipartisan support for the scheme as an important social reform to provide a safety net for the most vulnerable Queenslanders living with catastrophic injury.

I now turn to a number of statements made by the member for Kawana. There was the usual mixture of diatribe, inaccuracies and mindless repetition, and always with a bit of union bashing thrown in for good measure. It was nothing if not predictable. In relation to the statement by the member for Kawana about improvements in workplace health and safety reductions in serious injury rates, I can advise that the data claimed by the member for Kawana for the period 2002 to 2012—that is 10 years immediately prior to the March 2012 election—relates to all of the efforts of the previous Labor government. We are proud of the 18 per cent reduction, so I thank the member for Kawana for pointing out the excellent work done over the past decade by the previous Labor government, because they are figures that reflect that government's work. I thank him very much.

The significant improvement in the workers compensation reforms addressing common law paved the way for significant workers compensation scheme improvements and cost reductions. I acknowledge the role of the then minister, the Hon. Cameron Dick. He played a significant role in the 2010 reform process. These reforms were achieved without removing or reducing an injured worker's rights or entitlements. This can be compared to how the member for Kawana acted when in charge of Queensland's workers compensation scheme. The member for Kawana sung the virtues of the former government in reducing the average premium rate to \$1.20 per \$100 of wages paid. What he failed to do was say that this reduction was on the backs of injured workers and the removal of their common law rights. For someone who talked a lot about consultation last night, I bet there was not much public consultation undertaken when those common law rights were taken away from Queensland workers—or when 14,000 public servants were sacked, for that matter. I believe there was zero consultation with regard to those issues. We have obviously reinstated what was taken away, and we are very proud to do that.

In relation to the statement by the member for Kawana that the contractual indemnity is a longstanding industry practice, I am advised that this practice is not currently widespread. In fact, I spoke to MBA last night following those comments. The Byrne decision is a serious issue and I turn to that issue now. The Byrne decision came down in October 2014 and it said that hold harmless clauses are now able to be used and are legally binding.

Mr Bleijie: As they were.

Ms GRACE: Yes, after the decision in 2014, and they proliferated under the watch of the member for Kawana, and what is happening now is that major principal contractors—the big end of town—are putting these clauses upon other subcontractors down the tier and it means that they are responsible for common law action. Let us say a subbie electrician is on a site. In general average terms my understanding is that they will find the principal contractor 75 per cent responsible for the common law and the employer 25 per cent. That means that that employer picks up 100 per cent of the liability and the principal contractor gets away with 75 per cent.

Mr Bleijie: For which they're insured. They're insured. That's what insurance is for.

Ms GRACE: I take that interjection from the member for Kawana. The member for Kawana says, 'They're insured,' but who pays? He raised the issue about who pays. From a party that professes to be the champions of small business, that is who is going to pay and I will explain it very clearly because it is a very important issue that is being misunderstood by those opposite and he may want to check with his small business constituency. The Chamber of Commerce & Industry Queensland supports the

proposed amendments. In fact, the MBA supports the proposed amendments. They know that this cannot go on because eventually it will hit other subcontractors. It will go down the line. They want to see something put in place where principals can obtain insurance coverage because it costs too much outside in public liability land. That is the issue here. Let me tell members who is going to solve that problem for them: it will be the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations—me—because we are working with WorkCover, with the MBA and with the industry to bring about insurance coverage that will cover them in those instances, but not with the Byrne decision. The MBA even says so. The CCIQ says so. It said—

Since the Byrne decision, the costs of claims against principal contractors has in turn been passed on to small and medium operators and subcontractors, thereby exposing those smaller businesses to significant financial risk to which a principal contractor is ultimately contracting out of.

That is what we are trying to fix here. This is a significantly important issue and I plead with those opposite to understand the significance of what we are aiming to do here.

The Byrne decision has a financial impact on WorkCover and all insured employers. On an individual level, all employers' premiums have a \$175,000 cap on common law damages that is attributed to the policy per claim. Then there is the rest of it—that is, the remaining damages which they may have been able to claim from the insurance companies. It is a bit like having a motor vehicle accident going to work and you are not at fault at all and you are injured. WorkCover covers you and pays and it then goes after the other vehicle's insurance company because it was their fault. It would be like that vehicle holding themselves harmless for the damages caused to that injured worker. It is the same principle which means that all employers in the premium pool have to pay for those additional costs, because once \$175,000 is put against that individual employer's claim the rest of it is distributed amongst the other premium-paying employers.

A government member: Small businesses.

Ms GRACE: Small and medium sized businesses. It means that WorkCover cannot claim. Let us say that someone is awarded \$1 million for a catastrophic injury or any injury. They put \$175,000 against the premium-paying employer and the rest of the money, if they cannot get it from the principal contractor's public liability insurance, is going to be spread amongst the rest of the employers. That is what the Byrne decision does. Those opposite do not understand it and I plead with them to understand that this is a serious matter and to oppose this will cause significant costs to not only WorkCover but also the very employers that those opposite claim to represent. I implore those opposite to understand what the Byrne decision means. The MBA supports this. Other small businesses support this. The only people who do not support this are the LNP. The legally trained opposition spokesperson in IR does not understand the implications of this decision. I suggest to the member for Kawana that the next time I offer to fully brief him he takes it up, because, as we have seen in this House, those opposite do not understand it.

The member for Broadwater then suggested that workers are not going to be covered under this legislation because of the Byrne decision, which has absolutely nothing to do with the NIIS. I point out that the member for Broadwater knew full well that this was not the case because the member asked the same question to the CEO of WorkCover during a public hearing on the bill of the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee. In response to the question about whether workers would be covered, WorkCover CEO, Mr Tony Hawkins, stated—

No, they will still get the 100 per cent from us.

He confirmed that they will be 100 per cent covered because WorkCover will pay it. If they do not recoup the difference of the amount that they put against the employer, they spread it across all of the premium-paying employers in that industry which puts up their premium rate. That is what they do and those at fault walk away scot-free. I might sound passionate about this issue because I am passionate about it, because if we do not do this it will be the tip of the iceberg. If this does not go through, this could have significant ramifications not only because WorkCover has to pay those additional costs but it will have no ability to claim it from principal or host employers, making it much more expensive and putting the fund, which is the best in Australia, at risk. This side of the House will not let that happen. We will not stand for it.

Consistent with the recommendations of the committee, there will be broad consultation. Last night I rang Grant Galvin from the MBA. He is well aware that we are on the path to putting in place a system which can cover these principal contractors and host employers. We do not want to see these hold harmless clauses being used as a weapon for shifting risk and then it can continue on down because, at the end of the day, the people whom those opposite propose to represent will be those

paying the bill. If there is a way that those opposite can counteract what I am saying, I invite them to do so, because they do not understand the Byrne decision even though I am explaining it to them as best as I possibly can. By implementing the National Injury Insurance Scheme for workplace accidents in Queensland, this bill continues to build on the Palaszczuk government's significant reforms providing greater support and opportunities for the most vulnerable members in our community. The bill is based on the principles of choice, flexibility and independence.

In the time left I want to address the issue of retrospectivity. There is nothing retrospective in this bill. What has happened has happened. We are not claiming that WorkCover can go back and interrupt any cases that have already been decided. That is what retrospectivity is.

Mr Bleijie: That's not true. Look at page 5 of your explanatory notes.

Ms GRACE: The member is incorrect; I take the interjection. He still does not understand the bill. The member for Kawana still does not understand the bill and it will not be going back. What will happen is that it will occur from the date of its operation and there is no retrospectivity. I can guarantee the member for Kawana that that is not the case and it is not included in this bill. I can advise the member for Kawana and the member for Broadwater that claims which have been finalised before commencement will not be affected by the amendments. As such, they will not have retrospective application to previous claims where issues of liability and contribution have already been determined. They are the ones with regard to retrospectivity.

Mr Bleijie: What about not finalised? Yes, you won't answer that—take that interjection.

Ms GRACE: If something is not finalised, it cannot be retrospective.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Elmes): Order! Member for Kawana, you are being repetitive.

Ms GRACE: I remember that during estimates the member was trying to get an interpretation of an act from the deputy director-general. He is a legally trained person. Most of the questions he asked were to try to get an interpretation of sections 423 and 424, because he still did not understand them. He cut that questioning short because he was advised that he had been briefed about that particular section. He quickly changed the subject. Obviously, he was suffering from amnesia or something like that.

This bill before the House is yet another part of Labor's proud tradition of progressive social reform in support of those who need it the most. I ask members to understand the significance of the Byrne decision. I implore those opposite to support that amendment. It is crucial for the wellbeing and ongoing sustainability of WorkCover. I commend the bill to the House and thank everyone for their contributions to the debate.

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


Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 4, as read, agreed to.

Clause 5—

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (5.41 pm): The minister just talked about there being no retrospectivity. I refer to the explanatory notes, which state, in respect of the Byrne v People Resourcing case—

... will apply to a claim for damages started before the commencement of the amendment provisions.

If there is a current claim, this provision will apply to that claim. That is retrospectivity. The minister says cleverly that, if the claims are settled, this provision does not apply. What she did not say is that, for claims that have not settled today, which we suspect are many, this provision will apply.

The minister says, 'It's okay. We're going to sort all of this out next week. We're going to have a meeting with the industry—with the HIA and the Master Builders—and we're going to sort it all out next week.' The provision is in this bill. Tonight is the opportunity to sort it out. There are huge unintended consequences in passing this bill with clause 5 in it.

The minister said that last night she spoke to Master Builders. She got on the phone to Master Builders and did the consultation after she had introduced the bill and most of the debate had occurred yesterday, and they whinged that they were not consulted. I refer the minister to the Master Builders submission to the parliamentary committee. It states—

An analysis of the impact of the Byrne amendments show a number of unintended consequences that will expose injured workers' claims to uninsured employers.

This is the reality of tonight. Tomorrow, we will wake up, the bill will go to the Governor's house, the Governor will sign off on the bill and there will be exposure to those employers who are not covered by workers compensation. Why is that? Because principal contractors cannot be covered by WorkCover Queensland. This bill reverses well-known law in the Supreme Court for many years to say that the principal contractor will be held liable for those particular employees. Yet, tonight, they are not insured. Principal contractors will wake up tomorrow with potential negligence claims and they will be uninsured. The worker is not going to get anything out of it, because the business is uninsured.

What ought to happen is for clause 5 to be deleted from the bill. Let us all get in a room with the HIA and the Master Builders and, in a friendly, happy way, have the consultation that should have occurred weeks ago. These organisations have said that they think there will be an answer for principal contractors to be able to be covered under WorkCover. WorkCover has even said that it thinks there is a good solution to this. WorkCover does not know what it is, but it thinks there is.

All I am asking is that we delete the clause from the bill. The minister and her department officials can go away and talk with those organisations and get the proper response to this issue. Then they do not have the unintended consequences that will happen after this bill is put into law.

Ms GRACE: For a former minister for industrial relations, I am astounded by his lack of understanding of WorkCover. When a worker is injured, it is their employer's insurance cover that covers them. The principal contractor is shifting a hold harmless clause when there is a common law damages claim. When they are negligent, because of the injury—

Mr Bleijie: Which the Supreme Court said is legal, by the way.

Ms GRACE: Mr Deputy Speaker, with all due respect, it was said here that the workers would not be covered because the principal contractor would not have insurance. That is not the case. The principal contractor will be covered for their workers. It is the employer—the subcontractor—who is on the side of the principal contractor who has the hold harmless clause, that pays the premium and the worker is covered. When there is a common law action, WorkCover is precluded from going after the principal contractor for their part of the negligent claim. The worker gets their money. They get covered. They get everything.

I cannot believe that a former industrial relations minister in this state—a legally qualified person—does not understand how WorkCover works. WorkCover can then get 75 per cent of whatever lump sum is paid to the injured worker from the negligent principal contractor. In a hold harmless clause, they cannot do that, which means the amount that they do not recover is spread across all of the other premium-paying employers in that industry, because only \$175,000 of a \$500,000 lump sum—\$600,000 or whatever it may be—gets attributed to the employer. The employer may have had no fault in that injury, but it still gets \$175,000 awarded against them, because they cannot go after the insurance.

It is like what occurs in a motor vehicle accident. If the driver is at fault, WorkCover will go after that insurance company for the payment that they made to that injured worker. Without this provision, it would be like all of us driving around with a hold harmless clause, which means that, no matter who you crash into it, they cannot come after you. It is absolutely astounding that this is not understood.

I have spoken at length about this provision. The member opposite does not understand how it works. The former industrial relations minister of this state does not understand how WorkCover claims—

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, I would urge you not to debate the issue. I have been listening to the debate to date. I would ask all members to be relevant to the issue at hand.

Ms GRACE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I will just sum up now. It is the fact that workers remain covered. This provision relates to common law actions where the hold harmless clause comes in. WorkCover cannot receive the additional funds and it means that premium-paying employers will be at risk.

Division: Question put—That clause 5, as read, stand part of the bill.

AYES, 43:

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

INDEPENDENT, 1—Gordon.

NOES, 44:

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


KAP, 2—Katter, Knuth.

Resolved in the negative.

Clauses 6 to 53, as read, agreed to.

Schedule, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

 **Hon. G GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (5.54 pm): I move—


That the bill be now read a third time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Long Title

 **Hon. G GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (5.54 pm): I move—

That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

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

Motion agreed to.

Mr SPEAKER: If everyone is happy we will move on to the motion for debate.

MOTION

Trade Unions

 **Mr EMERSON** (Indooroopilly—LNP) (5.55 pm): I move—

That this House calls on the government to act in the best interests of all Queenslanders—not just the less than one in five who are members of a trade union by:

1. preserving the longstanding ministerial powers that protect jobs and prevent significant damage to the Queensland economy; and
2. maintaining important accountability and transparency measures for registered industrial organisations in Queensland.

When the Premier was elected at the last election she promised to lead a government of consensus and consultation, one that would be for all Queenslanders. The reality is that what we have seen has been the complete opposite: chaos, indecision, no consultation and no idea of what they are doing. Make no mistake, Labor will come in straight after me and say this is just another union-bashing motion from the LNP because we are anti unions. That is a predictable response and another smokescreen to hide the fact that this government is corrupted by the influence of the trade union movement and blinded by the fact that while they are obsessed with issues that help their union mates Queenslanders are missing out as a result.

States like New South Wales and Victoria are powering ahead while this Labor government dithers between indecision and incompetence. The Premier likes to talk about Mike Baird when it suits her, but not when it comes to the economic performance of New South Wales versus Queensland

because we all know that under this government we are challenging for the economic wooden spoon. Is it any wonder? Labor has no economic narrative. It is led by a Treasurer who has been branded as Captain Risky.

Mr Minnikin: Captain Risky!

Mr EMERSON: I take the interjection from the member for Chatsworth. He has been branded as Captain Risky, who raids hollow logs in his sleep, and a Premier who does not even know what the GST rate is if she has not had her morning coffee.


This motion is fundamental to the economic prosperity of Queensland and the job-creating opportunities that are squandered by a Labor government that is anti business and anti jobs. The reality is that it is not just the LNP that has been saying the government has no clue when it comes to managing the Queensland economy. It seems that the business community, trade union leaders and even Labor MPs do not believe in this Treasurer. As far as bad weeks go, last week for the Treasurer was a complete shocker. We hear that it was actually a dry run ahead of the next state election campaign for Labor. If that is the case then Labor will go for as long as it can before it goes to the polls, which is a shame because Queenslanders are looking forward to the next state election to get rid of this hopeless Labor government. Let us look at some of the commentary into the week that was for Labor's chief economic strategist, the member for Mulgrave.

Mr Minnikin: Run the highlights reel!

Mr EMERSON: What are the highlights? The Property Council executive director, Chris Mountford, said his organisation had experienced, 'a more challenging relationship with the Treasurer since his backflip on the introduction of a new stamp duty surcharge on foreign buyers of residential properties.' Let us not forget, as the Treasurer admitted today in the parliament, 12 months ago when he ruled out that tax he said it was a job-destroying tax and it would rob the state of business confidence but 12 months later he brings it in—a backflip, as the Property Council said. Infrastructure Partnerships Australia CEO Brendan Lyons said it was under a lot of pressure despite the consistent press releases about the high level of sentiment in Queensland. They pointed out that he was the Pollyanna of Queensland politics, claiming that we had never had it so good, ignoring the reality of every figure.

Another senior business figure told the *Courier-Mail* that Mr Pitt was coming across as blissfully naive in some of the rhetoric. 'He's got his head in the sand in terms of his public commentary', the same key business figure said. The article in the *Courier-Mail* went on to say that, while many in his old guard faction clearly support him, many within the left and right factions of the party, where the power base is, are concerned about his performance. One said that there is no doubt that he is widely considered a dead weight on the government and has shown himself completely incapable of coherently communicating on the economy.

We are seeing a government that is not focused on what is best for Queenslanders but on what is best for its mates. This government needs to be true to its word and govern in the interests of all Queenslanders, not for vested interests or mates that it relies on for preselection. The longer it does not govern in the interests of all Queenslanders, the longer our economy will suffer and other states like New South Wales and Victoria will continue to power ahead.

 **Mr FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (6.00 pm): I move the following amendment—

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

'by:

1. preserving the longstanding independence of the Industrial Relations Commission that protects jobs and prevents significant damage to the Queensland economy; and
2. maintaining important accountability and transparency measures for registered industrial organisations in Queensland.'

I rise to speak in support of the amendment. Just like groundhog day, those opposite come in here with their antiunion rhetoric. We hear it over and over again, like a broken record. Those opposite know no bounds. They come in here with no policies, they attack unions and anyone else they oppose. One day they will come in here with a set of policies to indicate what they stand for and what they might look like if they were to form government one day in the long future. They are complaining about maintaining important accountability and transparency measures, but only if those accountability and transparency measures apply to unions.

We have just completed an independent review of Queensland's industrial relations laws, which was the first comprehensive review in 17 years. Since 1998, there have been significant changes in the Queensland industrial relations landscape. For many years I have followed industrial relations. Certainly


over a period many laws have changed, which generally happens when governments change. When a Labor government comes in, they look at laws to protect workers and the members who are represented by their unions. Of course, when those opposite come in, they make changes to erode the conditions of workers, erode the functions of unions and put workers at a disadvantage. We saw a prime example of that in 2005 when the then federal government brought in WorkChoices. We have just come through a federal election at which Mr Turnbull did not have the intestinal fortitude to put up his industrial relations changes, yet we know in his back pocket he has changes to erode penalty rates, reduce conditions for workers and further erode protections for those he purports to represent.

The takeover of Queensland's industrial relations laws in 2005 resulted in the state's IR coverage being focused almost exclusively on the state's core Public Service workers and local government workers. Our industrial relations laws need to be updated to reflect the changing realities. I am pleased to say that our new industrial relations system does just what the member for Indooroopilly's motion suggests: it will maintain accountability and transparency measures for all industrial organisations—employers and unions of employees—by aligning them with the industrial organisation provisions of the Fair Work Act.

However, first let us rewind to 2013 and look at the harsh realities of the Newman-Nicholls regime. Under the guise of 'greater confidence in the governance of industrial organisations', the member for Kawana introduced some of the most draconian and backward industrial laws in this parliament's history. The increased administrative burden and excessive reporting requirements associated with the new laws were extreme, to say the least. As an example, under those laws there was a requirement for a register of credit card and cab charge account spending only for employee organisations. I reflect on how some of those changes affected members of the branch committee of management of those unions. They sat on those committees doing the honourable thing of ensuring the accountability of the organisations and the unions but were targeted by those opposite. Are we to assume that issues such as the inappropriate or fraudulent use of credit cards or cab charges do not occur with employer organisations? Do they only occur with unions? Obviously, as is typical of those opposite, there is a focus only on unions.

Thankfully, the report from the recent review of the Industrial Relations Act recommends the equal treatment of organisations, both employer and employee, in relation to this matter and that the burden on employee organisations beyond the requirements that apply to employer organisations be abolished. That recommendation was unanimously agreed to by all members of the reference group, employee and employer. Had those opposite checked with some of those organisations, such as the Australian Industry Group, the CCIQ, the LGAQ, the Bar Association of Queensland and the Queensland Law Society, perhaps they would have realised that those organisations accept what was presented to them. However, not only did the member for Kawana's law manage to increase the administrative load on unions and employers but also the ongoing red tape—

(Time expired)

 **Miss BARTON** (Broadwater—LNP) (6.05 pm): This evening in this House it gives me great pleasure to rise to speak in support of the motion that has been moved by the shadow Treasurer and the shadow minister for small business. It is heartening to know that the 42 members on this side of the House speak for the 80 per cent of Queenslanders who are not members of unions, unlike the members of the government who speak for only 20 per cent of Queenslanders, as they are controlled and dictated to by union leaders. What we have seen is the hypocrisy and the hyperbole of this government—

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. I cannot hear the member for Broadwater clearly.

Miss BARTON: As I was saying, what we continue to see from that side of the House is hypocrisy and hyperbole. They keep saying that they care about accountability and transparency. However, today with the announcement that Kathy Jackson will face charges we have seen that even the whistleblower who tried to do in the friend of the member for Ferny Grove and the friend of the member for Redcliffe and even those who seek to be whistleblowers themselves are not angels. If that is not dodgy union works, I do not know what is.

What we see, particularly on the Gold Coast, is the effect of the actions of their union mates on jobs and the economy. We know that the Labor Party in this state refuses to distance themselves from the CFMEU. We have the members for Bundamba and Mirani very proudly proclaiming in this House that they are members of the CFMEU. It is the CFMEU on the Gold Coast that is holding up the


construction of vital infrastructure for the Commonwealth Games. It is the CFMEU on the Gold Coast that is more concerned about how their prawns are fried than whether or not those buildings will be built. In 2018 my home town will be on display and it is not being aided by the corrupt dodgy union mates of this government.

We know that this government refuses to distance themselves from the CFMEU. They refuse to distance themselves from people such as Michael Ravbar, who, before appearing before the trade union royal commission, instructed people to set fire to about eight tonnes of documents. I would say that there is no smoke without fire. We know that they are incapable of even managing a bonfire, because by seeking to destroy so many documents they could not even set fire to paper. These are the people whom we are trusting to build the infrastructure that Queensland needs, but they cannot even set fire to a couple of pieces of paper.

What we do know is that Queensland is lagging behind when it comes to economic growth. What we do know is that Queensland is lagging behind when it comes to construction growth. We know that that is all at the hands of this Labor government and their union mates. We know that the decisions that this government makes are decisions made by their union masters. We know that the decisions that this government makes are not in the best interests of Queenslanders but are in the best interests of their union mates.

That is all the Labor Party does. They do not care about the economic interests of Queensland. They do not care about the jobs of Queenslanders. If they did, they would make sure that they sent the independent umpire to tell their union mates to get back to work on the Gold Coast. We saw the CFMEU play politics not only with the Commonwealth Games construction but also with the construction of the new children hospital across the river. How disgraceful that a union would play politics with a hospital for sick children being built in this state. It is absolutely disgraceful. It is those people who have been adversely named by the trade union royal commission who will proudly take selfies with the Premier. It is people like Peter Simpson of the ETU who proudly proclaim that criminal motorcycle gangs are supporters of his union. Those are their associates.

It is absolutely disgraceful that in 2016 we have a government that is dictated to and controlled by unions that represent only 20 per cent of Queenslanders. What that means is that Queenslanders suffer. It means that they do not get the infrastructure that they need. It means that they do not get the economic growth that they need. It means that they do not get the jobs that they need. That is all because this asleep-at-the-wheel Labor government refuses to do anything other than bow to their union dictators and their union masters. They should hang their heads in shame.

 **Mr CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (6.11 pm): I rise to support the amendment to the motion moved by the member for Ferny Grove. I must confess that I guess I am one of those pesky union people. I am quite proud to be a member of United Voice. I am quite proud to be somebody who has stood on the front line and taken it to government year after year to protect and argue for the rights of workers not only in Queensland but also in Victoria. I speak of public servants—our firefighters, our nurses, our teachers, our paramedics, and so on.

In 2013 we saw the Newman government come to power. We certainly saw what happened under the member for Kawana who introduced some of the most draconian and backward industrial relations laws this parliament has ever seen. We saw attacks on our public sector workers. We saw attacks on the people who are out there right now in our hospitals, out there right now in our fire trucks, out there right now in our ambulances and out there right now walking our streets—our police officers. The list goes on and on.

There is a very good reason those 42 members opposite are sitting on that side of the House. That is because of the way they treated the workers of Queensland in the three years that they ruled. In the three years that they ruled we saw the destruction that they created. I am proud to be a member of this government. I am proud to be a member of a government that actually listens to Queenslanders and listens to workers and actually has workers' interests at its core.

As we heard from the member for Ferny Grove, there was a reference group in relation to this matter. That reference group unanimously agreed with the recommendations—that is, both employee and employer groups. The reference group comprised the Australian Industry Group, the CCIQ, the LGAQ, the Bar Association of Queensland and the Queensland Law Society. This was not just unions making these recommendations but groups that I am sure the LNP consult from time to time. Perhaps they need to actually go and speak to these groups.

Thankfully, the report into the recent review of the IR Act recommended equal treatment for organisations—employer and employee organisations—in relation to this matter and that the burden on employee organisations beyond the requirements that apply to employer organisations be abolished. Those opposite should have checked with those organisations before they proposed this motion.

It is a bit like a broken record, is it not? Every sitting we come here we have a motion moved that attacks the unions and the backbench.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Pause the clock! I cannot hear the member for Barron River.

Mr CRAWFORD: Their motions attack the backbench of the Labor Party. Let us get into them. Let us call them out. Maybe I should have worn a red tie today. I will wear my red tie tomorrow.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr CRAWFORD: Are you happy with that?

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I would urge the member for Barron River to speak through the chair.


Mr CRAWFORD: I will read what the LGAQ said in relation to this reference group. The LGAQ stated—

This is a nonsense situation where organisations who employ finance officers who are chartered accountants and/or have tertiary qualifications in finance are required to attend training by people who are far less qualified than themselves and on matters routine to their occupation.

That related to a requirement for officers of unions who have financial management duties to undertake training. This is one small example of what we are dealing with here.

Our government is proud to represent the workers of Queenslanders. It is proud to represent the hardworking public sector workers and all workers. I am happy to stand with the backbench, with the frontbench and with the leadership to defend that.

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Kawana, I remind members that I spoke about the sub judge rule yesterday. I know some members have referred to people in the debate. I assume they have made sure that their references do not contravene the sub judge rule.

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (6.16 pm): The reason we do not have debate in relation to industrial organisations and transparency for employer organisations is that employer organisations were not subject to royal commissions because its members were going with company credit cards and cab charges to visit prostitutes and brothels. We have not had allegations raised about employer groups like we had in relation to Craig Thomson.

While we are talking about Craig Thomson from the federal parliament, let us go to the member for Ferny Grove. Every time the member for Ferny Grove gets up in this place I count the minutes until he mentions something about the federal parliament. I suspect he still has depravation syndrome from the big red chamber. I think he has. It is just as red as he is going now. I suspect when we all go to bed at night—

Mr Furner interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock! Member for Kawana and member for Ferny Grove, direct your comments through the chair, please.

Mr BLEIJIE: I imagine when we all go to bed at the night the member for Ferny Grove sneaks down to the red chamber just to sit in the chair and reminisce about the good old days of the red chamber in Canberra. I suspect he does that. He was not wanted down there. The Labor Party got rid of him. We have him up here now—no problem.

There was a member yesterday—and I cannot remember who it was—who said that they were proud to be associated with union thugs. Believe it or not, one of them particularly said, 'I am proud to be associated with union thugs.' I take from that that they are proud to be associated with the thugs who were subject to a royal commission.

I do a bit of gardening. I hire a trailer from time to time to get rid of the rubbish. If one wants to get rid of evidence subject to a royal commission, you do not hire a 6 x 4 box trailer. You do not hire a trailer with a cage that you can see through. What do you hire? You hire a horse float. That is what they did. They hired a horse float to get rid of seven tonnes of documents that were going to be subject to a royal commission. They said that they were not hiding evidence or anything. They forgot to say why they put the rag over the CCTV camera.


Mr Mander: It's a coincidence.

Mr BLEIJIE: It was a coincidence that they flicked a tea towel over the CCTV camera. It was just a coincidence that they had access to a horse float. Why are the members opposite, like they said yesterday, happy to be associated with union thugs? I will tell you why, Mr Speaker. The ECQ have just released the donations for the last few months on their website. Let us look at this. Remember, honourable members, that these are the organisations that protect the most vulnerable in our society, the workers in our society. United Voice just wrote a cheque for \$175,000 gift in kind; the AMWU, \$90,000 out the window to the Labor Party; the AWU, \$95,000; the Australian Services Union, \$66,000; the CFMEU—

Mrs Frecklington: Out of the pockets of the workers.

Mr BLEIJIE: Yes, out of the pockets of the workers. The CFMEU, the great construction workers union we just talked about, took out of their pockets \$124,000. United Voice, as we just said, was \$175,000 and there was another one a month later of \$156,000—that is nearly \$400,000 in five months. The Australian Workers' Union gifted another \$157,000. Today we saw the Minister for Industrial Relations announce the change to the public holidays at Easter. It just so happens that the shop, distributive and allied employees' union just gave \$178,000 to the Labor Party. Here we go: the Community and Public Sector Union—the community union—just wrote a cheque for \$38,000; and the CEPU, \$80,000.

I suspect the millions of dollars in Labor donations from the unions would be better put in the pockets of the workers. It would be better put to building more social housing in Logan. It would be better put to building social housing in the member for Woodridge's electorate and my electorate. Millions of dollars have been given by the union movement to the Labor Party and they claim no conflict of interest. If \$1,000 is given by a businessperson to the LNP, they are corrupt, but you can give millions of dollars to the Labor Party. You do not have influence; you buy influence and you own the Labor government when you have that money.

 **Hon. G GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (6.21 pm): I rise to support the amended motion. When it comes to their choice of subject tonight for this debate, it is the same old broken record. The LNP has nothing else to debate in this House other than a really good dose of union bashing. That is all it is, because the donations that the member for Kawana just read out are all legally paid and declared donations. The problem is that they cannot stand the idea of openness and transparency and that we are part of a fine union movement in this state and we are proud of it. If it were not for the union movement, let me tell those opposite that workers would not have the benefits that they have today, and we are proud of everything that we have delivered on behalf of workers.

Earlier on tonight we heard the member for Nanango stand up for the workers, yet when they were in power the first thing they did was take away their common law rights—an absolute disgrace. Then what did they do? They said to the workers out there, 'You have nothing to fear.' Campbell Newman went to the election in 2012 and said to the workers in the public sector, 'You have nothing to fear.' What did they do? They proceeded to sack 14,000 public servants—14,000 of them.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Pause the clock. Minister, I cannot hear you. We will wait. I call the minister.

Ms GRACE: They come into this House declaring themselves the bastions of the working class. They are not kidding anybody. They are not fooling anyone but themselves. It is a disgrace that we have an ex-industrial relations minister in the Newman government opposite who does not understand the fundamentals of industrial relations or of workers compensation because in the debate tonight—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, members! We will wait. I call the minister.

Ms GRACE: In the debate tonight it was clear that there was a lack of understanding in regard to a very significant issue. Once again we see their complete lack of understanding of how industrial relations and bargaining actually works. Their motion also demonstrates a failure to understand how a good Westminster system government should work—of course, they got their degree from the Bjelke-Petersen days, as they had no idea about the separation of powers—admittedly, a concept their side of politics in Queensland has had trouble with over many years.

Their motion refers to the 'longstanding ministerial powers that protect jobs and prevent significant damage to the Queensland economy'. That depends on how you define 'longstanding', because it only came in when they were in government. That is the only time it came in—when they were in government. Other than that, the provision that a minister has the power to unilaterally terminate an industrial agreement is what they gave themselves. In effect, what this provision did was set the minister up as both employer and judge on the same matter. That is what it did. The industrial relations system in this state, following the hostile takeover of the Howard government of industrial relations, only covers the public sector and local government. They gave themselves the power to be both judge and jury. That completely and utterly withdraws the independence of the Industrial Relations Commission. This side of the House will restore the independence of the Industrial Relations Commission. That is what we went to the people with, to restore fairness, balance and independence of the commission where they can take anything into consideration in coming to their decision.

Mr Bleijie: You took the Local Government Association to court.

Ms GRACE: I hear the member for Kawana rattling on. What I suggest he does is listen a bit because tonight he moved the wrong amendment to the bill we just passed. He opposed the wrong clause. I think the member for Kawana should sit and listen because there was an error made tonight. There was a complete misunderstanding of industrial relations in this state because they opposed clause 5 instead of clause 31. That is what we are getting from the member opposite, who does not even know anything in regard to industrial relations.

The McGowan review was a fundamental review of industrial relations in this state. It confirmed the essence of collective bargaining and that the responsibility for resolving disputes is in the hands of the Industrial Relations Commission, which is where it should lie, not in the hands of the minister. The shadow minister has no understanding because in estimates he questioned the deputy director-general ad nauseam about how to interpret sections 423 and 424. He had been briefed and he still did not understand.

(Time expired)

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

AYES, 44:

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

INDEPENDENT, 2—Gordon, Pyne.

NOES, 42:

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

Resolved in the affirmative.

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

AYES, 44:

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

INDEPENDENT, 2—Gordon, Pyne.

NOES, 42:

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

Resolved in the affirmative.

Motion, as agreed—


That this House calls on the government to act in the best interests of all Queenslanders by:

1. preserving the longstanding independence of the Industrial Relations Commission that protects jobs and prevents significant damage to the Queensland economy; and
2. maintaining important accountability and transparency measures for registered industrial organisations in Queensland.

Sitting suspended from 6.35 pm to 7.35 pm.

PRIVILEGE

Sub Judice


 **Miss BARTON** (Broadwater—LNP) (7.35 pm): I rise on a matter of privilege suddenly arising. Earlier in debate I mentioned a matter in relation to which, subsequent to my contribution, it has come to my attention that charges have been laid. I wish to make clear to the House that at the time of my contribution I was not aware of that fact.

FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES (DOMESTIC SMOKE ALARMS) AMENDMENT BILL

FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES (SMOKE ALARMS) AMENDMENT BILL

Fire and Emergency Services (Domestic Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill resumed from 23 February (see p. 404) and Fire and Emergency Services (Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill resumed from 2 December 2015 (see p. 3080).

Second Reading (Cognate Debate)

 **Hon. WS BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services) (7.36 pm): I move—

That the Fire and Emergency Services (Domestic Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill be now read a second time.

Let me start by thanking the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee for its consideration of the Fire and Emergency Services (Domestic Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill 2016 and the Fire and Emergency Services (Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill 2015. I note that the committee tabled its report on the bill on 23 May 2016 and I tabled the government response to the committee's report on 24 August 2016. The committee's report contained two recommendations. The government supports both the recommendations of the committee. The committee's first recommendation gave support to the installation of photoelectric alarms. Photoelectric smoke alarms respond faster than other types of smoke alarms to the types of fires that tend to result in deaths in homes. They also lead to fewer false alarms. Fewer false alarms mean fewer people are likely to deliberately turn them off, resulting in more homes with working smoke alarms. The government's bill includes a provision which will see more photoelectric smoke alarms installed in homes immediately upon commencement. From 1 January 2017, a photoelectric alarm will need to be installed whenever a smoke alarm is replaced or a new one installed.

The committee's second recommendation was that smoke alarms comply with two Australian standards—AS 3786-2014 and AS 1670.6-1997. Existing provisions already require compliance with the first of these standards. The government supports this continuing. The government also supports incorporating the second standard into the Building Fire Safety (Domestic Smoke Alarms) Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2016. The incorporation of this second standard stems from advice received from public submissions. The standard provides more specific guidance as to the positioning of smoke alarms, particularly in relation to structural features of a home. It aids home owners in understanding where to install their smoke alarms and ensures they are placed so as to ensure the best functionality.

The second standard also supports the interconnection of smoke alarms and their installation in bedrooms, which is mandated by the government's bill. The draft amendment regulation to the bill, which was tabled at introduction, has been amended to incorporate the placement requirements of this standard. I table this revised draft Building Fire Safety (Domestic Smoke Alarms) Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2016 and the explanatory notes to the draft regulation.

Tabled paper: Building Fire Safety (Domestic Smoke Alarms) Legislation Amendment Regulation 2016: Tabling draft [1416].

Tabled paper: Building Fire Safety (Domestic Smoke Alarms) Legislation Amendment Regulation 2016: Tabling draft, explanatory notes [1417].

Tabled paper: Fire and Emergency Services (Domestic Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill 2016, explanatory notes to Hon. Bill Byrne's amendments [1418].

Use of subordinate legislation for the technical aspects of the government's smoke alarm policy allows the legislation to remain reactive to technological change and developments in best practice in smoke alarm placement. I will be moving that a number of amendments be made to the bill during consideration in detail. These amendments provide greater clarity to one clause and correct a cross-referencing error in another. I have already tabled the explanatory notes to go with those.

Last week was the fifth anniversary of the devastating house fire at Slacks Creek which tragically stole the lives of 11 people, including eight children—the greatest loss of life in a domestic house fire in Australian history. The inquest by the Office of the State Coroner recommended changes be made to Queensland's smoke alarm legislation, including the installation of photoelectric and interconnected smoke alarms in every bedroom, between areas containing bedrooms, in any hallway servicing bedrooms and in any other storey of a residential dwelling. For new residences, the coroner recommended that the smoke alarms be hardwired, while in existing residences smoke alarms may be hardwired or powered by a 10-year lithium battery.

The Palaszczuk government is committed to taking every effort to prevent tragedies such as the Slacks Creek house fire from occurring again. That is why the government bill fully implements the coroner's recommendations. By doing so, Queensland will have the most effective and comprehensive smoke alarm legislation in Australia. The safety of the Queensland public is our primary and paramount consideration.

There have been 93 house fire related deaths in Queensland since 2010. Every house fire has the potential to cause deaths. From the date of the Slacks Creek house fire until the start of this year, there were 80 house fires in my electorate of Rockhampton, there were 64 in the member for Kawana's electorate, there were 178 in the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services' electorate, there were 49 in the member for Cook's electorate and there were 136 in the Minister for Housing and Public Works' electorate. I repeat: every one of these fires has the potential to kill and this government will not flinch in taking the necessary steps to reduce avoidable tragedies from happening.

That is why the government is determined not to stop halfway in enacting the coroner's recommendations. This bill seeks to amend the current smoke alarm requirements in homes to require the installation of photoelectric, interconnected smoke alarms which are hardwired or powered by a 10-year battery in every bedroom, between areas containing bedrooms, in any hallway servicing bedrooms and in any other storey of a residential dwelling.

The evidence supporting the use of photoelectric smoke alarms over the other main type of alarms, known as ionisation alarms, is well established and proven. Photoelectric alarms are better at detecting slow-smouldering fires which are generally the fires that lead to deaths in homes. They are more reliable and less likely to produce false alarm activations. Queensland Fire and Emergency Services strongly support the installation and use of photoelectric smoke alarms. In fact, all Australian fire authorities support the use of photoelectric smoke alarms over ionisation, and the Northern Territory has already mandated their use.

However, mandating the use of photoelectric alarms is only one way in which the government bill will reduce house fire fatalities. The requirement for the interconnection of alarms is critical in ensuring residents—and in particular children and the elderly—have sufficient time to escape from a house fire. Interconnection involves linking all alarms so that when one alarm is triggered all are activated. Interconnection of smoke alarms ensures residents are alerted, even when the fire starts in another area of the house. This ensures all residents hear the alarm and are provided maximum time for escape before the fire and smoke spread within the dwelling.

Interconnection can be achieved by either hardwiring into the building's electrical system or interconnecting them wirelessly through the use of battery operated wireless devices. These wireless devices do not require an electrician to install them and can be readily installed by the home owner. Queensland Fire and Emergency Services advise that the cost of wireless devices will drop significantly over the next five to 10 years due to increased demand and competition between manufacturers.

Smoke alarms are only effective if they remain functioning. A continuous power source, such as hardwiring or a 10-year battery, reduces the risk of a smoke alarm being rendered useless due to flat batteries that may not have been replaced. The bill will see new homes continue to be required to have hardwired smoke alarms installed and will introduce the requirement that all other homes have their smoke alarms either hardwired or powered by a non-removable battery with a 10-year life. Again, these battery powered alarms are easily installed by home owners without the need for an electrician.

The most deadly fires occur when occupants are asleep, and the best way to rapidly alert residents to a fire is by installing alarms in every bedroom. Evidence shows that, in order to wake sleeping residents, smoke alarms must produce at least 75 decibels of sound at the bedhead. The current Australian Standard AS 3786 states that smoke alarms must produce at least 85 decibels three metres from the alarm. If an alarm positioned in the hallway activates, the sound level at the bedhead could be as low as 36 decibels if the person sleeps with the door closed. This would not provide the necessary warning, particularly for the elderly or children, who may be more likely to sleep through an alarm sounding at a different location in the residence.

An Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council analysis of deaths from house fires across Australia reveals that the major cause of death was smoke inhalation. The analysis found a sleeping person may become unconscious from inhaling smoke and subsequently die without ever being aware of the presence of a fire. Smoke inhalation is a silent killer. The installation of interconnected smoke alarms in every bedroom of a residence ensures sufficient early warning is provided to alert residents to the presence of a fire. The installation of smoke alarms in bedrooms provides the sleeping occupant the earliest possible warning of smoke in any part of the house and additional time to evacuate to a place of safety. If smoke alarms are not interconnected and in all bedrooms, parents would not be alerted to fires that start in children's bedrooms until it is too late.

The proper positioning of smoke alarms in homes will be further enhanced by the incorporation of Australian Standard 1670.6-1997, as recommended by the committee. This will ensure that smoke alarms are installed in the most effective position in a room. The changes will commence on 1 January 2017 and will be phased in over a 10-year period. From next year, if an existing smoke alarm needs to be replaced, it will be required to be replaced by a photoelectric smoke alarm. Also from that date, all new or substantially renovated homes will need to be compliant with the new smoke alarm provisions.

After five years from commencement all dwellings that are sold or leased will need to comply at the time an accommodation agreement, contract or sale is entered into. All other homes will be required to be compliant with the full provisions within 10 years from commencement. This 10-year period reflects the requirements under the Australian standard for smoke alarms to have a life span of at least 10 years and the recommendation of all Australian fire authorities that smoke alarms be replaced after 10 years.

The government is leading the charge by bringing its approximately 72,000 social housing and government employee housing properties into compliance within five years. The Department of Housing and Public Works has been phasing in photoelectric smoke alarms as part of its housing maintenance program and, as a result, it is estimated that approximately 80 per cent of dwellings are currently fitted with hardwired photoelectric smoke alarms.

I thank my ministerial colleague the Minister for Housing and Public Works for his assistance in the development of this bill. The Department of Housing and Public Works will be leading the way in implementing important changes to Queensland's social housing properties. The Department of Housing and Public Works is currently working on an assistance package to ease the cost of complying with the changes for struggling households. This package will be in place prior to the commencement of the changes on 1 January 2017.

This bill will see Queensland lead the country in home fire safety. Installing photoelectric smoke alarms with an enduring power source will result in a greater number of homes with working smoke alarms. The evidence is overwhelming that having interconnected smoke alarms and installing them in bedrooms greatly increases the chance of families escaping from fires unharmed. The Palaszczuk government will not sit back while more Queensland families are torn apart by house fires. We will not sit back while children continue to die in house fires. This bill takes the necessary steps towards ensuring tragedies such as the Slacks Creek house fire never happen again. I commend the bill to the House.



Mr MANDER (Everton—LNP) (7.51 pm): I move—

That the Fire and Emergency Services (Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill be now read a second time.

I rise to speak as part of the cognate debate on the Fire and Emergency Services (Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill 2015 that was introduced by my colleague the member for Kawana when he was the shadow minister for this portfolio and the Fire and Emergency Services (Domestic Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill 2016 introduced by the minister. For ease of reference I will refer to each bill as the LNP bill or the government bill.

Before we go into the details of both bills and the rigour of the debate, I think we should all acknowledge the tragic circumstances in which this subject is being debated. In fact, it was only last week that we commemorated the fifth anniversary of the Slacks Creek house fire, an horrific fire event in which, sadly, 11 people passed away including eight children under 18 years of age. This was the greatest loss of life in a domestic fire in Australian history.

In November 2014 the coroner who reviewed this tragic fire event found that smoke alarms were either not present in the dwelling or were not maintained. Two smoke alarms were in the upstairs section of the house; however, neither was working. He also found that had the smoke alarms been working, there was a reasonable prospect that some or all of the victims could have escaped.

The coroner held three public hearings and the subsequent report, which was published on 28 November, identifies the cause of the 11 deaths including when, where and how they died; the response of the emergency services; the circumstances surrounding the deaths, particularly the cause of the fire and any factors that may have prevented the deceased persons from escaping the fire; whether any accommodation issues contributed to the circumstances in which the deaths occurred; and any actions that may be taken to help prevent deaths in similar circumstances occurring in the future.

To understand the importance of this issue—and it is a very important issue of community safety—I want to read a short passage from the coroner's report which describes the events of 23 August 2011 in Slacks Creek. It states—

A few minutes before midnight on 23 August 2011, a fire started on the ground floor of the house occupied by the Taufa family and Lale family at 60 Wagensveldt Street, Slacks Creek, Queensland. The first of twenty three ... '000' emergency calls was made to emergency services at 12.04am on 24 August 2011.

The Queensland Fire and Emergency Service ... crew at Woodridge Station were notified of the fire at approximately 12.05am. They arrived at the scene at 12.11am. By the time they arrived at the scene, police were already in attendance and the house was already fully engaged by the fire.

Eleven people lost their lives including eight children under 18. The deceased were: Fusi Taufa, aged 57; Teukisia Lale, aged 42; Anna Taufa, aged 23; Jeremiah Lale, aged 17; Lini Paul Lale, aged 17; Adele Lee, aged 15; Jeanette Lale, aged 13; Selemafi Lale, aged 9; Richard Lale, aged 7; La'haina Taufa, aged 6; and Kalahnai Taufa, aged 3.

As we debate the importance of smoke alarms and the best way to improve smoke alarm use in Queensland homes, we should also consider these 11 people who tragically lost their lives because they were either unaware or ill equipped to deal with a major domestic house fire. It is clear that both sides of the House support the need to increase awareness and use of smoke alarms in Queensland. Where we differ is how we do that and the best way to do that. I am pleased to see that the government followed our lead on this issue and in response to the recommendations of the coroner's report into the Slacks Creek house fire.

The Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee, which considered these bills, could not agree that each bill be passed. They did make five recommendations though, namely: (1) the committee concurs with the majority of evidence from the many stakeholders and endorses interconnected alarms; (2) the committee recommends an alarm be powered by a prescribed regulation and be either hardwired or have a nine-volt, tamper-proof lithium battery with a 10-year warranty; (3) the committee recommends smoke alarms be located in accordance with the requirements set out in AS 1670.6 and as a minimum be installed in each bedroom of the residence; (4) the committee recommends the lessor check alarms at least once each calendar year and within 30 days before any new tenancy; and (5) the committee recommends the installation of time frames be provided for in accordance with the Fire and Emergency Services (Domestic Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill 2016.

The reason we support our bill over Labor's bill is that we believe that it is important to have an affordable transition process that encourages Queenslanders to take up photoelectric smoke alarms over the older ionised alarm type. While many of the advocates who support these changes believe that cost should not be a factor when it comes to saving your life and the lives of your family, which is a good point, when governments bring in any new legislative and regulatory change it is important to consider the costs because often they can be one of the barriers for people. I make that point because Labor's bill increases the number of smoke alarms that are required in a domestic dwelling. As the case stands now, the requirement is that smoke alarms must be situated between the bedrooms and the rest of the house, in separated sleeping areas and on every storey of a multilevel dwelling.

While Queensland Fire and Emergency Services recommend that they be installed in every bedroom, it has never been legislatively required until the introduction of Labor's bill. Whereas in the past some homes may have needed just two smoke alarms, Labor laws will now require that they have

at least five or six. We are not saying that this is a bad thing, but it needs to be done in a way that does not complicate the transition to photoelectric smoke alarms and does not make it harder for Queenslanders to comply with the new regulations. On top of that additional cost, it is also mandated that the smoke alarms be interconnected. For some people that could also mean purchasing alarms that wirelessly connect to one another, but for others it could mean hardwiring them, so there is a further additional cost of calling in an electrician. The LNP bill encourages home owners to interconnect but does not mandate that it must happen. If you make it too hard and too burdensome for people, they will not comply and put it in the too-hard basket. This issue is far too important to risk that happening.

While some of the other recommendations of the coroner's report are important, we believe that ultimately the first priority must be about transitioning Queensland homes to photoelectric smoke alarms, and the most affordable way to do this is through the LNP bill. We also think that a 10-year phase-in period is far too long. It gets the balance completely wrong. This is an issue in the here and now. We do not want to see another debacle like we saw with pool fencing, where there was such a long lead-in period that most Queenslanders forgot about it and, when the deadline came around, everybody was rushing around to madly comply and there was a backlog because the pool fence assessors were overbooked. We support the merits of an education and awareness campaign, but the timing of that campaign is crucial. From what we can ascertain, it seems that there is a 10-year education and awareness campaign planned which is spreading the funding too thin and over too long a period.

While I do not want to politic too much over this important community safety issue, from our point of view it is extremely disappointing that it took the government so long to act on this issue and respond to the 2014 coroner's report. Rather than simply introducing another bill and dragging out this process, the government could have just come to us and sat down to work out amendments to our bill if we were agreeable.

There are some people I want to acknowledge and thank as part of this debate. They are strong community advocates on this issue. Many people would be aware of, and probably know, Louie and Christine Naumovski from the Logan House Fire Support Network. The member for Kawana tells me that the LNP bill and our support for these important changes stem from a meeting that Louie and Christine and the mayor of Logan, Luke Smith, had with the former shadow minister Jarrod Bleijie and Lawrence Springborg last year. The LNP were more than happy to take up this important cause. Despite the result tonight, if it was this meeting and our private member's bill that instigated these changes, we are proud of the fact that the community will be better protected from a fire event as a result. It is a well-earned saying that smoke alarms save lives, but it is so true and a core foundation of the coroner's report into what happened in Slacks Creek in August 2014.

I also acknowledge the advocacy of Sunshine Coast man Keith Golinski. Keith's daughter-in-law Rachel and three granddaughters Sage and Willow, twins aged 12, and Starlia, aged 10, tragically died in their Tewantin home on Boxing Day 2011. I table a photo of those four people and the tribute that was given to them on the back of this as a tribute to them and in memory of them as a reminder of why we are tonight trying to introduce these laws.

Tabled paper: Photograph depicting Rachel, Willow, Sage and Starlia Golinski and containing a tribute to them from a family friend [\[1419\]](#).


Like the deaths of the families in Slacks Creek, this is a human tragedy that leads up the fight to ensure that Queenslanders are better protected and safer in their homes. The coroner's report on the Golinski tragedy, which was released in November 2015, again pointed to the findings from the coroner's report into the Slacks Creek house fire and the importance of these reforms. We honour and pay tribute to the Golinski family as well tonight as we debate these important changes. Keith Golinski, with Louie and Christine Naumovski, have been community advocates for these important changes. During the committee's consideration of these bills Louie made the following plea about the importance of getting on with these changes and moving forward with these reforms. Members should bear in mind that this testimony is from 24 February this year. Mr Naumovski stated—

We have been to numerous fires. We have been to numerous fatalities. We are currently working on two fatalities right now. We are arranging two funerals for two families and possibly a third from two nights ago at Goodna. We are still waiting to hear the outcome of that one. He is in a critical condition.

What is common in all these situations is the ionisation alarms did not activate. That is how simple it is. We do not want to hear any nonsense about the cost. Cost never comes into play. We want this to be implemented as soon as possible. It is as simple as that.

When we had discussions with the shadow emergency services minister late last we were looking at implementing a requirement that from 1 July this year all brand-new homes must be done, 1 July 2017 all rentals must be done and 1 July 2019 all other residents must be completed. That is a three-year phase-in period. Last year there were 1,908 house fires in the state of Queensland and we had 23 fatalities. I do not know about you, but I do not want another 6,000 house fires over the next three years and I do not want to lose another 50 lives. With the new bill that was introduced yesterday, which would have a 10-year phase-in, we are looking at a further 20,000 house fires and over 200 deaths. If we had any other incident like this in this state, legislation would be passed so quickly with fewer fatalities. Some 230 Queenslanders could potentially die over the next 10 years. Cost does not come into play.

Members, this is an issue that simply cannot wait much longer. We need to get on with these important community safety reforms and not delay over a decade. In this regard I urge honourable members to support the LNP bill that was introduced in 2015. In doing so, I thank the member for Kawana for all the work that he has done in putting this together and consulting with key community safety advocates. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr FURNER** (Ferry Grove—ALP) (8.05 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the cognate debate on the Fire and Emergency Services (Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill 2015 and the Fire and Emergency Services (Domestic Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill 2016. The bills in cognate received 15 submissions for the private member's bill and 16 submissions for the government bill. Some of those submissions were alike and some of them identified issues associated with both the private member's bill and the government bill.

The committee could not reach agreement on the passage of these bills; however, the committee was able to make some recommendations. The first of those recommendations noted the overwhelming evidence supporting the installation of photoelectric alarms and endorsed such. The second recommendation is that smoke alarms comply with AS 3786:2014 and AS 1670:1997. The government members' statement of reservation made five recommendations—

- (1) The committee concurs with the majority of evidence from the many stakeholders and endorses interconnected alarms;
- (2) The committee recommends an alarm be powered by prescribed regulation and be either hard-wired or have a 9v tamper proof lithium battery with a 10 year warranty.

Recommendation 3 concerns the AS number and is essentially covered by recommendation No. 2 in the committee's report. It continues—

- (4) The committee recommends the lessor check alarms at least once each calendar year and within 30 days before any new tenancy;
- (5) The committee recommends the installation of timeframes be provided for in accordance with the Fire and Emergency Services (Domestic Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill 2016.

In respect of the two bills we differ with regard to the time frames, but I do believe that if you are going to introduce legislation into this chamber you need to do it right. I refer to the key objectives of the 2016 bill. Consistent with the private member's bill, it requires the installation of photoelectric smoke alarms to all dwellings. The report states—

- That legislative amendments be made to mandate the installation of photoelectric and interconnected smoke alarms in every bedroom, between areas containing bedrooms and the rest of the dwelling, in any hallway servicing bedrooms and in any other storey of a domestic dwelling.

The member for Everton covered some of the history of what happened with the Slacks Creek house fire. Hearing of the deaths of so many in that tragedy at Slacks Creek was concerning. The coroner's report made a number of findings in relation to that particular fire and summarised the comments of Chief Superintendent Mr Neil Reid. The report states that Mr Reid indicated—

In essence, the photoelectric alarm responds more quickly to a broader range of fires and is less likely to cause false alarms (meaning people are less likely to interfere with them).

That was the case, unfortunately, for those residents at Slacks Creek. In the past, when my family had ionised smoke alarms, we used to go in and fan the alarms to stop the buzzer from going off. The report continued—

Mr Reid also emphasised the importance of smoke alarms being interconnected, preferably hard wired. The interconnection of smoke alarms means when one alarm operates they all trigger. This provides a loud warning to more parts of the home than would be possible with a single alarm. Mr Reid explained it was important to consider the placement of alarms. In particular, the need for smoke alarms in the bedrooms due to a closed bedroom door ...

The committee found that the only jurisdiction that currently specifies photoelectric smoke alarms is the Northern Territory. In November 2011 they legislated in respect of existing residential buildings. There was a Senate inquiry in respect of this issue; however, the Australian Senate is not in a position to make recommendations on behalf of the states.

A majority of the submitters supported the provisions in both bills that only photoelectric smoke alarms should be permitted. The United Firefighters Union of Australia indicated in its submission—

A typical residential, night-time fire tends to begin in a smouldering stage, where the smoke produced is visible, but cooler and less dense than the smoke produced from a flaming fire. Ionisation alarms take significantly longer, even up to an hour more, to detect fire at the smouldering stage. By the time a fire of this type is in the flaming stage, the level of smoke in the air makes escape considerably more difficult.

In addition to this, ionisation devices are five times more likely to give off a false alarm. In practice, this means that residents are significantly more likely to disconnect their device to avoid the annoyance and inconvenience of a false alarm. This is clearly contrary to the public interest because it leaves residents with no protection whatsoever against night-time fires.

Most of the committee members were informed also of a *60 Minutes* story called 'The Alarming Truth'. I watched the entirety of that program. That prompted me to immediately replace the ionised smoke alarms in my house with photoelectric alarms. It is alarming to watch that story and see that the only alarm that went off during the exercise was the photoelectric alarm, while the ionised alarm did not go off at all. In addition, the REIQ in its submission indicated—

There is a large volume of evidence that photoelectric smoke alarms offer the best detection across a range of fires. Our research indicates they will enhance protection against fire and reduce the risk of injury and fatality in the event of fire.

In respect of interconnection, currently in Queensland smoke alarms in existing houses are not required to be interconnected; however, since 2014 interconnectivity of smoke alarms has been mandated for new homes. Comparing apples with apples, the 2015 bill does not require smoke alarms to be interconnected in existing residential dwellings; however, the 2016 bill does require smoke alarms to be interconnected in existing residential dwellings.

In his findings from the inquest into the Slacks Creek fire the coroner recommended that smoke alarms 'be interconnected by hardwiring where possible and by wireless signal where hardwiring is impractical'. The committee does accept—any reasonable person would accept—that houses can have brick cavity and so on which makes it difficult for hardwiring to be carried out. Now on the market are products that have an ability for wireless interconnectivity. As technology progresses, it will become cheaper and easier for people to interconnect. Assistant Commissioner Reid from the QFES went on to explain—

The issue of interconnection is an important one. The way you get woken up by a smoke alarm is all about the sound level. A smoke alarm will give you 85 decibels within three metres of the smoke alarm. Away from the smoke alarm, particularly in a bedroom with a closed door, you might get as little as 36 decibels at the bed head. It is well known and is documented throughout the world that 75 decibels at the bed head is a requirement to make the average person wake up out of sleep.

Master Electricians Australia noted—

There is little to no cost difference between having hard-wired smoke alarms installed and interconnected compared with battery only smoke alarms installed and interconnected.

Safety Watch Australia indicated to the committee—


With new innovations in wireless interconnection between smoke alarms provides a possibility to achieve a desired outcome but at a heavier price per alarm to the stakeholders. Whilst this sounds like an easy fix, this is reasonably new technology and has yet been proven to be reliable for the life span of a smoke alarm (10 Years).

Conversely, Quickcheck submitted to the committee—

Whilst the interconnection of smoke alarms can provide additional warning to occupants in the event of a fire, our experience has shown that if all the alarms in a dwelling are interconnected and an alarm false activates, the occupants of the dwelling immediately disable all the smoke alarms, leaving the dwelling with no working smoke alarms ...

Of course, with photoelectric alarms that will not cause problems for the future.

I think the committee did an excellent job in examining both bills. I certainly commend the previous members of the committee who contributed to the inquiry as well as the current members. I also acknowledge the secretariat for their excellent work in putting this report together. I commend the cognate bills to the House.

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (8.17 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Fire and Emergency Services (Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill 2015 and the Fire and Emergency Services (Domestic Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill 2016, referencing report No. 28 of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee. I support the 2015 bill, introduced by the member for Kawana. I came late to this committee and had to play a bit of catch-up, so the first question I asked was why there are two bills. Obviously the first was the member for Kawana's bill, introduced on 2 December

2015. The formulation of that bill was driven by those terrible fires that occurred. Then on 23 February 2016 the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services introduced a bill that, in all reality, used much of the member for Kawana's bill and made some changes. After looking at the evidence I can say that the changes suggested in the 2016 bill are worrying. I will deal with those in a little while.

It is worthwhile to state the key objectives of the 2015 bill. It provides that photoelectric smoke alarms will be required in residential premises in Queensland, as they already are in all commercial premises in Queensland. It is not mandated that they be hardwired. Home owners have the option of hardwiring or using nine-volt 10-year lithium batteries.

It is not mandated that they be interconnected. That is also optional for home owners. Houses built after 1 May 2014 already have a requirement for interconnectivity. These smoke alarms would be required to be in a specified location within the residential premises which is the same as it is now. The 2015 bill provides for a staged transition in accordance with the recommendations of the coroner—that is, for dwellings with smoke alarms complying with the law immediately before 1 July 2016, the owner must replace them with smoke alarms complying with the 2015 bill within three years. That is the crux or the cornerstone of the 2015 bill—that is, a three-year time frame. For dwellings with no smoke alarms complying with the law on 1 July 2016, the owner must install smoke alarms compliant with the bill before the first of a transfer of the dwelling, the end of an existing residential tenancy or rooming accommodation agreement for all or part of the dwelling or the start of a new one, or by 1 July 2017. If they are not currently complying, they have to be complying by 1 July 2017.

The report was delivered in November 2014 and of course that report, as has been said already, was driven by those tragic events that occurred in 2011. The new state government came into this place some time after the end of January 2015 and in terms of the bills that were being introduced this particular bill was not exactly a priority. We sat around waiting and expecting something to happen or something to come through given that the report from the coroner was available, but nothing happened. A lot of priorities were being given to unions, with nothing lifesaving in any of that. Rather, we saw all of these union based bills—promises to the unions—being brought through the House but nothing in relation to this lifesaving legislation.

The member for Kawana ultimately drafted his own bill. That legislation is lifesaving legislation. In drafting that legislation, he was ahead of the government and introduced it into the House on 2 December, as I mentioned before. In that respect, he brought his legislation into the House based on testimony from QFES and other key industry witnesses that photoelectric smoke alarms should be the only type of smoke alarm that is the approved alarm for the purposes of residential homes. It was fairly blatant and fairly obvious that that was where we needed to go and that is where the member for Kawana went, and then a few months later the government brought its bill into the House.

It is worth talking about some of the key outcomes of that 2015 bill. Photoelectric smoke alarms would be required in residential premises and those smoke alarms would be required to be in specified locations, and that is very important. The 2015 report states—

The key objective of the 2016 Bill is to improve personal safety in domestic dwellings by requiring the installation of photoelectric smoke alarms in all dwellings thereby reducing the loss of life or injury.

The committee has found that the key outcomes of the 2016 bill are similar but not quite identical to the 2015 bill. We know that both bills call for photoelectric alarms. We know that in both bills the alarms would be required to be in specified locations. We know that both bills come to this House as a result of the Slacks Creek house fire that, tragically, 11 people lost their lives in, as has been alluded to. It should also be noted that the findings from a coronial inquest into a Tewantin house fire which tragically claimed four lives, three of whom were children, that occurred in December 2011 were also referenced in the bill's explanatory notes.

In that respect it is very important for us to understand that the differences are the issue in these two bills. It is the differences that are the issues. We know that the coroner describes the approved smoke alarms and some other matters. Included in those other matters he talks about hardwiring and the use of wi-fi connectivity, and I will come back to that a little bit later. We come to our investigations and the evidence, and this is where we need to understand that the coroner had not undertaken in-depth investigations in relation to the reliability of or what the issues might be or cast inquiries around the broader community to see what might be at issue in relation to some of those things that he said.

Once again, if we look at it, it is three years in the 2015 bill that the member for Kawana put forward and a 10-year phase-in period to 31 December 2026 in the government's bill. As I said, that is the issue. The technical issue is—and my inquiries and other inquiries have suggested—that 10-year

lithium batteries may not be capable of connectivity with one another. Remember, we would be doing this on the basis of wi-fi and there is some suggestion that the connectivity of lithium battery run smoke detectors may not be able to be provided and if they are able to be provided then they may not be reliable. That would be of concern to everyone in this House and everyone in Queensland—that is, if you were in bed and a fire occurred and you were confident that if there were a fire the alarm wherever the fire might start would trigger and then also trigger the alarm in your bedroom or the bedrooms of your children. If you are that confident that that is the case, then you are going to go to bed at night and not so much concerning yourself with those potential fires. Obviously they are of concern to all of us, but the situation is this: what if that wi-fi connectivity fails? What if the technology is not that good? We know because we see it here. We see the wi-fi technology in this place fail from time to time.

Mr Power interjected.

Mr CRANDON: This is a very serious issue and I really do not think the member for Logan is accepting how serious this issue is. The situation is that there are issues around lithium batteries and there are issues around connectivity and the cost of connectivity, and that is another matter. I did some research and discovered that we are talking quite significant differences in costs. It was alluded to by the shadow minister earlier that the cost of the interconnectivity using hardwiring and certainly interconnectivity using wi-fi is quite significant. Therefore, many people within the state would delay the addition of these hardwired or lithium battery operated devices until much closer to the end of the 10-year cycle than the member for Kawana's bill puts forward, and that is for it to be in place by July 2017. It must occur within three years or penalties apply.

In terms of the difference in costs with regard to a typical relatively large house, it is somewhere around \$1,400 or \$1,500 to put in sufficient devices plus the wi-fi to connect it—that is, for a three- or four-bedroom house it could cost somewhere around \$1,400 or \$1,500. Hardwiring on a typical one-level, three-bedroom home is something like \$712, with \$400 of that being the cost of the equipment alone.

That is assuming a relatively standard \$80 piece of equipment for an electrician to come and hardwire. We do not even know if that is accurate. I made a comparison with a three-bedroom home and discovered that you could use lithium battery non-connected types for \$540 as opposed to \$1,070 if you have to hardwire. That is where all of those concerns come from. I am talking about cost and reliability.

The final issue that I would like to close on is the issue of false alarms. In our statement of reservation—and it is worth reading—from page 54 we included a comment by Safety Watch Australia in its submission to the 2016 bill. It states—

With new innovations in wireless interconnection between smoke alarms provides a possibility to achieve a desired outcome but at a heavy price per alarm to the stakeholders.


So Safety Watch is supporting that cost aspect of it. The submission states further—

Whilst this sounds like an easy fix, this is reasonably new technology and has yet been proven to be reliable for the life span of a smoke alarm (10 Years).

The submission goes on to say—

Should a smoke alarm produce a false alarm event, all... alarms will go into alarm mode. In this circumstance the occupant must locate the individual alarm that has caused the event in order to address the problem and stop the alarms... from sounding. It is our professional experience that the average person has neither the knowledge nor the patience to systematically go through the house to find the offending alarm and, as a consequence, may render each beeping alarm that they encounter unserviceable until they finally address the correct alarm to stop the alarming. It is often the case that batteries are removed and not replaced until the next day or perhaps not at all; in this instance if the batteries are the lithium removable types, it could be a costly exercise to replace any missing batteries. And, in the case that lithium non-removable batteries are present in the smoke alarms the smoke alarms themselves are disabled (rendered non-functional) and would need to be completely replaced. Interconnection has the ability to render a dwelling's entire smoke alarm system inoperable leaving the occupants totally unprotected.

I ask the minister to give serious consideration to this issue. To force through the House this interconnectivity aspect with a delay of up to 10 years for the implementation of these smoke alarms versus no connectivity required at this stage but installation within three years is a no-brainer. At this juncture, the 2015 bill is the one that we should be going forward with. We have to know and be satisfied that the technology is going to work every time. Let us think of these smoke alarms like we would an aircraft. We need to know that, when the aircraft takes off, it is going to land. We need to know that, in all reasonable circumstances, these smoke alarms are going to send a signal to us every single time—and that technology is not proven for that to occur.

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (8.34 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Fire and Emergency Services (Domestic Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill 2016. 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 also the other committee members and the secretariat. I would also like to thank the many submitters and those who provided evidence at hearings, sharing their knowledge, expertise and often difficult and distressing experiences. It was very much appreciated.

The Palaszczuk government is committed to improving the safety of all Queenslanders by rolling out the most comprehensive smoke alarm legislation for homes in Australia. The government's bill will save lives and, most importantly, the lives of children and vulnerable people. It will improve safety outcomes for the community and those most vulnerable to deaths from house fires.

Following the inquest into the tragic Slacks Creek house fire, the coroner's key recommendation was to ensure that photoelectric smoke alarms are audible in the bedroom at a minimum sound level of 75 decibels. The only practical way of achieving that sound level at the bedhead is to place alarms in all bedrooms. That is what the government's bill seeks to achieve. It will provide residents with an early warning of the presence of a fire at a sound level capable of waking occupants in all places where people sleep and also implement a long-held recommendation of the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services.

However, without interconnected alarms in bedrooms, if an alarm in the hallway activates and the bedroom door is closed, the sound level at the bedhead could be as low as 36 decibels. That may not provide an alarm at a level that is necessary to awaken residents. Installing smoke alarms in every bedroom and, importantly, interconnecting them with other alarms in the house will mean that, if an alarm—say, for example, downstairs in the lounge—detects smoke, all the alarms will sound an alert. This is particularly critical for children and vulnerable or elderly people who, unfortunately, are overrepresented in house fire deaths.


A major cause of death from domestic fires is smoke inhalation. A sleeping person may become unconscious from inhaling smoke and potentially die without ever being aware of the presence of a fire. A study by the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council found that most fires occur during the sleeping hours of between 8 pm and 8 am, with a peak time between midnight and 4 am. A University of Victoria study of house fires found that 50 per cent of house fire related deaths can be reduced through interconnected smoke alarms that are installed in all bedrooms. If smoke alarms are not interconnected, and in all bedrooms, parents and elderly people would not be alerted to fires that, for example, may start in the children's bedrooms or elsewhere in the house until it is too late as smoke inhalation is a silent killer.

Sadly, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services advise that the elderly and children are statistically more likely to die in house fires as they are less likely to be roused from sleep. The Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council study found that the very old and the very young are four times more likely to die in a house fire than are the rest of the community. Interconnecting the alarms will notify residents of the presence of a fire at a sound level sufficient to wake them, even if the fire is in another part of the house. The private member's bill does not require smoke alarms in bedrooms, which is also against the recommendations of the coroner.

The other great advantage of the government's smoke alarm bill for children and vulnerable people is that it provides the earliest possible warning of the presence of a fire. In the case of a fire, the elderly and other persons suffering from mobility impairment may take longer than others to exit their homes. That is particularly true when personal security has been prioritised ahead of fire safety, making it difficult to exit a home.

As such, the rapid alert that a photoelectric alarm in a bedroom provides while smoke is only at ceiling level equips vulnerable people with the best possible chance of escaping a fire unharmed. It also provides caregivers with the maximum time to assist others in exiting the building if needed. Further, I can advise that vulnerable persons who may feel unsure about how to comply with the new provisions can arrange a home visit from Queensland Fire and Emergency Services through its Safehome program. The government is also currently working on an assistance package to ease the cost of compliance for households, as the member for Coomera spoke about earlier, so there is some support and assistance for people who might be struggling with meeting those demands. Queensland Fire and Emergency Services has also committed to providing an education campaign to advise the community on the changes and how they need to comply. This campaign will have a particular focus on vulnerable persons and those most in need of assistance.

Quite simply, the government's bill will save lives. It will save children's lives, it will save vulnerable people's lives, it will save Queenslanders' lives. I am very proud to be part of a government that is taking concrete steps to improve the safety of all Queenslanders. I commend the Fire and Emergency Services (Domestic Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill 2016 to the House.

 **Mrs STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (8.41 pm): I rise to add my contribution to the cognate debate on the Fire and Emergency Services (Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill 2015, introduced on 2 December of that year by the honourable member for Kawana, and the Fire and Emergency Services (Domestic Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill 2016, introduced into the House on 23 February of this year by the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services. Both bills were referred to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee which was required to report to parliament by 23 May of this year. I became a member of this committee on 10 May this year, by which time most of the hard work had already been done. Therefore, I would like to commend the committee, the team of research staff and Hansard reporters for their work and deliberations on these bills. In particular, I recognise the work of the former committee members, the honourable members for Mount Ommaney and Broadwater, and the committee chair along with other members. I also note the contributions of my colleagues, the honourable members for Everton and Coomera, in tonight's debate.

The objectives of both of these bills as detailed in the explanatory notes are fundamentally similar and they highlight the urgent need to review current legislation and address the issue of installation of functional, life-saving smoke alarm devices. The committee report outlines that the objective of the 2015 bill is to implement recommendations from the coronial inquest into the Slacks Creek house fire that occurred in August 2011, tragically claiming the lives of 11 people, including eight children.

It is explained that the 2015 bill is based on testimony from Queensland Fire and Emergency Services and other key witnesses that photoelectric smoke alarms as opposed to ionised alarms should be the only type of smoke alarm that is the approved alarm for the purposes of residential homes. A staged transition process is recommended for the implementation of photoelectric smoke alarms in residential premises in Queensland. For dwellings that already complied with the law prior to July 2016, owners must replace them within three years. If dwellings do not have compliant smoke alarms as of 1 July then they must be installed if there is a transfer of the dwelling, at the end of an existing residential tenancy or rooming accommodation agreement or before 1 July.

The key objectives of the 2016 bill are to improve personal safety in domestic dwellings by requiring the installation of photoelectric smoke alarms in all dwellings thereby reducing the loss of life and injury, with the inclusion of two broad recommendations by the State Coroner that legislative amendments be made to mandate the installation of photoelectric and interconnected smoke alarms in every bedroom, between areas containing bedrooms and the rest of the dwelling, in the hallway servicing bedrooms and in any other storey of a domestic dwelling. For new residences smoke alarms may be hardwired or powered by a 10-year lithium battery. Further, the 2016 bill recommends a 10-year phase-in period up to December 2026 that includes a complex and varied list of implementation time lines.

The objectives of both of these bills are commendable. Both aim to protect Queenslanders, save lives and reduce the risk of a death in a fire. Our role as members of the Queensland parliament is to make laws that safeguard the people who elect us, both in our electorates and within the state. Here we have a cognate debate on two bills that are comparable. One was introduced by the LNP last year, the other by Labor copying the LNP's good idea.

A government member interjected.

Mrs STUCKEY: It is a good idea. Interjections to suggest otherwise—that it is not a good idea—really do not help this debate. After consideration of both bills, the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee was not able to reach a majority decision on whether to recommend that either bill be passed. The non-government committee members' statement of reservation detailed the Palaszczuk government's decision to introduce new legislation a mere two months after the introduction of the Fire and Emergency Services (Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill 2015, stating it was simply unnecessary when they could have put forward amendments to the LNP's bill.

While the two bills possess similarities, when evaluated, the 2015 bill is superior in that it is simpler, cheaper to comply with and, as a result, it is anticipated the rate of compliance—read 'saving lives'—would be quicker and greater across the state. As mentioned previously, the principle of both of these bills is to improve the quality of alarms installed in all homes across the state thereby decreasing the frequency and occurrence of death or injury in the unlikely incidence of a household fire.

Basing our decision solely on that key principle, the 2015 amendment bill is the clear winner of the two. Non-government members consider that the first priority is to transfer all existing domestic dwellings in Queensland to photoelectric smoke alarms. The 2015 bill, with a much shorter compliance period, is an easier and cheaper option, which means more people will comply with the new regulations and therefore more people—that is, families, children and pets—will be protected, ultimately reducing the risk of death and injury within a much shorter time period than the 10-year period outlined in the 2016 government amendment bill.

Both bills make amendments to the Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990 and both also require the installation of approved compliant smoke alarms in residential domestic dwellings in Queensland. However, it is those finite details that separate the two from both a practical and a financial sense. The private member's bill policy objective is the result, as I said, of the tragic fire in August 2011 at Slacks Creek. It is detailed in the explanatory notes that the bill is in response to coroner recommendations. In this heartbreaking circumstance it was found that there were only two smoke alarms in the upstairs section of the home, neither of which were in working order. Evidence from one of the survivors, Mr Taufu, had been provided to the inquest that the smoke alarm in the hallway had been turned off more than 10 years previously. Similarly, the smoke alarm in the kitchen was not in working condition. The coroner's response stated—

... had the smoke alarms been working there was a reasonable prospect that some or all of the victims could have escaped. Any working smoke alarm, be it Ionisation or Photoelectric, would most probably have saved lives.

The coroner continued and summarised the comments provided by Chief Superintendent Neil Reid from the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services stating—

QFES is of the view the Photoelectric smoke alarm is superior. Photoelectric smoke alarms are compulsory in commercial premises. In essence, the photoelectric alarm responds more quickly to a broader range of fires and is less likely to cause false alarms (meaning people are less likely to interfere with them).

According to a research brief from the Parliamentary Library—and I would like to thank them for their prompt response—in the last decade there have not been any reported fatalities in the electorate of Currumbin as a result of a fire in a residential dwelling. However, not all of Queensland has been so fortunate during that time, as we have heard. In May last year a devastating fire in Kokoda Street, Beenleigh claimed the life of a toddler on his birthday and in May this year an elderly lady on the Gold Coast lost her life in another terrible incident.

The introduction of these bills prompted me to update my home smoke alarms by purchasing photoelectric models. As I stated, there are notable differences between the requirements, the locations of placement for each device and the implementation time periods specified. To understand some of the bills' phrasing, an approved smoke alarm means a photoelectric type smoke alarm that complies with the Australian Standard AS3786 and, if installed in a newly constructed domestic dwelling, is a 240-volt hardwired smoke alarm, or, if installed in an existing domestic dwelling in addition to or replacing existing smoke alarms, is a 240-volt hardwired smoke alarm where access is available to the ceiling space or, otherwise, a 10-year lithium battery smoke alarm interconnected wirelessly to all other required smoke alarms in the dwelling. It is important that all smoke alarms are interconnected so that if one alarm is triggered all remaining alarms also operate. This will only be possible if all alarms are of the same type and are compatible with each other.

The LNP private member's bill outlines requirements that smoke alarms 'must be photoelectric'. The government's bill states smoke alarms must be photoelectric and interconnected. There is no doubt that the decision to legislate that every home in Queensland be fitted with a photoelectric alarm is an important one and the evidence is patently clear on this. Photoelectric smoke alarms use a light source and photocell. As the smoke enters the detection chamber, it interferes with the light beam, which in turn causes the alarm to sound. The outcome is that photoelectric smoke alarms detect visible smoke. On the flip side, ionisation smoke alarms use a small amount of radioactive material to create an electrical current that travels through ionised air. When smoke enters the detection chamber, it impedes the flow of the current and causes the alarm to sound, which means the alarm detects the presence of extremely small submicron sized particles of combustion.

Let me explain the difference. To pass the Australian standard criteria, both alarms are put through smoke sensitivity testing by the CSIRO, formerly the scientific services laboratory. A typical photoelectric smoke alarm activates at around eight per cent to 12 per cent light obscuration per lineal metre. Ionisation alarms are not required to meet light obscuration, that is, visible smoke pass criteria, because they are measured on submicron particle density pass criteria. However, when they are tested based on light obscuration levels at the recorded time of the alarm activation in the test room, the levels

are typically 48 to 62 per cent light obscuration per metre. That result is up to five times more than the maximum safe level allowed for photoelectric smoke alarms under the current pass criteria. The average person has difficulty seeing and breathing in a room of 12 per cent obstruction per metre and would be desperately trying to find the exit. If you think about the ionisation alarms testing data in relation to that fact and times the amount of smoke by four in an already stressed and difficult situation where a person cannot breathe or see, it is almost certain that death will occur. That is all the more reason to support the 2015 bill, with a shorter time frame for implementation, because if an ionisation alarm currently does not activate until four times the safe smoke obscuration levels set for photoelectric alarms then they are not safe.

ORR Partners added that, while the two alarms serve different purposes and neither is deemed faulty, photoelectric alarms cover a wider range of residential fires and should be the technology of choice. However, the requirement of the government's bill for the alarms to be interconnected is asking too much. Together with the other non-government members of the committee, I agree that it should not be mandated that smoke alarms be interconnected. It is one thing to encourage interconnected alarms, but to force each and every home in Australia to connect their alarms goes against the objective of the government's bill to equip every home in our great state with up-to-date safe smoke alarms. The reason for this is explained in our statement of reservations.

The LNP does not believe that the interconnectivity of smoke alarms is as important as getting them into households in a short period. Why does this matter? Simply because the moment you stipulate that all smoke alarms need to be interconnected, the cost doubles for each individual, each household, each landlord and also for the government's significant public housing stock. The cost analysis from QuickCheck provided to the committee outlines that wireless nine-volt alarms currently cost approximately \$90 to \$100 each. Under the new legislation, a standard three-bedroom home would require four or five of those to be fitted, costing approximately \$400 to \$500, and that cost would dramatically increase for homes with complex floor plans or two-storey homes. By comparison, hardwired smoke alarms must by law be installed and connected by a licensed electrical contractor. As a result of other requirements, such as the replacement of existing smoke alarms and electrical interference, the cost would rise to approximately \$1,000 to \$1,200 and could dramatically increase for homes with complex floor plans, inaccessible roof spaces or two-storey homes. The fact is that, once the cost goes up, more and more people are going to either be reluctant to comply with the new rules, putting the occupants in danger, or prolong the time it takes for the smoke alarms to be installed, which again risks lives. The minister said that the cost of alarms will go down over the next five years. The LNP thinks that is far too long to wait.

In our statement of reservation we made it clear that the first priority is to transfer all existing domestic dwellings in Queensland to photoelectric smoke alarms without incurring huge costs to households, making the process quicker and saving lives. Based on the cost factor alone, interconnectivity should not be mandatory—preferred yes, but not mandatory. Granted, it was included in the coroner's recommendations, but it also needs to be noted that experts' recommendations do not exclusively advise for interconnected alarms. In its submission on the 2016 bill, Safety Watch Australia stated—


While interconnectivity is ideal on paper [and achievable in new builds and major renovations] trying to retro fit older homes is going to be virtually impossible and not to mention costly.

That is not the only evidence backing up the case against interconnectivity. There has been mention of wireless interconnection as an alternative but, for people with existing photoelectric alarms, that would mean having to get the same alarm to interconnect or replace the existing suitable alarm at additional costs. It also should be mentioned with regard to wireless interconnection that Safety Watch Australia stated that it will come at a heavy price per alarm to the stakeholders and, as reasonably new technology, it is not yet proven to be reliable for the lifespan of a smoke alarm.

It is noted that the Logan Fire Support Network requests photoelectric alarms in every hallway, bedroom and living area. However, it is not the responsibility of government to legislate this. The location of smoke alarms must be compliant with the relevant sections of the Building Code of Australia.

In closing, there is bipartisan support for photoelectric smoke alarms to be installed in all Queensland homes and living quarters. On that point, it seems we all agree. Functioning smoke alarms save lives. Once installed, they need to be tested regularly. I admit that once or twice over the years it has slipped my mind to do that, which is why I have a reminder on my fridge to test them on 1 April each year, as that is an easy date to remember. It is also recommended that you check the batteries once a month, keep them free of dust and replace batteries at least once a year, unless the alarm has

a lithium battery which lasts 10 years. These are tamper proof and cannot be replaced. All types of smoke alarms have a limited lifespan and will need replacing, so check the warranty. Governments can legislate and regulate all they like, but in truth the responsibility lies with home owners, landlords and tenants to protect themselves and their families.

 **Mr BROWN** (Capalaba—ALP) (8.56 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Fire and Emergency Services (Domestic Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill 2016. Firstly, I thank my fellow parliamentary members who sat on the committee that prepared the report. I especially thank our chair, the member for Ferny Grove, and the secretariat. Tonight is really about a contest of ideas. I commend both bills. I commend the work of the previous shadow, the member for Kawana, in bringing forward his bill and for the evidence that he provided at the hearings. Certainly it was apparent that his bill really is based on the best of intentions and on bringing about a speedy change in this area.


I note that the government's bill not only provides a high level of safety for homes but also allows for the use of different technologies, which makes compliance easier and more convenient for home owners. Homes will be required to have smoke alarms interconnected and powered by an ongoing power source. New homes will be required to hardwire their alarms to achieve those aims, in line with the Building Code of Australia. However, existing homes will have the option of using smoke alarms that are battery powered and interconnected wirelessly. Those alarms are powered by a non-removable battery with a 10-year lifespan. Therefore, the whole unit is discarded at the end of 10 years. It is designed to be interconnected wirelessly with all other smoke alarms within the home, without the need for any other equipment or technology. The greatest advantage of those alarms is that they are easily installed by home owners, removing the need for an electrician, saving costs and inconvenience. That is particularly important for those living in more remote areas where accessing electricians may be difficult and also for those who live in rental premises where organising a tradesperson can sometimes be difficult.

Smoke alarms that are interconnected wirelessly are relatively new technology. They are widely available across the state and currently retail for approximately \$150. This cost is expected to reduce as the demand for this technology increases, especially as a result of passing legislation like this tonight. By allowing for the use of this technology, the bill will provide added flexibility in terms of how homes comply. As there is no need for hardwiring they can be installed in any location in a home, even in situations where there is a limited ceiling space and other structural features which would otherwise make installation difficult.

The alarms interconnect by emitting a radio frequency when smoke is detected by one device. When the other alarms in the house detect this frequency they are triggered so that all alarms in the house sound an alert. Home owners can program a house code into the alarms to avoid interference so only the alarms with that code will interact.

The bill has been designed in such a way as to allow for ongoing innovations in technology and research. The provisions relating to the technological aspects of smoke alarms, such as the fact that they are photoelectric, how they are powered and where they are positioned, are to be contained in subordinate legislation. This allows the policy to be responsive to the best available technology in Queensland homes. Both bills have the best intentions when it comes to the safety of Queenslanders. I thank the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and the Minister for Public Works for the bill they have brought forward.

It be remiss of me not to thank Shane Malley and his gang at the Capalaba Fire Station. They are a great crew. I love catching up with them for a coffee at Wicked Brew Coffee, which we do quite often. I commend them on their work. I hope as a result of whichever bill gets up tonight firefighters like Shane Malley and his crew have to turn up to fewer fires where they have to pull out the bodies of deceased persons. Hopefully we can make our homes safer. As a home owner and landlord myself, I think both bills are commendable. There is not too much in our bill that limits landlords and home owners from getting on with installing this technology. I commend the government's bill to the House.

 **Mr ELMES** (Noosa—LNP) (9.02 pm): I think we would all agree that life-saving legislation, by its very nature, must be implemented as a matter of urgency. I also expect most reasonable people would agree that a 10-year time frame to fully implement such legislation is far from expedient or satisfactory.

After reading the Fire and Emergency Services (Domestic Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill 2016 it appears this government clearly has a lot to say about best case scenarios. However, the actual law is once again overshadowed by glaring gaps in logic. Serious questions must be asked as to the way in which the bill is to be rolled out and, more importantly, concerns raised about the government's

naivety as to how the mandatory requirements of the bill will be taken up by Queenslanders. The government has given itself 10 years to fully implement its own legislation to make it compulsory for every home to have—and I quote the legislation—

... photoelectric and interconnected smoke alarms in every bedroom, between areas containing bedrooms and the rest of the dwelling, in any hallway servicing bedrooms and in any other storey of a domestic dwelling.

On present trends, by the time this ambitious plan has been achieved, 10 years hence, 20,000 homes will be destroyed by fire in Queensland and 200 lives lost. There is no debate that the new generation of photoelectric smoke alarms must replace ionised alarms, and they must do so across-the-board regardless of whether the property is owned or rented, without restrictions and as soon as possible. If it is good enough for these alarms to protect us at work and in a commercial setting, as the current law requires, why then is it not as vital that the same safety standard be in place to protect us at home—where we live and raise our children.

More than 12 months ago the minister was advised that the installation of photoelectric smoke alarms, either hardwired or powered by a nine-volt lithium battery, should be mandated. The minister received this advice not once but on several occasions: from the coroner following the inquest into the tragic Slacks Creek house fire which killed 11 people in 2011; from much closer to home for me following the coroner's investigation into the house fire that killed Noosa celebrity chef Matt Golinski's wife and his three precious daughters in that same year; and from fire safety experts in Queensland Fire and Emergency Services. All the government has proposed since that time is a cumbersome piece of legislation that will take 10 years to come into effect.


Conversely, the LNP has introduced a sensible and practical bill that will implement these important recommendations more easily and more quickly as part of a staged, more affordable and more realistic process—all within three years. Stage 1 would see the replacement of all existing less effective ionised alarms with photoelectric ones which can be hardwired or use a nine-volt 10-year lithium battery. This goal is far more achievable than that of Labor's bill, which requires additional alarms to be installed over and above what is currently required and for them to be interconnected so that when one alarm sounds they all do.

This is a costly and overwhelming endeavour that requires a qualified electrician and will simply be impossible for many families to afford. The cost of mandating interconnectivity, together with the complexity of who and when and what part of the community is meant to meet with which time frame, of which there are many stipulated in the bill, is an automatic barrier to compliance. Not every household can afford to move immediately to Labor's bells and whistles version, which Labor is no doubt aware of and hence that is why they have given Queenslanders 10 years to comply. In truth, we do not need bells and whistles to save lives; we just need to transition from one type of alarm to a better one.

At an average approximate cost of \$600 for an easy-to-wire ground-level average home, the installation of interconnected photoelectric alarms in more places than ever before is an overhaul that many people in my electorate and indeed throughout Queensland simply cannot afford. Furthermore, why would they bother when the majority of them have 10 years to comply? A 10-year buy-in is nonsense. It does not matter how rich or poor people are, if they have 10 years to think about an expenditure of a minimum amount of \$600 then they are not going to bother to comply until someone starts to remind them about 9½ years from now.

There is a domestic house fire in Queensland every 4.7 hours. Despite the fact that smoke alarms are already required, there are many homes in Queensland that still do not meet the requirement to have a working smoke alarm installed. Whether that is because they have not been installed in the first place or whether they have not been maintained or serviced, we are all at risk of suffering the life-threatening offence of complacency when it comes to fire safety.

The LNP has paved a way for more homes to be protected and more lives to be saved through a simple and easy transition to deliver the necessary changes and in a timely fashion at about a fifth of the cost. It just makes common sense.

 **Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (9.08 pm): I rise tonight in this cognate debate to speak in support of the bill proposed by my colleague the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services. The government's bill will make Queensland homes safer. Put simply, I am convinced that the government's bill is the bill that will save lives in this state.

Fire has always called us to collective action. As a community we have always understood that fire has a fury that we cannot control ourselves and so we entrust the hardworking men and women of the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services to keep us safe. Their responsibility to keep us safe is

about more than just the image of fire trucks and hoses. We also trust them to advise us on what we can best do to prevent fire or give people the best chance of survival when fire occurs. Tonight we are called upon in this House to act on their expertise and advice, to bring our laws up to the safe standards that our community expects.

We know from the experts that fires in homes can progress at an astonishing pace. Fire & Rescue NSW, in conjunction with the CSIRO, showed that a fire in a typical home with modern furnishings can progress from a small localised flame to engulfing an entire room in as little as two to three minutes. Similar tests conducted in the 1970s resulted in a typical time of 10 to 20 minutes. What that shows is that modern life, with all of its convenience, has become more flammable. The fire safety standards considered adequate only a few decades ago are now outdated, and our legislation should be amended to reflect that.

Our laws should reflect that technology has greatly improved as well. Photoelectric alarms, which we have heard a lot about tonight, unlike ionisation alarms, have the advantage of being able to detect smouldering fires. That is a lifesaving advantage. The warning of smouldering fires gives people the chance to protect their families and their property before a fire takes hold. Not only does the government bill seek to require the use of the more effective photoelectric smoke alarms in Queensland homes; it rightly requires them to operate on an enduring power source. That is either wiring the alarm directly into the mains power or having a 10-year lithium battery. This is vital to ensure that alarms do not run out of power or are disconnected on purpose, as we have heard about tonight.

This last point is a significant issue. In evidence to the federal Senate committee on the use of smoke alarms, Julian Yaxley of the Victorian Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board said that fire services often discovered purposefully disconnected smoke alarms. Christopher Orr of the Fire Protection Association of Australia said that 30 per cent of ionisation fire alarms are disconnected by people within two years—within just two years—of installation. An alarm running on a simple nine-volt battery can be disabled, as we have heard, with next to no effort. Photoelectric alarms, on the other hand, have a much lower rate of false alarms. That is a good start, because false alarms are the leading cause of disconnection, as we know.

For much of what I have discussed tonight, and which has been indicated by the committee members—in particular, the member for Capalaba—the bills before us are somewhat in agreement. When it comes to the crucial issues of location and interconnectedness, the minister's bill is far superior to the bill introduced into this House by the member for Kawana. As I said, I urge all members to support the government bill tonight because it is the bill that will save lives.

I am supporting the minister's bill as a father and as a husband and as a son to parents who are reaching that stage in their lives where getting around their home has become a little bit harder. I am speaking to this bill as someone who has listened to the pain of those who have lost loved ones. I am here to support the best possible protection for Queenslanders. Interconnected systems provide superior protection against tragedy. Likewise, the requirement for an interconnected alarm to be placed in all bedrooms greatly reduces the chance of people sleeping through it. According to Fire Protection Association Australia, if you sleep with the bedroom door closed—which most of us do—as we have heard again tonight, the sound of a smoke alarm in the hallway maybe reduced from 85 decibels to as low as 55. This is especially a risk for seniors in our community or those with hearing impairment. It is a risk for children who at times sleep soundly through significant noise. The member for Lytton pointed out that children and the elderly are four times more likely to die in a fire. That is why the member for Kawana's bill does not stack up.


It is ill-thought-out policy like this that was rejected by Queenslanders when they rejected the government of Campbell Newman, Tim Nicholls and Jarrod Bleijie. The private member's bill must be rejected as well. If they want to go out tomorrow and grandstand on this issue instead, then so be it. We all know how little respect members opposite hold for our hardworking men and women of our fire services. We remember when firefighters were defending their rights on the streets of this state, after the arrogant treatment handed out to them by the government led by Campbell Newman, Tim Nicholls, Tim Mander and Jarrod Bleijie. The LNP's response, minister after minister, member after member, was to claim that they were 'pretend firefighters' or 'dress-up firefighters'. In certain cases they even described them as strippers.

To declare our brave firefighters, our brave men and women—those whom we describe as our communities' protectors—as frauds and fakes was simply another indication of the gall of the government led by Tim Nicholls, Campbell Newman, Jarrod Bleijie and Tim Mander. They have not

changed a bit. When the member for Clayfield gave his faux mea culpa last Friday, when he said that they made mistakes without actually owning up to any, perhaps the arrogance that they showed towards our Queensland Fire and Emergency Services staff was one of them.

On this side of the House, we recognise the professionalism and we recognise the expertise of the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services and fire services around this nation. Those professionals are in agreement that interconnected alarms in all bedrooms will save lives. For all of the opposition and the member for Kawana's talk about family values and valuing children, they are simply unwilling in this case to listen to the experts or listen to the coroner and give our children the best chance of survival in a house fire. This shows just how hollow the government led by those opposite were and how hollow they remain today, still mired by the chronic inconsistency of their lofty talk but unprincipled action.

This is absolutely a question of family values, and anyone who has even had the slightest contact with a family that has been impacted by a fire knows this to be true. I am here today to support a bill that will save families from loss and heartbreak. I am also here today to speak in my role as having responsibility for tenants in Queensland's largest property portfolio. Over 110,000 Queensland families live in our homes, including over 36,000 people under the age of 18. We provide homes to some of the most vulnerable people in this state, including people with a disability and, increasingly, seniors with mobility issues. This is an important demonstration of why we need systems in every bedroom and we need them to be interconnected. This is an investment in saving lives. This is not a matter where we should be considering half-measures. Near enough is not good enough when it comes to setting the right framework for fire safety. That is why I am pleased to support my colleague the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services. I commend the government bill to the House.

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Albert—LNP) (9.16 pm): I am going to make a reasonably short contribution because a lot of information has been spoken about already tonight. This bill is very important for our communities. It is certainly very important for a lot of individuals, for people like Louie and Christine, who are in the gallery tonight and who are very strong advocates for making our community safer with better fire detection in people's houses. I thank them for coming here tonight and for pushing this issue very hard.

In recent history we have seen the results of multiple house fires and tragedies that have concluded in the loss of life. A domestic house fire in Queensland, as previously stated, happens every 4.7 hours. I will never forget the tragedy that unfolded on 23 August 2011 where 11 people, including eight teenagers and children—one who was only three years old—lost their lives. As a father of young children—my eldest daughter is five, my son is four and my youngest daughter is two—thinking about that child who was only three years old certainly hits home. I would hate to see any parent having to suffer through that. This left massive scars in the Tongan and Samoan communities but also in the Logan community. I will never forget the times when then mayor Pam Parker was on the TV expressing her absolute grief and sorrow of what had transpired. It was certainly an emotional time and I feel that she summed it up very well.

In looking at the coroner's inquest, in all honesty, I feel this issue is bigger than politics. This is a pressing matter that needs to be dealt with as soon as possible and as effectively as possible. The coroner's findings on the Slacks Creek fire, which were handed down on 28 November, found that the smoke alarms were not maintained or were not present in the house in a working fashion. He also noted that, if there were functioning smoke alarms within the dwelling, there would be a reasonable prospect that some, if not all, of the victims would have escaped. Therefore, one of the recommendations from the inquest was the installation of photoelectric smoke alarms. They should be the only type of smoke alarm installed in residential dwellings. It is certainly pleasing that the committee unanimously agreed to this.


My main concern when it comes to this legislation is the implementation date. I agree with the submission of Smoke Alarm Solutions to the inquiry, which is as follows—

We feel the proposed timeframes of 5 and 10 years (respectively) for dwellings that are sold, leased, government owned and domestic in nature all have too long of a lead time to comply with legislation and there is not enough urgency created to ensure action is undertaken. Many catastrophic events have the possibility of occurring in the next five or 10 years.

The whole aim of this legislation is to reduce the possibility of loss of life. Therefore, I feel delaying this urgent action out to 10 years is not prudent. It is not logical. We need to act on this as soon as possible, but we also need to ensure that have a system in place which is easy for people to install these alarms in their houses. Let us not make it confusing. Let us have a system which people can

easily implement. That is why I support the bill introduced by the member for Kawana. Having a shorter phase-in period will make a huge difference in potentially saving a life—waking up a child from a smoking room, waking up a grandparent or waking up a family member so everyone can get out safely.

I say again: 10 years really is too long. I do not want to see anybody in my community delay implementing these important safety measures until 9½ years time. We need it done as soon as possible. I plead with government members to support a shorter period of time to implement these safety measures. I do not want to see any more people in Logan City, South-East Queensland or Queensland losing their life when we can make a difference here tonight. I plead with all members of the House to support a far quicker implementation period.

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (9.23 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Fire and Emergency Services (Domestic Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill 2016. I am grateful to be part of a government that takes real action in making Queenslanders and Queensland a safer place. This bill recognises the importance of ensuring Queenslanders have the best possible chance of escaping a residential fire. As a former paramedic—and I know the member for Barron River, who was in the fire service and the ambulance service in Victoria, and the member for Burdekin, who was a police officer, can also attest to the following experience—I have witnessed firsthand the horrific scenes an emergency service officer is faced with when attending a house fire where people have been badly burnt, injured or, worse, die as a result of a house fire. They are, indeed, challenging and emotional scenes for all involved.

I have trained over the years with the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services in self-contained breathing apparatus as part of my role in the QAS. After experiencing taking patients out of burning houses and over the past two decades treating way too many burns victims, I can say that, when you are faced with someone screaming in pain with their skin hanging off, that is the kind of thing that stays with you forever. We should do all that we can to reduce these horrific incidents. I would not do a firey's job for the world, whether it is rural, auxiliary or full-time. They are the ones who go into burning structures, and I commend every single one of our Queensland Fire and Emergency Services staff for the job they do in looking after our Queensland community.

We must acknowledge the fine work of our hospital staff, whether they are in the ICU or are paramedics, particularly those staff in burns units throughout the state. There is no doubt that this bill will save lives. In Townsville, which takes in the Thuringowa and Mundingburra electorates, the Townsville fire service responded to 285 residential house fires from late 2011 to late 2015 which resulted in two fatalities. That is two too many and there were many more significant injuries as well.

Let us fix this. Let us do our measured best as a responsible government to reduce the risk of house fires. This bill mandates that from 1 January 2017 newly built or substantially renovated homes will install photoelectric smoke alarms that are interconnected and positioned in every bedroom, between areas containing bedrooms, in any hallway servicing bedrooms and in any other storey of a residential dwelling. As we know, that is where these things start.

Another key feature of this bill in ensuring the safety of Queenslanders is the immediate replacement of ionisation smoke alarms with photoelectric smoke alarms. From 1 January 2017 a photoelectric alarm will need to be installed whenever a smoke alarm is replaced or a new one installed. These alarms are better at detecting slow-smouldering fires, which are generally the fires that lead to deaths in homes. I hate numbers, but there have been 68 deaths in the last four years across Queensland. The fire service across Queensland responded to over 8,000 residential and structural smoke incidents across our state. Let us put the numbers aside—no, we should not because they are important: it is people who have succumbed. Let us just get on with making good policy. These alarms are more reliable and less likely to produce false alarm activations. The Queensland Fire and Emergency Services strongly supports the installation and use of those photoelectric smoke alarms.

If this bill is passed, all homes that are leased or sold—that is, at the time an accommodation agreement or contract sale is entered into—will be required to install photoelectric smoke alarms, interconnected and positioned in every bedroom, in any hallway servicing bedrooms and in any other storey of a residential dwelling. Commencement of this provision gives landlords and those people selling their home lead time to implement the changes to their homes. We have heard concern about the lead time, but just liken it for a moment to the pool safety laws that have occurred over a number of years in Queensland. It has taken a number of years for people to take that up, and I can see exactly where we are going with this particular bill.


It is estimated that rental properties comprise approximately 30 per cent of housing in Queensland and that sold homes comprise approximately six per cent of housing each year. Compliance after five years ensures that a significant portion of the homes in Queensland provide occupants with the earliest chance of escape from a house fire. For all other homes in Queensland, compliance reflects the requirements under Australian standards for smoke alarms to have a life span of at least 10 years, as well as the recommendation by all fire agencies to replace smoke alarms every 10 years.

Whilst 10 years seems like a significant amount of time, it has been designed to cater for the financial needs of home owners as well as adjustments to the supply and pricing of smoke alarms and services. The 10-year implementation time frame provides families with time to financially plan for and take into account any costs involved in complying with the provisions contained within the bill. This 10 years also gives manufacturers and retail outlets time to adjust their supply and pricing without undue commercial harm arising from the changes.

It is expected most home owners would progressively update their smoke alarms within a 10-year period naturally as their useful life expires. Therefore, providing time for compliance with the new provisions allows scope for this to occur as replacement of alarms is required anyway. In this way, the cost and inconvenience caused to home owners is reduced. The government remains committed to the safety of all Queenslanders but is also mindful of the impact that implementing the full coroner's recommendations will have on the families of Queensland, and that is why we have a phase-in period of 10 years.

This government is also implementing the changes to social housing and government employee housing properties within five years. I commend Minister de Brenni for his stance on this. The state's approximately 72,000 government owned homes will be installed with the photoelectric smoke alarms that are interconnected and positioned in every bedroom, between areas containing bedrooms, in any hallway and in any other storey of a residential dwelling.

I am proud to be part of a government that is committed to reducing the risk of death from fires in the home and keeping Queenslanders safe. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr DICKSON** (Buderim—LNP) (9.31 pm): I rise to speak to the Fire and Emergency Services (Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill 2015 in this cognate debate. The bill before the House primarily sets out to achieve the following. Firstly, the bill will mandate the installation of photoelectric smoke alarms in all residential premises in Queensland, as they are already in commercial premises. These are the preferred options of the Queensland Fire and Emergency Service and are particularly responsive to smouldering fires and dense smoke given off by foam filled furnishings or overheated PVC wiring, as opposed to ionisation smoke alarms which are not as effective and are more prone to nuisance alarms from cooking.


Secondly, the bill will give home owners the option of installing a smoke alarm system which is either hardwired to the premises' power supply or powered by a nine-volt lithium battery with a 10-year guarantee. Thirdly, the bill gives home owners of existing dwellings the option to install interconnected devices. It is worth noting here that houses built after 1 May 2014 already have a requirement for interconnectivity.

The bill will provide a staged transition process for the implementation of photoelectric smoke alarms in residential premises in Queensland, requiring home owners with previously compliant smoke alarms to replace them with smoke alarms complying with the new bill within three years. Dwellings with no smoke alarm compliant with the previous legislation will be required to install smoke alarms complying with the new bill before the transfer of a dwelling, at the end of an existing residential tenancy or by 1 July 2017. This is in contrast to Labor's confusing 10-year phase-in period which will delay this vital safety measure for a decade. The REIQ have said they do not support differing time lines on the phasing in of photoelectric alarms and all dwellings should be upgraded within a three- to five-year time frame.

In no uncertain words, Louie Naumovski, of the Logan House Fire Support Network, said that opting for a 10-year phase-in rather than three could see an additional, and completely unnecessary, 20,000 house fires and over 200 deaths if current trends continued. No-one wants to see a repeat of the horrific events of 23 August 2011. That night at Slacks Creek was the time of one of the deadliest house fires in Australian history, with 11 lives lost including eight children. The coroner's report into this tragic event provided a number of recommendations, all of which sat on the desk of the former minister for fire and emergency services for 12 months before the LNP forced the government to act and introduce its bill.

The LNP's 2015 bill provides the simplest and easiest transition process to deliver the changes recommended in the coroner's report. It is important to note that if the Palaszczuk government had supported the LNP's bill it would already have commenced on 1 July 2016. The priority must be—and it is for the LNP—to transition residential dwellings to photoelectric alarms as soon as possible before other measures mandating the installation of interconnected alarm systems and alarms in every bedroom. It is a genuine concern that Queenslanders in lower socioeconomic environments may not be able to afford to pay the electrician to hardwire these systems throughout every bedroom in their home. What we do not want is a situation where Queenslanders cannot install these vital and lifesaving photoelectric alarms because of a prohibitive installation price.


We on this side of the House believe this should be implemented as soon as possible. I fully support the shadow minister's resolve on this issue. I have heard much of the debate tonight. I think everybody in the House agrees that something has to be done. Common sense demonstrates that the sooner you do something the sooner you are going to start to save lives. That is what this side of the House is talking about. I know the other side of the House wants to do the right thing by the people of Queensland, but when the difference is 10 years compared to three years then three is going to win every day of the week. I ask those opposite to consider any amendment being put forward by the shadow minister to bring that time line forward, because common sense has to prevail. Having a lithium battery that will last 10 years is the goal and what we are trying to deliver. As a parliament in Queensland, this is about saving lives; it is not about petty politics.

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (9.36 pm): The events of 23 August 2011 shocked and moved the people of Logan. Eleven Logan City residents, including children, lost their lives in the Slacks Creek fire. We gathered, Logan prayed, Logan cared, Logan loved those whom we had lost. As the Labor candidate in 2012, I along with the community gathered in the street for the opening of the rebuild of the destroyed house. The house was built entirely by donated labour and donated materials. Unions, companies and ordinary people came together. It was the community coming together to rebuild what had been destroyed. Eleven pillars stand in the front and 11 trees were planted in the back as a permanent reminder of those who lost their lives. For us they are a reminder that no matter how much the Logan community cared, how much the Logan community loved, how much the Logan community prayed, we could never bring back the 11 lives lost. The bill put forward by the minister tonight means the Logan community is less likely than ever to see the suffering and loss that we saw on 23 August 2011.

I should recognise the passion of Louie and Christine of the Logan House Fire Support Network who came to see me soon after I was elected in January 2015. They instilled in me a passion to see action and a changed policy on fire detection and safety. They gave me the information and encouraged me to research more about photoelectric alarms. We know that photoelectric alarms detect fires more quickly. I installed 10-year lithium-ion photoelectric alarms in my own house. They cannot be tampered with. They are less likely to be tripped by false alarms and they only need to be changed after close to 10 years. Of course, it would be even better if each alarm in each bedroom and living area were interconnected to ensure that my deep-sleeping son and daughters were also woken by their own bedroom alarm, rather than waiting for the fire to spread to near their bedrooms.

I note that one speaker worried about the reliability of wireless systems. However, there are a variety of technologies. Even if interconnectedness does fail—and the technology and products improve every day—it does not prevent the original detector that detected the smoke sounding an alarm. Members should know that in almost all cases multiple alarms would go off, waking the whole house simultaneously. This will save lives. Some of my constituents have very large houses and a fire in one area may block off exits from some bedrooms. In all houses, sleeping families will wake more quickly when the alarms are interconnected. I am confident that once standards are set, prices will quickly reduce.

In my own electorate I have participated in fire safety days and promoted 10-year lithium-ion battery photoelectric detectors bought from local stores such as Browns Plains Hardware. It is time for all Queenslanders to personally follow the law and install 10-year interconnected fire alarms. They should sit down and talk with their family about their household. Every child should know that when their bedroom's interconnected alarm goes off, they should wake and follow their practised safety plan. We know that the comprehensive fire safety plan for any family relies on the families having these conversations and having alarms that will wake the family. I know that I will be encouraging Logan residents to remember 23 August 2011 and to act to make their families safe. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr KRAUSE** (Beaudesert—LNP) (9.40 pm): I rise tonight to speak in favour of the Fire and Emergency Services (Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill 2015, the private member's bill introduced by the member for Kawana in 2015, and against the government's bill introduced earlier this year. The primary reason for supporting the private member's bill is that the time frame set out for the implementation of the government's proposal is far too long. Ten years is too long for the legislative requirements for transition from ionisation smoke alarms to photoelectric smoke alarms to be implemented. It is too long considering that, on average, 20 people in Queensland die in house fires each year. Ten years is too long a period to bring about an important change in the legislative requirements for smoke alarms in domestic dwellings in Queensland. When I say '10 years', I am referring to the requirement to upgrade fire alarms in relation to domestic dwellings.

As I see it, there are only two issues of disagreement between the opposition and the government in relation to these two bills. Generally, common ground has been found on everything else or could be found in a ready fashion. The two issues of disagreement are the time frame, as I have discussed, and the issue of interconnection of photoelectric smoke alarms. I have spoken about the issue of the time frame. In relation to interconnectedness, the issue that we have on this side and that was clearly expressed by many submitters to the committee—and there were many submitters to the committee; there were many expert witnesses and other people who had firsthand experience in relation to house fires—is the cost involved in implementing it, particularly in existing dwellings where retrofitting would be required. The fact is that, when there is a 10-year time period to implement something that will cost a significant amount of money for many people, many people are going to wait a long time to actually comply with those requirements. We can stand here and encourage people to do the right thing and to install photoelectric smoke alarms as soon as possible, and many people will. Many people will not when it is a significant financial impost, and interconnectedness is a significant financial impost compared to the alternative that is set out in the private member's bill.

I just want to draw the attention of the House to some of the evidence we received during the committee process, in particular, the sentiments expressed by Mr Keith Golinski, father of Mr Matt Golinski who was the sole survivor from the horrific Tewanin house fire. He made the following observation—

One PE alarm **now** I believe is better than 7 ionisation now and better than 7 PE in ten years time.

He sums up what should be as clear as day to anyone who has sat through this inquiry and should be as clear as crystal to the government, and that is that we need to have legislation in place and a campaign to get ionisation alarms out of people's homes as soon as possible and to install photoelectric alarms whether they are interconnected or not. The weight of evidence and the thing that the committee can all agree on is that photoelectric alarms, whether one or two or three, save lives. It does not matter if they are interconnected or not, they will save lives. I agree that the ideal will be for interconnectedness to occur, but the additional expense in undertaking that will deter a lot of people from actually changing their alarms at all. In the meantime an average of 20 people a year die in house fires in Queensland.

I refer also to the sentiments expressed by Louie Naumovski of the Logan House Fire Support Network. I agree with many of the sentiments expressed earlier by the member for Logan in his contribution to this debate. Mr Naumovski stated in the inquiry—

... Photoelectric Smoke Alarms will give you ample warning on a broader range of fires within the home and time to escape.

...


The evidence is there; ionisation Alarms are ornaments on the ceiling that tell you when your toast is ready. Photoelectric Smoke Alarms will notify you if there is a fire hazard in your home ...

The private member's bill that we are debating tonight, the time frames and the requirements for the installation of photoelectric smoke alarms will get photoelectric smoke alarms into people's homes sooner than the government's bill. That is why the requirements set out in the government's bill should not be supported but the requirements set out in the private member's bill should be supported.

If we make a legislative regime, a compliance regime, for smoke alarms expensive to comply with and with a long lead time, people will tend to take a long time to comply. Whilst we all agree that there are ideal situations in the world, unfortunately we do not live in an ideal world. In this case, the evidence is clear: we should be moving to get photoelectric smoke alarms into homes as soon as possible and to remove ionisation. That does not preclude future action by the government or by householders to move to interconnectedness. We know that wireless interconnectivity is becoming a

more affordable technology, which will bring down the cost of actually interconnecting smoke alarms in homes. However, at the moment there is a significant difference. For example, if there is a home and the owner wants to put in four smoke alarms, the cost would be about \$200. However, if we take that same home and want to install four smoke alarms and interconnect them as well, the cost as we heard from the committee will go to somewhere between \$500 and \$800 depending on who does the work, how much is involved, what type of house it is and what type of retrofitting is involved. We also heard that there were significant complications when it comes to retrofitting strata title properties where significant building work could be required to actually comply with the government's legislative requirements.

There are a lot of issues with the government's legislative requirements in their bill tonight. That is why I urge all members of the House, especially those members on the crossbench, to support the provisions set out in the private member's bill for a shorter time frame—three years—to get photoelectric alarms into domestic dwellings and a simple regime without interconnectedness to make it cheaper, simpler and easier for people to comply with so that we can actually get these alarms in there and save people's lives.

 **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) (9.48 pm): I rise tonight to speak in support of the Fire and Emergency Services (Domestic Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill 2016. Last week marked five years since Australia's worst residential fire. The fire at Slacks Creek, which is in my electorate of Waterford, took the lives of 11 beautiful people. Eight out of the 11 lives lost were children.

This fire shook my home of Logan and, in fact, the entire state and country. As former premier Anna Bligh said at the time of the tragic fire—

This is another community that will remember 2011 as a year of heartbreak, a year of tragedy and a year when we all had to reach out and look after each other.

After this devastating tragedy our Logan community rallied together to help those families who were affected rebuild their lives. We also vowed to make sure that those lives which were lost were not lost in vain and that any lessons which needed to be learned would be.

The coronial inquest into the Slacks Creek tragedy recommended that all Queensland homes install photoelectric smoke alarms. The coroner recommended that photoelectric alarms were more effective than ionisation alarms. The technology in photoelectric alarms detects smouldering smoke, which is often the first stage of a fire, and can therefore sound the alarm earlier than an ionisation alarm. Photoelectric alarms also send off fewer false alarms, which means that they are less likely to be tampered with or disabled by residents. Following that coronial inquest the Logan community committed to raise fire awareness, implement fire exit plans and encourage the purchase of photoelectric alarms. Queensland Fire and Emergency Services have endorsed photoelectric smoke alarms for some time, and as the experts and the ones who attend house fires regularly we should of course listen to their advice.

While the private member's bill has provided for a staged transition process in the implementation of photoelectric smoke alarms in residential premises in Queensland, it does not implement the other important recommendations of the coroner in relation to house fire fatalities. The Palaszczuk government has listened to the coroner and the experts. This bill fully implements the coroner's recommendations. This includes the installation of photoelectric smoke alarms in homes any time a smoke alarm is replaced or a new one is installed. It also mandates that photoelectric smoke alarms must be interconnected and installed in every bedroom, living room and escape path. Smoke alarms must also be hardwired in new residences, while in existing residences they must be hardwired or powered by a 10-year lithium battery.


Interconnected photoelectric alarms installed in bedrooms will not stop every house fire in Queensland, but they play a critical role in letting people know there is a fire and dramatically increase the chance of people being able to get out safely. We know that a number of house fires start in bedrooms. Whether it is young children playing with matches or lighters or people's electric blankets and heaters, it makes sense to have an interconnected warning system in place in every room so that it triggers an alarm no matter where everyone else is in the house. Having safe and interconnected photoelectric smoke alarms installed in bedrooms, living rooms and hallway spaces will give Queensland households the best and most effective warning system and it will save lives.

Too many people in Queensland, particularly in my electorate of Logan, are victims of house fires. So far this year there have been 83 house fires just in Logan. Late last year my local community was again in mourning when three-year-old Baileigh Cartledge and his mother Crystal Cartledge passed away after fire engulfed their Beenleigh unit. Crystal was an outgoing small business owner in Logan, and now her other two children do not have their smiling mother or their brother Baileigh. Our community is still reeling from this loss. I have been working hard with my other Labor Logan MPs to raise awareness around fire safety. At the end of last year I hosted a successful—and free—fire safety forum with the member for Woodridge. Legislating to phase in photoelectric smoke alarms is the next necessary step, and we owe it to all of the victims who have been lost to house fires to pass this bill.

Two of the greatest advocates for photoelectric alarms are Louie and Christine Naumovski, who are here in the gallery tonight. Louie and Christine run the Logan House Fire Support Network. Their organisation turns up at people's homes when they are most in need: when a fire has broken out and destroyed part or all of their home. These remarkable individuals organise emergency accommodation, arrange new homes and supply furniture and goods, but tragically they often support families and help to organise funerals. Often these fires break out at night when people are sleeping, but Louie and Christine are not sleeping. They work all hours of the night and day, and I know that many victims of fire in our community say they cannot put into words how lucky they have been to have these two heroes. Louie and Christine have sat in my office many times after a fire and pleaded with me to enact the recommendations from the Slacks Creek coronial inquest and legislate for interconnected photoelectric smoke alarms. Well, Louie and Christine, here we are! Louie and Christine have some of the biggest hearts in Queensland, and the reason we have this bill in the House is largely due to their advocacy. They should be so proud of their work and their advocacy; they certainly are some of the most persuasive lobbyists I have ever met.

The Palaszczuk government is leading by example in introducing this important bill. I also want to thank the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services, Bill Byrne, for his work in this area, also Minister Mick de Brenni. I want to thank my fellow Logan Labor MPs Cameron Dick, Linus Power and Leanne Enoch for joining me in pushing for this reform. I am also proud that within five years the Palaszczuk government will see 72,000 state government owned housing properties fitted with smoke alarms which meet the new safety standards. I again give a massive thank you to Louie and Christine from the Logan House Fire Support Network for never losing sight of their goal of all Queensland homes having these lifesaving alarms.

This bill will not stop house fires, but it does equip homes with the best possible warning device, which will in turn prevent the loss of lives here in Queensland. That is something all parliamentarians in this place have a responsibility to vote for. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (9.55 pm): I rise to contribute to the cognate debate on the Fire and Emergency Services (Domestic Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill 2016. Before I start I wish to make mention of another very similar bill before the House tonight: the LNP introduced Fire and Emergency Services (Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill 2015. I would like to go into the background of why these two bills are even being debated. As has been mentioned by other members who have spoken previously in this debate tonight, around five years ago in August 2011 the greatest loss of life in a domestic house fire in Australian history tragically occurred. The fire started on the ground floor of a house in Slacks Creek. Tragically, eight children and three adult lives were lost. It was too tragic for words. After a coronial inquest was conducted in November 2014, it was found that smoke alarms were either not present or not maintained in the Slacks Creek residence. Two smoke alarms were found in the upstairs section of the house, however, sadly neither were working. It was further found that, had the alarms been working, there was a possibility that some, if not all, of the victims may have survived.

This tragic event rocked Brisbane, South-East Queensland and in fact Australia, to the core. How could something which may have been prevented through the use of smoke alarms have happened? The coroner recommended that as a minimum in all areas of a building where people sleep approved smoke alarms should be installed and that installation should occur in a staged approach. I accept, along with many members, that both bills before the House today implement the transition from ionised to photoelectric smoke alarms in domestic dwellings in Queensland. There is a practical distinction between the two approaches. The LNP bill provides the simplest and easiest transition process to deliver those changes and, importantly, in a much more timely manner. The greatest concern that I have, along with many of my LNP colleagues, is that having a 10-year phase-in period as the government bill proposes will obviously delay this important community safety measure for a decade.

The member for Waterford has already acknowledged the great advocacy work of Louie and Christine Naumovski from the Logan House Fire Support Network. I admire them greatly for what they do, and they are here in the gallery tonight. During a public hearing on 24 February this year, Louie stated that there were 1,908 house fires in Queensland last year which tragically resulted in 23 deaths. He further reinforced that a 10-year phase-in period could result in a further 20,000 house fires—20,000 house fires—and more than 230 deaths. Mr Naumovski stated the following at the public hearing on 24 February about the transition time frames, and I believe his words are worth quoting in the debate tonight. He stated—

With the new bill that was introduced yesterday—
the 2016 bill—

which would have a 10-year phase-in, we are looking at a further 20,000 house fires and over 200 deaths. If we had any other incident like this in this state, legislation would be passed so quickly with fewer fatalities. Some 230 Queenslanders could potentially die over the next 10 years.

Therefore, the priority for the LNP is to transition domestic dwellings from ionisation smoke alarms to photoelectric smoke alarms—there is no debate about the efficacy of photoelectric smoke alarms—as soon as possible. We on this side of the chamber would like to see a staged transition—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! Could I ask members to keep their conversations to a minimum. This is quite a solemn issue and I think every speaker deserves the respect of being able to be heard.

Mr MINNIKIN:—in accordance with the recommendations of the coroner, which would see dwellings with ionisation smoke alarms that comply with the law prior to 1 July 2016 replaced with photoelectric smoke alarms within three years. Furthermore, for dwellings with no smoke alarms complying with the 2015 bill on 1 July 2016, the owner must install a compliant smoke alarm before a transfer of the dwelling, at the end of an existing residential tenancy or rooming agreement or by 1 July 2017.


The government's bill, however, mandates that all alarms be interconnected and that smoke alarms be installed in each and every bedroom of a domestic premises, thus making it obviously a more time-consuming and costly exercise. By contrast, the LNP bill does not mandate that they be hardwired. Most importantly, home owners would have the option of hardwiring or using nine-volt 10-year lithium batteries. Home owners would simply have a choice.

History tells us that the harder and more expensive laws are to comply with, the less effect they will have as they will not be taken up on all occasions. This being the case, if the average Queenslanders cannot afford to obey the law then they are more likely to ignore the law. To me as a legislator, this makes the government's proposed law rather redundant. There is a golden law that we all learn at university in student politics, the politics that goes back to the ancient Greeks: do not legislate what you are not prepared to enforce. Despite the fact that smoke alarms are already required in Queensland, sadly there are still homes that do not comply with the current legislation let alone all of the requirements the government would like to introduce via their bill.

Moreover, if the government had just supported the LNP bill when it was introduced it would have already commenced, as at 1 July 2016, rather than being dragged out longer and longer. Having said that, I am hardly surprised given the 18-month track record of the Labor government.

Tonight all members in this chamber agree on one thing: saving lives. That aside, while I support the legislative move of both bills to see ionisation smoke alarms replaced with photoelectric smoke alarms, as a result of the evidence tendered to the committee I do not support a 10-year phase-in; nor do I support having each and every smoke alarm interconnected within a property.

My seat of Chatsworth is a typical middle-ring suburban electorate with a large, broad residential subdivision. The people in my electorate want to protect their families and their properties. Surely, the Labor Party could ditch the political games and introduce sensible, practicable and, most importantly, timely legislation in order to save precious lives. If we truly want to save lives in Queensland, we need to have more households with compliant and working smoke alarms sooner. This is why I cannot support the Labor government's bill and do support the private member's bill.

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (10.03 pm): I am pleased to rise this evening to speak in support of the government's Fire and Emergency Services (Domestic Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill 2016. The Queensland community is very aware of the dangers of house fires. The electorate of Woodridge in the broader city of Logan has

unfortunately had more than its fair share of fires in recent years. However, there has been a strong community effort in the city of Logan to raise awareness of the dangers of fire and support those who have survived a fire.

Five years ago, as almost every speaker in this debate has mentioned, there was a tragic fire in Slacks Creek, very close to the Woodridge electorate. In that fire 11 people, including eight young people and children, tragically lost their lives.

I want to recall the contribution made by the minister. I commend the minister for his work on this important legislation before the parliament. In his second reading speech the minister said that there have been 93 house fire related deaths in Queensland since 2010. Every house fire has the potential to cause deaths. If I can speak here about the Woodridge electorate, from the date of the Slacks Creek fire until the start of this year there were 178 house fires in the Woodridge electorate. Every one of those fires had the potential to kill. That is what the minister said. I reiterate those statistics tonight. This is an important legislative measure that will make Queensland safer and protect Queenslanders against fire.

Following the inquest held after that terrible fire, the coroner concluded that all residential accommodation should be fitted with photoelectric smoke alarms instead of ionised smoke alarms, and the parliament moves this legislation through the House tonight to ensure that occurs. The coroner stated in his report—

I find also that had the smoke alarms been working there was a reasonable prospect that some or all of the victims could have escaped.

The fire was a terrible event, and we as a parliament must ensure some good comes from it. The coroner's report made several recommendations, which have all been accepted by the government. I make it clear: all of the recommendations made by the coroner conducting the inquest have been accepted by the government. That is a very significant and substantial difference between the position the government takes on this matter and the position taken by the members of the LNP opposition. Those recommendations are being implemented through the government bill being considered by the parliament tonight so that hopefully events such as that particular house fire in Slacks Creek in which 11 people died can be avoided.

The bill applies various time frames for the implementation of photoelectric smoke alarms that are interconnected, with a longer transition before it applies to all housing in Queensland. Of course, there is nothing to stop any householder in Queensland installing smoke alarms in their own house, and hopefully many will take that step on their own initiative, of their own volition. Certainly government members will be promoting this in the community. I echo the words of the member for Waterford. Certainly this will be promoted by all of the government members in the city of Logan: the member for Logan, Linus Power, who is in the House the evening; the member for Waterford, who earlier in the debate spoke at length and with some poignancy about the fire in Slacks Creek; the member for Algester; and of course the member for Springwood, the Minister for Housing and Public Works. The member for Springwood has a very significant role to play in the implementation of this legislation.

All of the Labor government members of Logan are united to ensure that no-one, if it is at all possible, should suffer the horrific outcome of a house fire. We are working together on that. We have conducted family house fire awareness days to ensure families are aware of the risk of house fires. The member for Waterford and I were pleased to hold one in Logan Central last year. It was attended by the member for Logan. We will continue our campaign, united in Logan, to ensure no-one suffers as a result of a house fire.


Queensland is not on its own in implementing this sort of legislation. Several cities in the US have implemented photoelectric-only legislation, while the state of Ohio has also enacted photoelectric-only legislation. I think the implementation time frames set out in the government bill are, on balance, sensible in all of the circumstances. Over the period of time set out in the government's proposed legislation the government will run a comprehensive awareness campaign to encourage households to comply with the requirements and to promote the development of escape plans.

Installing smoke alarms in bedrooms and making sure that these are connected to all other alarms in the house means that people who are asleep in a home can be alerted to a fire in other parts of the house. The interconnection of photoelectric smoke alarms is an absolutely critical part of this government bill before the House. It is a very substantial and significant difference between what the government seeks to do in the parliament and the members opposite. Frankly, I have not heard any cogent argument against interconnection other than it may be more costly. What cost can any of us in

this parliament put on a human life? To take the words of the member for Chatsworth, he said that the harder the law the less effect it has. It is not that we want hard laws; it is that we want the best law for the people of Woodridge, the people of Logan and the people of Queensland. Interconnection is absolutely critical to ensuring the people of Queensland have the best laws which ensure the highest and best safety for them. Independent analysis shows that photoelectric smoke alarms are much faster at detecting smoke than other alarms.

I also want to talk about some of the initiatives in the city of Logan. One effect of the terrible house fire in the city of Logan in Slacks Creek was that it set people in Logan asking what they could do to stop such a tragedy occurring again as well as helping people cope with fires after they have occurred. In that spirit and like so many members in the House tonight on both sides of the chamber—and I think it is a credit to all members in this parliament, regardless of the political party that they represent—all members in this chamber have commended the great work of Louie and Christine Naumovski who realised that after that tragic fire there was a need for a support group for people whose houses have been destroyed by fire. They formed the Logan House Fire Support Network, which has been mentioned as well tonight, which does wonderful work in the city of Logan looking after people who have lost their homes, their possessions, everything after a fire. They realised that the hours and days immediately after a fire are crucial for families in particular and they provide help to local families, particularly in the city of Logan, who have been devastated by house fires to ensure that no family feels isolated, as I have said in the parliament previously, alone and lost in their time of need.

Recently I was delighted to be able to provide the Logan House Fire Support Network with a decommissioned Queensland ambulance for use for its important service. Louie has told me that the donation will help the network help victims of fire by being able to carry much of the emergency items people need immediately after a fire and it provides a protective shield for those family members who may have lost everything in a fire when they arrive at the scene of a fire. I just want to say this about Louie and Christine: they represent the best of the city of Logan. They represent the sort of community that Logan is—one in which people look out for each other. I strongly support the work done by Louie and Christine and acknowledge their contribution to the important legislative measure before the House tonight. I urge all members of the parliament to support the government bill.

 **Mr CRAMP** (Gaven—LNP) (10.12 pm): I rise to make a contribution to this cognate debate on the Fire and Emergency Services (Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill 2015 and the Fire and Emergency Services (Domestic Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill 2016. I note from the outset that the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee could not determine that either bill be passed, with government members supporting the government bill and opposition members supporting the LNP bill. Recommendation 1 of the report did, however, highlight that there was overwhelming evidence supporting the installation of photoelectric alarms which the committee endorsed. Ensuring that homes in Queensland are protected with the most up-to-date smoke alarms is an extremely important issue for this parliament, so I want to take this opportunity to note the considerable initiative and effort of my colleague the member for Kawana in creating this important legislation in response to recommendations from the coronial inquest into the devastating Slacks Creek house fire in 2011 that we have heard so much about tonight which claimed the lives of 11 people, including eight children.

It has been said that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, and we have certainly seen this being played out by the Labor government on multiple occasions during this sitting of parliament. Bereft of any ideas of its own, Labor has had to resort to copying and repackaging LNP legislation and policy—and this LNP bill is no different, with Labor trying to spin the LNP's great work on this issue as its own. As a result of this, there is obviously shared information and desired outcomes between the two bills. However, the LNP's Fire and Emergency Services (Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill 2015 is clearly the best way to achieve the coroner's recommendations. Of particular note is the difference in the phase-in time frames between the two bills, with the LNP's 2015 bill ensuring all non-compliant homes are fitted with photoelectric smoke alarms within three years, whereas the 2016 bill introduced by Labor has a 10-year phasing-in period. The LNP bill would ensure that all homes would be fitted with photoelectric smoke alarms in the shortest possible time while there is quite simply an unacceptable delay if Labor's installation completion time frame is implemented.

The statement of reservation in the report by the non-government members of the committee highlighted interconnectivity as an issue, where government members were in disagreement with not only the non-government members but also many of the submitters to the inquiry. While it is recognised that interconnectivity of smoke alarms is an ideal outcome, there is an extremely high degree of difficulty and cost associated with doing this, especially with regard to retrospectively connecting alarms in

existing dwellings. Non-government members noted in their statement of reservation the following comments of Mr Naumovski, founder of the Logan House Fire Support Network, at the committee's 2015 bill public hearing who stated—

Whether it be interconnected or not, we are not fazed by that as long as they are in all rooms ... Interconnectivity is debatable for us. Certainly eventually, absolutely, but cost-wise I think that is going to be the issue right now with interconnectivity.


Safety Watch Australia in its submission to the 2016 bill stated—

Whilst interconnection may seem an ideal solution on paper and is achievable in new builds or major renovations, trying to retrofit older homes is going to be virtually impossible not to mention costly.

Safety Watch very importantly summarised the issue of interconnectivity, stating—

It is more important to mandate the optimal number of correctly positioned working photoelectric smoke alarms in domestic dwellings (especially existing dwellings) than to legislate a requirement for all existing homes to be retro-fitted to achieve interconnection.

Above all else, these significant factors of cost and delays resulting from Labor's desire for interconnectivity as well as its irresponsibly overextended implementation time frame mean that Queenslanders' homes will inevitably be less safe for a longer period. This will especially be the case for those on low incomes—the very people that Labor purports to represent. I do note the member for Woodridge disregarded that in his speech in that people on low socio-economic incomes should not be taken into account. Only the LNP has taken an inclusive approach to this issue that will allow all Queenslanders the opportunity to have photoelectric smoke alarms installed in the most cost-effective and time-efficient manner. I urge all members of this House to support the Fire and Emergency Services (Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill 2015.

 **Mr PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (10.17 pm): I rise to speak on the Fire and Emergency Services (Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill 2015 and the Fire and Emergency Services (Domestic Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill 2016. Yet again we find ourselves in a position of finding that this Labor government is not in control of the agenda, of finding that it is incapable of leading. Today we see another example of the government playing catch-up.

Last year the member for Kawana introduced the smoke alarms bill. The government refused to do anything about it and the bill sat while the government had to reinvent the wheel and come up yet again with its own legislation this year. If the government had just agreed to the opposition's bill, changes would have already commenced in July this year. The only approach the government takes in its bill is to impose overburdensome regulations, thereby demonstrating its complete inability to understand how people will react to those regulations.

As legislators it is critically important to understand the reaction and behaviour of people to impose regulations and obligations and whether they become self-defeating. It is also important to introduce changes in the right sequence. It is also important to take into account the economic impediments of government regulation. No-one disagrees that we should do something to make it safer for people, families, children, renters and home owners to live in as much safety as possible.

This year, we have already heard of the tragic deaths of a number of Queenslanders in house fires. During this winter, the Gympie region has not been left alone. Since June, the Gympie area has had four house fires: in Monkland, Mothar Mountain, Curra and, this week, at Pie Creek. Many in the community are still traumatised by the tragic death of 12-year-old Alexis Dean from a fire in Monkland in late June. Now, the community is rallying around to raise funds in support of a family of five which, this week, has been left homeless from a fire in Pie Creek. Just 10 days ago a Curra family lost their home of 30 years. In June, an extended family was left homeless and sleeping in tents on their property after the loss of their home. All of these fires touch our communities and we constantly ask: how can we make people safer? What else could have been done?


In creating a framework to provide safety, we should make it both simple and economical. Both of these bills are about transitioning from ionised to photoelectric smoke alarms, whether they should be hardwired or battery operated, whether to retrofit, what is really achievable in both new and older dwellings, about wireless, about the behaviour of residents when false alarms go off, the use of batteries, interconnectivity, which Australian standard to use, time frames, mandating locations, and whether we should have uniformity and leave it up to the Building Code of Australia, or the BCA.

The difference between these two bills is whether we understand how people react to regulations and whether we make things worse or better, and about getting changes implemented in the right order so that the compliance rate is high. The LNP's bill provides the simplest and easiest transition process to deliver those changes in a timely fashion. In its bill, the government's time frames are a decade away. It is important that we do as much as possible now, not in 10 years time. The priority to transition domestic dwellings from ionised to photoelectric smoke alarms is important. Measures such as mandating that alarms be interconnected and be in every bedroom only complicates the issue and potentially leads to behaviours where more houses will be less safe. We all know that history tells us that the harder and more expensive you make laws for people to comply with, the less effective they are.

There is no disagreement that smoke alarms should be prescribed to be photoelectric. The disagreement is that the government, in its high-handed way, intends to mandate that the smoke alarms be interconnected. We need to be mindful that interconnectivity creates its own behavioural problems. Anyone who has experienced a false alarm going off in the night knows exactly what I mean. We need to get this transition in the right order. It is far more important to install photoelectric smoke alarms in a timely way. Mandating interconnectivity may not make homes safer but, in fact, make homes more dangerous by hindering the timely installation of photoelectric alarms.

The government also proposes to mandate that alarms be in every bedroom. This is in addition to what is required at the moment. Already, smoke alarms are installed in accordance with the relevant sections of the Building Code of Australia. The technical details should be left to that code so that there is uniformity and less need to return to introducing legislation when changes are required. The code, which is constantly updated, provides significant detail about locations.


It is vital that smoke alarms must be economically replaced with photoelectric smoke alarms as soon as possible. It is vital that shorter transition time must be adopted with a minimum cost framework, because this issue is fundamental to saving lives. It is vital that we make transition simple and inexpensive so that compliance rates are greater. Only the opposition's bill achieves those goals. Only the opposition's bill is clearer, simpler, less costly, has shorter time frames, is easy to comply with and is less prescriptive. The only way to achieve this transition is to pass the opposition's bill.

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (10.23 pm): I rise to speak to the Fire and Emergency Services (Domestic Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill 2016. This bill, as well as the Fire and Emergency Services (Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill 2015, were introduced in response to the recommendations of the coronial inquest into the Slacks Creek house fire. House fires devastate families and have a deep impact on local communities and, in the case of the Slacks Creek house fire, the whole of Queensland. These bills provide for photoelectric smoke alarms to be installed in houses. They will also need to be interconnected through a hardwired unit installed by an electrician or by a unit with a 10-year lithium battery. Hopefully, that will put an end to tragedies such as that which occurred at Slacks Creek in 2011.

Photoelectric and interconnected smoke alarms will need to be installed in all residential premises in Queensland by 31 December 2026. There will be a financial cost to home owners, but there cannot be a price put on saving the life of a loved one.

Louie, who founded the Logan House Fire Support Network with his wife, came to meet with Robbie Katter and me. He explained to us that the average price of installing the required number of photoelectric smoke alarms in an average four-bedroom home would be about \$750. That is an investment in the lives of families and a small price to pay. The lives of children are so important. As parents, we take care of them in our homes and we entrust the state to take care of them in our schools. That is why I would ask the minister to investigate extending the rollout of smoke alarms to Queensland schools.

Our emergency services do a wonderful job in running into fires as the rest of us are trying to escape them. I thank them and Louie and his wife, Christine, of the Logan House Fire Support Network for the amazing work that they do.

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (10.26 pm), in reply: I rise to sum up this debate from the LNP's perspective. I commend the House for a mature and sensible discussion about a very serious issue. There was one exception, and that was the contribution by the member for Springwood, which was an embarrassing disgrace. He gave a political commentary on something as solemn—to use the words of the Deputy Speaker—as this subject.

We have bipartisan support for the mandatory introduction of photoelectric alarms. For those people in the public gallery who are listening, we can assure them that, tonight, they will get that result. We simply disagree on the phase-in period. The government is arguing for a 10-year period, where we believe that this is such an urgent issue that it needs to be dealt with straightaway and that we should have no more than a three-year phase-in period for those who are noncompliant.

The LNP also believes that interconnectivity between the alarms is a desirable thing. It is a good thing and we would recommend that, but we do not believe that it should be mandatory. We do not believe that, because we believe that that will bring extra cost to people who simply cannot afford it. The result will be that they will not—

A government member interjected.

Mr MANDER: I will take that interjection. It will not save lives; it will cost lives because these people will not install the smoke alarms.

Mr Dick: That's not what the coroner said.


Mr MANDER: I will take that interjection from the member for Woodridge. The coroner does not live in your electorate of Woodridge with people who are very vulnerable—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! I will ask the member to direct his comments through the chair.

Mr MANDER: These are incredibly vulnerable people. The people who would benefit from that the most are those who cannot afford it. We should encourage interconnectivity, we should recommend it, but we should not make it mandatory.

Tonight, in a spirit of bipartisanship, we will not be voting against the government's bill, but we will be moving amendments to make this bill far more effective and bring about the results that the coroner was looking for as well as the people who have been advocating for this for some time. There is bipartisan support for the essential elements of this bill, but for good reason this side of the House believes there are amendments that need to be brought in to make sure that these smoke alarms are introduced as quickly as possible—not in 10 years time, but in no longer than three years time—and that they are introduced in a way that people can afford so there are no barriers to implementing these safety measures.

I again commend the member for Kawana. It was the member for Kawana who listened to the lobby groups in the first place and who was moved, with the former opposition leader, the member for Southern Downs, to introduce the private member's bill. It was not until three months later that the government introduced its bill. I commend the member for Kawana on his initiative. I hope tonight that we can continue the spirit of bipartisanship, that we support the mandatory introduction of photoelectric fire alarms, but at the same time that we are incredibly practical about this, that we make sure that they are implemented as quickly as possible and that we put no financial barriers in the way for those families that will find it very difficult to afford that cost.

 **Hon. WS BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services) (10.31 pm), in reply: I thank all members for their contributions to the debate this evening. As has been pointed out by the member for Everton, with one or two exceptions in the House this has probably been perhaps the most civilised debate that I have been involved in for some years—for a Wednesday night in particular. That said, there have been a number of comments made and I will endeavour to address those as I work through this reply.

All members acknowledge that photoelectric smoke alarms are superior to ionisation alarms. Ionisation alarms are prone to false alarms and are not nearly as effective at detecting smouldering fires which is the type of fire that is most prevalent in residential dwellings. I thank the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services not only for their brave efforts in battling fires but also for advocating for the higher standard of protection that photoelectric smoke alarms will provide Queensland communities.

We have seen too many fire tragedies in this state to approach this legislation in a half-hearted manner. In fact, many of the points that have been raised by members of the House this evening have been points of considerable discussion and thought within the government in the last some months. It is not only the committee that has looked at these issues; I can assure members that there has been nothing raised this evening that has not been a matter of discussion in and around my office and my ministry. The issues have been well ventilated here this evening.

The government's bill reflects the recommendations of the State Coroner following the inquest into the Slacks Creek fire which has been reflected on this evening. It mandates that smoke alarms installed in homes be photoelectric, interconnected, installed in all bedrooms and powered either by hardwiring to the home's electrical system or the use of 10-year-life batteries. I am proud to say the Palaszczuk government has implemented these recommendations in full. A point that we would want to highlight to the House is that we have taken the absolute implementation of the coroner's recommendations fully to heart.

Mr SPEAKER: I apologise for interrupting, Minister. I would ask members to not make comments. I am having difficulty hearing the minister. If members want to talk, go outside.

Mr BYRNE: I suppose that is the problem with having a civilised debate; I am not ramped up in volume.

Mr SPEAKER: I do not need you to be ramped up. I am having difficulty hearing you.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: This is not an invitation for cross-chatter.

Mr BYRNE: Okay, let us try and keep this where it is. There was a decision made by the government to implement the full recommendations put forward by the coroner. I would like to now address some of the specific issues raised by members within the context of this debate. In terms of the time implementation, the government bill will improve safety immediately from commencement. I know it has been asserted that that is not the case, but it will. On 1 January 2017 photoelectric alarms will be required to be installed in homes any time a smoke alarm is being replaced or a new one installed in any way. The opposition bill, in contrast, introduces no changes until three years after commencement. The other provisions are introduced over 10 years to allow households time to cater for the associated costs and to plan a suitable time to make the changes. Houses sold or entering into a new tenancy will comply within five years. This increases the speed with which the changes are introduced across the community and takes into account the other financial interests in the property occurring at the time. Smoke alarms have a 10-year useful life at which point they should be replaced. Therefore, by allowing 10 years for compliance many homes may choose to comply with the provisions when they would have been replacing existing alarms anyway which decreases any additional costs to them. Allowing 10 years to comply allows time for retail stock and pricing adjustments and helps avoid any artificial increases in trade charges due to a spike in demand.

On the issue of interconnection, smoke alarms can be installed either as standalone units or they can be interconnected so that when one alarm detects smoke all alarms sound the alert. Interconnection is crucial and critical to ensuring an early audible alert rouses a person from their sleep in the event of a fire. Residents asleep in an upstairs bedroom will be made aware of a fire on the lower level due to the alarm in their bedroom sounding. The need for interconnection is closely linked to the need to place alarms in bedrooms. A smoke alarm in a bedroom can wake a sleeping person or resident but only if it is interconnected to the others in the house so that it actually detects the fire at its source.

The member for Everton spoke about an affordable transition and the costs of interconnected smoke alarms. Let us talk about one of the most important components of the coroner's recommendation and the government's bill and that is interconnection. It is far worse to impose a cost on a community with an outcome that does not deliver comprehensively, an outcome that does not save lives to the degree possible. Not only did the coroner recommend interconnected alarms, the Commonwealth Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee recommended the National Construction Code be amended to require installation of interconnected photoelectric smoke alarms in every residential property. It is not just the coroner who has made these recommendations or the advice from our own professionals, it is also coming from a Commonwealth Senate committee. Interconnectivity is the only way to guarantee that parents in their bedroom, and everyone else in the house, can hear if a fire starts in a child's bedroom. This is really important in double-storey homes.

On a technical point, the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee agreed that smoke alarms comply with the Australian Standard. This standard requires that a sound level is achieved at the bedhead of 75 decibels. The only practical way to reach 75 decibels is through interconnected smoke alarms. The opposition has actually agreed to this. It was one of the two recommendations that were unanimously agreed to. Further, a Victorian university study about the benefits of smoke alarms found that interconnected photoelectric smoke alarms in every bedroom in every dwelling can save up to 50 per cent more lives than the opposition's proposal which has them only in the hallways. Those statistics speak volumes about the importance of interconnectivity.

With regard to the comments of the member for Everton about the cost of hardwired smoke alarms, it is important to note that households have the option of wireless connections. They do not require the services of an electrician, which will significantly reduce the costs for those households. We will also have a package of assistance measures to help families who are doing it tough and those on disability services.

The member for Coomera said that the differences were the issues. What we are proposing is a greater measure of certainty between the option of life and death. If for some reason the wireless interconnectivity fails, we end up with the same system that the opposition is proposing. If a worst-case scenario occurs, the radio frequency fails, for example, the individual alarms will still operate. Encouraging interconnected smoke alarms is simply not good enough. The Queensland Fire and Emergency Services has been advocating and actively encouraging home owners to change their smoke alarms to photoelectric and to interconnect them for years—many years—with very little success. However, mandated smoke alarm requirements achieve 92 per cent compliance.

The opposition has said that a 10-year time frame for photoelectric alarms is too long. Our bill requires rental properties to comply within five years and rental properties make up approximately one-third of all properties in Queensland. Further, any property sold after five years will need to be equipped with photoelectric interconnected smoke alarms. That will ensure more people in more homes will be safer sooner than the 10 years that the LNP is continuing to refer to in this debate.

Another important point that I would like to make tonight is that the member for Noosa has stated that photoelectric alarms should be installed immediately. The government bill requires that any alarm that needs to be replaced from 1 January next year has to be photoelectric, which in fact will ensure that more homes have photoelectric alarms 12 months earlier than the proposed time frame put forward by the private member's bill. This will effectively see the removal of the old style, less effective ionisation smoke alarms from the shelves in retail outlets.

The Palaszczuk government can assert to being a leader in the implementation of residential smoke alarm laws that will afford the greatest protection to the community. There is indisputable evidence that interconnected photoelectric smoke alarms will provide the most accurate and early warning of a house fire. That is a fact. This bill will place Queensland in the best possible position to mitigate and avoid the devastating effects that a house fire can have on a community.


In closing, I wish to acknowledge Louis and Christine from the Logan House Fire Support Network and commend them for their tireless work assisting victims of house fires across South-East Queensland. We have worked closely with Louis and Christine. They in fact believe that the government bill requiring photoelectric smoke alarms in bedrooms and interconnectivity is the best outcome for Queenslanders. Importantly, we have the most comprehensive and protective smoke alarm provisions in the nation.

Question put—That the Fire and Emergency Services (Domestic Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Speaker's Ruling, Same Question Rule

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, the question before the House is that the Fire and Emergency Services (Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill be now read a second time. I draw member's attention to the statement I circulated in the chamber earlier today regarding the application of the same question rule. Standing order 87 provides the general rule of Westminster parliamentary practice that once the House has resolved a matter in the affirmative or negative, the same question shall not again be proposed in the same session. As previous speakers have noted, the matters do not have to be identical but merely the same in substance as the previous matter. In other words, it is a question of substance, not form.

The Fire and Emergency Services (Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill introduced on 2 December 2015 seeks to achieve substantially the same objective as that of the government's bill, which the House has just resolved to read a second time. Therefore, under standing orders 87 and 150, the Fire and Emergency Services (Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill cannot proceed and is discharged from the *Notice Paper*.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 3, as read, agreed to.

Clause 4—



Mr MANDER (10.45 pm): I move the following amendments—

1 Clause 4 (Amendment of s 104RA (Definitions for div 5A))

Page 5, line 11, '2026'—

omit, insert—

2019

I table the explanatory notes to my amendments.

Tabled paper: Fire and Emergency Services (Domestic Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill 2016, explanatory notes to Mr Tim Mander's amendments [\[1420\]](#).

This amendment and the next two amendments refer to the timing issue that we have been debating tonight. These amendments will ensure that the transfer to photoelectric alarms happens by 2019.

Mr BYRNE: The issues around this have been well ventilated in the debate. Obviously the government will not be supporting the amendments.

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

AYES, 43:

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

INDEPENDENT, 1—Pyne.

NOES, 45:

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

KAP, 2—Katter, Knuth.

INDEPENDENT, 1—Gordon.

Resolved in the negative.

Non-government amendment (Mr Mander) negatived.

Mr SPEAKER: I understand there are a few amendments to be moved. For all subsequent divisions the bells will be rung for one minute.

Clause 4, as read, agreed to.

Clause 5, as read, agreed to.

Clause 6—



Mr BYRNE (10.53 pm): I move the following amendments—

1 Clause 6 (Amendment of s 104RB (Owner must install smoke alarm))

Page 6, line 12, after 'out'—

insert—

by 31 December 2026

2 Clause 6 (Amendment of s 104RB (Owner must install smoke alarm))

Page 6, after line 12—

insert—

(1A) Section 104RB, before subsection (1)—

insert—

Note—

The requirements in this section will not apply after 31 December 2026. However, before this section expires, these requirements are replaced by the requirements in section 104RBA in particular circumstances.

Amendments agreed to.

Mr MANDER: I move the following amendment—

2 Clause 6 (Amendment of s 104RB (Owner must install smoke alarm))

Page 6, line 25, '2026'—

omit, insert—

2019

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

AYES, 42:

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

NOES, 46:

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

KAP, 2—Katter, Knuth.

INDEPENDENT, 2—Gordon, Pyne.

Resolved in the negative.

Non-government amendment (Mr Mander) negatived.

Clause 6, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 7—



Mr MANDER (10.58 pm): I move the following amendments—

3 Clause 7 (Insertion of new ss 104RBA and 104RBB)

Page 7, line 12, '2021'—

omit, insert—

2019

4 Clause 7 (Insertion of new ss 104RBA and 104RBB)

Page 7, line 33, '; and'—

omit, insert—

5 Clause 7 (Insertion of new ss 104RBA and 104RBB)

Page 8, lines 1 to 10—

omit.

6 Clause 7 (Insertion of new ss 104RBA and 104RBB)

Page 8, line 11, '(7)'—

omit, insert—

(6)

7 Clause 7 (Insertion of new ss 104RBA and 104RBB)

Page 8, line 12, '2026'—

omit, insert—

2019

8 Clause 7 (Insertion of new ss 104RBA and 104RBB)

Page 8, line 13, '(8)'—

omit, insert—

(7)

9 Clause 7 (Insertion of new ss 104RBA and 104RBB)

Page 8, line 24, '(9)'—

omit, insert—

(8)

These amendments refer to the interconnectivity of smoke alarms. As was mentioned through the debate, we encourage this strongly, but we do not believe it should be compulsory because it would be an incredible impost on many families that cannot afford it.

Mr BYRNE: Again, this is an issue that has been well-ventilated during the debate. The government will be opposing the amendments.

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

AYES, 42:

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

NOES, 46:

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

KAP, 2—Katter, Knuth.

INDEPENDENT, 2—Gordon, Pyne.

Resolved in the negative.

Non-government amendment (Mr Mander) negatived.

Clause 7, as read, agreed to.

Clause 8—



Mr BYRNE (11.01 pm): I move the following amendment—

3 Clause 8 (Replacement of s 104RC (Lessor must replace smoke alarm))

Page 10, line 11, '(4)(b)'—

omit, insert—

(4)(a)

Amendment agreed to.

Mr MANDER: I move the following amendment—

10 Clause 8 (Replacement of s 104RC (Lessor must replace smoke alarm))

Page 10, line 12, '2026'—

omit, insert—

2019

This is another amendment that is necessary to bring the introductory date of photoelectric alarms forward to 2019.

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

AYES, 43:

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

INDEPENDENT, 1—Gordon.

NOES, 45:

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

KAP, 2—Katter, Knuth.

INDEPENDENT, 1—Pyne.

Resolved in the negative.

Non-government amendment (Mr Mander) negatived.

Clause 8, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 9 to 12, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—



Mr MANDER (11.05 pm): I move the following amendment—

11 After clause 12 (Amendment of s 104RM (Notice to buyer of manufactured home about smoke alarms))

Page 12, after line 11—

insert—

12A Insertion of new ch 5, pt 5, div 8

After section 205—

insert—

Division 8 Transitional provisions for Fire and Emergency Services (Domestic Smoke Alarms) Amendment Act 2016

206 Replacing existing smoke alarms

- (1) This section applies if, immediately before the commencement, smoke alarms were installed in a domestic dwelling in compliance with this Act as in force immediately before the commencement.
- (2) The owner of the domestic dwelling must replace the smoke alarms with smoke alarms that comply with section 104RBA before 1 January 2020.

207 Installing smoke alarms

- (1) This section applies if, on the commencement, no smoke alarms are installed in a domestic dwelling in compliance with section 104RB.
- (2) The owner of the domestic dwelling must install smoke alarms in the dwelling in compliance with section 104RBA before the first of the following happens—
 - (a) any transfer date for the dwelling;
 - (b) the day any existing residential tenancy agreement or rooming accommodation agreement for all or part of the dwelling ends;
 - (c) the day any new residential tenancy agreement or rooming accommodation agreement for all or part of the dwelling starts;
 - (d) the day that is 1 year after the commencement.

Maximum penalty—5 penalty units.

- (3) In this section—

residential tenancy agreement see the *Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008*, section 12.

rooming accommodation agreement see the *Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008*, section 16.

transfer date, for a domestic dwelling, means the date a person is entitled to possession of the dwelling under any agreement to transfer possession of the dwelling.

This is the last amendment to again make sure that photoelectric alarms are in well before the 10-year period suggested by the government.

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

AYES, 42:

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

NOES, 46:

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

KAP, 2—Katter, Knuth.


INDEPENDENT, 2—Gordon, Pyne.

Resolved in the negative.

Non-government amendment (Mr Mander) negatived.

Clause 13, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

 **Hon. WS BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services) (11.08 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. WS BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services) (11.09 pm): I move—

That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

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


Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (11.09 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Short-Term Holiday Letting


 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (11.09 pm): I understand that the Gold Coast City Council is considering ill-thought-out recommendations from its planning department to allow short-term letting of residential properties to be self-assessed under its planning scheme. This would, in effect, roll back the effective protections in place that I and many Gold Coast and Mermaid Beach constituents campaigned long and hard to get, with the temporary local planning instrument, or TLPI—party houses—engaged under the state planning legislation put in place by the Newman government. I thank the member for Callide, who very strongly supported this planning legislation which restored peace to the wonderful communities on the Gold Coast.

In essence, the proposal would allow for a self-assessment process to be introduced on short-term accommodation so an individual owner can self-assess whether their property is able to be let as a short-term accommodation rental—a potential party house. It is obvious to my mind that of course they would find them suitable for making a quick buck at the cost of local amenity, enjoyment and the comfort which Gold Coast residents could achieve in their own homes. Many Mermaid Beach constituents have recently approached me to tell me how lovely it was that their teenage children could now use their backyard in safety without fear of being harassed by drunken partygoers. I can only imagine the shock and dismay they are now feeling after hearing of this irresponsible and reckless plan.

The issue has been of constant concern to communities in the Broadbeach Waters, Mermaid Waters and Clear Island Waters suburbs for over 10 years as they bore the brunt of regular unruly, unacceptable behaviours exhibited at party houses, with every resident having their own uniquely horrifying experience. The national publicity given to these party houses was incredibly damaging for the family-friendly image of the Gold Coast and wreaked unbearable unpleasantness on my constituents in otherwise normally quiet residential communities.

It was the introduction of the TLPI in May 2015, brought about by clear legislative changes giving powers to local councils to enforce restrictions on short-term holiday letting businesses in residential areas, which brought about the eradication of the unapproved, abhorrent party houses—party houses that have been impacting residents for years. It is with those residents in mind that I implore the Gold Coast City Council to reject this plan and reassure residents that their peaceful, family-friendly Gold Coast lifestyle will be preserved.

Hervey Bay, Whale Watching

 **Mr SORENSEN** (Hervey Bay—LNP) (11.13 pm): Hervey Bay is a great destination this time of year, and I encourage all members of the House to come and visit. We have started our whale-watching season, and there are many reports about the perfect weather conditions on the water and the huge number of whales making their way into Platypus Bay. Our whale-watching boats are busier than ever.


The Swim with the Whales tourist product being promoted by the Perrys is attracting a lot of attention. In perfect conditions, up to 21 people were able to go swimming with the whales in one day with the Perrys. It was only an LNP government that could foresee this sort of tourism product was going to be a winner. No longer do visitors wish to sit in their accommodation or just go out for dinner or walks along the beach. They want to get involved with nature. Hervey Bay is the perfect place to do that. You do not have to go far to have a wildlife or marine life encounter.

Along with the whale-watching season comes events and celebrations. There was the annual paddle out to the whales on 21 August, which always has great public support and participation. We had the illumination parade a couple of weeks ago where business groups, not-for-profit organisations and local schools organised floats in a colourful array of lights and movement. It is truly spectacular. Thanks to Mayor Chris Loft for returning the parade after some years of its absence. Chris knows the importance of having the community get together in celebration, and the Fraser Coast Opportunities team also made sure it was successful. It was bigger and brighter than ever.

I must make special mention again of the Hervey Bay Seafood Festival held this month—another great event. Our seafood industry is important to Hervey Bay and it employs many people. It is one of the pillars of the economy in my electorate. My thanks must go to Michelle Fuchs and Elaine Lewthwaite for all their efforts in making this event bigger and brighter each year.

This weekend we will have RiverFest at River Heads. I would like to thank Billie Rustin and her team for working so hard to make this event bigger and better each year. It will be a great weekend of celebrations because this is where the two rivers meet—the Mary River and the Susan River—as they merge into the Great Sandy Straits adjacent to Fraser Island. Once again, thanks to Billie and her team. They do a great job with busking, wine, food, the dinner dance and the fireworks display.

Navua Sedge, Eradication

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (11.16 pm): Today I tabled a petition of 920 signatures from the Atherton Tablelands calling on the government to take action to combat the invasive pest weed Navua sedge. It states—

The Petition of the residents of Tablelands Regional Council Local Government area wish to draw to the attention of the House the critical level of the infestation of Navua Sedge ... and the devastating impact it is having on prime agricultural land on the Atherton Tablelands and surrounds. Conservative estimates predict that over 50% of grazing pasture could be lost if strong action isn't taken immediately to eradicate and control this weed on farms and on roadsides.

We the petitioners call on the government to take urgent action to:

Fund research and development into Navua Sedge for a pre-emergent and long-term management solutions.

Establish a Navua Sedge pilot program on the Atherton Tablelands and include farmers, stakeholders and Local Government in the program.


Continuation of the recent allocation of funds provided the Tableland Regional Council for spraying of Department of Transport and Main Roads controlled roadsides and verges at a minimum application rate of 5 sprays per year.

Agriculture is the largest employer on the Atherton Tablelands, and Navua sedge is killing it and it is getting worse. Navua sedge is an invasive weed and has the capacity to spread at an alarming rate. The weed has now been found in the drier areas of the Tablelands where initially it was thought it could never survive and the situation is now critical. Biosecurity Queensland points out that Navua sedge is extremely aggressive and takes nutrients, light and moisture from the natural pastures and is capable of forming dense stands that can smother many tropical pasture species. In pastures, Navua sedge is unpalatable and provides little feed value for cattle. Navua sedge can cause death in cattle as they cannot pass it, there is no nutrition, they put on no weight and they starve. Each flower has over 500 seeds which remain viable in the ground for over three years.

Without the existence of a pre-emergent herbicide, control of this weed is reliant on intensive and regular spraying. The devastation of this weed can be seen on neighbouring Fiji. Navua sedge has reduced the carrying capacity of pastures by up to 40 per cent and is a major cause of low milk production. It is estimated that Navua sedge could have a larger impact on pastures in Far North Queensland than it has had in Fiji. Applying the scenario of reducing carrying capacity rates by 50 per cent could potentially reduce the agricultural economy and the Queensland economy.

I am pleased that the call for urgent action has been heard by the Department of Transport and Main Roads, and I welcome the much needed additional spraying rates for Main Roads road verges. The Atherton Tablelands Regional Council, the agricultural industry and I are seeking support for funding the research and development program for Navua sedge.

Pimlico State High School, Fanfare

 **Mr STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (11.19 pm): It gives me great pleasure to rise this evening to talk about Pimlico State High School students' Fanfare performance. I had the pleasure of attending on behalf of the Minister for Education and presenting the winning trophy. Unfortunately, it did not go to Pimlico students; instead it went to Cairns State High School. Fanfare has been operating and running since 1985. I thank AEG Ogden, who are the proud sponsors. They picked it up after the former government axed the funding for the program.

At the start of 2014, the Pimlico State High School chamber string orchestra was renamed Orpheus after one of the beautiful tropical islands which lies just off the north coast of Townsville. Orpheus is also the name of the mythical Greek string player who, legend says, could charm all living things. The group comprises the more developed string players from the Pimlico symphony orchestra and includes students from grade 8 to grade 12. Orpheus chamber strings plays without a conductor, which is amazing when looking at the talent of those particular young men and women.

As part of the school's music program, players in Orpheus are involved in promoting and fostering music in younger students. Through their educational performances in primary schools and their beginner concerts and workshops, the players in the group actively mentor primary school students—just like we saw yesterday from Banksia Beach State School. Orpheus are consecutive winners of the Townsville Eisteddfod and were the regional representative ensemble and state grand finalists in Education Queensland's biennial Fanfare festival in 2014 and once again this year, in 2016. I believe they should have won, but then again I could be a bit biased and one-eyed.

Pimlico State High School also has a strong community focus and actively supports a number of charities. Students from Orpheus perform at events such as Australia's Biggest Morning Tea, the Cowboys-Broncos charity dinner and Lions functions. As part of the school symphony orchestra, Orpheus students have raised over \$80,000—remember they have only been going since 2014—for local Townsville charities. Each year Orpheus performs at Ronald McDonald House and also takes time to fill each ward of the Townsville Hospital with music. Orpheus has a close association with the Australian Festival of Chamber Music, and two of the members of the group currently hold the prestigious Theodore Kuchar Scholarship. Mr Speaker, I seek leave to have the students' names incorporated into *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Orpheus Chamber String Orchestra is led by Florence Cappler-Shillington and the group is directed by Richard Newell.

Violins: Florence Cappler-Shillington (Principal 1st Violin), Emily Robson, Jasmin Massey, Jacalyn Adcock, Elena James (leader), Shani Bennett, Ellen Conrad, Emily McDonald


Violas: Julia Ramsbotham (leader), Chelsea Royan, Lilyann Conrad, Emily VanDerWal

Cellos: Amy Roberts (leader), Matthew Newell, Ingrid Miller, Michelle Heijneman

Bass: Olivia Adcock, Emma Wootton

Director: Mr Richard Newell

Gympie Electorate, Youth Forum

 **Mr PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (11.21 pm): Late in June I hosted a youth forum with input from Gympie's representative to the Queensland Youth Parliament, Sophie Ellaby. Student representatives from every secondary school across the region gathered to discuss the issues facing our youth, including tertiary opportunities and unemployment. This group did not plead for more entertainment venues. They had their eyes on the future of Gympie's growth, on keeping actively engaged in employment and on study opportunities and community activities in the region.


Naturally, the level of youth unemployment worries them. They are concerned that policies and decisions made in Brisbane do not help to create long-term employment opportunities in regions like Gympie. Several representatives identified it as one of the major factors pushing local youth to leave the region. This is exacerbated by the lack of opportunities to study to gain qualifications. The limited university and TAFE opportunities in Gympie mean that if a student cannot afford to move away they are being denied the chance to pursue a tertiary education.

I cannot stress how deeply this worries them, with many feeling the burden that this alone could have a significant impact on their job expectations. What makes this even more shameful is that the state government is deliberately preventing the University of the Sunshine Coast from expanding its presence at the Gympie education precinct. It is contemptible that out of sheer bloody-mindedness the

Minister for Training is refusing to allow the University of the Sunshine Coast to access an empty and unused TAFE building at the site so it can expand its courses and offer more places for enrolment. What compounds this is that TAFE has said that it does not even need the building, which sits across a car park from the University of the Sunshine Coast. In fact, in December last year TAFE closed nursing studies at the Gympie campus which was being used as a pathway course for students who were then able to transition into a bachelor degree at the University of the Sunshine Coast.

Students have been missing out since last year, and it looks like 2017 will be a missed opportunity again. These actions are not just unthinking; they are actually hurting the hopes and aspirations of our youth. Not surprisingly to those who know the region, many students called for more agriculture focused courses to be introduced at the University of the Sunshine Coast's Gympie campus. As an encouraging sign for the future, representatives suggested engaging with volunteer organisations to complement the ageing demographics of volunteers and to take advantage of the Bruce Highway upgrade to attract more tourists and market secret destinations which even some locals do not know about. I thank everyone who attended because the feedback has been invaluable in helping to provide an insight into the needs of Gympie's youth.

Road Safety Week

 **Ms FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (11.24 pm): Last week was Road Safety Week. It was a week to drive home the point that we all need to be careful, that we are all mortal, that none of us can take life for granted and that road safety is the responsibility of the whole community. That is why I was so pleased at the excellent campaign that was run by the Department of Transport and Main Roads, led by the Minister for Main Roads and Road Safety, whose enthusiasm for the cause is palpable. It was a campaign that went to workplaces, to school and to communities. It was a campaign that was taken up by my local community with gusto.


My colleagues Terri Butler, the federal member for Griffith, Shayne Sutton, the councillor for Morningside, and I know how much our community cares about doing the right thing, and especially about doing things that keep our kids safe. That led us to our road safety strategy for the week. At one end of the week, we held a school day lunch hosted at St Oliver Plunkett, where we were joined by a contingent from Murarrie State School. At the other end of the week, we hosted a community breakfast in Hawthorne Park.

The common elements were the dedicated team from Transport and Main Roads, led by the wonderful Helen Sheehan. I cannot say enough how much we are going to miss her now that she is moving to the Gold Coast region. Members on the Gold Coast are going to be very lucky to have her. We also had the police team, led by Senior Sergeant Barry Bullion, and the fireys from Cannon Hill Fire Station. That these people should all take so much time out of their already busy days to help make our kids more aware about looking after themselves around our roads is incredible and fills us with admiration and gratitude.

I would also like to thank some other people. The event at St Oliver Plunkett was, as many of the students put it, just like the Ekka. They loved it and surrounded us with questions, advice and information. It all went well because of the assistant principal, Sonny Smith, and his immense patience and enthusiasm for the cause. We thank him and the acting principal of Murarrie State School, Ben Turner, so much for their commitment to strong community partnerships. Their students did them proud as well. Most importantly, we heard that many parents were receiving road safety messages at home from their very excited children, and that is what the event was all about.

As for our community breakfast, I want to thank the primary schools—Morningside State School, Saints Peter and Paul's, Bulimba State School, Norman Park State School and Seven Hills State School—for their promotion of the event. I also thank our local high schools—Cannon Hill Anglican College, Lourdes Hill College and Balmoral State High School. They know how vulnerable our new young drivers are to the fatal five—distraction, drink-driving, not wearing seatbelts, fatigue and speeding—because the statistics tell the story. More than 11,000 Queenslanders are expected to acquire a brain injury. Motor vehicle accidents will be responsible for 70 per cent of those. I want to thank our trustee volunteers—Vickey, Annmaree, Carla, Brian, Ian, Lucy, John, Liz, Marty, Audra and Suzanne—for their great support of these events and for what was a great message for our local community about road safety.

Redlands Electorate, Festivals

 **Mr McEACHAN** (Redlands—LNP) (11.27 pm): I rise tonight to bring to members' attention the fantastic festival that is happening in Redlands as the House sits this week. This festival combines the 4 Island Festival and RedFest and celebrates all of the things that make the Redlands the best place to live and play.

Mr Bennett: Second best.

Mr Costigan: Third best.

Mr McEACHAN: The best. This weekend gone, I had the great pleasure of attending markets, viewing art displays, eating fabulous food, listening to terrific music and watching moving displays put on by the Yulu Burri Ba dancers on Macleay and Karragarra islands. Picture stunning blue skies, glittering Moreton Bay, towering gums and people with a profound sense of community enjoying their place in the world. The celebration does not happen without the vision, passion and hard graft of a huge number of dedicated volunteers. Time does not permit me to name them all but I want to acknowledge some of them tonight.


I acknowledge Steve Morgan; the three commodores and members of Karragarra Yacht Club, Tingira Boat Club and the Sandy Beach Yacht Club; Wally Crook and the members from the Macleay Island Lions; Councillor Mark Edwards and Mayor Karen Williams for their enthusiastic support; President of RedFest, Patrick Burke; and Adrian Addicott, who was recently recognised for 30 years service to the festival. The festival goes all week, heading to Coochiemudlo Island, North Straddie, Russell Island, Lamb Island and Redland Showgrounds. It shines a light on our unique natural environment, our strawberry-growing heritage and our rich cultural history.

This weekend I have the privilege of emceeing the famous International Strawberry Eating Competition—'international' is a bit of poetic licence. I take this opportunity to invite one and all to come out to the Redlands and enjoy our hospitality. The 4 Islands Festival and RedFest bring to the Redlands national and international music stars—performers like Taxiride, Darren Percival, Joe Camilleri and the Black Sorrows, the Hillbilly Goats and many more. The festival singing competition has also uncovered local voices like Mirusia Louwerse and up-and-comers like Leah Lever.

Redlands is all about community and our relaxed way of life. Redlanders are passionate about their local area. RedFest and the 4 Islands Festival are a celebration of everything that is great about our beautiful Redlands. The 4 Islands Festival highlights the beauty of our Southern Moreton Bay Islands and our stunning Moreton Bay waters—dragon boat racing, kayaking—made safe by Volunteer Marine Rescue and Coastguard. RedFest in turn celebrates the best food, music and businesses that Redlands has to offer, from Mount Cotton to Capalaba and Cleveland to the bay.

Following the lead of my colleague the newly minted member for Toowoomba South, I am going to shamelessly promote my electorate and encourage all members to head to the bay to enjoy a weekend of festivals in the Redlands.

Townsville Stadium

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (11.31 pm): I would like to update the House on the fantastic announcement that local companies and contractors are expressing their interest in participating in the building of the new Townsville stadium. Whilst I was unable to join Minister Lynham last Sunday due to some personal commitments, I certainly welcomed his presence in our fine city on the weekend when announcing the great news of the first tender in Townsville as well as an opportunity for local contractors to register online their interest in future work. Registrations will close on 19 September.

I know from conversations I have had directly with construction business operators from local companies in the Thuringowa electorate that they will welcome this job-creating opportunity to be a part of this major infrastructure project in Townsville. The numbers that have expressed interest already demonstrates great local interest in the Townsville stadium, which we know will deliver much needed jobs due to the \$140 million investment in construction. We also know that it will be the home to the proud premiership-winning North Queensland Cowboys.

We know that many local businesses have already put their hands up to be part of the \$250 million stadium project now that the first tender has opened. It is indeed great news to hear that more than 200 businesses have sought information online about working on the Townsville stadium project and design tender. Of those, 54 companies have lodged 97 expressions of interest in the work packages and 158 suppliers have downloaded the expression of interest documentation. I certainly am very encouraged to see the response from businesses in the Townsville area. Everybody knows that I


am a North Queensland Cowboys fan, but I am also a fan and strong advocate of ensuring we keep jobs local and help bring the confidence that was lost under the LNP back into our city. I know that this project will be the jump-start that our North Queensland economy needs.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr HARPER: I have obviously stirred them up, but that is okay. Our North Queensland stadium project will deliver a world-class facility for Townsville city and a catalyst for future jobs and opportunity. The stadium will be completed in time for the 2020 Rugby League season. I will invite members opposite to come along to that if they are still here. It will provide opportunities for local jobs for years to come. The stadium project will create 750 construction jobs and tender assessments and emphasise opportunity for local businesses and alliances.

I know my fellow MPs in Townsville will join me in encouraging locals to attend the Department of State Development's next quarterly industry breakfast, to be held on 6 September, when the departmental executives will outline tendering time lines and the type of work that will be on offer for this fantastic project for Townsville.

Seniors Week

 **Ms DAVIS** (Aspley—LNP) (11.34 pm): Each year in August we formally recognise the importance of seniors during Seniors Week. We should always acknowledge the important role that seniors play in every community across Queensland. They make invaluable contributions as community leaders, workers, volunteers, carers and grandparents. Their work often goes unrecognised, which makes Seniors Week even more important. There is no better time to say thank you for the tireless work that they do.

One of the great privileges of being the member for Aspley is having the opportunity to meet and interact with many of the extraordinary seniors in our local area. One of the ways we celebrate Seniors Week each year is with my annual Seniors Week Aspley Achiever Award ceremonies. I always look forward to joining with residents from four local retirement villages—Aveo Aspley Court, Compton Gardens, Holy Spirit Carseldine and Aveo Bridgeman Downs—for morning or afternoon tea before presenting many special people with an Aspley Achiever Award. These awards are about recognising someone who goes quietly about their work without seeking reward or recognition and has a positive impact on the lives of others. There are many people in my electorate who should be honoured for the work they do and it is always a pleasure to recognise them.

This year I presented awards to 28 talented and inspiring seniors. Many did not know they had been nominated, which is a wonderful surprise for them, and all were extremely gracious and humble in accepting their awards. We even had a few tears of disbelief from one wonderful lady who could not believe that her volunteering and friendship to so many had been noticed by those around her. Celebrating Seniors Week is a highlight of my year and I am looking forward to hosting my Seniors Week morning teas again next year. Who does not enjoy a cup of tea, a delicious piece of cake and an opportunity to hear a wonderful story from someone who has lived and continues to live an exciting and fulfilling life?

There are so many great organisations and community groups that cater to our senior residents including the Aspley branch of National Seniors, arguably the largest branch of National Seniors in Queensland. These local seniors know how to have a good time and it is always a hoot to attend one of their events. We have Aspley classes for seniors, which provide a range of programs and activities from craft to history lessons. Of course, our Probus clubs bring together our many business retirees and there are many other clubs and groups that cater to the very diverse interests of our senior residents in the Aspley electorate.

We should always acknowledge the contribution that seniors make to our local communities. The fabric of our local area is made significantly more vibrant by our fantastic Aspley seniors.

Guinness World Record; Colless, Mrs R

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algerie—ALP) (Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy and Minister for Small Business) (11.37 pm): On 12 August 2016 students from across Queensland converged on the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre to take part in a Guinness World Record attempt for the largest practical science lesson. The students, supported by their teachers, took part in a lesson all about magnets. Whilst carrying out some interesting experiments, they had to follow strict rules to comply with criteria overseen by Guinness World Record officials. It is with great pleasure that

I can confirm that, with nearly 2,900 students in attendance, Queensland students smashed the record. I would like to thank all students, their schools and their teachers for not just being part of setting a new Guinness World Record but also helping put science and STEM subjects in the spotlight for all Queenslanders.

Students from Forest Lake State High School in my own electorate of Algester were proudly part of the excitement on the day and can now lay claim to being world record holders. Forest Lake State High School has a strong commitment to STEM through their 'innovate' program and that commitment was certainly on display during the world record attempt. I would like to congratulate the Principal, Tom Beck, the amazing teaching staff at Forest Lake State High School and all the incredible students, who should be so very proud of their efforts.

On a more solemn note, I would like to take just a moment to acknowledge a remarkable woman who, sadly, passed away recently. Rose Colless, nee Oliver, or Mrs Colless as most of us referred to her, was a tireless worker and leader in the Aboriginal community across Far North Queensland. Her career spanned many decades and included regional ATSIC councillor, deputy chair of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Corporation for Elders, chair of the Wuchopperen Medical Service and deputy chair of the first North Queensland Aboriginal Land Council. She was also the foundation member and board member of numerous other organisations and task forces in support of Indigenous issues and she was well known for her work in establishing the Aborigines & Islanders Alcohol Relief Service in Cairns, otherwise known as Douglas House. She was the managing director of Douglas House for 16 years and helped numerous people in their journey to rehabilitation.

Mrs Colless received the Order of Australia Medal in 1984 and in 1987 became the first-ever recipient of the Australian Human Rights Medal for her ongoing fight to improve the lives of Indigenous Australians. She was a remarkable woman and I was very privileged to have known her. She was actually the bridesmaid to my grandmother at her wedding. I was always very thrilled to get time to speak with her and more recently receive letters of congratulations and encouragement from her.

Mrs Colless passed away aged 88 after a battle with stomach cancer. She left her mark on this world as an Aboriginal woman and she inspired all of us.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 11.39 pm.

ATTENDANCE

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