



# RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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## FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT

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## WEDNESDAY, 12 OCTOBER 2016

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The Legislative Assembly met at 2.00 pm.

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

### PRIVILEGE

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



**Mr BROWN** (Capalaba—ALP) (2.00 pm): I rise on a matter of privilege. During the last sitting week of parliament I made a contribution on the health bill where I quoted the member for Moggill. Since the contribution, the member has written to the Speaker alleging that I implied that the member was opposed to immunisation. I would like to state for the benefit of the House that it was never my intention to make this inference. I take this opportunity to apologise to the member and to the House.

### SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

#### School Group Tour

**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I am informed that we have students from the Mudgeeraba State School in the electorate of Mudgeeraba in the gallery observing our proceedings. Welcome.

### PRIVILEGE

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



**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, on 2 August 2016 the member for Burnett wrote to me alleging that the Minister for Housing and Public Works, the member for Springwood, deliberately misled the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee during the estimates hearing on 20 July 2016. I have circulated a ruling on this matter.

On the evidence before me, I am satisfied with the minister's explanation that he was referring only to the Logan Chamber of Commerce's support in his statement. Accordingly, I have decided that the matter does not warrant the further attention of the House via the Ethics Committee and I will not be referring the matter. I table the correspondence in relation to this matter. I seek leave to incorporate the ruling.

Leave granted.

#### SPEAKER'S RULING—ALLEGED DELIBERATELY MISLEADING THE HOUSE

MR SPEAKER: Honourable Members,

On 2 August 2016, the Member for Burnett wrote to me alleging that the Minister for Housing and Public Works and Member for Springwood deliberately misled the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee during the estimates hearing on 20 July 2016 when he stated that:

*Later I spoke to a range of other stakeholders, including the mayor of the Logan City Council and the leadership of the chamber of commerce, who indicated that the decision that our government has taken is the right one for the people of Logan.*

In his letter to me, the Member for Burnett contended that the Minister's statement was deliberately misleading because he referred to the Mayor of Logan City Council as being a stakeholder who indicated that the decision taken by the government to not continue with the Logan Housing Initiative was the right one for the people of Logan.

The Member for Burnett identified an article in The Courier Mail from 1 August 2016 in which the Mayor of Logan City Council indicated he had not provided support for the decision.

I sought further information from the Minister about the allegations made against him, in accordance with Standing Order 269(5).

The Minister explained that the comment he made in relation to the decision the government took being the right one for the people of Logan, was in reference to comments made to him by the Logan Chamber of Commerce.

On the evidence before me, I am satisfied with the Minister's explanation that he was referring only to the Logan Chamber of Commerce's support in his statement.

Accordingly, I have decided that the matter does not warrant the further attention of the House via the Ethics Committee and I will not be referring the matter.

I table the correspondence in relation to this matter.

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 2 August 2016, from the member for Burnett, Mr Stephen Bennett MP, to the Speaker, Hon. Peter Wellington, regarding an alleged misleading of the House [1833].

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 31 August 2016, from the Minister for Housing and Public Works, Hon. Mick de Brenni, to the Speaker, Hon. Peter Wellington, regarding an alleged misleading of the House [1834].

## PRIVILEGE

### Speaker's Ruling, Alleged Publishing of a False or Misleading Account of Proceedings before the House

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, on 14 September 2016 the member for Glass House wrote to me alleging that the Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply, the member for Yeerongpilly, published a false or misleading account of proceedings of the House on 13 September 2016 when, in a media release, the minister stated that the LNP opposition voted against a ministerial motion moved by the minister regarding federal funding of Queensland roads. I have circulated a ruling on this matter.

As the minister has acknowledged the inaccuracy of his statement, removed the media release from the Queensland government's website and apologised to the House, I have decided that the matter does not warrant the further attention of the House via the Ethics Committee and I will not be referring the matter. I table the correspondence in relation to this matter. I seek leave to incorporate the ruling.

Leave granted.

SPEAKER'S RULING—ALLEGED PUBLISHING OF A FALSE OR MISLEADING ACCOUNT OF PROCEEDINGS BEFORE THE HOUSE OR A COMMITTEE

MR SPEAKER: Honourable Members,

On 14 September 2016, the Member for Glass House wrote to me alleging that the Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply and Member for Yeerongpilly published a false or misleading account of proceedings of the House on 13 September 2016 when, in a media release, the Minister stated that the LNP opposition voted against a Ministerial motion moved by the Minister regarding Federal funding of Queensland roads.

In his letter to me, the Member for Glass House stated that "at no stage during the debate did the LNP vote against any question put".

I sought further information from the Minister about the allegations made against him, in accordance with Standing Order 269(5).

The Minister stated that it was not his intention to publish a false or misleading account of proceedings before the House, and acknowledged that the statement in his media release was inaccurate. The Minister also advised that the media statement had been removed from the Queensland Government website, and apologised unreservedly.

I note the Minister has made a similar apology to the House yesterday.

Standing Order 269(4) requires:

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

As the Minister has acknowledged the inaccuracy of his statement, removed the media release from the Queensland Government's website and apologised to the House, I have decided that the matter does not warrant the further attention of the House via the Ethics Committee and I will not be referring the matter.

I table the correspondence in relation to this matter.

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 14 September 2016, from the member for Glass House, Mr Andrew Powell MP, regarding an alleged publication of a false or misleading account of proceedings before the House [1835].

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 26 September 2016, from the Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply, Hon. Mark Bailey, regarding an alleged publication of a false or misleading account of proceedings before the House [1836].

## PETITIONS

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

### Curra State Forest

**Mr Perrett**, from 143 petitioners, requesting the House to immediately excise Corella SF700 from the Curra State Forest, or issue a lease to the local council for a sporting shooters range complex [1837].

### Wellington Point, Birkdale and Main Roads, Pedestrian Crossing

**Dr Robinson**, from 145 petitioners, requesting the House to upgrade as a matter of urgency the pedestrian crossing at Birkdale Road and Main Road, Wellington Point [[1838](#)].

### Ravenswood, Mining

**Mr Knuth**, from 459 petitioners, requesting the House to stop the expansion of future mining at Ravenswood [[1839](#)].

The Clerk presented the following e-petition, sponsored by the Clerk—

### Mansfield State High School, Sports and Hall Facility

From 1,157 petitioners, requesting the House to prioritise funding for the construction of a new indoor sports and hall facility that services the increasing needs of Mansfield State High School, Mansfield State Primary School and the wider community [[1840](#)].

Petitions received.

## TABLED PAPERS

### MINISTERIAL PAPER

The following ministerial paper was tabled by the Clerk—

Deputy Premier, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade and Investment (Hon. Trad)—

[1841](#) Response from the Deputy Premier, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade and Investment (Hon. Trad) to an ePetition (2623-16) sponsored by Mr Pegg, from 70 petitioners, requesting the House to reconsider the development proposal for 2236 Beaudesert Road, Calamvale

### MEMBERS' PAPERS

The following members' papers were tabled by the Clerk—

Member for Gympie (Mr Perrett)—

[1842](#) Nonconforming petition regarding the excise or lease of land from Curra State Forest for a sporting shooters range complex

Member for Cairns (Mr Pyne)—

[1843](#) Document, dated October 2016, titled 'David & Goliath—Toorbul Marine Services and Moreton Bay Regional Council'

Member for Dalrymple (Mr Knuth)—

[1844](#) Nonconforming petition regarding the expansion of future mining at Ravenswood

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

### Dutch Royal Visit

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (2.05 pm): I am pleased to inform the House that Brisbane has been included in the upcoming visit to Australia by His Majesty King Willem-Alexander and Her Majesty Queen Maxima. The Dutch royal couple will arrive in Brisbane on the night of 3 November to rest before undertaking a busy round of official engagements the next day. They will be in Australia for just five days as part of year-long celebrations marking the 400th anniversary of a Dutch explorer arriving off the Western Australian coast.

I, along with the thousands of Queenslanders of Dutch descent, are delighted the king and queen will stop over in Brisbane. The royal couple will be accompanied by a big international media contingent and their visit offers us another opportunity to showcase our relaxed lifestyle and attractions worldwide. Their Brisbane itinerary begins with a morning visit to the Queensland University of Technology, followed by a cruise on the Brisbane River, before viewing modern Australian and Aboriginal art at the Gallery of Modern Art and then meeting Australians of Dutch descent at City Hall.

At QUT the Deputy Premier and I will join them as they attend a seminar on 'Smart living with water' organised by the Queensland Reconstruction Authority. King Willem-Alexander, a former chair of the United Nations water and sanitation board, has a keen interest in international water issues and flood mitigation. The royal couple are also keen to focus on confirming and expanding the Netherlands' longstanding and bilateral ties with Queensland and Australia.

This is the second visit to our state by members of Europe's popular royal families in under 12 months. In December last year the Danish royals Crown Prince Frederick and Princess Mary enjoyed a relaxed beach and shopping holiday with their children on the Gold Coast which attracted worldwide media coverage. The Dutch royals' visit to Brisbane promises the same. This is a great honour for our state, and I am sure we all look forward to welcoming the Royal Family here next month.

**Mr Bleijie:** I'll go in Jackie's place.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** You want an invite, do you? Maybe if you are good. We will have to behave. There is the test.

## Renewable Energy

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (2.07 pm): The release of the independent Renewable Energy Expert Panel's draft report today shows my government's renewable energy ambitions for Queensland will drive new investment and jobs in our regions. The panel reports there is a potential for more than \$6 billion in new investment and up to 6,700 direct and indirect jobs per annum between 2020 and 2030. As the panel reported, the reliability standard for electricity supply can be maintained, and downward pressure on wholesale electricity prices from increased renewable energy can offset costs.

I join the Minister for Energy in urging Queenslanders to respond to the draft report. Companies are already responding to my government's plans for renewable energy. Last month the minister and I announced support from ARENA for six new solar farms to be delivered by private sector proponents in Dalby, Collinsville, Kidston, Oakey and Longreach. There are two solar farms in the Collinsville area. This is another important development for Collinsville, with Glencore announcing yesterday it was seeking 200 workers for its mine.

Last week in Townsville, I met with the chief executive officer of Sun Metals Corporation. Sun Metals, a subsidiary of Korea Zinc, is investigating two additional investments at its operations in Townsville. Together, these investments represent up to \$460 million of new investments at its zinc refinery. One of those investments being considered by Sun Metals is the feasibility of constructing a 100-megawatt solar farm at the refinery. Sun Metals estimate this project and an expansion of the plant would require an additional 100 jobs at the refinery. Sun Metals currently employs almost 300 staff in Townsville. This is good news for regional Queensland on top of my government's commitment to the regions.

## Premier's Reading Challenge

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (2.09 pm): I would like to take this opportunity to talk about the success of this year's Premier's Reading Challenge. For 11 years now successive state governments have supported the reading challenge. This statewide initiative is open to state and non-state school students and home educated students up to year 9, as well as children aged up to five years enrolled in an early childhood centre, and individual home readers. It aims to improve literacy and encourage children to engage in reading for pleasure and learning.

This year I am pleased to report more than 114,000 Queensland students completed this challenge. These Queensland students and children read or experienced a total of 2.24 million books during the three-month overall reading period, breaking last year's record of 1.95 million books read. That is a great achievement by our students. I know the Minister for Education is particularly pleased with that great result.

This year's figure brings the total number of books read over the 11-year life of the challenge to more than 12 million. I am pleased to report that more than 1,300 schools and early childhood centres across Queensland took part this year. This figure includes 900 schools and 414 early childhood centres. To reward and recognise the students and children who completed the challenge, I am issuing signed certificates of achievement which will be presented during recognition ceremonies held at schools and childcare centres in November. My government will also recognise and reward more than 160,000 Queensland students who registered for the challenge with a certificate of participation.

The challenge is not a competition. The ultimate goal is to encourage participation and open children's minds to the pleasure of reading. I am sure everyone in the chamber today welcomes the news that more and more Queensland children are signing up to this important initiative. The Premier's Reading Challenge is ultimately ensuring more Queensland children are broadening their minds through literature. It is rewarding to see so many children demonstrating their love of books and reading through the challenge.

I thank sincerely the Premier's Reading Challenge sponsors for supporting this important initiative. These sponsors include Teachers' Union Health, QSuper, QT Mutual Bank, the *Courier-Mail*, Booktopia and the Queensland Ballet.

## Europe and the Middle East, Trade Mission

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade and Investment) (2.12 pm): I am pleased to inform the House that I recently completed a successful trade mission to Europe and the United Arab Emirates, where I promoted great Queensland innovation businesses and our state as an investment destination of choice.

In London, I hosted a round table with Queensland based fintech companies that are now competing on the global stage, having established successful operations in the UK. This round table, in partnership with the Commonwealth Bank, gave businesses a platform to share their experiences about starting out, scaling up and winning work in international markets.

I also met senior business leaders in London to discuss the longer term opportunities for Queensland businesses in the UK following Brexit, as well as the global investment landscape for infrastructure projects. I also visited the Kings Cross Station redevelopment, a 27-hectare mixed use office, education, residential and leisure site, which provides a model for our Cross River Rail economic development strategy. It is worth noting that Australian Super is the majority investor in the delivery of this major urban renewal project.

In Paris, I reaffirmed this government's commitment to protecting the Great Barrier Reef at a meeting with UNESCO and met with global company Thales in relation to Queensland's defence industries and urban infrastructure management. I should also acknowledge Thales' \$20 million investment in Brisbane's LifeFlight Simulation Centre, which the Attorney-General outlined yesterday.

A highlight of this mission was my visit to the United Arab Emirates, where I was joined by a number of impressive Queensland innovation businesses. Two of those innovative businesses—Gruntify and Greywater Solutions—are already reaping the benefits of the many opportunities provided by Dubai South, the world's largest urban renewal development, which is currently under construction and will eventually house one million people. During my visit to Dubai South, I signed a statement of intent between Queensland and Dubai South to cement these relationships and open the doors for other Queensland businesses to expand and develop their services in the United Arab Emirates and Dubai South.

As part of the statement of intent, the Palaszczyk government will invest \$180,000 a year for two years so we are able to give businesses the in-market support they need to refine their global smart city innovations. This will be jointly funded by Trade and Investment Queensland and Advance Queensland through the global partnerships program. I would like to particularly acknowledge the Minister for Innovation, Leeanne Enoch, for supporting this initiative and our in-market TIQ officials Donna Massie and Geoffrey Schuhkraft for their work on this important deal.

It is also my pleasure to announce two new appointments to the TIQ Board: Michele Fleming and Kate Hynes. Ms Fleming is a member of the Asia Pacific management team for Populous design, a global architecture firm which specialises in designing sports facilities, arenas and convention centres. They have worked on major projects including ANZ Stadium in Sydney, Emirates Stadium in the UK and the London Olympic Stadium.

Ms Hynes is currently the Chief Legal Officer for Halfbrick Studios, makers of the incredibly successful app Fruit Ninja. She has extensive experience in international and trade law, as well as interests in media, technology, agribusiness and innovation. Together these two appointments bring a wide range of skills and experience to further advance trade and investment opportunities for Queensland on the international stage.

Finally, I can also inform the House that TIQ has appointed Sandra Diethelm as our new India Trade Commissioner. Ms Diethelm will be based in Trade and Investment Queensland's Bangalore office. I look forward to working with her to grow the important opportunities for Queensland businesses in this critical market.

## Government Owned Corporations

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Minister for Sport) (2.15 pm): This government values the role of government owned corporations that play a great role in growing the Queensland economy. Together, our publicly owned assets in the energy, transport, water and finance sectors are key drivers of economic growth and prosperity in Queensland. They facilitate trade and business, create jobs and deliver valuable returns back to Queenslanders which are utilised to provide essential services across the state.

An overview of the key sectors the GOCs operate in include: transport and our strategic ports in regional centres such as Gladstone, Cairns, Mackay and Townsville; our energy generators and distributors, including Energy Queensland—Australia's largest energy distribution company with an asset base of \$24 billion; Seqwater, which manages \$10 billion of water supply assets and is one of Australia's largest water businesses; SunWater, which manages a regional network of bulk water supply infrastructure across Queensland, supporting 5,000 customers across the mining, power generation, industrial, local government and agriculture sectors; and the Queensland Investment Corporation, which has over 90 institutional investors in Australia and internationally and spans infrastructure, real estate and private equity with over \$78 billion under management.

Collectively, dividends from our GOCs totalled \$1.5 billion in 2015-16 and tax equivalent payments of \$718.3 million. That is our government owned businesses returning to the people of Queensland more than \$2.2 billion last year. The government made CSO payments of \$541.6 million to Ergon to support the uniform tariff policy for regional Queenslanders and \$10.2 million to SunWater for irrigation subsidies. While there is a call by some short-sighted commentators to undertake a fire sale of our assets for a short-term sugar hit, there is a reason we are keeping these assets in public hands. This means, instead of losing income-generating assets forever, we are optimising the way that these government businesses operate. We are ensuring our publicly owned income-generating assets run effectively and efficiently, are accountable to taxpayers and pass on savings to Queenslanders. The fact is that owning government businesses is good for the economy and good for growth.

In the energy sector, we expect to make savings of around \$680 million over five years due to efficiencies found by this government. Customers are also seeing direct savings, with our direction to Energex and Ergon to not appeal the regulator's pricing decision. This is in contrast to the private sector approach in other states, with energy businesses seeking billions in additional revenue from consumers.

We are driving employment and improving services with infrastructure upgrades at the Port of Hay Point and RG Tanna Coal Terminal; a Gladstone Ports traineeship program, providing employment opportunities for Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Australian South Sea Islander people; SunWater and Seqwater, enhancing their response to flood emergencies, with a new Seqwater Emergency Operations Centre and SunWater developing an emergency management response program; Energy Queensland agreeing to a 170-megawatt power purchase agreement with Mount Emerald Wind Farm; and P&O to make the Port of Cairns the home port for its cruise ship the *Pacific Eden*—this is the first time a major cruise line has based itself in a regional Queensland city. It is programs and initiatives like these that would be at risk of being scrapped if these businesses were sold to private buyers. The Palaszczuk government remains committed to not sell off these very important income-producing assets.

### Queensland Health, Annual Reports

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (2.19 pm): Just under a fortnight ago I tabled the annual reports for Queensland Health entities and a number of health related foundations. These reports reveal a state health system that is in healthy shape, delivering dividends both for Queensland patients and for Queensland taxpayers. The 2015-16 budget—the Palaszczuk's government's first budget—allocated to the health portfolio a record \$14.183 billion, an increase of \$560.6 million or 4.1 per cent on the previous year.

When we came to office we promised to restore the front-line services so savagely cut by the Newman-Nicholls LNP government, and that is what we have done. In 2015-16 we employed an additional 1,940 nurses and midwives, 651 doctors and 479 allied health professionals. Over 2,000 nursing graduates were offered a position under our Refresh Nursing initiative, and the first 47 of our nurse navigators started work. We employed an additional 115 ambulance officers and commissioned an additional 155 new or replacement ambulances.

We commenced the rollout of our digital hospital program, with Princess Alexandra Hospital in Brisbane and the Cairns hospitals going live, and we are getting results. The lists of those waiting longer than clinically recommended for a specialist outpatient appointment have fallen by over 40 per cent since we came to office. All of this has been achieved in the face of significant growth in demand.

In 2015-16 there were 1,728,443 emergency department presentations. There were 334,715 calls to 13HEALTH, the majority of which were answered within 20 seconds. The Queensland Ambulance Service received 737,803 emergency calls. The QAS also responded to 342,613 code 1 incidents. These results reflect a health system focused on delivering better outcomes for Queensland patients, and doing it in a financially prudent and responsible way.

I am pleased to advise the House that the Queensland Health annual report for 2015-16 records a surplus of \$51.1 million across the system, reflecting the benefits of careful financial management, strategic investment of surpluses and our commitment to delivering value for money to Queenslanders. Whilst we are making progress, we recognise there is more to do. I am under no illusion about the pressure we face as the Turnbull federal coalition government continues to walk away from its responsibilities to provide its fair share of funding to our state's health system. Fortunately for Queenslanders, the Palaszczuk government is committed to delivering the high-quality health services they deserve. In this year's budget we allocated \$15.274 billion, an increase of 7.7 per cent, to the health portfolio.

That is the story of the 2015-16 annual report: more doctors and nurses, more front-line services, shorter waiting lists, increased investment and a budget surplus. That is why Queenslanders understand that under the Palaszczuk government their health needs are in safe hands.

### State Schools, Maintenance

 **Hon. KJ JONES** (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism and Major Events) (2.22 pm): We are rolling out a massive \$780 million maintenance program to ensure that our 1,236 state schools provide quality learning and teaching spaces. This investment will help us keep more than 32,000 classrooms in good condition and supports more than 1,000 construction jobs every year. It is also helping us address the \$260 million maintenance backlog we inherited from the former government. Already we have reduced the LNP's backlog by more than \$70 million through our new approach—

**An opposition member:** You're kidding!

**Ms JONES:**—to managing school maintenance needs. I take the interjection; I am not kidding. This year we are investing \$190 million to address maintenance and deliver fit-for-learning, contemporary classrooms.

We are delivering \$220,000 to upgrade an outdoor learning area and special education program set-down area at Albany Creek State High School in the honourable member for Everton's electorate; \$210,000 to refurbish three classrooms in Block C at Mount Isa Central State School in the Mount Isa electorate; \$350,000 to refurbish the performing arts hall at Aspley State High School in the electorate of Aspley; \$1 million to refurbish the Special Education Unit's teaching blocks 17 and 25 at Crestmead State School in Woodridge; \$150,000 at Mount Garnet State School in Dalrymple to paint Blocks A and B; \$275,000 to refurbish four classrooms at Townsville Central State School in the Townsville electorate; \$120,000 to repair outdoor learning areas, rectify drainage, replace play equipment, soft-fall and shade structures at Mungar State School in the Maryborough electorate—and I could keep going.

**An honourable member:** Go on, go on!

**Ms JONES:** One more: \$850,000 to upgrade the manual arts facilities at Mareeba State High School in the electorate of Cook. We know that quality learning environments support quality learning outcomes for all young Queenslanders, no matter where they live in our great state. That is why I will always ensure higher levels of maintenance funding for Queensland state schools.

### Renewable Energy, Expert Panel

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply) (2.24 pm): The Palaszczuk government is delivering on its election commitment to grow the renewable energy sector in Queensland to create jobs, to boost investment and to act on climate change. The Palaszczuk government is taking a responsible and thorough approach to increasing the level of renewable energy in Queensland over the next 14 years. In January this year I appointed an independent expert panel of energy industry experts to identify credible pathways to a 50 per cent renewable energy target for Queensland by 2030. The panel has significant private sector experience and is chaired by Mr Colin Mugglestone, former head of energy and utilities with Macquarie Group.

Earlier today the independent panel released its credible pathways draft report, which contains the panel's draft findings and recommendations. Importantly, the expert panel has found that Queensland can continue to enjoy its reliable electricity supply while meeting a 50 per cent renewable energy target by 2030. This is due to significant base load generation remaining online with no closures projected under two of the three pathways identified by the panel to achieve the target over the next 14 years. Queensland has a diverse mix of energy sources. With around 8,000 megawatts of coal and

2,000 megawatts of gas-fired generation, Queensland is a net exporter of energy and electricity. The panel projects that, as renewable sources like wind and solar grow, coal and gas will continue to have an important role, giving the state an even more diverse supply while maintaining flexibility and security.

The expert panel has also engaged closely with the Australian Energy Market Operator, and the Palaszczuk government will continue to work proactively with AEMO to ensure that the system's security and reliability are at the forefront of our planning into the future. The panel's modelling also projects that a 50 per cent target will have a cost-neutral impact for electricity consumers—let me say it again; cost neutral—under all three pathways. This is due to additional supply from the renewable generators placing downward pressure on wholesale electricity prices projected to offset payments to renewable energy projects.

This finding is broadly consistent with other recent modelling commissioned by the Queensland Productivity Commission and the federal Renewable Energy Target review. The draft report finds there will be \$6.7 billion of new investment through the policy, delivering broad benefits to the Queensland economy. This includes a net increase in employment of 6,400 workers, direct and indirect, on average between 2020 and 2030. The panel expects these jobs will mainly occur in regional Queensland. Let me repeat that number: 6,400 jobs.

The panel will now conduct further public consultation across Queensland before delivering its final report to government by the end of the year. The work of the independent expert panel adds to the \$600 million worth of investment Queensland is receiving through its Solar 150 and ARENA grant funding announced a few weeks ago and the more than 600 direct jobs that come with it. I encourage all interested stakeholders to get involved in this important process over the next five weeks to help shape our transition to the clean energy economy of the future and the jobs that go with it.

### Child Protection

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (2.28 pm): I was pleased to speak in the House yesterday about additional staff in front-line and front-line support positions for Child Safety. While we are rebuilding capacity on the front line, we are also playing our part in prevention, as was recommended by the commission of inquiry. I was pleased to announce in Child Protection Week our \$2 million partnership with NAPCAN to run a statewide campaign urging Queenslanders to call out child abuse. This will be a whole-of-community education program that will engage all levels of the community from children and young people to families, professionals and decision-makers.

We also recognise the links between domestic violence and the horrible impact it has on children, so we have funded the ReNew initiative, a partnership between Carinity and the Domestic Violence Action Centre which is soon to be rolled out in Ipswich and south-western Brisbane. This groundbreaking program works with mothers and their adolescent sons and siblings to address abusive behaviours perpetrated by the young men towards their family members.

We have also funded Walking with Dads—a domestic violence informed approach to child protection work in Gympie and Mount Isa after a successful trial at Caboolture. By raising awareness and funding early intervention initiatives, we are seeing families reaching out for support earlier when it comes to protecting children. We have seen more than 12,000 families seek help through our earlier intervention and support services—Family and Child Connect. More than 20,000 people have accessed Triple P parenting support in recognition that parenting is not always easy and it is okay to ask for help. As Corey Parker said—

It makes sense to learn as much as you can about how to raise a happy, resilient family so you can prevent small issues from becoming major problems.

Of course, preventing child sexual abuse is an absolute priority. I was very pleased to stand with Hetty Johnston last month to launch their Turning Corners program. This unique service works with young people who have engaged in, or are at risk of engaging in, sexual abuse of others or sexual behaviour that is a high risk to themselves. I am a very proud former chairperson and secretary of the Centre Against Sexual Violence, which supports not only women who have experienced sexual violence but survivors of child sexual abuse through funding provided by the royal commission. I am pleased to see many members of the House wearing the teal ribbons provided to us today by CASV to mark Sexual Violence Awareness Month. I urge all members of the House to encourage people to seek help and play their part.

## Passenger Transport

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games) (2.31 pm): On 11 August this year, I announced the government's new framework for the personalised transport industry. Part of that announcement in August was for an industry reference group to be established to work through the second stage of the reform package. Today, invitations for membership have been issued and the first meeting of the reference group will be held next month. This is after the 30 one-on-one industry meetings that have been held since 11 August with the Department of Transport and Main Roads. This new group, comprising industry participants, consumer advocates, motorist groups, disability access groups, tourism advocates, social access groups and driver representatives, will be chaired by the director-general of the department. The group will be engaged directly on helping shape the detail and implementation of the second stage of the government's reform package.

The second stage of our reforms includes comprehensive changes to the primary legislation covering the industry, as well as the foreshadowed new licensing regime and chain of responsibility for taxi and booked hire services. A topic for discussion with this reference group will be the nature and requirements of the new booked hire/taxi, which will become known as BHTX, driver authorisation, which covers issues such as language proficiency and driver training. Whilst other requirements such as the federal government's skilled work visas cover issues such as English language competency for foreign workers, I am open to engagement and representations from industry on this question. I note that holders of a general drivers authorisation do not currently have English language requirements and have been able to service the booked hire market, so there will be different views on this question. The reference group will be the forum for that discussion. Of course, I will continue to have direct engagement with stakeholders along the way, but this group will be the key group for consultation on the finer aspects of the reforms.

I am confident that, by working closely with this industry reference group, the government will continue to finetune the reforms we have made to the personalised transport sector. This group will help us deliver the second stage of the reforms and achieve the goal we have sought of a level playing field, a framework that will survive future technology and market changes and ensure the greatest amount of consumer choice.

## Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis

 **Hon. AJ LYNHAM** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (2.34 pm): As part of this government's commitment to tackling the re-emergence of coal workers' pneumoconiosis, I wish to advise the House of recent amendments to the Coal Mining Safety and Health Regulation. The amendments, which will commence on 1 January 2017, tighten rules around dust management, reporting and medical examinations for coalmine workers. The changes to these regulations are vital components of the three-pronged attack, which includes prevention, early detection and a safety net for those who are diagnosed. They include a requirement that mines report respirable dust monitoring results to my department every three months. The changes also require mines to report individual sample exceedances to the department within 24 hours of the mine receiving the result. The mine must also then undertake further dust sampling within two weeks to confirm that dust levels are at an acceptable level.

The regulation also makes changes to the requirements for health assessments for workers. These will mean: all new coalmine workers undergo a chest X-ray on entry into the coalmining industry; respiratory function and chest X-ray examinations for underground coalmine workers to occur at least once every five years; respiratory function examinations undertaken as part of a health assessment include a comparative assessment against a worker's previous respiratory function results where available; all medical examinations are to be performed by a person qualified and competent to conduct the examination; and chest X-ray examinations are to be performed in accordance with International Labour Organization guidelines.

The regulation also requires mines to report cases of coal workers' pneumoconiosis to the inspectorate as they become known. These regulations are a significant milestone in tackling the re-emergence of coal workers' pneumoconiosis. These regulations mean the Mines Inspectorate will protect the health of Queensland coalminers. A 16th case of coal workers' pneumoconiosis was confirmed yesterday. The worker is 55 years old with 30 years experience working, in this case, in an open-cut mine, not an underground mine. In light of this new case, I will be working very closely with the Coal Mining Safety and Health Advisory Committee to address this issue directly. I look forward to eradicating this disease from our workforce. Addressing CWP is an absolute priority for this government.

## Domestic and Family Violence, Court Video Launch

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (2.37 pm): On 22 September this year, I launched a series of videos aimed at clarifying the court process for Queenslanders impacted by domestic and family violence. It was a great honour to have as guest speaker at the launch Dame Quentin Bryce AD CVO, Chair of the Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence and Chair of the Domestic and Family Violence Implementation Council.

Through engaging with our stakeholders across the domestic and family violence sector, a real need emerged for easy-to-understand information about the court process. These videos will help people seeking protection, as well as respondents to applications, become aware of what to expect when they attend court. This information will help ease any feelings of fear, uncertainty or anxiety about the court process itself. The video series also provides a valuable resource for lawyers, police, domestic violence practitioners and other support workers to assist in explaining the process to their client and preparing them for their time at court.

The six short educational videos outline how to apply for a domestic violence order, how the court hears applications, the conditions that can be made as part of an order and what happens if an order is breached. Importantly, the videos show people the inside of a courtroom, the court process itself and the other participants who will be in court. This knowledge can greatly help to alleviate the unknowns and make the court experience less daunting.

To reach culturally and linguistically diverse communities, the videos will be published by November this year in six languages other than English, including Mandarin, Spanish, Arabic, Persian, Thai and Vietnamese. To ensure the videos are accessible to people across Queensland, the Department of Justice and Attorney-General is working with the legal community, domestic and family violence support services, community legal centres, health organisations and government agencies to promote the videos on their websites and social media platforms. In the two weeks since its launch on 22 September, there have been nearly 3,000 hits across the six videos on the Queensland courts website. The videos are a collective effort by the judiciary, the Queensland Courts Service, Legal Aid Queensland, Queensland Corrective Services, the Queensland Police Service, the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services and the Department of Justice and Attorney-General.

Over 30 people across these agencies as well as from Women's Legal Service and Victim Assist Queensland volunteered to be the unpaid actors in these videos. I think there would be great benefit in having these videos, including the videos talking about what is domestic violence, playing on a loop in our courthouses and also in medical centres, in emergency departments and in clubs and hotels where there are TV screens. While people are sitting there having a beer or a drink they could actually watch these videos explaining what is domestic violence and the consequences of such actions. It would certainly be beneficial to get that message out into the broader community and send the very clear message: not now, not ever to domestic violence.

## Firefighters Remembrance Day, National Police Remembrance Day; Queensland Police Service Annual Statistical Review

 **Hon. WS BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services) (2.39 pm): I take this opportunity to inform the House of two very significant and solemn days which recently occurred, Firefighters Remembrance Day and National Police Remembrance Day. Monday was Firefighters Remembrance Day, the day when all Queenslanders pay tribute to our fallen firefighters and remember the firefighters around Queensland who are prepared to put their lives on the line each and every day to keep Queenslanders safe. Commemorative services were held around the state for the broader community to come together and recognise and honour those who have tragically lost their lives and those who still serve. A total of 51 firefighters have lost their lives in the line of duty since 1877.

On 29 September we commemorated National Police Remembrance Day and paid tribute to the 143 fallen Police Service officers who have made the ultimate sacrifice. Across the state services, marches and vigils were held to remember those officers who paid the ultimate sacrifice for the community they served. It was a moment to remember the Queensland Police Service members who are no longer with us. While, fortunately, no officers were lost in the line of duty over the course of the past year, a historical review of police records resulted in three names being added to the police honour roll. We honour the work of our firefighters and police officers.

Recently the Police Commissioner and I released the Queensland Police Service Annual Statistical Review. It showed the comprehensive work of the Queensland Police Service including the additional 266 police who joined the service last financial year. The statistical review shows that there has been a six per cent increase in the overall crime rate in Queensland. I stepped through this in detail during the release of the report.

Much can be made from annual statistics. By way of comparison, I compared the crime statistics from the first year of the former Newman government against the first full year of our government. There are some revealing comparisons. For example, in 2012-13 there were 30 per cent more robberies in Queensland; there were 31 per cent more unlawful entries; there were 73 per cent more manslaughter charges; there were 52 per cent more driving causing death charges; and there were 24 per cent more unlawful use of a motor vehicle charges compared to the first year of our government. On the other side of the coin, during the same periods of comparison, drug offences have increased 54 per cent; weapon offences have increased 50 per cent; and breaches of domestic violence orders have increased 72 per cent. These numbers affirm my observations that accompanied the release of the statistics. In the past, people would have closed their doors and windows to domestic violence. Now people are prepared to report and have confidence in the system. This is the signature of this government's efforts.

I again express this government's support for the Queensland Police Service and Queensland Fire and Emergency Services officers and their ongoing efforts on behalf of us all.

### Shark Control

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (2.43 pm): I rise today in this House to make a short statement. I have read the sad media reports today of another shark attack in northern New South Wales. I also note that Premier Mike Baird has announced that he will write to the federal government requesting permission to install shark control gear off New South Wales beaches. This is consistent with the offer I made to New South Wales a few weeks ago. I would be pleased to write to the federal government supporting Mr Baird's request for this permission to be granted.

Any system that is put in place to make people safer in the water has my government's full support. For 50 years we have had a shark control program with only one fatality off a protected beach during that time. I urge the federal government to approve this request immediately.

## NOTICE OF MOTION

### Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (2.44 pm): I give notice that I shall move—

That this House directs the Auditor-General, pursuant to section 35 of the Auditor-General Act 2009, to conduct an audit of the Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service, specifically:

- (a) the forecast financial performance for 2016-17 and the resulting job losses;
- (b) the circumstances of the resignation of the board;
- (c) whether the oversight of the board's operations by the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services was appropriate in the circumstances; and
- (d) any other relevant matter that becomes apparent during the audit.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Black Lung Disease

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (2.45 pm): Tragically, overnight we heard about another diagnosis of black lung disease in Queensland caused by the breathing in of coal dust at the Goonyella Riverside open-cut mine near Moranbah. Mr Paul Head is the 16th diagnosis of black lung disease since May this year and the first diagnosis of a miner from an open-cut mine. Why is this significant? It is because at May this year 41 of the 54 operating coalmines in Queensland were open-cut mines. Our thoughts and prayers go out to Mr Head and his family as they come to terms with the diagnosis and the various treatment options available.

We should also think of the thousands of Queenslanders who have worked or currently work in the coalmining industry and the level of stress and concern that they and their family will be going through now. No-one deserves to contract an illness or disease due to going to or from work when they are earning an honest living to support themselves and their family. That is why every effort must be taken to find out what has gone wrong, why black lung has re-emerged in Queensland and what can be done to ensure it is banished forever.

Today the LNP renews its calls for a full royal commission of inquiry into the re-emergence of black lung disease. We think it is the appropriate course of action for it to be held in the state. We hear time and time again from the CFMEU, the member for Mirani and the member for Bundamba that there should have been a royal commission into the re-emergence of black lung and yet when given the chance, when given the opportunity to support a royal commission into black lung disease, they squibbed it. Not only that, we now have a parliamentary inquiry looking at the issue and the member for Mirani is not even serving on it and he has been one of the most vocal Labor proponents of royal commissions along with the member for Bundamba.

When we see the story today of Mr Head, when we see stories with titles such as 'Union calls for black lung royal commission' and 'Miller and Pearce turn their backs on miners', we see a history of hypocrisy. The member for Mirani also talks a lot about fly-in fly-out. He held a parliamentary inquiry into fly-in fly-out, despite fly-in fly-out contracts being brought to this parliament by Anna Bligh. Anna Bligh's government put those contracts in place which the member now opposes. The member for Bundamba basically said, 'I will stake my political career on having a royal commission into black lung.' Of course, we do not have a royal commission into black lung.

It would be unbelievable for members of this government to see that Jarrod Bleijie and the CFMEU are at one on an issue, and we are; we are calling, just as the CFMEU has, for a royal commission. The member for Mirani has let down his community and all those coalminers. How can a coalminer's daughter in the member for Bundamba vote against a royal commission into black lung disease? The LNP is the only party committed to finding out why black lung disease has re-emerged and getting to the bottom of it once and for all. I call on those members to finally support a royal commission.

*(Time expired)*

### Queensland Economy

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Minister for Sport) (2.48 pm): One of the distinguishing features between us on this side of the House and those opposite is that we do not constantly talk down the state. We do not ignore the facts and we will not look for any slither of bad news to say that the place is going to rack and ruin. We rely on reports and statistics to talk about how well we are going. Sadly, the full-time job of those opposite has been to talk down our state, and it starts at the top. We know that the LNP is simply too lazy to develop a single economic policy or a comprehensive economic plan. On this side of the House we have recognised that there are some regions in Queensland that are transitioning more slowly than others when it comes to moving from the heights of the mining boom to a post-mining boom economy.

Overall, our economy is doing very well and the facts and hard data prove it, yet the LNP continues to refuse to acknowledge the facts. If you listen to Chicken Little from Clayfield over there—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Treasurer, I ask you to withdraw your comment.

**Mr PITT:** I withdraw. During his last term in government Campbell Newman's treasurer, now the Leader of the Opposition, had one aim then and that continues: to scare people into a need for asset sales. Before the 2012 election the former premier said that Queensland's economy was a 'basket case', and the member for Clayfield did not disagree when his former fearless leader, Campbell Newman, said that the state was on a 'power-dive into the abyss' and that we were like the 'Spain of Australian states'. None of this was true, but that is what he said in Queensland. What did he say overseas?

As I have said this week, I just returned from an overseas trip. When we go overseas we take with us the Queensland Treasury Corporation investor blue book. We know that when we talk to bankers, investors or anyone we stick to the facts. The same blue book that I have was taken overseas by the former treasurer. He said one thing here and another thing overseas. What happened was that he essentially got caught out telling truth, which is an astonishing thing for the member for Clayfield. We know that he will never believe that the Queensland economy is doing well and he continues to talk the place down. When in Queensland the former treasurer said terrible things about Queensland's economy, yet overseas he has used the former Labor government's record to sell Queensland. This is

the sort of behaviour we have come to expect, but what would happen if he started using the facts and conceded we have had a turnaround in the economy? We know that in black and white the economy is performing better under Labor than it was under the LNP: debt is lower; unemployment is lower; growth is higher; and we are in budget surplus. Those are things that the Leader of the Opposition could not achieve.

### Queensland Economy

 **Mr EMERSON** (Indooroopilly—LNP) (2.52 pm): I welcome the opportunity to speak about the state of the Queensland economy, the state of the Queensland Treasurer and his trip overseas. Remember how he had to flee overseas because when he was Acting Premier he had to put out a clarifying statement after he stuffed up during a press conference? He had to go out there and explain to the media. All the media knew that every day he wanted to get out there to show how good he was, and the first day he gets out there he has to correct the record the next day. All his colleagues saw it. They know the great confidence we have—

**Mr Nicholls:** It was a dress rehearsal!

**Mr EMERSON:** I will take that interjection from the Leader of the Opposition; it was a dress rehearsal. Today we hear him talking about how good it is in Queensland. Yesterday when the NAB business survey came out the Premier got up in the House and said, 'Well done, Treasurer. What a great result!' Have a look at that result and have a look at business conditions. We were the cellar dwellers on that survey. We were not with New South Wales and we were not up there with Victoria—there we were in the bottom of the rankings. What did the Premier say? 'Well done, Treasurer, for delivering that result.' Mark Stockwell—Olympian, businessman and former chair of Trade and Investment Queensland—says that business investment has been crippled and foreign investment has been destroyed by this Treasurer's new property tax. Do members remember this property tax? When he announced it he made a 3,000 per cent mistake and then he could not explain it. 'As clear as mud' was the headline; he could not even explain it. Now we see a 95 per cent drop in inquiries from foreign investors. He promised there would be no new taxes and charges, but there were. He promised there would be no asset sales and he is delivering on that.

This is a deceitful government and a deceitful Premier as well, because she said there would be no land taxes and no sales tax. These are people who were in the Anna Bligh government. This is the Bligh government part 2—a deceitful, dishonest government and a deceitful Premier. Anna Bligh is back again. A deceitful Labor government is back again. You cannot trust them. You know they will say and do anything to win government and to hold on to power.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Before I call the member for Yeerongpilly, I note that some speakers have been very provocative in their comments and other members are responding. I would urge members not to be repetitive in their interjections when we get to question time. I call the member for Yeerongpilly.

### Renewable Energy

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply) (2.55 pm): Today we saw the handing down of a draft report by the expert panel on renewable energy. This is a very substantial piece of work, particularly in the context of an ill-founded debate in the last few weeks which was provoked by the federal government. There has been some doubt cast over Queensland's ability to deliver on its 50 per cent renewable energy target over the next 14 years to 2030. This report today bells the cat because it identifies not one pathway, but three pathways to 50 per cent renewable energy in Queensland over the next 14 years.

Let me be very clear that this is an independent report. It is a draft report that we will put out for a range of public consultation over the next six weeks before a final report comes down at the end of the year, and this government will fully consider every aspect of it. When you look at the calibre of private sector people in particular on the expert panel who have done the hard yards and the hard-nosed economics, they have come up with three credible pathways to 50 per cent renewable energy by 2030 from the current level of seven per cent. All pathways are credible and cost neutral. That is excellent news for electricity consumers, especially after 43 per cent increases under Tim Nicholls, the current Leader of the Opposition. We are looking at action on climate change, jobs and economic development in Queensland's regions whichever pathway we decide upon.

What we are also seeing in this report is that, across the three credible pathways, two of them say very clearly there will be no closure of power stations in Queensland over the next 14 years. Why is that? Because we have four super-critical power stations. We have the youngest and most efficient

fleet in Queensland. We are in the perfect position to guide this transition and grow up to 6,400 jobs in regional Queensland in particular. You would think the opposition might support that. They talk a lot about jobs, but when it comes to backing them in they do not act. They gave us the highest unemployment in 11 years yet they attack clean energy jobs across Queensland. This is in the context of a reliable supply of electricity. The independent panel works very closely with the energy market operator to ensure that is the case. This is a very substantial contribution to jobs and economic growth for Queensland and a blueprint for a clean energy industry in Queensland. The federal government has a lot to learn from the substance in this report—

*(Time expired)*

### Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.58 pm): On listening to those opposite this afternoon I am reminded of the old saying, 'They have learned nothing and forgotten nothing,' because we are hearing it all again. This is like the next version of the 2009-2012 Anna Bligh-Andrew Fraser government: it is exactly the same. With every passing moment and with every passing day, Queenslanders know that this government has learned nothing and forgotten nothing. They are going down exactly the same path. This government is the story of the two Annas, Anna Bligh and Anastacia Palaszczuk, and Queenslanders should not be surprised because Anastacia Palaszczuk, the Premier and the member for Inala, served in the same government as Anna Bligh—the same failed government that Queenslanders rejected. Why did they reject them? Because they broke their promise on fuel taxes.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I rise to a point of order. There have been a number of rulings made in this House about referring to members by their correct titles. I would ask that you remind the Leader of the Opposition of this obligation.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Thank you. I would urge all members to refer to other members by their correct title.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** Thank you very much, member for Sandgate—formerly the member for Stafford. He is one of the hoppers around the place. He was not going to go back and recontest that seat. If I remember correctly, the current member for Sandgate was the member for Stafford in the failed Anna Bligh government. He is exactly the same: he has forgotten nothing and learned nothing.

What did they do? They promised that there would be no fuel tax and they cut the fuel subsidy. They said that they were not going to increase tolls on all the motorways by 30 per cent before they sold them. They went to the 2009 election and said, with the full knowledge and backing of the members for Inala, Sandgate, Woodridge, Ashgrove and Brisbane Central, 'We will not sell assets.' What did they do? They sold assets. They did exactly what they said they would not do. What is happening this time around? The members for Sandgate, Inala and Mulgrave—I forgot him—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I think we will have some decorum, members.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** No-one really blames you for that, do they? The members for Woodridge, Ashgrove and Brisbane Central are all going down the same path. What did they do before the election in 2015? Hands on hearts, at every opportunity they said, 'We will not sell assets.' They did not say, 'We will not sell income-generating assets.' They did not say, 'We will not sell assets that have weeds on them.' They did not say, 'We will not sell assets that have buildings on them.' They said, 'We will not sell assets.' What did they do? They got back into power, realised that they did not have any money, realised that their plan was not going to work—realised that there was 'no more fun, no more mon'—and what did they do? They sold assets.

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

**Mr SPEAKER:** Question time will finish at 4.01 pm.

### Sale of Public Assets

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (3.01 pm): My question is to the Premier. Before the 2009 election campaign, Anna Bligh and Andrew Fraser deceived Queenslanders and promised not to sell state assets and then did so. Before the 2015 campaign, the Premier and Treasurer promised not to sell assets and are now planning on doing so. How is the Premier's government any different from the failed Bligh-Fraser government?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. When we are comparing governments, of course, we can never forget the government that was headed by former premier Campbell Newman. The now the Leader of the Opposition was the architect of the plan to sell off \$37 billion worth of assets. What did we do? On day one after being sworn in we stopped the sale of the \$37 billion worth of assets. We still do not know where the Leader of the Opposition stands in relation to the \$37 billion worth of assets that we saved. We have heard rumours that they are talking about either a 50-year lease on our energy companies or our ports, or perhaps selling a 50 per cent stake in them. They are the rumours going around. Everybody is talking about it. Nothing has changed.

With Advancing our cities and regions—I said it; let me say it again—we want to create jobs for Queenslanders. We want to create partnerships with councils and the private sector to grow jobs and bring about urban renewal. Not one person has raised this issue with me. In fact, people are saying, ‘Get on and keep creating jobs for our state.’ That is exactly what our government is doing. We are 100 per cent focused on creating jobs for Queenslanders. I will back my record and my integrity against the Leader of the Opposition any day of the week, because he was part of the former government. Let us not forget that they all sat around the cabinet table together. They were all part of that collective decision. Even though our old mate the former premier has gone, they are still all here.

**Mr SPEAKER:** We do not need a prop, Premier. Do you want to put the prop down.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** The people who sat around the table and made the decisions are still here. We are seeing a change for the better in the economy. Jobs are being created and our policies are working.

### Sale of Public Assets

**Mr NICHOLLS:** My second question is also to the Premier. The Premier has repeatedly tried to claim that her government will not sell assets, even attempting to change the definition to ‘income-producing assets’ after the election. Can the Premier explain why her government wants to sell the income-producing Mount Cotton driver training centre, just like the failed Bligh-Fraser Labor government tried to sell income-producing assets after their election?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Premier, just a moment. I want to make it clear that, as long as the Premier’s answer is relevant to the question and is not directly provocative of the opposition, I think we need to listen to the Premier’s answer.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. Let us talk about the Mount Cotton driver training centre. It is a market-led proposal—an initiative that was brought to the government by the RACQ. What do they want to do? They want to help save lives in this state. There is a huge public benefit of wanting to help save lives.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I cannot believe those opposite. Are they saying that they do not want to help save Queenslanders’ lives? That is what they are saying.

**Ms Trad:** They do not believe in community benefit.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** They do not believe in community benefit. They should go and ask any Queensland—

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Members!

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Do they think it is a good idea—

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Members! We have until one minute past 4!

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Honestly, members can ask any Queensland whether this is a good proposal. The RACQ wants to improve people’s driving techniques to save lives on our roads. Our road toll is one of the highest in many years. There is clearly a public benefit in helping to save lives. I find it highly ironic that, a week after announcing Advancing our cities and regions, the Leader of the Opposition has finally woken up and decided to ask some questions. I put it firmly on the record: we will not sell the \$37 billion of assets that those opposite wanted to sell before the election. We stopped the sale.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I do not want to start naming members, but I ask members to exercise some care in their interjections.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** As the Treasurer announced today, the income-generating assets have provided over \$2 billion worth of revenue back to the state. What are we going to use that revenue for? We are going to use it to build infrastructure, to pay down debt and to restore front-line services. That is what we were elected to do.

Today we heard the Minister for Health talk about the front-line services that we have restored in this state after they were savagely cut by those opposite—4,500 by the former minister for health. Those opposite sat around the cabinet table making decisions about cuts to services, cuts to front-line services and no plan for infrastructure. It took this Deputy Premier to come up with a State Infrastructure Plan, but there was nothing from those opposite. There was nothing from the former deputy premier at all.

### Federal Funding

**Mr CRAWFORD:** My question is directed to the Premier. Has the Premier met with any Queensland senators to discuss important funding initiatives for Queensland?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for Barron River for that very important question. Yes, I can confirm that I have had a meeting with a senator recently to discuss some very important initiatives for Queensland. I met with Senator Anthony Chisholm to talk about how important it was for the federal government to get the NAIF funding out the door—the federal infrastructure money out the door. In fact, one of the few things that I agreed with Tony Abbott on was the setting up of the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility but, unfortunately, the federal government has refused to release any of that money. Some \$5 billion is sitting there and Senator Chisholm said to me very clearly that he is also going to stand up for Queensland and fight for this in Canberra. Projects like the Hells Gate Dam and the Cairns and Rockhampton airports expansions could also benefit from this fund, so we should work very hard. We should also see those opposite fighting very hard to ensure that these funds can get out the door.

I was also interested to see that someone amongst those opposite also had a meeting with a senator recently, and it was the member for Buderim. He met with Senator Pauline Hanson from One Nation. In fact, he invited her to his electorate to show her around and also to talk about some infrastructure funding. I find it ironic: why did he not invite his own leader to Buderim to talk about things? I find it highly ironic and perhaps the Leader of the Opposition can explain to us why he did not attend this very important meeting. In fact, the member for Buderim also did a deal with One Nation and we are yet to see the Leader of the Opposition stand up in this House and rule out a deal. Who else is going to invite them to their electorate?

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Just one moment, Premier. Members from the government side, I am having difficulty hearing the Premier.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Mr Speaker, those opposite obviously do not want their own leader to come and visit them. It is very sad. In fact, Senator Hanson said—

'I've made it very clear today that I won't be standing a One Nation candidate against Steve', she told Seven News, and Mr Dickson said the news was outstanding.

You could have knocked me over with a feather!

*(Time expired)*

### Sale of Public Assets

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** My question without notice is directed to the Premier. On 16 January 2015 the Premier was asked at Airlie Beach whether Labor would sell publicly owned buildings and land. The Premier then said that they would not sell the assets and the Premier now seems set to break that promise. How is the Premier's dishonesty about asset sales any different from that of previous Labor premier Anna Bligh?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for the question. Obviously, I am prepared to go through this all again, because clearly she is not listening. She just does not get it. With regard to the \$37 billion worth of assets, their plan was stopped by Labor. On day one of taking office the \$37 billion worth of assets proposed to be sold under their watch stopped—no more. As I have said,

and let me repeat it, we now have the largest energy company in Australia worth over more than \$24 billion that is owned by Queenslanders. In fact, the headquarters are based in Townsville and are creating jobs. I was up there last week talking about how we are putting on more apprentices.

Let me take the example of Calliope State School. Who was the genius from those opposite who decided to sell a future high school site and had the 'for sale' sign up? The member for Surfers Paradise when education minister. I was very pleased to join the member for Gladstone at Calliope State School promising a brand-new high school with the Minister for Education that would not have existed under those opposite. What else did we do? We stopped the sale of the Fortitude Valley State School, and that will be used for educational purposes into the future. We stopped the sale of the dental school, but we cannot go past the Leader of the Opposition as the former treasurer selling off seven buildings in the CBD to fund 1 William Street that is going to cost—

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr Seeney:** That's not even right!

**Mr SPEAKER:** Before I call the Premier to continue, I counsel the member for Callide, the member for Whitsunday and the member for Everton. I know everyone has been willing this afternoon, but I am going to have to start naming people if it continues. Premier, do you have anything further to add?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I take the member for Callide's interjection. He said that I may not be right. Was it more CBD buildings that we do not know about? Who would know? All we know is that Queensland taxpayers are going to have to fork out over \$2 billion for 1 William Street.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Thank you, members. I think we need to come back to the normal way of question time please, members.

**Mr Cripps** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** No. You will be first on the list, member for Hinchinbrook.

**Mr Cripps** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** All right; you are the first: you are warned under standing order 253A. If you persist, I will take the appropriate action.

### **Palaszczuk Labor Government, Advertising Expenditure**

**Mr HARPER:** My question is directed to the Premier. Will the Premier outline the Palaszczuk government's advertising expenditure and how this compares with the previous government's?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for Thuringowa for that really important question. As we know, from time to time governments have to do certain expenditure, especially when it is in relation to campaigns that raise awareness for things such as alcohol harm reduction, issues surrounding domestic and family violence and alcohol legislation changes. I am really pleased to report to this House that under my government there has been a 20 per cent reduction in the amount of Queensland government advertising. We are saving taxpayers money. We know that it has to be done responsibly, so I want to update the House about some advertising that happened under the former government with regard to the Strong Choices campaign. We all remember that one—the strongest and smartest choice campaign—about selling the \$37 billion worth of assets that we stopped. Let us go through what the former treasurer spent, because I think it is really important that we put this information on the public record.

An amount of \$19.6 million was spent on advertising for Strong Choices, including \$11.9 million on advertising agencies, \$1.8 million on Crosby Textor—and we know about their record—\$1.6 million for Bluegrass Consulting and another \$1.4 million for Burson-Marsteller.

**Mr Seeney:** How much are you going to spend advertising your asset sales?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Mr Speaker, honestly.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Thank you. I will allow that interjection. It is relevant.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Almost \$1 million was shared between Professional Public Relations Queensland and the Queensland Corporate Communication Network. Once again, it was \$19.6 million.

We have seen a 20 per cent reduction under my government and a waste of taxpayers' money on a campaign that failed—a complete and utter failure. We also cannot forget, of course, that there was also the lovely Christmas card that the member sent out.

**Ms Trad:** The strongest and smartest Christmas card.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** That is right, the Strong Choices campaign featured in the Christmas card. Hopefully, we can get a better one this year.

*(Time expired)*

### Sale of Public Assets

**Mr EMERSON:** My question is to the Premier. On 18 January 2015 the Treasurer promised, 'We do not have to sell off power utilities and port authorities and other assets' and has now announced that he will now break this promise and sell assets. How is the Treasurer's dishonesty about asset sales any different from that of previous Labor treasurer Andrew Fraser, with whom the Premier served in cabinet?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for Indooroopilly for the question. Obviously, the members opposite watched the TV news last night—'We could have gone this way, we could have gone that way. Maybe we'll go this way today'—a week after the event. In fact, we know that the Leader of the Opposition has been in hiding over the last few days, because he has not wanted to address the whole One Nation issue. There is no leadership from those opposite. Has he taken the member for Buderim to task? Has he had a conversation with the member for Buderim?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Premier, we have had the One Nation question. Can you please come back?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I am, Mr Speaker. Very clearly, we said that we would not sell the \$37 billion worth of assets. Our line on that was it was gone. We stopped that. Let us talk about Queen's Wharf. Queen's Wharf, which was started under the former government and contracts were signed under my government, is about urban renewal. Yeerongpilly Green is about urban renewal. Northshore Hamilton, in the electorate of the member for Clayfield, is about urban renewal.

The members opposite should go to Townsville and talk to the local members, talk to the mayor and talk to the business community and tell them that they do not want to see urban renewal in the heart of their city. The members opposite should go to Rockhampton and say, 'No, we don't want any jobs for Rockhampton. We don't want any urban renewal.' That is exactly what they are saying. What is the opposition's alternative plan? Where are the policies?

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Thank you, members. Pause the clock. We will have some silence for a moment.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I will tell members one thing: I will do everything that I can to keep Queensland moving. I will do everything to create jobs for Queenslanders. I will do everything that I can to bring down youth unemployment in this state. I will do everything that I can to restore front-line services in the state. I will stand on my record any day as opposed to that of those opposite.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, in recent rulings I stated that the Speaker will generally not interfere with the proceedings, but I remind members of the standing orders in relation to imputations. I have some reservations about the imputations in those couple of questions that have already been asked. I urge members to ensure that the questions that are asked comply with the standing orders.

### Trade and Investment

**Mr MADDEN:** Just to give our Premier a break, my question without notice—

**Mr Costigan** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Whitsunday, you are now warned under standing order 253A for your interjections. They are not appropriate. If you persist, I will take the appropriate action.

**Mr MADDEN:** My question without notice is to the Deputy Premier. Will the Deputy Premier outline the benefits of trade and investment for Queensland jobs?

**Ms TRAD:** I thank the honourable member for the question, because the member for Ipswich West understands how much trade, export and foreign direct investment—FDI—means to our state, our economy and, most importantly, jobs. I have said in this place before that one in five jobs is attributable to our export industry. For every \$1 billion worth of FDI into our state, 1,000 jobs are estimated to be created because of that \$1 billion worth of FDI.

In my ministerial statement I reported on my recent trade mission to the Middle East, the UK and France. We are seeing results for some fantastic Queensland innovation companies. We are seeing great results in emerging, large scale urban renewal projects such as Dubai South. I again acknowledge Gruntify and Greywater Solutions for their excellent work and their entry into the United Arab Emirates market—a highly competitive market. These two Queensland firms are punching well above their weight.

I can also report to the House some excellent news. Just yesterday, Brisbane West Wellcamp Airport announced that it will commence a weekly air cargo service between Toowoomba and Hong Kong, which will be southern Queensland's first scheduled international freight-only service. I was very pleased to congratulate John Wagner when he rang me to inform me that they had struck that deal. Next year they will be going to three dedicated freight services on a weekly basis out of Toowoomba. That is excellent news for exports, excellent news for Queensland.

We know that we can have more of this and that we need to have an open state to trade and investment and foreign direct investment particularly. All of this is at risk. Despite the former trade minister, the member for Clayfield, having said two years ago that he wanted to send a very strong, clear message to the world that Queensland is Australia's foremost location for trade and investment, now, he is sending a clear message that he does not want foreign direct investment in this country, he does not want close trade relationships; he wants a preference deal with One Nation to the exclusion of our economy.

The legitimisation of One Nation and everything it stands for puts at risk our economy. We on this side of the House will fight for jobs. That side of the House will fight only for their jobs.

### **Sale of Public Assets**

**Mr POWELL:** My question without notice is to the Premier. On 30 April 2013, the Deputy Premier stood in this House and said, '... this government is acting without a mandate ... wanting to sell vital public infrastructure to make a quick buck.' Now, the Deputy Premier is moving to sell Queensland Rail land at Mayne. How is the Deputy Premier's approach to asset sales any different from that of the previous Bligh Labor government in which the Premier was a cabinet minister?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member very much for the question. As I said very clearly, Advancing our cities and regions is fundamentally about creating jobs for Queenslanders and creating partnerships. Honestly, I think anyone driving past the Mayne rail yards in the prime centre of the city would say that this land can be put to public benefit if it is jointly partnered—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. I apologise for interrupting. The Premier's answer is relevant to the question. I would urge members not to provoke me. I call the Premier.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** As we know, this is fundamentally about creating jobs. Let us go back in history. Governments have been buying and selling land as part of normal government transactions for decades. Anyone can go back to the transcript of a press conference I did a year ago, I think it was in March, where I talked about that is what governments do. Let me give members the example of housing stock. In my own electorate of Inala, for decades old housing stock is sold to invest in building brand-new units and apartments. It happens right across Queensland. Queenslanders want us to create jobs. With urban renewal happening in the south-east, why can it not happen in regional parts of our state? That is the question that so many people have been putting to me.

**Mr Nicholls** interjected.

**Ms Jones:** No-one believes you!

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I will take that interjection. No-one does believe the Leader of the Opposition because whenever the Leader of the Opposition stands up in this House they know that what he wants to do is sell off the electricity industry in this state. That is what they know. They know that is what he stands for. We will definitely not go down that path.

What we will see is urban renewal in Rockhampton, we will see urban renewal happen in Townsville and we will see jobs growing in regional centres. We will look at partnerships for that Mayne railway site and we will make sure that we create jobs. There is nothing more important than creating jobs for our state.

### **Queensland Economy**

**Ms BOYD:** My question is of the Treasurer. Can the Treasurer please advise the House of the impact of the Palaszczuk government's positive economic plan on the Queensland economy with reference to recent economic data?

**Mr PITT:** I thank the member for Pine Rivers for her question. Unlike some in this House, she takes a very active interest in what is happening with economic indicators; she can read the budget papers, unlike the shadow Treasurer; she can read things that come in black and white because they are facts. They are not there for spin, they are not there to be denied; they are facts. What we have already heard today is that there has been a denial of the fact that when we talk about the NAB monthly business survey, they want to talk the economy down again but we know that in the last month Queensland was the only state that saw a rise in business conditions—an improvement. Everywhere else it did not improve, but in Queensland it did. Since the 2015-16 budget was handed down we have had the highest degree of business confidence of any state in Australia; if not leading it outright, we are equal highest.

When one looks at the other figures that have come out today, the Westpac-Melbourne Institute Consumer Sentiment Index, despite all of the things that those opposite say, all the positive energy that is on this side of the House, the people talking up the economy, seems to have flowed through to consumers in Queensland. What we have seen under this consumer sentiment index is that Queensland is leading the nation with 106.8 points. What does that mean? The index of 100 is the baseline. We are well above that. We are not only above it, we are above the national consumer sentiment index. That is very important. It means that Queensland is having a real resurgence, something that those opposite could not do. This is the fourth month in a row where the index has shown an increase in consumer confidence.

The surge in consumer confidence is broad. All five component indices of this index show that in the month Queensland's expectations index rose 14.9 per cent. What does 14.9 per cent mean in the expectations index? It means when someone is asked the question, 'Do you have confidence in the Queensland economy?' They go, 'Yeah, I do.' It means we have had a 15 per cent increase in people saying 'yes' rather than 'maybe' or 'no'. The confidence we have in the economy on this side of the House has flowed across everywhere else except that side of the House. We are confident that Queensland's prospects are good. We have a proven track record with the two budgets that have been handed down, the fact that economic growth is higher, debt is lower, unemployment is lower and the budget is in surplus. Those are things that those opposite could not get right in the three years they were in government. We know that there are a lot of other forecasts we are meeting. We know when it comes to growth it was 0.8 per cent under the member for Clayfield—that was his effort in 2014-15; he could not even reach one per cent—and we have three and a half per cent and a forecast growth of four per cent for 2016-17. We on this side of the House will continue to talk up the Queensland economy because we have faith in Queensland. Those opposite clearly have faith in themselves; sadly no-one else shares that sentiment.

### Sale of Public Assets

**Ms DAVIS:** My question is to the Premier. On 30 April 2013 the Premier stood in this House and said that seven high-rise buildings are assets and 55 schools throughout Queensland are assets, and now the Premier has moved to dispose of assets at Carseldine claiming they are not assets. How can the Premier have one definition of assets in 2013 and a completely opposite definition today?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for Aspley for the question. Advancing our cities and regions, as I have said and I will say it again, is clearly focused on growing jobs in this state.

**Mr Mander** interjected.

**Mr Seeney:** Why is the definition different?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Someone asked a question.

**Mr SPEAKER:** One moment. Member for Callide and member for Everton, you are both warned under standing order 253A for your interjections. If you persist I will take the appropriate action.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** What we have seen at Carseldine is the opportunity for there to be a partnership to make sure that urban renewal happens in that area. In fact, it is an extension of urban renewal that has been happening elsewhere. Those opposite are against urban renewal.

**Ms Trad:** And affordable housing.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** And affordable housing; that is right. We want to see young people have the opportunity to be able to get into their own homes. When you have urban renewal you have the opportunity to put in place—

**Mr Bleijie** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Thank you, member for Kawana. You are warned under standing order 253A for your repetitive objections. If you persist I will take the appropriate action.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thought he wanted an invitation—

**Mr SPEAKER:** No, Premier. Do you have anything further to add?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** This is clearly about creating livable communities. It is about ensuring that there are partnerships that are happening across the state. Let us look at the example on the Gold Coast. We have the opportunity to create a health and knowledge precinct. We have the university hospital, we have the Parklands village. It is about making sure that the community is getting a public benefit, which will be a health and knowledge precinct into the future. Look at the example of the Herston Quarter. In fact, the example there is making sure that it is a health precinct catering for the needs of Queenslanders now and into the future, and whether that means aged care or whether that means—

**Ms Davis:** You are selling our assets!

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I will take that interjection because those opposite wanted to sell \$37 billion worth of assets. I am very glad the member made that interjection because I will say it time and time again: those opposite wanted to sell our electricity assets, they wanted to sell our ports. Today, the Treasurer has said \$2.2 billion has come back to Queenslanders to be put into restoring front-line services and building infrastructure. Clearly, our priority is creating jobs. Those opposite before the last election said that people had nothing to fear, yet over 14,000 jobs were axed as well as services.

**Ms Jones:** 500 teachers!

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Exactly.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Before I call the member for Maryborough, I am informed that we have students from St Luke's Anglican School in the electorate of Bundaberg observing our proceedings.

### Aged Care

**Mr SAUNDERS:** My question is to the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services. Will the minister please advise the House of the effects of Commonwealth funding cuts on the aged-care sector in Queensland?

**Mr DICK:** I thank the member for Maryborough for his question and for his care and concern for some of the most vulnerable Australians who live in aged-care facilities, particularly in the electorate of Maryborough. Previously in the House I have spoken about the challenges our community and health services face through demographic change, particularly the ageing of the Queensland population. I have also spoken about the damage to our state's health system through the \$10 billion in cuts to health care from the original funding agreement that the Commonwealth entered into with the states, including Queensland, under the original National Health Reform Agreement.

Those who were hoping for a better deal under Malcolm Turnbull will be bitterly disappointed because, in the first budget that he presided over as Prime Minister, he cut \$230.4 million—almost a quarter of a billion dollars—out of aged-care funding over the forward estimates. That is one-quarter of a billion dollars cut from our aged-care sector, which is a funding reduction of \$1,670 per aged-care facility resident. Slash and burn is in the LNP's DNA. Whether it is sacking nurses, slashing mental health funding, closing the Barrett centre or dismantling dental services, they take a slash-and-burn approach. It is in their DNA. Vulnerable Queenslanders are always on the receiving end of the LNP. Not only will this reduce services; it will stop investment. It will stop the private sector, community organisations and charitable and religious organisations from investing in aged care.

I have one fact for the House: in the 2015-16 financial year, an estimated 65,470 patient bed days were taken up in public hospitals by patients who occupied a bed for more than 35 days and had been deemed fit for transfer to a residential aged-care facility. That equates to 180 public hospital beds a day that have been taken out of our system because of bed block. What does that mean for the member for Maryborough? It is the equivalent of closing, each and every day, the Maryborough Base Hospital, the Gladstone Hospital, the Alpha Hospital and the Moura Community Hospital and taking those hospitals out of action. If anyone thinks taking \$230 million out of the forward estimates for aged care is going to make that any easier, they are kidding themselves.

The Prime Minister says that there is no more exciting time to be an Australian, but there is no worse time to be an aged Australia or a senior Australian seeking a place in an aged-care facility in Australia. It is about time the LNP stood up for Queensland. It is about time the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Surfers Paradise stood up for Queensland. It is about time the member for Surfers Paradise stood up for the aged members of his community. We know there is an aged demographic on the Gold Coast. It is about time that they stood up for Queensland and stood against these cuts.

### Herston Quarter

**Ms SIMPSON:** My question is to the Premier. On 16 February 2014, as the member for Inala the Premier said that selling off one-third of the RBWH site was a sneaky sell-off, but now she is selling the same land herself. I ask: how are the Premier's actions on asset sales any different from those of previous Labor premier Anna Bligh, who said one thing and did another?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I am more than happy to talk about the Herston Quarter, because once again the site will be a health precinct, which shows the clear difference between what my government wants and what those opposite wanted to do. Those opposite wanted to sell it off and have high-rise apartments, up and down the site, with no health benefit for Queenslanders. I told the Treasurer and the Minister for Health that we wanted a primary health precinct, which is what we have delivered. On that site we have delivered a primary benefit for the people of Queensland. The childcare centre will remain and there will be a rehabilitation hospital and aged-care facilities. We know that, as Queenslanders are getting older and that as some people have high-care needs, it makes perfectly good sense for them to live close to the hospital. Therefore, we have delivered a health precinct on that site, benefitting Queenslanders.

What did those opposite want to do? All I can remember are the high-rise buildings. They went off to their developer mates, seeking high-rise development. Under my very clear direction, my government has made the site a primary health precinct. That is what we have delivered for Queenslanders, unlike those opposite.

I very much thank the member for the question, because now I have clarified our position and compared it to their position. I am more than happy to do that for the member for Maroochydore. Perhaps the member for Maroochydore could let us know if she, like her neighbour the member for Buderim, will be inviting Senator Hanson from One Nation to her electorate. There seems to be a bit of an attraction—

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

### State Schools, Infrastructure

**Mr PEGG:** My question is to the Minister for Education. Can the minister explain how decisions of the previous government in education capital works are continuing to impact on our ability to deliver new school infrastructure today?

**Ms JONES:** I thank the member for Stretton for the question. Having spent time in his electorate with him and meeting people of his community, I know how passionate he is about ensuring that we provide funding in the budget to deliver capital works and maintenance in our schools. I am very proud to be part of a government that has prioritised funding for our schools with a record \$667 million in capital works and maintenance funds allocated this year. We have a very proud track record of getting that money out the door and into schools, to improve assets and deliver jobs.

**Ms Trad** interjected.

**Ms JONES:** That is right; it is like the new school we are building in Calliope. That shows the difference between us and those opposite, because when they were in government they did a PPP deal for new schools, but only for South-East Queensland. Under their watch there was no chance for a school to be built in Calliope, because their PPP was dictated to be only in South-East Queensland.

I feel I have to apologise to the member for Surfers Paradise, because I have been blaming him for something that I believe is very unfair for regional Queensland. I know that at the time the department of education was briefing against the Leader of the Opposition and then treasurer, saying that if they went ahead with this PPP no new schools would be built outside of South-East Queensland and there would be a consequence for the capital works budget. I understand that at the time the advice that was provided to Treasury was to meet the capital works payments up-front under the PPP, but the then treasurer insisted, against the advice of the education department—

To achieve this the Department of Education will be required to divert a large part of its capital funding to the Queensland Schools Project—

the PPP—

away from existing projects and programs. This will require the department to cancel, defer and reduce the scope of existing projects and programs to meet capital funding constraints across the forward estimates.

As I have said in this parliament since I became minister, this meant that, despite securing a record budget from the Premier and the Treasurer, we would have to fund those payments. That is hundreds and millions of dollars—\$1.5 billion—going out the door in PPP payments alone.

Therefore, members can imagine my surprise today when a petition was tabled by the member for Mansfield saying, 'Where's my hall?' He was part of the cabinet that duded his own community. Guess what? It gets better! Can members guess who signed off on the PPP? Can members guess who the acting education minister was? It was the member for Mansfield! I apologise to JPL; I have always thought he was a very good man. Now it has been proven that it was the member for Mansfield who did a deal that excluded his schools from getting capital funding. I call on the member for Mansfield to come clean with the people in his community and be honest about the legacy he left, which is \$1.5 billion out the door and PPP payments that I could not get out of, even if I wanted to.

*(Time expired)*

### Labour Hire

**Mr KNUTH:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations. In response to the one disappointing recommendation of the inquiry into the practices of the labour hire industry in Queensland, government members have made a statement of reservation demanding more action to help workers who are being exploited by labour hire companies. How will the minister respond to the deep concerns of her fellow members of parliament?

**Ms GRACE:** Mr Speaker, I believe that the anticipation rule no longer applies because we debated this in the House during the last sitting and a report has now been tabled. I thank the member for Dalrymple for the question because I know that he too is concerned about the use of labour hire.

When I responded to this issue last time I mentioned that the layering upon layering that is happening in labour hire at the moment, the fact that employers are forcing workers to obtain ABNs, particularly labour hire companies, and the use of sham arrangements to avoid the employer-worker relationship is starting to become a national disgrace in this country. The concerns of this government started the inquiry.

The response to the report is that we have accepted the recommendation to list this with COAG so that the issue of workers being made to obtain ABNs is discussed at the federal level. It is in a way avoiding that employer-worker relationship where superannuation payments are obviously not made, where taxation is not paid and where they often do not pay workers compensation. There is a lot of exploitation happening.

The statement of reservations by government members listed a number of recommendations for the government to consider. We are currently exploring all of those recommendations. I thank the government members for those. Obviously those opposite were quite happy for this disgraceful situation to continue.

This side of the House will do all it can to ensure that we start the process of looking at regulating the labour hire industry. The committee found high levels of exploitation, including sexual harassment, non-payment of entitlements to workers, phoenixing—that is, where they rise and fall—workers not receiving their entitlements and the layering upon layering of employment arrangements and sham contracting arrangements to the point where workers do not even know who their employer is.

There have been a number of decisions by the ombudsman coming out of the federal commission stating that they are almost becoming faceless workers. Something needs to be done. We are developing an options paper based on those recommendations. It will include some form of regulation so we know who these labour hire companies are. Those that are doing the right thing have nothing to fear. We are referring to companies that are exploiting workers, not paying entitlements, not meeting their legal obligations and continuing to operate in any way they can to avoid a direct worker-employer relationship. That is not acceptable to this government but may be to those opposite. We will do what we can to stop it.

### Building Our Regions

**Mr PEARCE:** My question is to the Minister for State Development. Will the minister advise the House how the Palaszczuk government's Building our Regions program is delivering for regional Queensland communities?

**Dr LYNHAM:** I thank the member for the question. I know he appreciates the needs of remote and Indigenous communities from his work around our state as chair of the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee.

Small projects can make a big difference in remote communities—a very big difference. That is why applications open next Monday, 17 October for a one-off \$5 million round of the Building our Regions program. It is specifically targeted at supporting jobs and economic development in small,

remote and Indigenous communities. I encourage the 31 eligible councils to get their expressions of interest in for this Remote and Indigenous Communities Fund. This one-off round of funding will kickstart projects that will really make a difference in these battling communities.

The \$375 million Building our Regions program is having a positive impact right across our regional communities. We only have to look at the 42 projects funded under round 1 of the program—addressing a broad range of infrastructure including water, sewerage, waste, roads, airports, flood mitigation and recreation facilities. That is 700 jobs across this state.

Of these projects, 36 have started construction. Some 36 of the 42 have already started construction. Two are already finished. One of those is at Kowanyama. The member for Callide would be very happy that St George Airport is also finished. Three more are to be completed by the end of the year including the Lockhart River water park, the Cunnamulla water main upgrade and the Donohue Highway emergency landing strip.

Of the remaining six projects, four have been delayed due to the heavy rains that have been well received out bush. Two other projects have changed scope and are currently at the design and tender stage. We are working closely with councils to accelerate all these projects. Some 14 of the 36 projects are now four or more weeks ahead of schedule.

To date, nearly \$11 million in round 1 has been distributed to councils. Round 2 is progressing well. My department is currently assessing the 60 applications received from 38 councils seeking over \$90 million worth of funding. We anticipate notifying councils with successful projects by the end of the year, with the expectation that they start construction on these projects no later than 30 June 2017. That is more jobs and more valuable infrastructure for regional Queensland.

### Child Protection

**Ms BATES:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Child Safety. Yesterday the minister informed the House that she expected the June quarter child safety data could show a further deterioration under her leadership. Given the minister appears to have already seen the data, will the minister commit to releasing the data today?

**Ms FENTIMAN:** What I said yesterday was that the data would be released on schedule in October and I said, as I have said for many months, that the rate of investigation and assessments is not where I think it needs to be. That is why we are investing in front-line services and rebuilding this department.

I find it very interesting that the member for Mudgeeraba is very interested in this data since yesterday I was asked several questions about data—

**Ms BATES:** I rise to a point of order, Mr Speaker. We do not have very long for the minister to answer the question so I will get to the point again. My question was very specific: will the minister commit to releasing the data today?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Mudgeeraba, the minister has started to answer the question. I am happy to rule if it is not relevant, but at the moment her answer is relevant. I am happy to allow the minister to respond. If you, during her three minutes—and she will have three minutes—believe her answer is not relevant, I invite you to rise on the issue of relevance.

**Ms FENTIMAN:** I was asked several questions yesterday about data which clearly shows the member for Mudgeeraba does not even understand the data that is currently published. Yesterday in a speech following question time the member for Mudgeeraba stated that we have more than 3,254 cases languishing on waiting lists with no worker assigned. That is just wrong.

What that figure relates to is that there are 3,254 cases where a response has not yet been recorded. That means there is an investigation underway. That means there has to have been a caseworker assigned. Every notification that comes before Child Safety is assigned to a caseworker. I find it really surprising that the member for Mudgeeraba continues to ask for data to be released, which I have assured the House will be released on schedule this month, when she cannot even understand the data that is currently published on the website.

I was also asked a question by the member for Mount Ommaney yesterday about 1,124 cases closed without follow-up. That was wrong as well. The reason that those case are marked as no outcome recorded does not mean they are closed without follow-up. Usually it means that families have moved interstate. Our hardworking child safety officers do absolutely everything they can to work with the police. If the family has moved interstate they work with their interstate counterparts. I find it so appalling that the opposition would continue to play politics with child safety. In fact, the Leader of the Opposition in his last budget when he was the treasurer said, and I quote—

**Mr Nicholls:** Where's the relevance on this one, Mr Speaker?

**Mr SPEAKER:** I take your question, Leader of the Opposition. It is not relevant in relation to what the Leader of the Opposition did last time. I think you have answered the question, Minister. Resume your seat.

### Community Legal Centres

**Mr BROWN:** My question is to the Attorney-General. Will the Attorney-General please update the House on federal funding arrangements for Queensland's community legal centres?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Attorney-General, you have two minutes.

**Mrs D'ATH:** I thank the member for his question and for his interest and passion about community legal centres. I want to acknowledge members on both sides of the House who attended a parliamentary breakfast event yesterday morning here at Parliament House with community legal centres and the Community Legal Centre Queensland, recognising the important work they do and listening to the critical issues in relation to funding. We know that community legal centres provide very important advice and assistance to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people across Queensland. They do amazing work. I want to acknowledge the member for Ferny Grove and the member for Coomera, who jointly hosted the event yesterday and gave members of parliament the opportunity to hear personal stories about the difference that CLCs make and also what are some of the critical issues facing them.

Of course we know that the most critical issue, as we come up to the end of the current financial round on 30 June next year, is the fact that the Commonwealth is cutting funding by \$2 million in Queensland. I have had those on the other side asking me to fund community legal centres in their electorate. I ask today—it is a simple message: attorneys-general across the country have joined together and signed a joint letter and put politics aside to ask the federal Attorney-General to stop the cuts. I ask, in a genuine attempt at bipartisanship, for the member for Mansfield on behalf of the LNP or for the LNP leader himself, the Leader of the Opposition, to do a joint letter with me today showing that there is bipartisan support to support CLCs in Queensland and to call on the Commonwealth Attorney-General to stop the \$2 million cuts that are coming in on 1 July next year.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Question time has concluded.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Correction of Answer to Question; Sale of Public Assets

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (4.02 pm): During an answer to a question, I said that our road toll this year had increased. The year today our road toll is 186 deaths, which is 186 too many. It is four deaths lower than last year but it is still higher than 2014. I do want to note for the public record that in the Brisbane region there has been an increase of 12 fatalities from 2015 to 2016.

## GRAMMAR SCHOOLS BILL

Resumed from 16 August (see p. 2760).

### Second Reading

 **Hon. KJ JONES** (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism and Major Events) (4.02 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

On 27 September 2016, the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee tabled its report on the Grammar Schools Bill 2016. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all members of the committee for the detailed consideration of the bill. I note that the committee's inquiry into the bill included a public briefing by the Department of Education and Training and consideration of public submissions. I take this opportunity to thank those who provided submissions to the committee.

The committee recommended that the bill be passed and I thank the committee for its support of the bill. The committee made one further recommendation that the bill be amended to provide safeguards to protect information regarding a board member's conviction for an indictable offence. The

bill requires a member of a grammar school board to notify the minister if they are convicted of an indictable offence. It is important for the integrity of the grammar school boards as statutory entities that the minister be given this information as a conviction of an indictable offence would disqualify a person from being a member of a grammar school board.

The bill affords protection to current and prospective members against the unauthorised disclosure of criminal history information obtained by the minister from the Commissioner of Police. The committee sought similar protection against the unauthorised disclosure of information provided by a member of a grammar school board regarding their conviction for an indictable offence. The Palaszczuk government supports this recommendation. I propose to move amendments during consideration in detail to give effect to the committee's recommendation. I know that this is something the shadow minister is also very interested in. These amendments have been circulated in my name to all members. I now table the Queensland government's response to the report.

*Tabled paper:* Education, Tourism and Small Business Committee: Report No. 19—Grammar Schools Bill 2016, government response [1845].

Since the tabling of the committee's report, I have received correspondence requesting amendments to the bill to require grammar schools to comply with all recommendations arising from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The Palaszczuk government is deeply concerned with the plight of victims who have suffered child sexual abuse at the hands of government and non-government institutions, including schools. The Queensland government is actively examining the recommendations of the royal commission. The final recommendations of the commission are anticipated to be handed down in December 2017.

The government supports the recommendation that a single national redress scheme should be established to provide the most effective structure for ensuring equity and consistency for victims. We are committed to working with the Commonwealth and the states and territories to explore options for a way forward. The Queensland government is committed to ensuring that Queensland schools are safe, supportive environments for our students. It is anticipated that any negotiations around the establishment of a redress scheme will involve non-government institutions, including non-government schools, and this mechanism could more properly consider and address issues raised by survivors of child sexual abuse rather than through legislative amendment. As honourable members are aware, the Queensland government has introduced a bill to remove the limitation periods for institutional child sexual abuse actions. The government is also working on a series of reforms to the Queensland civil litigation system. We will continue to work with the Commonwealth and states and territories to explore appropriate responses to the recommendations of the royal commission.

I support the issues raised with me by parents and victims in relation to some grammar schools being considered as part of that process. The Grammar Schools Bill will replace the existing Grammar Schools Act 1975 with modern legislation that will meet the contemporary and future needs of Queensland's eight grammar schools. Queensland grammar schools were established between 1863 and 1892 and provide a non-secular education. As I mentioned in my introductory speech, grammar schools were established as a form of community-government partnership and a cost-effective way for the state government to support secondary school education without assuming the full cost of establishing a state high school. Over the years, grammar schools have gained a reputation for excellence in education. The bill maintains the current regulatory regime for grammar schools with some important reforms.

The bill removes the power to establish additional grammar schools in the future. The removal of this power is consistent with the current practice for the state to provide secondary education through state schools and to provide funding support and independent regulation of education provided by non-government schools. In recognition of the fact that grammar schools are Queensland statutory bodies, the bill continues the existing prohibition on the use of the term 'grammar' by non-grammar schools with two noted exceptions—Anglican Church Grammar School and Sunshine Coast Grammar School.

The bill also addresses the boards of trustees of grammar schools. Each grammar school is governed by a seven-member board of trustees appointed by the Governor in Council. The bill makes two important modifications to facilitate succession planning and board rejuvenation. Firstly, the bill allows up to an additional two members to be appointed at the request of a grammar school board. Secondly, the bill provides that a board may request a term of appointment that is less than four years for a person nominated for appointment by the minister. Boards may choose this option to stagger board appointments.

Another issue that is addressed by the bill is maintaining financial accountability. Like all Queensland statutory bodies, each grammar school board is subject to state legislation that regulates and provides for the oversight of statutory bodies such as the Financial Accountability Act 2009 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982 and are audited annually by the Queensland Auditor-General. Therefore, the bill does not retain the current prescriptive requirements relating to financial management that are in the current Grammar Schools Act. I know that this is something welcomed by grammar schools.

Finally, the bill before the House provides more autonomy for boards. While still ensuring appropriate procedures around decision-making, the bill provides greater flexibility for grammar school boards to determine their operational procedures such as how to conduct business and proceedings at meetings. As I have outlined, the modest but important reforms contained in this bill will provide grammar schools with a contemporary framework to ensure the continued success of grammar schools in Queensland's education system. I know from my discussions with grammar schools and from discussions the department has had that these are welcome reforms that the grammar schools of Queensland are looking forward to. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Before I call the member for Aspley, can I ask members to take conversations outside the chamber. The minister had to compete with a lot of conversations then.

 **Ms DAVIS** (Aspley—LNP) (4.10 pm): I rise to speak to the Grammar Schools Bill 2016. From the outset, I would like to acknowledge the diversity of education options that exist in Queensland and commend our very hardworking educators who are incredibly passionate about their job and the children they teach. Our teachers bring their very best ideas and innovations to our education system every day, and I thank them very much for their dedication.

In Queensland we now have schools that are empowered to make decisions which are the best ones for them and for their community. Queensland independent public schools, of which there are a number in the electorate of Aspley, have greater flexibility to promote innovation and increased performance through managing their planning and review processes, and determining staffing arrangements and processes which best suit their individual circumstances. Like our independent public schools, so too are grammar schools a vital part of the school system in Queensland. We must always aim to provide even greater opportunity to be prepared to go even further in building on the system so that every child receives the very best education possible and, importantly, one that caters to their individual needs and aspirations. If we are to truly succeed, we must begin to build an education system which is fit for the future. We must turn our attention to policies that give a renewed focus on learning outcomes, ensuring we get the basics of literacy and numeracy right in our primary schools, ensuring children stay engaged in the education process from the very beginning and throughout their educational journey, and we must find new and better ways for opportunities for students to develop the core knowledge that underpins everything else.

The purpose of the Grammar Schools Bill 2016 is to replace the existing Grammar Schools Act 1975 with more modern legislation. It sets out a number of objectives to meet the present-day needs of grammar schools. Whilst the bill removes the ability to establish new grammar schools, it does go to reducing red tape and removing certain prescriptive requirements around financial accountability currently imposed on existing grammar schools.

There are currently eight grammar schools across Queensland which were originally set up as partnerships between the government and local communities. Between 1863 and 1892, 10 grammar schools opened around Queensland. The first grammar school opened in Ipswich, and Rockhampton Girls Grammar School has the honour of being the final grammar school to be established. I had the great pleasure of meeting the current Principal of Rockhampton Girls Grammar School, Christine Hills, at the recent ICPA conference in Alpha where I learnt and heard about the great things which are happening at the school now and their plans for the future. I thank Christine for her very kind invitation to visit the campus, and I look forward to doing that in the very near future. Rockhampton is home to another grammar school. It was wonderful to meet the Principal of Rockhampton Grammar School at the Independent Schools Queensland parliamentary reception that was held during the last sitting week, and I too thank him for extending an invitation to me to visit that great school.

It has been 120 years since Rockhampton Girls Grammar School was opened, and much has changed in that time. In those early years it was the children of gentlemen and the wealthy who were able to access grammar schools. Scholarships were offered on an individual basis until 1883 when the first scholarship examinations were held. The early curriculum for grammar schools was based on a traditional English approach including classical subjects of Latin and Greek. Grammar schools, along

with all non-state schools, are governed by the Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2001, the E(ANSS) Act, which regulates the commencement and functions of non-state schools to ensure high standards of education while ensuring public confidence in the system.

As I mentioned, the bill before us today covers three key areas. The first relates to membership. The bill proposes to reform the membership of the boards by providing that, at the request of the board, an additional two board members may be nominated by the minister. I note that this change is supported by key stakeholders including the Association of Independent Schools. Furthermore, changes will allow board members to be appointed for fewer than four years. These changes are proposed to better prepare for succession planning of the board but also allow flexibility so that any emerging issues can be addressed by the appointment of board members with specific areas of expertise. This will provide for a more responsive mix of board members to deal with those contemporary issues. I would say that, whilst we should always ensure that the appropriate checks and balances are applied to a nominated person's suitability, it needs to be balanced with the timely consideration of that nomination. If the intent of allowing shorter terms of appointment of board members to address emerging issues is to be achieved, then a protracted assessment period of their nomination will defeat that purpose.

This is not a contentious bill. However, the committee did determine that there was a need to address an issue around the proposed power of the minister to request a criminal history report before deciding if a person is disqualified from becoming or remaining a board member of a grammar school. The concern was not so much about the power of the minister to make such a request but the lack of safeguards around the information once received and what happens to it after it is no longer required. I note that the committee raised concerns in relation to the lack of safeguards around protecting information regarding a board member's conviction for an indictable offence and made a recommendation to that concern. The LNP accepts this recommendation, and the minister, as provided in her contribution, will be introducing an amendment to address this issue.

During a briefing on the bill—and I thank the minister for providing the departmental briefing to me—I sought clarification as to how criminal history information would be provided to the relevant agencies and departments and what procedures would be undertaken to ensure that safeguards to protect that confidential information could not be compromised. I have now received that advice. If those procedures that were provided are implemented, I feel better assured that this confidential information will be treated appropriately. Whilst provisions around membership in the new bill were generally supported, one submission raised concerns about there being inconsistencies from board to board.

Secondly, the bill proposes to remove the prescriptive additional requirements regarding procedures before borrowing, establishing and maintaining a general fund, a trust fund and a loan fund and auditing accounts. The bill will still require a grammar school board to immediately advise the minister if there are any significant concerns regarding the financial viability of the school. Under the proposed new bill, the minister can give the board directions if necessary in the interests of the school.

The committee report noted that, like statutory bodies, grammar schools are governed by the financial management principles prescribed in the Financial Accountability Act 2009 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982 so the changes to the bill will still maintain the financial rigour through the other relevant legislation.

As I have already said, this bill does not allow for any new grammar schools to be established. While this change is supported by the Association of Independent Schools, it was noted by one submitter that there is a lack of parental choice in high-quality secular education in Queensland. I would say, though, that the rollout of independent public schools here in Queensland has provided new ways of providing autonomy in schools to reflect the local needs and aspirations of school communities in a secular setting. This LNP initiative has seen 130 independent public schools established in just three years, and we are very proud of that on our side of the House. While the new bill removes the ability to establish any new grammar schools, independent public schools do give greater choice and control for schools to deliver education that best supports their students' needs.

Overall, I note that the committee found no issue with the consultation process for this bill. I would like to thank all members for their consideration of the bill, particularly my LNP colleagues—the deputy chair and member for Broadwater, and the members for Albert and Buderim. I would also like to thank those who made submissions on this bill.

The minister has referred to correspondence that she has received with respect to introducing amendments that address the issues of redress but are outside the long title of the bill. She may not have been explicit at that, but I am aware as I have received some correspondence regarding that. I think the minister's view of that is probably appropriate at this time. The LNP also is absolutely disappointed to learn and to know that young people who should have turned up at school feeling safe

were instead dreadfully abused by those people who should have been protecting them. I think the amendments that were proposed to me via email could probably be raised through the process currently dealing with the issue of statute of limitations. I would encourage anyone who is interested in doing so to make a submission on those bills and to look more broadly at issues around institutionalised child sex abuse.

I will wind up my remarks on this bill by saying that educating our children should always be a priority. Providing choice in quality education options to parents and carers is something we should always encourage in the very strongest of terms because at the end of the day our children absolutely deserve it.

 **Mr STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (4.21 pm): I rise today to support the Grammar Schools Bill 2016 as the chair of the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee whose responsibility it was to examine the bill in detail. Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the individuals, groups and organisations for their submissions on the bill. I would also like to thank members of the committee from both sides of the House and the secretariat staff for their involvement in the examination of this bill. This is a great bill because as we have heard from the shadow education minister this is about choice and about providing choice. I am a little one-eyed though. I think state schools do a fantastic and outstanding job, but then again I am a little biased.

**An honourable member:** Good principals.

**Mr STEWART:** Great principals leading great teachers with great kids. This is about choice and this does need a little bit of tinkering. The tinkering that the Grammar Schools Bill will do will be to replace the existing Grammar Schools Act with modern legislation that meets the contemporary needs of our grammar schools in our communities. In general, the bill maintains the current regulatory regime for grammar schools with some important reforms. These reforms: remove the power to establish future grammar schools, provide flexibility for board appointments to facilitate board transition and rejuvenation, reduce red tape while maintaining financial accountability, and enhance board autonomy for the conduct of board business. This is an exciting bill.

Grammar school boards are currently fixed at seven members—three of whom are elected by a school community and four who are nominated by the minister. Clause 14 of the bill also provides for board membership of three elected members and four members nominated by the minister. However, the bill proposes to reform the membership of the boards by providing that, at the request of the board, an additional two board members may be nominated by the minister. Board members appointed by the ministerial nomination may be appointed for a shorter term than the four years at the board's request. This is an interesting component because this is about looking at how the boards actually do their succession planning and, more importantly, how they get a mix and broader range of people involved in their particular boards. As the explanatory notes state, these reforms are considered necessary to 'meet the contemporary needs of grammar schools and support succession planning', with the reforms supporting 'boards to maintain an appropriate skills mix and corporate knowledge, especially during times of board rejuvenation'.

The bill also enables the minister to request a criminal history report under clause 21 before deciding if a person is disqualified from becoming or continuing as a board member. Clause 22 provides that a criminal history report must not be disclosed except to the extent necessary under the bill or with consent. A board member who is convicted of an indictable offence must give notice of the conviction to the minister under clause 23.

During its inquiry into the bill, the committee identified an amendment should be recommended in regard to the board member disclosing their conviction of an indictable offence. We have heard this already in the chamber this evening. An amendment should provide that notice of the conviction must be destroyed after it is no longer needed, and the information cannot be disclosed unless it is necessary to perform a function under the Grammar Schools Act, it is authorised under another act or otherwise required or permitted by law, the person consents to the disclosure, or it is disclosed in a form that cannot identify the person.

The second aspect of this bill is around financial accountability. In these days, that is one of the crucial aspects of any school or any institution. The current act contains prescriptive financial accountability requirements and meeting procedures. The minister has already explained—

For example, the act mandates the types of accounts the board must maintain and includes prescriptive procedures that must be undertaken before borrowing state funds. The bill does not replicate these prescriptive requirements. This bill reduces red tape on grammar school boards, without reducing the oversight of grammar school viability.

I can hear from here already the Townsville Grammar School board sighing relief with that aspect.

Consistent with all statutory bodies, grammar schools are governed by the financial management arrangements prescribed by the Financial Accountability Act and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act. Consequently, the bill proposes to remove the prescriptive additional requirements regarding: procedures before borrowing; establishing and maintaining a general fund, a trust fund and a loan fund; and auditing accounts.

The bill retains the requirement for a grammar school board to immediately advise the minister if there are any significant concerns regarding the financial viability of the school. The bill also regains the authority for the minister to give the board directions if necessary in the interests of the school's financial viability, and to appoint an administrator if the minister believes the school is not financially viable or is in danger of becoming non-viable. The committee sees this as being a positive step to ensuring grammar schools remain viable and continue to provide an important education alternative to the communities in which they serve.

Finally, in line with the contemporary approach for the state to provide secondary education in Queensland, the bill does not provide for any new grammar schools to be established. This would not preclude the establishment of a new private school under the Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act. However, any new schools will not be established as grammar schools.

I will take this time to acknowledge the Townsville Grammar School, which has been around since 1888. I would also acknowledge the principal, Richard Fairley, who has been there since 1998. He is doing an exceptional job in Townsville with his students there. As we have heard, this school provides an alternative source of education, which is almost as good as state schooling. The explanatory notes state—

No grammar schools have been established since 1892 and it is no longer considered necessary for the State to retain the power to establish new grammar schools in the future.

Clause 51 prohibits the establishment or operation of a non-grammar school with a name that includes the word 'grammar'. However, clause 69 enables two non-grammar schools—Anglican Church Grammar School and the Sunshine Coast Grammar School—to continue using their names. A grammar school must continue to operate under the name in clause 6 of the bill.

I believe that these changes to the Grammar Schools Act are necessary to modernise the current legislation. We all acknowledge this evening the vital role that grammar schools provide right across our state as an alternative form of education. I therefore commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (4.29 pm): I will start where the member for Townsville left off and recognise the Toowoomba Grammar School, the great TGS, and its headmaster, Peter Hauser.

**Mr Millar:** Hear, hear!

**Mr WATTS:** Thank you. I hear a past, past member, an old boy.

Grammar schools have been part of the fabric of Queensland's history effectively since we became a state. Many, many people have passed through the doors and the gates of a grammar school and have gone on to play significant roles in building our state in the early years and other contributions right up to the present day. If honourable members take a visit to Toowoomba Grammar School they will find their honour board where they recognise everybody who served in the First World War and other wars. They have many boards recognising past contributions of students not only in school life but also their successes going forward since leaving school. I think it right that this bill recognises that history and makes sure that their names are preserved.

As has been stated, it has been over a hundred years since a new grammar school has been formed. Therefore, there are many aspects of this bill that are very relevant today in making sure we have a contemporary education system allowing for that history to be recognised but at the same time allowing the schools to operate in a contemporary fashion providing a modern education. I look at the success of my local grammar school. They now offer from prep right through to year 12 on what used to be the rifle range in Toowoomba. If honourable members drive down Herries Street it would be hard to imagine that it was once a rifle range where young boys would fire their .303s into targets, but that is the history of the school. It has been around for that long. If members read some of the early adventures, they would see that at times the boys would ride to boarding school. They would gather up their colleagues from way out west with their horses. These young boys with a rifle on their back would ride into the great metropolis of Toowoomba to go and receive their education. Can honourable members imagine what they would think if they saw a bunch of 14-year-old boys riding with rifles on their back through the main street of Toowoomba now?

The bill itself has some good aspects that will bring forward the contemporary needs of the schools. Certainly the changing of the board structure and the recognition of succession planning is very important. I think the ability, at the request of the board, to have two additional members is a good idea. However, one of the frustrations for boards of the past has been the length of time it has taken to have board members approved. Sometimes it has taken over a year and right up to 18 months for a replacement board member to be approved. I would ask the minister to look at that in view of modernising it. Leaving them without the governance of a full board for such an extended period obviously has difficulties. This is not directly related to the bill; it is more of a process with a view to cutting red tape. I would hope that when a request is made, the department gets through it in a timely fashion, ensuring that the criminal history checks and the other checks that need to be done to ensure the person is suitable are all done in a timely fashion so the board can get on with the fundamental job of making sure the grammar school that they are to work for will be able to pursue the things it needs with a full complement of skills on the board.

I am pleased to see that the financial accountability will continue and that the existing arrangements regarding reporting will continue. Obviously schools go up and down throughout their history. Again, in the history of Toowoomba Grammar School there were some very tight and lean years. I think making sure that the minister and the education department are aware of any of those things is good governance and making sure the financial accountability is there is something that is well thought through.

I would briefly like to thank the opposition members of the committee because I have jumped in front of them today on the speaking list: the members for Broadwater, Albert and Buderim. I do appreciate them allowing me to do that so I can manage my time in the chamber to fit in with another meeting I have.

Overall, I think this is a good school. Certainly the boys of the blue and gold at TGS will be happy that their grammar school will be able to continue, that their traditions will be upheld and that the governance structures will be modernised allowing them to not only get the best education available but to do it while meeting all of the contemporary standards and recognising their traditions. In no way is that meant to take away from someone like myself who was state educated or any of my other great schools in Toowoomba. This is about the governance of our grammar schools going forward. I think the bill strikes a good balance, as I say, with the minister being aware there have been some lengthy delays in the past in relation to appointing those members to the board. If that could be addressed as part of a process, I think we would find many happy grammar boards as they can get on with the governance of their schools. I thank the members for their indulgence. I support the bill.

 **Mr WILLIAMS** (Pumicestone—ALP) (4.35 pm): I rise this day to make a contribution to the debate on the Grammar Schools Bill 2016. I serve on the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee. I wish to thank the secretariat and those members on the committee for their diligence and deliberation of this bill. The committee recommends that the Grammar Schools Bill 2016 be passed. The committee also further recommends that the Grammar Schools Bill 2016 be amended to provide safeguards to protect information regarding a board member's conviction of an indictable offence from release.

Historically, grammar schools were established as a partnership between the state government and the community. This arrangement was a cost-effective way for the government to support secondary schooling without assuming the full responsibility of high school costs. The legislation allows for the regulating and establishment of grammar schools. The Grammar Schools Act 1860 was passed by the first parliament 153 years ago. The first grammar school was opened in 1863. A royal commission into education was conducted in 1891. It found that a system of secondary schools controlled directly by the state would be less expensive and just as effective as grammar schools. This led to the establishment of the Queensland state secondary school system and brought an end to new grammar schools being established.

There were 10 grammar schools established between 1863 and 1892 and no new grammar schools have been established since that date. The establishment, governance and regulation of grammar schools is currently provided for under the Grammar Schools Act 1975 and the Grammar Schools Regulation of 2004. There are eight grammar schools in Queensland operating under the legislation and the regulation today: Ipswich Grammar School, which was the first, Ipswich Girls Grammar School, Brisbane Grammar School, Brisbane Girls Grammar School, Toowoomba Grammar School, Townsville Grammar School, Rockhampton Grammar School and Rockhampton Girls Grammar School. There was some confusion in the community with regard to two other schools that

carry the name 'grammar' in their title, one at Forest Glen on the Sunshine Coast and the other at East Brisbane. These schools have permission under the act to use the word 'grammar' in their name but are not grammar schools under the legislation.

The Financial Accountability Act 2009 imposes obligations on these statutory bodies to: achieve reasonable value for money by operating efficiently, effectively and economically; establishing and maintaining appropriate systems of internal control and risk management; undertaking appropriate planning and budgeting; establishing and keeping funds in accounts in compliance with the prescribed requirements; and preparing annual financial returns that must be audited, prepared, certified and tabled before the Legislative Assembly of Queensland.

The purpose of the bill is stated in the explanatory notes—

The Bill replaces the existing GSA with modern legislation that: meets the contemporary needs of grammar schools; reduces red tape on the schools; removes prescriptive requirements regarding the financial accountability of grammar schools, instead, relying on other Queensland legislation regulating financial accountability of statutory bodies; and removes the ability to establish additional grammar schools in the future.

Clause 6 of the act defines the meaning of 'grammar school' and lists the eight grammar schools to which the current act and bill apply. Grammar school boards are currently fixed at seven members, three of whom are elected by the school community. Four are nominated by the minister. The bill replicates the board membership provision of three elected members and four members nominated by the minister, however, the bill goes further for the purpose of reforming the membership of boards by providing that at the request of the board an additional two members may be nominated by the minister. These reforms are considered necessary to meet the contemporary needs of grammar schools and support succession planning. The reforms will support boards to maintain an appropriate skills mix and corporate knowledge, especially during times of board rejuvenation. Such appointments can be made by the minister in less than the four-year period.

The bill also enables the minister to request a criminal history report before deciding if a person is disqualified from becoming or continuing as a board member. The bill further provides that the criminal history report must not be disclosed except to the extent necessary under the bill or with consent. Under the bill, a board member who is convicted of an indictable offence must give notice of the conviction at the earliest convenience to the minister. The bill provides that the minister may obtain a written report about a prospective or existing board member's criminal history, including a summary of the circumstances of any conviction mentioned in the report.

Three proposed caveats on the minister's power to obtain a criminal history report act as safeguards against a potential abuse of the power. Firstly, the prospective or existing board member must give their written consent for the report to be obtained; however, a person will be disqualified from becoming or remaining a board member if they do not consent. They could refuse to provide consent and recuse themselves from the board if they were strongly opposed to a report being obtained. Secondly, the minister must ensure that the report is destroyed as soon as practicable after it is no longer needed for deciding whether a person is disqualified from becoming or continuing as a board member. Finally, there is a new offence punishable by a maximum of 100 penalty units for the unauthorised disclosure of a report or information contained in a report. The aforementioned disclosure requirements are a safeguard for grammar schools and this amendment is necessary to meet community expectations. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Miss BARTON** (Broadwater—LNP) (4.44 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Grammar Schools Bill. At the outset I acknowledge my fellow members of the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee as well as those from the department who took the opportunity to brief the committee on the bill and also those who made submissions. I thank them for their contributions.

As has been outlined by many members in this debate so far, there are currently eight grammar schools in Queensland. Having had them listed by the member for Pumicestone, I will not go through the list again. It is important to note that grammar schools are a very important component of the education framework in Queensland and a very important part of making sure that parents and families have freedom of choice and flexibility to make the right education decisions for their child. What grammar schools strive to do is provide non-discriminatory secular education. I know there are members of this House who are very proud alumni of grammar schools, and off the top of my head—I hope I do not miss anyone—the member for Gregory is a proud alumnus and of course also the member for Callide, the member for Beaudesert and the member for Nanango that I am aware of. I am sure there are many others who are proud alumni of grammar schools here in Queensland.

One of the key components of this bill before the House today is the cutting of red tape. I am sure all members would agree that one thing that we as a parliament should strive to do is see government intervention lessen and decrease where it is appropriate. What we have seen over the many, many years that grammar schools have been in place in Queensland is that government does not always need to intervene to ensure the right outcomes are being met, and it is great to see there is bipartisan support for this cutting of red tape. We also see the removal of some very prescriptive financial accountability requirements, and that has been outlined by the minister, the shadow minister and other members in their contributions. This is not in any way, shape or form going to affect the financial strength and accountability of the schools or boards because there are other legislative frameworks and regimes which provide for that accountability. Where legislation is not needed it makes no sense that there is onerous and prescriptive legislation on our books.

The other thing that I wanted to quickly touch on in my brief contribution to this debate is with respect to changes to board membership. As the shadow minister for education, the member for Aspley, has outlined, this will lead to rejuvenation and better succession planning for boards. It will also give them an opportunity to respond to emergent situations where they think there is a more appropriate person who could serve on the board.

I do have a question that I hope the minister will be able to address in her response to the second reading debate with respect to ministerial appointments to the boards. When the department provided a briefing to the committee, it said that there was a requirement for the minister to consult with not only the existing board and the school, as I understand it, but also often the minister consults with the community. I wonder if the minister could detail the process that she goes through or would intend to go through when making ministerial appointments to grammar school boards. I am very conscious that all schools across Queensland, whether they are state schools or non-state schools, are very proud of their alumni and the contributions they have made not only to the school community but continue to make in many cases across Queensland. I know that when a lot of non-state schools and state schools are making appointments to the boards or committees which are there to support the school they are very, very conscious that alumni often have a real desire to make a positive contribution to their old school. I am curious to hear from the minister whether or not that is something that is a consideration for her and what considerations she has when making ministerial appointments.

I wanted to also touch on the requirement for someone to disclose their criminal history, especially when they have been convicted of an indictable offence. I think we would all agree that it is important that anyone who is associated with schools in Queensland, be they state or non-state, must be of the highest character and of great integrity. I do not think anyone in this House would dispute that, but it is important to ensure that, where someone is making a disclosure about their criminal history, there are particular safeguards of that information as we have seen in other pieces of legislation before the House. I note that the minister has accepted the recommendation from the committee, and I thank her for that.

Finally, I would like to address the submission the committee received which expressed disappointment that there were no new grammar schools and that the ability to create new grammar schools is being removed as part of this legislation. What I would say to that person is there are a range of options and there are many, many choices that people can make when it comes to educating their children across Queensland, be it in the state or the non-state sector.

One of the things we in Queensland can be incredibly proud of, whatever your views, is that we have robust state, private and Catholic education sectors in this state. I think we can be incredibly proud of the freedom of choice that offers parents in particular. I appreciate that this person is of the view that there are not very many non-denominational private schools that are an option for them; however, given the range of options—non-denominational private schools, denominational private schools, independent public schools and other public schools—I think there is great flexibility and a large range of choices for parents across Queensland. It is something we can be very proud of and I look forward to continuing to support the passage of this bill through the House.

 **Mr SAUNDERS** (Maryborough—ALP) (4.50 pm): I rise to speak in support of the bill before the House. It was good to hear the minister say that this is an exciting bill, because it was a good bill to work on. I also congratulate the committee, because there was a lot of good banter and a lot of good talk.

**An honourable member:** A great committee.

**Mr SAUNDERS:** The Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee is a very good committee. We do have our testy moments but on the Grammar Schools Bill we did not have any testy moments. It was good to work with the opposition members. I also thank the secretariat and all the crew who did the work on this inquiry.

As a young man I remember the Rockhampton Grammar School and Rockhampton Girls Grammar School. As I am sure a lot of people in the House know, I am originally from Longreach so I spent a lot of time with friends and relatives who went to the grammar school in Rockhampton. What a great name it has. Grammar schools across the state have a fantastic name for their ability to educate people. That is something that will continue. I do not think this bill will affect that ability of the grammar schools in any way, shape or form.

In part 3, 'Staff and business of boards', clause 28 states—

- (1) A board—
- (a) must—
    - (i) employ a secretary ...; and
    - ...
  - (b) may employ staff as it considers appropriate to perform its functions or exercise its powers, including ... administrative officers, teachers and clerks.

The clause clarifies that staff are entitled to be paid the remuneration and allowances decided by the board and are employed under the Grammar Schools Act and not the Public Service Act 2008.

It is good to see that there have been changes with regard to the membership of the board and with regard to criminal history checks. Criminal history checks are very important when it comes to board members in the field of education. We want to make sure that the people on the board are the best of society. I am not saying that they are not, but it is good to see sections in the act that ensure we get the best people on grammar school boards.

Grammar schools do play an important part in the education of Queenslanders. As the chair of the committee said, it is about choice in education. That is something our government is doing quite well at the moment: giving people throughout Queensland choice in education. Education is provided not only through the public system—I am 100 per cent behind that system—but also through grammar schools, Catholic schools and Christian schools. We are giving the people of Queensland choice in terms of where they educate their children. Choice is the major thing. I am someone who believes that we have to give people choice. There is no doubt about the importance of education. We know how important it will be, with so many existing jobs to be lost and new jobs to be created over the next 10 to 15 years. With coding and STEM coming into our system, we want to make sure that our children, whether they go to a grammar school or a public school, are educated to a level such that they will be able to get these jobs.

The minister and her department have done a fantastic job on this bill. They are really looking after the education of Queenslanders. They are making sure that Queenslanders will not be left behind and that we provide a high standard of education. The latest NAPLAN statistics show some really good results. The education minister, her department and the officials are working hard—

**Ms Jones:** And the wonderful teachers.

**Mr SAUNDERS:** And all of the teachers. That is very important. Last night I was talking to a few of my friends who went to Rockhampton Grammar School. I say to some people on this side of the House that, yes, I do have some friends. They were telling me that the years they attended the grammar school in Rockhampton were some of the best years of their life. They have all done very well, having received a great education.

**Mrs Lauga:** Hear, hear!

**Mr SAUNDERS:** I take the interjection from the member for Keppel.

**Ms Jones:** School captain she was.

**Mr SAUNDERS:** A former school captain of the grammar school. Look how far you can go: former school captain and now member for Keppel in the Queensland parliament. You cannot get any better than that! Grammar schools should be congratulated because they have done well to get the member for Keppel where she is today! This is a good bill and it is good to see choice in education. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr DICKSON** (Buderim—LNP) (4.55 pm): I rise to speak to the Grammar Schools Bill 2016. The bill before the House was introduced into the Legislative Assembly by the Minister for Education on 16 August 2016. The minister detailed that grammar schools were historically established as a partnership between the Queensland government and the community. This arrangement was a cost-effective way for the government to support secondary school education in Queensland without assuming the full cost of establishing high schools. As such, 10 grammar schools were established

between 1863 and 1892, with no new grammar schools established since 1892. The contemporary approach is for the state to provide secondary education through state schools and to regulate and fund the provision of education by non-government schools.

The committee noted in its report that the purpose of the bill is to replace the existing Grammar Schools Act 1975 with modern legislation to meet the contemporary needs of grammar schools; reduce red tape on grammar schools; remove prescriptive requirements regarding financial accountability and rely on other financial accountability legislation; and remove the ability to establish additional grammar schools.

It is also important to note that clause 6 further clarifies the meaning of 'grammar school' by listing the eight grammar schools to which the current act and the bill apply. There are eight grammar schools still in operation; namely, Ipswich Grammar School, Ipswich Girls' Grammar School, Brisbane Grammar School, Brisbane Girls Grammar School, Toowoomba Grammar School, Townsville Grammar School, Rockhampton Grammar School and Rockhampton Girls Grammar School. These grammar schools currently educate over 9,000 students. In line with current provisions under which Queensland provides secondary education in Queensland, the bill does not provide for any new grammar schools to be established. It is important to note that this does not preclude the establishment of any new private schools as such.

In clause 51 the bill proposes to prohibit the establishment or operation of a non-grammar school with a name that includes the word 'grammar'; however, clause 69 enables two non-grammar schools—Anglican Church Grammar School and the Sunshine Coast Grammar School—to continue using their names. I am very proud of Sunshine Coast Grammar School in the electorate of Buderim. I was able to clarify this issue during the departmental briefing on this bill.

I briefly touch upon recommendation 2 in the committee's report. The committee recommends that the Grammar Schools Bill 2016 be amended to provide safeguards to protect information regarding a board member's conviction for an indictable offence. The committee examined the application of fundamental legislative principles to the bill and found that this was a potential FLP issue that should be brought to the attention of the Legislative Assembly. Clause 23 of the bill introduces a requirement for a board member who is convicted of an indictable offence during their term of appointment to immediately disclose the conviction to the minister. The committee found that the bill did not propose safeguards to protect information disclosed by a board member regarding conviction for an indictable offence during their appointment to the board. As such, the committee recommended unanimously that the bill be amended to specifically provide for the protection of information disclosed by a board member regarding a conviction.

In conclusion, the committee has considered the bill and the information provided by the department and the information and views expressed in submissions and recommended that the bill be passed. I want to mention the Sunshine Coast Grammar School. Its motto is 'Strength and Purpose'. It is situated in the Buderim electorate. It was established in 1997. The principal's name is Maria Woods and she is an outstanding representative of the grammar school institution. It has an enrolment of roughly 1,220 students. Its favourite sport—members would never guess what it is—is Rugby Union. It has a wonderful academia with music, media studies and international studies. If parents want to send their children to school on the Sunshine Coast in one of the best electorates in the state, please send them to the grammar school. It is a great educational facility.

 **Ms FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (5.00 pm): I do have to disagree with the member for Buderim, because the Bulimba electorate is the best electorate in the state. I rise to support the Grammar Schools Bill 2016. I love talking about education. Any chance I get to talk about education I will take, and of course education is a massive priority for the Palaszczuk Labor government. The bill replaces the existing Grammar Schools Act with modern legislation that meets the contemporary needs of grammar schools, reduces red tape on the schools, removes prescriptive requirements regarding the financial accountability of grammar schools and instead relies on other Queensland legislation regulating financial accountability of statutory bodies, and removes the ability to establish additional grammar schools in the future. This bill is underpinned by two of the fundamental principles of the Palaszczuk Labor government when it comes to education. One is that every child has the right to have the same access to high-quality public education in his or her own local area and also that every student has the right to access the education of their choice.

It was very interesting to read through this bill, its explanatory notes and the report from the committee because not only is it obviously a common-sense bill that does a lot to improve the ability of grammar schools to conduct their business in the best and most efficient manner but also it says quite

a lot about the history of state schools and grammar schools in this state. In fact, I found that there were a number of things that I just had not been aware of. The first was that grammar schools had historically been established as a partnership between the Queensland government and the community as a cost-effective way of supporting secondary school education in Queensland without having to assume the full cost of establishing high schools. Legislation allowing for and regulating the establishment of grammar schools was passed by Queensland's first parliament and the first grammar school opened in 1863. A royal commission into education was held in 1891 which advised that a system of secondary schools more directly controlled by the state would be less expensive and as effective. This led to the establishment of the state secondary school system and the end of new grammar schools being established, but in the period between 1863 and 1892 10 grammar schools were established.

This bill reflects a contemporary approach about establishing state schools and the state government regulating the operation of non-state schools. I note that grammar schools are also non-state schools in terms of the Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2001. What I also had not realised until reading through this was that another piece of interesting history for me is that the eight grammar schools—Ipswich Grammar School, Ipswich Girls' Grammar, Brisbane Grammar, Brisbane Girls Grammar, Toowoomba Grammar, Townsville Grammar, Rockhampton Grammar and Rockhampton Girls Grammar—are all statutory authorities responsible for the governance and operation of grammar schools. I note the evidence from Mr Busby from the department to the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee that because they are statutory authorities we must have oversight as we have a moral interest and obligation in ensuring they continue to be viable, which is why we have to monitor grammar schools over time. This clearly has created some constraints to the grammar schools which this bill is designed to address.

The Financial Accountability Act and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act govern the financial management arrangements and set the borrowing and investment powers for government departments and most statutory bodies. In addition to the requirements under those two acts, grammar schools have to also comply with the very prescriptive requirements relating to the financial management contained in the Grammar Schools Act, and prescriptive requirements are not included in the establishing acts of most other statutory bodies. For example, the Grammar Schools Act prescribes processes before borrowing from the state and to maintain specific bank accounts. It is just good to see, as I said, common sense. This bill removes those prescriptive provisions and provides for the financial accountability of grammar schools, like other statutory bodies, to be regulated through the framework established by those two acts that I just mentioned.

I turn to the membership of the boards. A number of members have said that grammar school boards are currently fixed at seven members—three of them elected by the school community and four nominated by the minister. Clause 14 of the bill provides for the board membership of three elected members and four members nominated by the minister. However, the bill proposes to reform that membership by providing that at the request of the board an additional two board members may be nominated by the minister, and board members appointed by ministerial nomination may be appointed for a term shorter than four years at the board's request. I note that Independent Schools Queensland—those eight grammar schools are members of that association—shows strong support for the ability of the minister to nominate an additional two board members and notes that it will support greater flexibility in terms of board composition, including seeking out persons with specific skills and knowledge that may be required at a particular time by the board.

I also want to talk briefly about the bill removing the ability to establish future grammar schools under the act, again reflecting the contemporary approach for the state to provide secondary education. I note that Independent Schools Queensland noted that no new grammar schools under the act have been established since 1892, so this also makes sense. Although the bill maintains the current restriction on the use of the term 'grammar' in the naming of a school, the appropriate exemptions for Sunshine Coast Grammar and Anglican Church Grammar School remain. I want to note this in particular because although Anglican Church Grammar School, or Churchie as we call it locally, is a school not in my electorate it is certainly attended by a significant number of boys from my electorate. The bill also clarifies that schools do not represent the state.

I want to close by noting the support that the state government does provide to non-state schools. In addition to this oversight of grammar schools under the Grammar Schools Act, it provides grant funding for capital works. Thank you from Cannon Hill Anglican College and St Peter and Paul's in my electorate for grants in the last couple of budgets that have enabled them to establish significant capital works. It also contributes to the C2C curriculum. Non-state schools are able to access the Autism Hub and Reading Centre, the Daniel Morcombe curriculum and the Respectful Relationships curriculum.

Before I finish I cannot speak to an education bill without acknowledging the really wonderful schools in my electorate and the teachers and other support staff and the students and parents in those school communities who do so much to provide a great education and provide a range of education choices for local families: Balmoral State High; Bulimba, Norman Park, Seven Hills, Cannon Hill, Murarrie, Morningside and Camp Hill state schools; CHAC; Lourdes Hill College; St Peter and Paul's; St Ollies; and St Thomas'. I also want to acknowledge the efforts of the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee. Finally, I want to acknowledge our very enthusiastic education minister who shows us every day inside and outside this House how committed she is to continuing to reform education and to have a vision for our children's future. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Albert—LNP) (5.09 pm): I, too, stand here today to speak to the Grammar Schools Bill 2016. I would firstly like to thank my fellow committee members from both sides of the chamber. It is certainly very good that we worked so well on this bill. I would also like to thank the committee staff and all of those who participated and took the time to discuss this bill.

Firstly, I would like to mention the schools in my electorate. There are certainly quite a few. The Albert electorate is very diverse. The demography of the north of my electorate is different from the demographics to the central and southern parts of my electorate. My electorate is a bit of a mishmash of demographics. Recently, I asked the minister a question on notice if the transfer points for Mount Warren Park State School could be changed in the future to assist the teachers in my area.

Back in 1893, under the Grammar Schools Act 1860 the first grammar school was opened in Ipswich. The original act was designed to be a cost-effective way for the government to support secondary education without having to outlay the full cost of establishing high schools. The 1860 act allowed townships that had the financial capacity to fundraise locally to enter into a partnership with the Queensland government to build educational facilities. Back in those days, the Queensland government would match the funds raised by a township pound for pound. In those days, the grammar school boards were administered by seven people, of whom four were appointed by the Governor.

I found it interesting to note that the original 1860 act contained a provision to provide public scholarships for students to attend universities in Britain and the other southern states. In 1891, a royal commission into education reported that schools directly controlled by the state would be less expensive and as effective as grammar schools. That report led to the end of the establishment of grammar schools. Between 1863 and 1892, 10 grammar schools were established. Unfortunately, Maryborough Grammar School and Maryborough Girls Grammar School were forced to close during the Great Depression, leaving eight of the original 10 schools that still survive today.

As mentioned by other members in this debate, the bill makes three major changes to the Grammar Schools Act. Firstly, the bill reforms the membership of the grammar school boards by providing, at the request of the board, an additional two board members who may be appointed by the minister. The member for Toowoomba North referred to delays in replacing these board members. Unfortunately, that also occurs in the state school system. A few of the schools in my electorate have had acting principals for a good part of the year. That is certainly concerning a lot of my local residents. Samantha, the acting principal at Norfolk Village State School, is doing an amazing job. The school community certainly very much supports her. They have said to me that they would love her to be the permanent principal of that school. We need to speed up the process of appointing permanent school principals. I know that there is a lot of red tape and a position has to be made available, but a permanent principal gives certainty to a school. The school community knows the direction the school is going in with a permanent principal. An acting principal is not in a permanent position and the school community fears that the school's direction may change in three or six months time.

The bill also gives additional flexibility by reducing the prescriptive requirements regarding procedures for borrowing money, auditing accounts and general funds. There is still the requirement to inform the minister without delay if there are any significant concerns about the financial viability of a grammar school.

The third major change contained in the bill is the prevention of the creation of any additional grammar schools. As I said previously, the last grammar school was established in 1892. An individual expressed some concern to the committee about the lack of parental choice when it comes to high-quality secular education in Queensland. I can understand that that individual was not overly comfortable with the bill not allowing any more grammar schools.

I have a daughter in prep. She is very excited about going to school. She likes playing games on the iPad most of the time, but we try to make sure that it is educational software that she is playing. We need to make sure that there is choice for parents and that schools are equally funded across-the-board

to ensure that each child, no matter where they live, is not discriminated against. We need to make sure that a school that is possibly within a five-minute radius of another school does not receive reduced funding just because it is located in an area where a large proportion of children go to a private school. Even in our so-called good areas—where we see good academic results—there are families who are struggling. Both parents are working five, six, or seven days a week. They are doing it pretty tough. We should make sure that those kids in those schools get a decent share of the pie to ensure that they become the entrepreneurs and innovators of tomorrow.

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (5.18 pm): I rise to speak to the Grammar Schools Bill 2016. Firstly, I would like to thank the Minister for Education, the Hon. Kate Jones, for her work on this bill and for her work as education minister in general. She is doing an extraordinary job. I know that she is an inspiration to many of the principals in my electorate. I would also like to thank the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee for its work on this important bill.

This bill has been created to replace the current Grammar Schools Act 1975. A lot has changed in terms of society and attitudes since the original act and it is important that governments recognise the need for our schools to remain relevant and contemporary. I commend the Palaszczuk government for doing so by introducing this bill that is before us today.

This bill seeks to implement some important reforms whilst adhering to the current act's regulatory regime. In fact, one of the successes of grammar schools across Queensland is their adherence to tradition while maintaining a contemporary approach to the education of young Queenslanders.

Grammar school boards play an essential role in the operation and outcomes of the eight Queensland grammar schools. Grammar school boards are statutory bodies and as such are subject to annual audits by the Queensland Auditor-General. This bill removes some prescriptive requirements around financial management from the current Grammar Schools Act. Another important component of this bill is the removal of the power to establish any new grammar schools in Queensland. This fits with our ongoing dedication to providing secondary education through state schools, as well as our commitment to providing funding support to non-government schools. The Governor in Council currently appoints a seven-member board of trustees to grammar school boards. With this bill before us today, an additional two members may be appointed should a grammar school board request it. Additionally, a grammar school board may request ministerial appointments for less than four years which would allow boards to stagger their board appointments. In order to further modernise our grammar school boards, this bill will allow more scope for grammar school boards when it comes to meeting procedures and conduct.

In the period 1863 to 1892 Queensland grammar schools were established in order to provide a non-secular education for Queensland children. Grammar schools were established in partnership with government and the community with a view to supporting secondary school education in a cost-effective way. As we have heard several times today, there are eight grammar schools in Queensland and I am pleased and proud to have two outstanding examples of these schools in my electorate of Ipswich. In fact, one of these schools, Ipswich Grammar School, as the member for Pumicestone has said, was the very first grammar school to be established in Queensland. With more than 1,000 students enrolled today, I think it is safe to say that the school has gone ahead in leaps and bounds from the 16 students in attendance at its opening in 1863.

Grammar schools have become widely recognised as institutions of excellence in education. I can certainly attest to this in the case of the Ipswich Grammar School and the Ipswich Girls Grammar School. As I have already stated, Ipswich Grammar School was the first grammar school to be established in Queensland in 1863, three years after the initial Grammar Schools Act was established. The Ipswich community raised the initial funds to partner with the Queensland government in establishing the school that remains in place in Woodend to this day. The current principal, Mr Richard Morrison, is the 16th principal of Ipswich Grammar School and is well and truly making his mark at the school after less than a year in the job. My son attended Ipswich Grammar School from 1999 to 2004. The principal in charge when he started, Igor Lapa, was succeeded by Denis Frederiksen in 2001. Mr Frederiksen served as principal until 2010. We first heard of Mr Frederiksen's appointment in the *Queensland Times* in late 2000 and after I read it I reminisced to my son that I had a principal called Denis Frederiksen and wondered if perhaps it was the same person. In the inimitable style of 14-year-olds all over the world when talking to their parents, my son looked at me and responded, 'Don't be silly, Mum, he'd be dead by now.' I did share this anecdote with Mr Frederiksen some time later—who, by the way, was the one and same Mr Frederiksen who taught me in grade 9 in Mackay State High School and is very much alive—and we were able to laugh about it despite our advanced years.

Ipswich Girls Grammar School opened on 10 March 1892. The founding principal of Ipswich Girls Grammar School was a woman called Fanny Hunt, who was the first woman to graduate in science from Sydney University. There were 31 students enrolled at the opening and that has now grown to around 900 students today. My daughter attended Ipswich Girls Grammar School from 1996 to 2001 and now has a PhD and is a Doctor of Medicine. Anecdotally, the first ever student to enrol at Ipswich Girls Grammar School, Mrs Eleanor Greenham, went on to become the first Queensland-born woman to earn a degree in medicine.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend Dr Peter Britton, the 11th and current principal of Ipswich Girls Grammar School, who is well respected in our community and is doing an excellent job guiding the school into the future. Ipswich Girls Grammar School, including Ipswich Junior Grammar School, has a very strong focus on excellence and nurturing every young woman, girl and boy to become confident, well educated and prepared for higher learning, leadership and life. Nurturing is the word I think of when I think about the benefits that my daughter received at that school. In fact, there are two teachers who taught her when she was at that school, Elizabeth Kingston, who was her art teacher, and Maria Stevenson, who was her science teacher, were wonderful role models to my daughter and many of her friends at that school. I know that they are still thought about to this day. There is no doubt that the school played a significant role in the outcomes for my own daughter. It has also been pivotal in the outcomes and the education of thousands of significant and inspirational women who have pursued careers in health, law, engineering, information technology, politics and other challenging careers. Ipswich Girls Grammar School identified the many benefits of a co-educational experience in the formative years so in the 1990s the school expanded to include young boys, with Junior Grammar now providing full co-education from kindergarten to year 6.

Our grammar schools are a very good example of how productive and beneficial community-government partnerships can be. As I have already said, Queensland has eight grammar schools and they are all highly regarded. The minister is correct, though, to disallow any future grammar schools to be established in Queensland. Secondary education is now supported differently in this state and I think that this approach is the correct one. By supporting the establishment of state schools and regulating the operation of non-state schools, in addition to providing grant funding to eligible non-state schools, this government is providing a more contemporary approach to secondary education. Under the Grammar Schools Act, no non-grammar school is allowed to operate under a name that includes the word 'grammar' or to in any way imply that it is a grammar school. There are two exceptions to that: Anglican Church Grammar School and Sunshine Coast Grammar School. No offences apply to these schools because they were already operating when the offences were introduced. Once again, I am very pleased to support the Grammar Schools Bill 2016 and I commend it to the House.

 **Hon. G GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (5.26 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Grammar Schools Bill 2016. I congratulate the minister for bringing it forward. I think that anything we can do to make rules that govern our schools in a more contemporary way to reflect the modern day and age is a step in the right direction. I think the minister has done an excellent job in bringing this bill to the House. I am also very fortunate to have two of Queensland's grammar schools in my electorate of Brisbane Central: Brisbane Girls Grammar School and Brisbane Grammar School. Both schools have a very long and proud history. It has been amazing watching the schools transition into the modern world, with new facilities being built and the adoption of technology and modern teaching practices to a point where, as we all know, they are providing a wonderful service to their students. They are both outstanding schools led by outstanding and dedicated individuals: in the case of Brisbane Girls Grammar School, Principal Jacinda Euler, and in the case of Brisbane Grammar School, Headmaster Anthony Micallef. Both schools are just up the road from my electoral office and every afternoon we see pupils walk past our office. I commend the schools on the manner in which those students conduct themselves. They are the epitome of good manners. They are well behaved and you can tell that they wear their uniforms with pride. I think that has a lot to do with the leadership in the schools which I think says to boys, 'You can do anything,' but, more importantly, says exactly the same to girls as well. In their schools they can become whatever they want. Their teaching styles reflect that outcome. Both principals, Jacinda and Anthony, get great support from their board of trustees. In the case of girls grammar, the chair, Elizabeth Jameson—

**Ms Jones** interjected.

**Ms GRACE:** She is absolutely fantastic. I take that interjection from the minister. She is outstanding as chair of the board of trustees of Girls Grammar School. I have known Elizabeth for many years. I know that she and her fellow board members do a wonderful job in supporting all of the principles that the school encompasses to deliver the best form of education.

Mr Howard Stack, the council chair at Brisbane Grammar School, has immense experience and is also a wonderful leader for the school. Those people are supported by their P&F presidents, Dr Fiona Harden at girls grammar and Craig Chapman at boys grammar. I acknowledge their efforts. The P&Fs do an absolutely outstanding job in those schools. As a local member it is a delight to see such a group of individuals on the boards of trustees and as council chairs, working with the principals and doing such a good job.

As we know, both of those schools and Queensland's six other grammar schools play an important role in Queensland's education system. Over the years, they have produced some truly exceptional achievers thanks to their outstanding teachers, to whom I pay tribute, their staff and their governance structures, which I know they have adopted and adapted according to their needs. However, those governance structures now need updating. This bill seeks to replace the existing act with more contemporary legislation to reflect the changing realities of modern education. Each of the eight Queensland grammar school boards was consulted in the development of this bill, which I understand they all generally support.

This bill will ensure that the Queensland law meets the contemporary needs of grammar schools, which is very important. Because these schools are growing—they are very big institutions—another important measure in the bill is the reduction of red tape. The bill will transition from the current financial reporting requirements to other Queensland legislation regulating the financial accountability of statutory bodies, which I think is an important step. The bill will ensure that no additional grammar schools are established in Queensland in the future. I do not think one has been established for many years—

**Ms Jones:** Over 100 years.

**Ms GRACE:** Over 100 years, the minister says. Obviously, the need to establish more is not there. The bill protects the brand. It protects the use of the name and the schools will be able to provide the great education that they have provided for many years.

One of the most important things we are seeking to achieve is appropriate board composition in our grammar schools by modernising the way new board members are appointed and supporting boards with their succession planning. At the moment, grammar schools have outstanding boards of trustees, but as we know boards take on a lot of responsibility in the management and the strategic direction of schools, working with principals and other leaders in the schools. Anything we can do to assist them to modernise that composition mix is a step in the right direction. The bill will ensure that grammar schools have the right mix of skills, experience and corporate knowledge to deliver the best possible outcomes for their students. That is not to say that they have not done that in the past, but the bill modernises it and makes sure that that skill mix is there to meet their charter, which is especially important during periods when boards undergo rejuvenation. As we know, in any large institution or organisation it is important to have mechanisms in place for the rejuvenation of boards, the right skill mix and the ability to deliver on their strategic direction.

The bill retains the existing safeguards under the current act that allow the minister to appoint an administrator if the financial viability of a grammar school is threatened. While there is no indication that that is going to happen, one has to have safeguards in place. It is appropriate to keep the existing safeguards so that, in the unlikely event that a grammar school is in financial trouble, the education of its students will not be affected. It is most important that we have mechanisms in place, as we never know when something will occur. The students are of utmost importance. We must ensure that they get the education that their parents are paying for, who should not be distressed should anything happen. Therefore, the minister should retain the ability to appoint an administrator if necessary so that the good work of the school can continue.

The bill cuts red tape but not at the expense of effective governance oversight. It is very important that we maintain governance oversight. As I said, these are very large institutions. When one looks at their accounts and their financial management, they involve a lot of money, a lot of staff and a lot of responsibility. They have to confront a lot of issues every day. This will mean better governance for our grammar schools. It is very important to ensure that, should anything go wrong, those governance structures are in place. I have seen the way that they operate, so any improvement to contemporising the way that they operate is a step in the right direction. I know that the chairs, the boards of trustees, the principals and the teachers would welcome that, as they see continual improvement almost as a part of their strategic plan.

This is a great bill. The schools in my electorate have done exceptionally well. As I have said, the students wear their uniforms with pride. The teachers and everyone involved in both grammar schools do a wonderful job. It has been excellent to see the facilities increase and the manner in which they operate. I have been to their assemblies, which are absolutely amazing.

**Ms Jones** interjected.

**Ms GRACE:** Yes, and to see the way that they keep their traditions alive. It is a delight to see those fantastic schools. We never have any problems with any of the students going to and from school in the suburb of Spring Hill and on Gregory Terrace. I take every opportunity I have to visit the schools, which are wonderful. This bill really establishes them for the future. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mrs LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (5.36 pm): This evening I rise to speak in support of the Grammar Schools Bill 2016. The main purpose of the bill is to maintain public confidence in grammar schools and to regulate the governance and administration of grammar schools. I can speak from experience in terms of the quality of education that I received as a student of the Rockhampton Grammar School.

**Ms Jones:** As school captain of Rockhampton Grammar School.

**Mrs LAUGA:** I am a former school captain of the Rockhampton Grammar School.

**Ms Grace:** Congratulations.

**Mrs LAUGA:** Thank you; I take the interjection from the member for Brisbane Central. There are lots of reasons why the Rockhampton Grammar School is ranked among the top schools in Queensland. It is one of the best country schools in Australia and it is Central Queensland's best performing school. There are thousands of reasons for that. The most important reason is that parents, teachers, students and past students work together to provide every boy and girl with every opportunity to do his or her best every day. Parents, teachers, students and past students are the grammar family and in every way we are a learning community. We are passionate about every individual student's education and character development in all aspects of their life, throughout life. We are equally committed to providing outstanding teaching and learning opportunities for staff. In fact, the Rockhampton Grammar School is the only school in the country that offers a Master of Education to each and every teacher, which is designed and delivered in partnership with Griffith University. The Rockhampton Grammar School's investment in its teachers' ongoing education is the single most important advantage we can provide to the Rockhampton Grammar School students.

Rockhampton Grammar School students are active young women and men, inside and outside of school. During my time at the Rockhampton Grammar School, I was very active inside and outside of school, not only as school captain but also as vice-captain of netball. I served in the school's first 7 team from grade 9. I was actively involved in the women's cricket team. I was also involved in rowing. I was captain of oratory and I made some really wonderful friends—friends for life, in fact.

Whilst I am on my feet, I wish to pay tribute to a former Rockhampton Grammar School student and my boss before I took up the role as member for Keppel, Patrice Brown, who is a finalist in the Telstra Women in Business Awards, which will be announced this Friday. I wish her all the very best. Patrice is a very capable and passionate woman and a former student of the Rockhampton Grammar School.

Students at the Rockhampton Grammar School take their education seriously, but through balanced academic, sporting, co-curricular and social activities, their learning is well rounded, exciting, engaging and enlightening. Students participate proudly and contribute thousands of hours to causes and community organisations every year throughout Central Queensland, Australia and the world. The students' ideals, and the school's, are exemplified in the school motto 'Macte Virtute Et Litteris'—grow in character and scholarship.

Rockhampton Grammar School is Queensland's largest boarding school. Approximately 1,500 day and boarding students, from all ages and backgrounds, are nurtured, respected and supported at the school. Set on 7.5 landscaped hectares, the school is well appointed and features two large sporting ovals, tennis courts, a 50-metre swimming pool, a multipurpose gymnasium/hall, a modern healthcare facility, dance studios, a professional theatre and more.

The school's beachfront education centre, Ritamada, is located at Emu Park on the Capricorn Coast. The school also maintains a small farm at nearby Port Curtis and the Rockhampton Grammar School Rowing Club on the Fitzroy River, in town. I was at the rowing club recently for our 10 year reunion. In addition, students enjoy exclusive access to Belmont Station, the former CSIRO cattle research facility at Etna Creek owned by AgForce Queensland.

Whilst the school is large enough and resourced to support a diverse and rich curriculum, the four schools within the Rockhampton Grammar School—the early learning centre, primary, middle and senior—are each small enough to provide individual care and attention to each boy and girl. It is an environment in which 21st century learners thrive and emerge educated, well rounded and confident, equipped to pursue their ambitions, secure in their sense of self and their capacity to make the most of opportunities and meet future challenges.

I will pay tribute to some of the teachers and staff at the Rockhampton Grammar School who are still working passionately to educate our region's young people. In particular I mention: Ms Denise Wright who was the head of the senior school when I was at the school and is still there today working very hard; Mr Arthur Kelly and Mrs Aileen Kelly; Mrs Miranda Broadbent, my wonderful Japanese teacher, who is still passionately teaching Japanese at the school; Mr Stuart Norford, the head of boys boarding who is still at the school doing a wonderful job; and Dr Phillip Moulds, the current headmaster. He was not the headmaster when I was there. Mr Islay Lee was the principal whilst I was there. I know that Dr Phillip Moulds is a very passionate leader and headmaster. He is doing wonderful things particularly in relation to the school's music school.

I know that Mr Brad Beasley does a wonder job as chairman of the board as does Mr Mark Birkbeck as deputy chair of the board. The board of trustees of the Rockhampton Grammar School is constituted under the Grammar Schools Act and is the statutory body within the meaning given in the Financial Administration and Audit Act and subject to audit by the Queensland Audit Office. I pay tribute to the other members of the board of trustees for the Rockhampton Grammar School: Emeritus Professor Deborah Clayton, Mr Simon Irwin, Dr Jill South, Mrs Kaye Wilson and Mrs Josephine Volck. They are aptly supported by the acting board secretary, Mrs Karryn Johnson.

The Rockhampton Grammar School was a great place to go to school. I am very grateful for the education that I received there. In closing, I will read the words of the school song.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Elmes): I hope it is a short school song so we stay somewhere relevant to the bill.

**Mrs LAUGA:** Of course. The words of the school song are:

We of Grammar shout our chorus,  
 what tradition has gone before us.  
 Sing the songs of all our glory,  
 shout with all our might.  
 Proud of our endeavours,  
 surrender we will never,  
 in a fight, we stand for right and  
 may God be our protector.  
 When the battle-cry is sounding  
 and our hearts in us are pounding,  
 that's the time to show we stand  
 for Grammar and the right.

 **Mr MADDEN** (Ipswich West—ALP) (5.43 pm): At short notice, I rise to speak in support of the Grammar Schools Bill 2016.

**Mr Rickuss:** Go on sing.

**Mr MADDEN:** No, I do not know the words to any other song other than St Edmund's College songs. The bill replaces the existing Grammar School Act with modern legislation that meets contemporary needs for grammar schools, reduces red tape for schools, removes prescriptive requirements regarding the financial accountability of grammar schools, instead relying on other Queensland legislation regulating financial accountability of statutory bodies, and removes the ability to establish additional grammar schools in the future.

The Grammar Schools Act 1975 and the Grammar Schools Regulation 2004 provide a framework for the establishment and regulation of eight grammar schools in Queensland. Ipswich is blessed with two of those grammar schools. It is technically three, but I will get to that. The first of these is Ipswich

Girls' Grammar School, including the Ipswich Junior Grammar School, and, of course, the oldest grammar school in Queensland, the Ipswich Grammar School. It is not the oldest school in Queensland. We are all aware that All Hallows' is the oldest school in Queensland. I am pleased to see that there is some alumni of All Hallows' here tonight.

**Miss Barton:** Very proud alumni.

**Mr MADDEN:** Two alumni here tonight. That is very good. Each grammar school is governed by a seven member board of trustees appointed by the Governor in Council. The Grammar School Act provides that the board of trustees for each grammar school is a statutory body. The Grammar School Act regulates the business of grammar school boards, the keeping and auditing of accounts and the making of budgets.

The eight grammar schools were established between 1863 and 1892. Historically, the establishment of a grammar school was a form of community-government partnership that provided a cost-effective way for the state government to support secondary school education before the newly independent state was in a position to establish its own great state secondary schools. The contemporary approach is for the state to provide secondary education through the establishment of a state school under the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006. The state government also supports the provision of education through the regulation and funding of non-government schools.

I will depart from this speech now. My connection with two grammar schools in Ipswich relates to an Anzac Day service that I am the convener of each year. That is the Woodend Anzac Day service. At that service, which is a school based service, a number of schools from the Ipswich area participate. Two of those schools are the Ipswich Grammar School and Ipswich Girls' Grammar School. I am always proud when I see the grammar school students arrive. They always represent their schools with great presence and fortitude. They do great honour to our servicemen who have served in the defence of Australia.

It is a connection I have with them every year and it is a connection that I treasure. I also treasure my connection with the other schools that participate in the service: St Edmund's College, St Mary's College and St Mary's Primary School. I believe that next year for the first time—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Can we go back to the bill, please.

**Mr MADDEN:** The bill provides the minister with the power to obtain criminal history information about prospective and current board members. This aligns with the minister's powers under other legislation establishing statutory bodies in the education portfolio.

The power to obtain a person's criminal history potentially breaches a fundamental legislative principle that legislation should have sufficient regard to the rights and liberties of individuals, as contained in the Legislative Standards Act 1992. However, the power of the minister to obtain criminal history information is considered necessary to ensure the suitability of individuals appointed to statutory bodies established under the legislation within the education portfolio. Also, the bill includes safeguards to protect the interests of individuals whose criminal history is obtained under the act. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Elmes):** I am very pleased to call the minister.

 **Hon. KJ JONES (Ashgrove—ALP)** (Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism and Major Events) (5.49 pm), in reply: You did not want more of that? I want to thank everybody for their contribution here this evening on the Grammar Schools Bill—in particular, the grammarians who made comments. I do not think I have heard a school song sung into the *Hansard* before. There are three Kelvin Grove State College alumni on this side—

From the heights and valleys round about,

We come to gather on the hill,

That is all I will say. It is wonderful to see the bipartisan support for the modernisation of this legislation—something which all grammar schools have requested. I am very pleased that hopefully through the passage of this bill here tonight we will be providing them with that.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the board of trustees of each grammar school for their participation in the review of the Grammar Schools Act and the development of this bill. The bill has been enhanced through the consultation process that was undertaken, and it is pleasing that the grammar schools do support this bill. I have had the privilege since I became the Minister for Education to have numerous meetings with many representatives from the grammar schools in Queensland, including members of boards as well as the principals. I agree with all members in the parliament: they are doing a fantastic job—although I was not aware that the member for Callide was a grammarian, so there you go.

The shadow minister noted that she too also received correspondence requesting amendments to the bill to require grammar schools to comply with all recommendations arising from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. I agree with her comments. I thank her because I agree. Of course we have great sympathy for the plight of victims of sexual abuse. However, this bill before the House is not the appropriate vehicle to address some of those concerns. The Palaszczuk government, as I said earlier, supports the establishment of a single national redress scheme to provide the most effective structure for ensuring equity and consistency for victims. We are committed to working with the Commonwealth and the states and territories to settle the scope and details for the implementation of this scheme. It would be pre-emptive of this government to progress legislation around redress to victims ahead of the development and implementation of the redress scheme proposed by the royal commission.

The member for Toowoomba North raised concerns about the length of time in the past for appointment of members to grammar schools. I am very cognisant of that and it is certainly something that I have given a commitment about in person to all representatives I have met from the multiple grammar schools about ensuring that we make appointments as quickly as possible. I can assure members that the department attempts to expedite appointments in a timely manner. However, we are always happy to take on board any processes to improve that. That is certainly an assurance I have given to members of boards of trustees of grammar schools.

The bill will also ensure that the appointment of members to a grammar school board to fill a casual vacancy can be made more quickly by allowing the minister, rather than the Governor in Council, to make the appointment following due consultation with the board. The member for Broadwater also sought advice about the process for progressing ministerial appointments, noting the interest of alumni to be included in school governance. Once again, I have given my personal assurance to members of grammar school communities that my focus will absolutely be on about ensuring that we have the appropriate skills and experience for the board of trustees for grammar schools. This is particularly important in our regional communities. I firmly believe that grammar schools themselves are best placed to identify the complement of skills that are needed for their school and for their school board. This legislation requires me as minister to consult with the boards before progressing any appointments. In actual fact, this bill strengthens this consultation process by requiring the minister to consider a board's submissions about the proposed nomination including the effect of the nomination on the composition of the board.

The bill provides that the minister must be satisfied that the person has the skills, experience or expertise in commerce, corporate governance, economics, finance law, management or education or another area that the minister considers relevant or necessary to support the board in performing its functions. Once again, this is a conversation I have had with a number of representatives from grammar schools about saying how we can work better together to ensure that all of the boards have the skill set that is required to run, as you heard from the member for Brisbane Central, very large organisations often with multimillion dollar budgets.

Alumni who are interested in becoming board members can note their interest with the board. I say that to the member for Broadwater. They could also seek to be elected by their school community as an elected member provided they donate the prescribed electoral amount. This is common-sense legislation that is before the House. I thank all members for their cooperation and I thank the committee for ensuring that the bill, which hopefully will be passed in a matter of moments, is one that will serve grammar schools well into the future. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

### Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 20, as read, agreed to.

Clause 21—



**Ms JONES** (5.55 pm): I move the following amendment—

**1 Clause 21 (Criminal history report)**

Page 16, lines 8 to 10—

*omit.*

I table the explanatory notes to the amendments.

*Tabled paper:* Grammar Schools Bill 2016, explanatory notes to Hon. Kate Jones's amendments [[1846](#)].

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 21, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 22—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Elmes): I note that the minister's amendment No. 2 proposes to omit clause 22. Therefore, the minister should oppose the clause.

Clause 22, as read, negatived.

Clause 23, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—



**Ms JONES** (5.56 pm): I move the following amendment—

3

**After clause 23**

Page 17, after line 12—

*insert—*

**23A Confidentiality of criminal history information**

- (1) This section applies to a person who possesses either of the following because the person is or was an officer, employee or agent of the department—
  - (a) a report or information given to the Minister under section 21;
  - (b) a notice or information given to the Minister under section 23.
- (2) The report, notice or information is **criminal history information**.
- (3) The person must not, directly or indirectly, disclose criminal history information to any other person unless the disclosure is permitted under subsection (4).  
Maximum penalty—100 penalty units.
- (4) The person is permitted to disclose the criminal history information to another person—
  - (a) to the extent necessary to perform the person's functions under this Act; or
  - (b) if the disclosure is authorised under an Act; or
  - (c) if the disclosure is otherwise required or permitted by law; or
  - (d) if the person to whom the information relates consents to the disclosure; or
  - (e) if the disclosure is in a form that does not identify the person to whom the information relates; or
  - (f) if the information is, or has been, lawfully accessible to the public.
- (5) The Minister must ensure a document containing criminal history information is destroyed as soon as practicable after it is no longer needed for the purpose for which it was given.

As I said in my comments earlier—and I thank the shadow minister for her comments and interest in this—I think the amendments when coupled together deliver the safeguards that the committee talked about in their deliberations. This is very consistent with what happens across government. It is obviously consistent with what happened when the member was a minister in cabinet as well.

Amendment agreed to.

Clauses 24 to 79, as read, agreed to.

Schedule, as read, agreed to.

### Third Reading



**Hon. KJ JONES** (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism and Major Events) (5.57 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. KJ JONES** (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism and Major Events) (5.58 pm): I move—

That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

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

Motion agreed to.

## MOTION

### Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service



**Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (5.58 pm): I move—

That this House directs the Auditor-General, pursuant to section 35 of the Auditor-General Act 2009, to conduct an audit of the Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service, specifically:

- (a) the forecast financial performance for 2016-17 and the resulting job losses;
- (b) the circumstances of the resignation of the board;
- (c) whether the oversight of the board's operations by the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services was appropriate in the circumstances; and
- (d) any other relevant matter that becomes apparent during the audit.

Labor loves to talk about health but only the LNP has a proven track record of getting things done for Queenslanders. We can see that in what we achieved in Cairns and throughout Queensland in the time that we were in government, as opposed to the Minister for Health, the member for Woodridge, who today spoke about the 2016-17 budget in his ministerial statement before question time, when he spoke about something that one does not normally associate with the Labor Party—financial prudence.

He is like a horse race tipster who keeps tipping losers. When you come to the form guide on a Friday, you look at it in some sort of hope that maybe the tipster will get it right for the next day, Saturday, but you look at their form and you realise that they are never going to return a surplus because they have not done it in the past.

The best example is to see what happened in the financial year 2015-16 across our 16 HHSs. The forecast deficit was a \$14 million deficit. It ended up being a \$99 million deficit and Cairns was the most classic example. There was a forecast deficit of \$6 million and it ended up being \$20 million. That is the first part of our motion, which talks about the forecast financial performance for 2016-17 and the resulting job losses.

I asked about the \$6 million deficit for 2015-16 that turned into \$20 million at estimates in July. I asked a number of questions. I asked about the fact that the air conditioning was being turned off and the lights were being switched off. You would have thought that if the lights were off in Cairns maybe the lights went on in the ministerial office to ask, 'Why have we got a \$20 million deficit in Cairns? And why is it that within a couple of months of the new financial year we had an \$80 million deficit in the Cairns HHS?' That is an \$80 million deficit.

**Mr Walker:** \$80 million?

**Mr LANGBROEK:** I take the interjection from the honourable member for Mansfield—an \$80 million deficit, and that has caused the board to fall on its sword. Let us look at the contrast between what the LNP achieved in government. We gave HHSs autonomy. I note that the former minister will speak about his budget oversight when he was the minister. There was no way that we would have an HHS returning a \$20 million deficit let alone an \$80 million one, because we said we wanted HHSs to deliver surpluses—reinvest them in what was called the Better Healthcare Bonus, reduce the surgery waiting lists, expand statewide access to child health specialists, make improvements in telehealth, online bookings and central booking coordination with GPs. Under Labor we see that ramping is back at Ipswich, Redlands and Logan, and bed block is back. This is across the state, not just in Cairns, and patients are waiting longer.

It is all in the budget papers. With regard to specialist outpatients, 39 per cent of category 1 patients waited longer than clinically recommended; 50 per cent of category 2; and 26 per cent of category 3—all under Labor. It is obvious when we look at this motion that the ministerial office has serious questions to answer. In fact, we cannot trust them to have the oversight with the report from Ernst & Young that has not been released because we understand it was too specific about where the prospective deficit was coming from. I have written to the Auditor-General asking him to undertake an audit, because we need to look at all of these circumstances—the resignation of the board and the job losses that we are going to see.

Today I table a statement from the secretary of the Together union, Alex Scott, who at today's parliamentary committee hearing said that there will be job losses in Cairns.

*Tabled paper:* Article from the *Brisbane Times* online, dated 12 October 2016, titled 'Queensland health job losses in Cairns, Townsville predicted for coming year: union' [\[1847\]](#).

That is in the budget papers—247 jobs there. There are going to be 164 lost in the Wide Bay HHS and 243 in Metro South.

It is important for us to know about the oversight of the board's operations and whether it was appropriate in the circumstances. Why did the ministerial office not take any note of the things that I asked? I asked more questions of the Cairns HHS CEO at estimates than of any other HHS and yet still the alarm bells did not ring in the ministerial office. Instead of that, within two months of the new financial year there is an \$80 million prospective loss which will affect clinical services and outcomes in Cairns and the Far North where patients deserve to have the best treatment.

The final part of our motion is 'any other relevant matter that becomes apparent during the audit'. I commend this motion to the House, and I ask all members to support it. It is too important for the people of Cairns, Far North Queensland and the hinterland to see the great things that we did in government—including getting the bed block project done and practical completion of many things—now in danger of being wasted, affecting the outcomes for patients in Far North Queensland.

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (6.04 pm): As the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services, I am well aware of the importance of prudent fiscal management, which is why I was pleased to announce in the House earlier today—

**Mrs Frecklington** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Pause the clock. I apologise for interrupting you, Minister. Deputy Leader of the Opposition, you are warned under standing order 253A for those interjections. If you persist, I will take the appropriate action.

**Mr DICK:** I was pleased to announce in the House earlier today the \$51 million surplus across the system in the 2015-16 Queensland Health annual reports. As members in this House are well aware, we have a federated health system, legislated by the then Bligh Labor government and brought into effect by the Newman government on 1 July 2012. Under the act, the hospital and health services have been established as independent statutory authorities with considerable and, importantly, legislated degrees of autonomy and accountability including how they manage their finances and the funding they receive through the service agreements they sign with the Department of Health—service agreements that are also established by legislation.

Relevant sections of the act that members should be mindful of are section 7(4)(a), where each hospital and health board exercises significant responsibilities at a local level including the financial management of the service; section 9(1), 'Hospital and Health Services are individually accountable for their performance'; section 19(2), 'A Service also has the following functions—(a) to ensure the operations of the Service are carried out efficiently, effectively and economically'; and section 22, 'A Hospital and Health Board controls the Service for which it is established'. Both sides of this House supported those provisions and that is the way hospital and health services operate. These are serious and onerous responsibilities. In 2015-16, hospital and health services were allocated over 80 per cent of the Health budget, a sum of around \$11.5 billion. In 2016 that sum increased to \$12.6 billion. Under our system, oversight of its proper management is the responsibility of boards.

The deteriorating financial position in Cairns is a matter of concern and needs to be dealt with with strength and certainty to give the community confidence. That is why in April this year well before the budget, well before the estimates hearing, reputable accounting firm Ernst & Young were appointed to work with the hospital and health service to identify improvements and efficiencies to arrest the decline. Through the work of Ernst & Young, it emerged in the absence of remedial action that the Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service was forecast to deliver an operating deficit of \$80 million in 2016-17—a figure that is more than 10 per cent of the operating budget specified in its service agreement, an agreement that the board approved and executed with the department.

On 16 September I wrote to the board, which is accountable under the act for the financial performance of the hospital and health service, to show cause and to ask why it should not be dismissed. On 19 September I was contacted by Carolyn Eagle, Chair of the Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Services Board, who was first appointed to the board by the Newman Liberal National Party government, advising me that the board members had collectively tendered their resignations. At that time I thanked the board members for their service and accepted their resignations. On 23 September I announced that I had appointed respected health professional Terry Mehan as administrator for the Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service and the Director-General of the Department of Health, Mr Michael Walsh, as an acting interim administrator. I have always said that the Ernst & Young report would be released publicly, and I undertake to the House tonight to table it in this parliament.

The Office of the Auditor-General plays an important role in ensuring public services remain accountable to the people of Queensland. It is critical that the independence of that office be respected by both sides of the House and that the Auditor-General be free to pursue the work he considers best serves the interests of Queensland. The Auditor-General is entitled to investigate the financial performance of any state public entity and has made a valuable contribution to the quality of public administration and the continuing drive to find efficiencies and deliver value for money for the Queensland taxpayer. Indeed, the Auditor-General recently signed off on the 2015-16 annual report of the Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service. In the view of the government, involvement of the Queensland Audit Office would be premature at this time. The Ernst & Young report is close to finalisation, I am advised by the Department of Health, and will soon be ready for public release and it will be tabled in this House.

My advice to the House would be to await its release. It is premature to act at this time. I ask members of the House to await the release of this report, to carefully consider its contents and its recommendations, to not unduly waste public moneys by authorising another audit that may be unnecessary and for the House, when it considers those matters, to make an informed decision on what further action might be deemed appropriate. Members should oppose the motion.

*(Time expired)*

 **Mr PYNE** (Cairns—Ind) (6.09 pm): I rise in support of the motion in its entirety. This has become necessary due to the treatment of the Cairns and hinterland health board. It was effectively sacked by the minister, the Hon. Cameron Dick, on 16 to 23 September 2016. This was done through a show cause and board resignation. However, had the minister not issued a show cause, the board would be getting on with their job. Instead, an administrator has now been appointed to operate in place of the board. The appointment of an administrator has raised concerns of cuts to health spending in Cairns, cuts to services and cuts to jobs.

Last week I attended a rally of Cairns Hospital staff concerned about losing jobs at the hospital. This included a number of staff positions, including Indigenous liaison officers employed under temporary employment contracts. These staff, who are essential in providing quality patient care, are rightly concerned about losing their jobs. Prior to the last election, I stood shoulder to shoulder to protect health jobs with people like Kevin O'Sullivan, Deb Pearson and Sandy Donald from Together, with Kaylene Turnbull and Kristy Bishop from the Nurses' Union, and with Jennifer Miran from United Voice. I attended many rallies against job cuts under the former government. Last week I rallied against job cuts by this government. For me, it does not matter what party is in government—if you want to cut health services in Cairns and sack staff, I will fight you every step of the way.

The now former board was skills based and consisted of highly regarded professional locals. It was a non-political board with a clear awareness that money drives health services. The board had been performing well and had taken on the tough reality of the regional health service's financial situation. This ministerial intervention came as a shock to the board, staff, me and the community. The board had recognised many months ago that things had started tracking over budget. The board did all the right things and acknowledged that trajectory. They had a worst-case scenario budget prepared and it was this worst-case scenario that projected an \$80 million deficit.

I am advised that the minister did visit last year and stakeholders came together to work on best management and business management outcomes along with the best outcomes for the community and patients to prevent this worst-case scenario. The annual report for 2016 has been released publicly and I am advised that at 30 June 2016 there was a \$20 million deficit. The projected worst-case estimate of \$80 million was run with by the media and others, including the minister and the department. However, the context was lost in the storytelling. Spin won the day.

This board had faced up to the issues, had done the work and had commenced addressing it. This entailed a three-year plan targeted at the right things to make a real difference in financial performance and culture and not impact health services. This functioning health board has been used as a scapegoat and been unjustifiably threatened with being sacked by the minister. The trigger for their sacking and resignation was financial and there is discrepancy about the detail surrounding those numbers and the 'story', so an audit as proposed here is the only reasonable way forward—not just a poke and a report but an audit.

Health services are vitally important for my electorate and the catchment area that it serves. Thirty-three per cent of patients are Indigenous and there is a large geographic catchment area. The Cairns and hinterland health service was at the centre of the very successful response to the 2015 Ravenshoe cafe gas explosion—a disaster that resulted in a mass casualty event and that was the

worst burns accident in Queensland history. Our regional hospital and health services did the heavy lifting and continue to provide coordinated, multidisciplinary care during patient recovery. Burns treatment and recovery is complex and costly, and this will go on for many years as each patient moves through recovery and rehabilitation.

Again, this week we have seen a tragic mass casualty event at Kowanyama. The Cairns and hinterland health service is again at the centre of this response and recovery doing the heavy lifting both immediately and for the long haul through treatment and rehabilitation. These are just two examples—

*(Time expired)*

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (6.14 pm): I rise to speak against the motion by the member for Surfers Paradise. He invited us to look at the great things that they did in government. I looked at those closely when I worked in Queensland Health and I saw great big cuts.

Earlier today we heard the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services deliver a ministerial statement outlining the achievements of Queensland Health as detailed in the 2015-16 annual report—front-line services restored, waiting lists slashed, a \$51 million surplus and, most importantly for me, nurses and doctors put back in the system, because I was there when they were walked out the door. No wonder the member for Surfers Paradise has been reduced to this callow political stunt. It is the only arrow he has left to fire, but as usual he has missed the target and the point.

He should know the point by now—that, under our federal model, health and hospital services are independent statutory authorities. The nurses and the allied health professionals at QEII where I worked know this. The nurses and the staff at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital where I worked know this. They know, as the member for Surfers Paradise should know, that the HHSs are responsible for the delivery of the services they are commissioned to provide within the budget allocated under the service agreements they sign with the Department of Health. The management in the HHSs that I worked in never tired of reminding the staff that they were responsible for this. In other words, they—or more specifically the boards that govern them—are accountable for the financial management of the hospital and health services they have been established to oversee. The member for Surfers Paradise does not know whether he is walking towards his shadow or away from it.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr KELLY:** He spends half his time in here, as he did in estimates, railing against—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. I am having difficulty hearing the speaker.

**Mr KELLY:** He spends half his time in here, as he did in estimates, railing against what he calls command central—blaming the minister and the department for interfering with health and hospital services and their ability to manage their own affairs. Now he has the audacity to come into this House complaining that the minister and the department have not interfered sufficiently with the HHSs and their ability to manage their own affairs.

Unfortunately, he has flip-flop form. One day he is out there complaining about the fact that we are employing too many people; the next day he is out and about complaining about job cuts. He asked us to contrast. What a contrast he strikes to the Minister for Health, who has acted decisively to deal with the deteriorating financial situation in Cairns. Clearly, the decisions that were made by the executive team and endorsed by the board were financially unsustainable. By asking the Queensland Audit Office to re-audit the Cairns HHS, the member for Surfers Paradise is impugning the reputation of Ernst & Young by challenging their capability to complete the work for which they have been commissioned. The member for Surfers Paradise has form in dismissing independent inquiries.

**A government member:** Bad form.

**Mr KELLY:** It is bad form; I take that interjection. He dismissed the findings of the eminent QC, Margaret Wilson, into the closure of the Barrett centre as a political witch-hunt. At least he had the decency to wait until the report was released. The Ernst & Young audit of Cairns is still being finalised, yet the member for Surfers Paradise—a little too overeager, a little too anxious to try to get at least one point and one run on the board—has jumped the gun and immediately tripped over his feet. Perhaps it is because of the flip-flops.

This is not to dismiss the importance of proper financial management or to absolve the Cairns HHS management for the decisions they made that led their service into a deteriorating fiscal position. We should get out of the way of Ernst & Young and let them complete their report and let the plans for financial recovery already underway to restore the financial health—

*(Time expired)*

**Mr SPEAKER:** Before I call the member for Southern Downs I am informed that we have two former members in our public gallery observing our proceedings: Matt Foley and Kerry Shine. Welcome.

 **Mr SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (6.19 pm): As I have sat here and listened to those members opposite I have seen and heard a combination of revisionism, amnesia and self-romancing. I do not know where these people were some 4½ years ago when Anna Bligh said the Queensland health system was such a dysfunctional basket case—it had outgrown its bureaucracy—she needed to create two bureaucracies: one to run the bureaucracy and the other one to run the hospitals. Guess what? The member who is now the Minister for Health was sitting in the cabinet with her when that happened. The member who is the Minister for Health was also sitting there when the Queensland health system in the last full year of the Labor Party ran a \$300 million budget deficit. Indeed, in the last nine months of their last year in government they ran up a deficit of \$142 million. They never heard anything about surpluses when they were in government. The only reason they can run a surplus today is they are reducing the surplus that they were left in the health system.

I listened to the member for Greenslopes and I do not know where he was working in the health system, but it obviously was not in a hospital which was subject to ambulance bypass where patients were in ambulances for up to nine hours going from Ipswich, Logan and then to the QEII. When they were bypassing, people were dying in ambulances. We had ambulance ramping all over the place. We had the fake Tahitian prince and who can forget we had a \$6 million Health payroll contract that blew out to \$1.253 billion? There was a health waiting list for elective surgery of 6,485 which was reduced to 200 by the time we left office and a dental waiting list of 63,000 people waiting more than clinically recommended when we came to government. It was zero within 18 months. In Cairns there were 1,300 people waiting on that dental waiting list. When we took over there was zero after 18 months. There was a reduction, a significant reduction. Indeed, the 400-odd patients who were waiting on the long-wait surgical waitlist in Cairns were reduced to zero by 30 June in 2014.

When we came to government the last Labor Party budget in Cairns was \$570 million, and that had increased by about 17 per cent by the time we had finished—well over \$600 million, almost \$700 million. We were able to put those accumulated surpluses into a new MRI in the Cairns Hospital. We saw the cardiac unit expand from two days to five and to go on from there as well. In the first full year of the LNP stewardship we saw the Cairns hospital and health service run a surplus of almost \$6 million after years of deficit. In the following year, the 2013-14 financial year, they ran a very small deficit of \$114,000. In our last full year that we were responsible for a budget in 2014-15, they ran an \$8.8 million surplus at Cairns hospital and health service. Something went wrong in the ensuing year. In the first full year of the Labor Party that went from an \$8.8 million surplus to an \$80 billion blowout. That is the legacy of the Labor Party's administration of health care. It is about bureaucracy. It is about dysfunction. It is about waste.

Let us not have any of this revisionism from the minister, who said that the Labor Party created hospital boards. No, they did not. They created hospital and health networks with a very restricted mandate of autonomy. They did not have the ability to employ staff, they did not have the ability to own assets and they had limited ability in other areas of autonomy. What this government did was significantly reduce the opportunities for the hospital boards to be able to run the things that they can effectively run. That in itself is creating a delineation; it is creating a dilution of the ability of those hospital boards to do what they should do. Despite Anna Bligh—Annastacia Palaszczuk; there is probably not a lot of difference. Despite Annastacia Palaszczuk saying on 8 January 2015 in a Health policy 'the buck stops with the minister', there is a minister over there saying that he has no responsibility. Either they have responsibility or they do not. Whatever the case, there is a significant problem and the only way to get to the bottom of it is a proper audit with the Auditor-General.

*(Time expired)*

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Minister for Sport) (6.24 pm): I rise to support the contribution made by the health minister. As a member of this House, with my electorate in Mulgrave in Far North Queensland and also with my responsibilities as Treasurer, I was naturally concerned by the news about the deteriorating financial position of the Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service. This House would be well aware of the emphasis this government has placed on careful financial management, and it can look to budget surpluses delivered and forecast as evidence. I would just like to go back to the member for Southern Downs. He asks where were we four years ago, and he continued to rattle off the same things he talks about all the time. We can play word bingo when the member for Southern Downs gets up and talks about the health system. Where was he when he oversaw the departure of more than 4,000 Health workers? Where was he when that happened? What about the fact that the member for Moggill was

lauding the wait-time gimmick? That has not even started yet he is still claiming credit for anything that has happened in the health system. I think he is the one with amnesia, not anyone on this side of the House.

We recognise that the increasing demand on health services is putting financial pressure on our system. This is a situation that we know has not been helped by the Commonwealth government's approach, of their insistence on walking away from their responsibility to fund their fair share. Make no mistake that the cuts that the federal government is making to Health spending will have a direct and negative impact on our capacity to deliver health services to Queenslanders. Nonetheless, we have to have high expectations, as we should of health service boards, to properly manage the budgets that they have been given and they sign up to in our service agreements. Regrettably, the Cairns HHB have failed to live up to those expectations. As a local MP, I have made my position very clear that our priority must be ensuring the people of Far North Queensland continue to have the health services that they both need and deserve.

The act is very clear about the responsibilities that boards have for financial management of their services. Under the circumstances, the board acted in the manner they considered appropriate when they tendered their resignations in the face of the scale of deficit that is forecast for 2016-17. These decisions are never easy and they require a steady hand. I certainly commend the minister for the way he has managed this matter, both in the prompt action he took and in the respectful way in which he dealt with the board. I know the accounting firm Ernst & Young were appointed in April this year when it first became apparent that there was a problem with the management of the budgetary position, and of course that was emerging: it was the work that revealed the prospect of an \$80 million deficit by the end of this financial year. I am advised that part of that work involved the development of a financial recovery strategy and a number of recommendations aimed at restoring the financial health of the Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service. I also note the commitment of the minister to table that report. I look forward to reading its recommendations and hearing how the work of fiscal repair is proceeding.

Whilst the performance of the Cairns HHS is a cause for concern, it should not be allowed to colour the financial performance of the health system overall which the annual reports tabled on 30 September show to be a system in surplus despite increased demand and significant improvements in performance. I also wanted to dispel any lingering doubts that those opposite might have that the financial difficulties we are seeing in Cairns have anything to do with the underfunding. Since the last budget of the Newman government, funding to the Cairns HHS increased by \$110 million—from \$667 million to \$778 million—an increase of 16 per cent at a time—

**Mr Springborg** interjected.

**Mr PITT:**—for the benefit of the member for Southern Downs, when inflation is running at less than three per cent. I would also like to point out that the 2015-16 Cairns HHS annual report was signed off by the Auditor-General's office. That is pretty important when we are looking at the motion that has been put forward tonight.

I want to echo the sentiments of the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services and record my respect for both the work and the independence of the Auditor-General. We on this side of the House respect the independence of the Auditor-General. I know those opposite had a big problem when some of the reports came out that absolutely tarred them in relation to 'back of the envelope' calculations regarding 1 William Street; we will never forget that one.

We acknowledge the right of the Auditor-General to conduct a financial investigation into any public entity, including the Cairns HHS. That is the work they perform on a delay basis, and it is up to them as an independent statutory authority to make those calls. I would ask the House to be temperate in its consideration of this matter in light of the work that is already underway by Ernst & Young and in view of the fact that the 2015-16 report, which was tabled two weeks ago, was audited and signed off by the Auditor-General's office on 31 August. This motion is nothing more than a stunt. We are used to seeing stunts from those opposite. I hope that members of this House treat it for what it is, and that is a political stunt.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The question is that the motion be agreed to. I think the ayes have it.

**An honourable member:** Divide.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I said the ayes have it. A division can only be called by the government.

**Mr SEENEY:** I rise on a point of order. Can you confirm that you called the vote for the ayes?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Yes.

**An honourable member:** Divide.

**Mr SPEAKER:** A division has been called. Ring the bells for four minutes.

Division: Question put—That the motion 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**—Pyne.

**NOES, 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.

**KAP, 2**—Katter, Knuth.

Resolved in the negative.

Sitting suspended from 6.36 pm to 7.40 pm.

## PUBLIC HEALTH (MEDICINAL CANNABIS) BILL

Resumed from 10 May (see p. 1551).

### Second Reading

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (7.40 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I table the government's response to the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee's report on this bill.

*Tabled paper:* Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee: Report No. 26—Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill 2016, government response [\[1848\]](#).

I am proud as health minister to be progressing this groundbreaking reform. This bill will change the paradigm for seriously ill patients who often feel compelled to seek out illicit cannabis treatment options by enshrining in an act a legal and safe pathway through which to access medicinal cannabis treatment. It is an important step in the Palaszczuk government's commitment to advancing the health of Queenslanders.

The framework proposed by the Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill 2016 is unique in terms of the flexibility it affords Queenslanders to apply for approval to use medicinal cannabis products. This flexibility will enable a Queensland patient who does not fall neatly into a recognised category to apply for access to treatment and have their case considered on its merits. Queensland will be best placed to understand the demand for medicinal cannabis and continuously improve its legislative framework and practices as the evidence base for medicinal cannabis grows.

Before I thank the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee for its diligent and thorough consideration of the bill and for its report, tabled on 30 September 2016, I want to dispel some of the concerns, myths and misconceptions about this bill. Firstly, there is a misconception among some in the community that the bill only allows the use of synthetic medicinal cannabis products. This was raised by a number of submissions to the committee's inquiry. Most recently, Queensland Senator Pauline Hanson voiced this concern in the Australian Senate. Let me say once and for all: this bill does not prohibit the use of botanically derived medicinal cannabis products, sometimes referred to as whole plant products. This could not be further from the truth, in fact. The bill enables access to both synthetic and botanically derived cannabis products. There are no restrictions in the bill on the form of medicinal cannabis products that may be prescribed. Permitting the use of botanically derived medicinal cannabis products is fundamental to an effective framework as very few synthetic medicinal cannabis products have been developed or are available in Australia. It is therefore expected that most approvals granted under the bill will be for botanically derived products.

During consultation on the bill and the committee's inquiry, some stakeholders argued that patients should be able to grow their own plants for therapeutic purposes, and I am aware that there are people who have gone down this path in the absence of a legal alternative. However, people must

understand that there are significant safety risks associated with products grown outside of the therapeutic goods framework. Homegrown or illicit cannabis products have unknown concentrations of active ingredients and may contain potentially harmful contaminants. The strength or dose of a product can vary over time. Even when cultivated domestically, cannabis plants intended for a therapeutic purpose must comply with the World Health Organization's guidelines on good agricultural and collection practice and the Therapeutic Goods Administration's principles and procedures on good manufacturing practice before they may be used. These requirements will deliver a crop of consistent, contaminant-free and medical grade cannabis which are essential characteristics of all prescription medicines.

Current and proposed Commonwealth and state regulations are designed to ensure the supply of medicinal cannabis is safe. The community has a right to expect that any medicine prescribed to them by a doctor is as safe as it possibly can be when used as recommended. This is without a doubt the case for medicinal cannabis, where many early patients are also expected to be children with intractable epilepsy. Doctors must have confidence that any substance they prescribe to help treat a patient is safe. Doctors and their patients need to know that any medical product used for treatment has a predictable and reliable effect. That is why we put controls around the approval and use of any medicine. People expect and have a right to expect that medicines sold to them are safe when used appropriately. Users of medicinal cannabis products deserve the same certainty. The measures in place at the state and Commonwealth levels both help patients and protect them.

Some have suggested that we should have followed the approach taken in Victoria or New South Wales. This arises from a misunderstanding of the differences between this bill and the Victorian and New South Wales schemes. As I have already noted, Queensland's proposed scheme takes a unique approach. The bill establishes two pathways by which patients may receive treatment with medicinal cannabis. The patient class prescriber pathway will allow certain specialist doctors to prescribe medicinal cannabis products for particular patients without the need for any additional approvals from Queensland Health. Specialists practising in medical oncology, neurology and palliative care medicine are expected to be among the first specialists approved under the bill. The single-patient prescriber pathway will enable medical practitioners who believe that an individual patient may benefit from medicinal cannabis treatment to apply to Queensland Health for approval to prescribe medicinal cannabis to the patient. This pathway will enable any doctor, including a general practitioner, to apply to Queensland Health for access to medicinal cannabis for their patients. Each and every case will be assessed on an individual basis.

This is in sharp contrast to the approach taken in other jurisdictions. The Victorian Access to Medicinal Cannabis Act 2016 will give patients in that state access to medicinal cannabis products. However, while the Victorian scheme may expand to include other conditions at a later date, it is currently limited to children with treatment resistant epilepsy. Victoria will also require every patient to be authorised by the health secretary before they may access medicinal cannabis products, with no as-of-right authority for specialists, as is proposed for Queensland. The Queensland scheme will also be more flexible than the New South Wales approach, which requires every patient to be considered by an expert panel before getting access to medicinal cannabis treatment.

Why is this flexibility important? The committee heard from a range of people with debilitating and painful conditions. Debbi Cliff shared her story of suffering from severe spinal and joint pain as a result of Ehlers-Danlos syndrome. Another submitter told the committee of his 82-year-old father who, following partial amputation of his arm, lives in chronic pain. The committee also heard from a 66-year-old woman with emphysema. Many parents shared their heartbreaking stories of children suffering from intractable epilepsy. This bill will give those patients a legal pathway to seek access to medicinal cannabis treatment. It will enable Queensland Health to consider their individual circumstances and determine whether an approval for medicinal cannabis treatment should be granted. It is this flexibility that puts Queensland at the forefront of medicinal cannabis access in Australia.

Stakeholders were understandably concerned to have access to affordable medicinal cannabis products. I appreciate that the price of therapeutic goods can be an issue of great distress for patients and their families. However, again, it is important that we deal in facts and understand what Queensland can and cannot do in this regard. The price for medicinal cannabis products is determined by the market. Currently, commercial medicinal cannabis products are not cultivated or manufactured in Australia because that is illegal, although that situation is changing. Those products must therefore be imported from overseas, usually from Canada or the Netherlands. This means the price is set by the overseas manufacturer.

The cost varies greatly depending on the product, its source, shipping expenses and customs fees. It is hoped that over time a mature Australian medicinal cannabis industry will develop and medicinal cannabis products will be both readily available and affordable. I must make it clear that the Queensland government will not subsidise the cost of medicinal cannabis products as this is a role that is played by the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth only subsidises products listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, otherwise known as the PBS. Before a product is listed on the PBS, it must be registered by the TGA on the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods. To be clear, the decision about whether a drug is listed on the PBS and the level of any subsidy is a matter for the Commonwealth government.

Moving now to the committee's examination of the bill, which I note was particularly detailed taking account of the broad range of views expressed by stakeholders, I again thank the committee for its detailed work. Much of the information considered by the committee, particularly regarding Commonwealth and state legislation, was complex. This was important work carried out by the committee. I also acknowledge all those who contributed to the committee's inquiry by making submissions or giving evidence. Your views have been carefully considered by the committee and by the Palaszczuk government. Many of the submissions to the committee testified to the fact that some patients do feel their suffering is alleviated by the use of medicinal cannabis. Epilepsy Queensland stated that, for children with intractable or treatment resistant epilepsy, even a small reduction in seizure frequency and severity can make a very significant contribution to the patient's wellbeing and the wellbeing of those around them.

Multiple Sclerosis Australia and Multiple Sclerosis Research Australia provided a joint submission in support of the creation of a regulatory framework under which medicinal cannabis products may be prescribed to patients in Queensland while also preventing their unauthorised use. Their submission noted that currently there are 23,000 people in Australia living with MS, which can be a debilitating and unpredictable disease. According to MS Australia and MS Research Australia, over 80 per cent of MS sufferers experience muscle spasticity during the course of their disease, negatively impacting on mobility and personal independence. Spasticity can cause pain, sleep disturbance and reduced mobility which can significantly limit a person's quality of life. MS Australia and MS Research Australia support the use of any proven treatment that helps to minimise the impact of the disease and allow people with MS to live more fulfilling lives. As noted in their submission, clinical trials of some medicinal cannabis products have shown benefits in improving muscle spasticity, motor control and pain. MS Australia and MS Research Australia are in favour of a regulatory framework that will facilitate further clinical trials to ensure the efficacy and safety of medicinal cannabis products and look at further potential benefits for MS sufferers that may be derived from cannabis based products.

This bill has been the subject of extensive consultation, not just through the committee process but during its development. The draft bill and discussion paper were released for comment in March this year. Over 1,000 responses were received through the online survey on the Queensland government Get Involved website, with over 96 per cent of respondents in favour of the use of medicinal cannabis in Queensland. Targeted consultation was also undertaken with medical practitioners and industry groups. Nurses, palliative care and disability workers expressed their support of the bill through the online survey, with one palliative care worker stating that they had seen the benefits of cannabis in easing nausea and controlling seizures when other medication had not worked.

I thank the committee for its recommendation that the bill be passed and the two additional recommendations it made. The committee recommended the bill be amended to remove the ability for the chief executive to request criminal history reports. The intent of giving the chief executive this discretion was to ensure additional controls could be put in place, if required, to ensure medicinal cannabis products were not diverted and used illegally. The committee's recommendation reflects the concern expressed by some stakeholders that patients might be denied access to medicinal cannabis on the basis of their criminal history or their medical practitioner's criminal history. The government has listened carefully to the views expressed by stakeholders and accepts the committee's recommendation. I will move amendments during consideration in detail of the bill to remove the discretion relating to criminal history checks. While the discretion will be removed, all medicinal cannabis approvals will still be subject to conditions designed to ensure the safety of patients and the security of the cannabis products. I am confident that the effect of these conditions and the offence provisions in the bill and the Drugs Misuse Act 1986 will be to facilitate the safe and secure use of medicinal cannabis products in Queensland.

The committee also recommended that the Queensland government, with the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries as the lead department, prioritise its investigation of options for obtaining a licence to cultivate and manufacture medicinal cannabis in Queensland. The government is happy to

accept this recommendation. As the committee noted, the cultivation and manufacture of medicinal cannabis in Queensland offers the potential to improve patient access to medicinal cannabis products and create agriculture and business opportunities for our state. This is an industry with real potential and one I consider we should promote in Queensland.

Internationally, medicinal cannabis has been approved for use in many countries including Austria, Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Israel, Italy, New Zealand, Spain, Sweden and the United States. In 2014 the legal medicinal cannabis market was one of the USA's fastest growing industries, growing from \$1.5 billion in 2013 to \$2.7 billion in 2014. In Europe medicinal cannabis is currently used by patients in 10 European countries. The largest markets are France, Italy, the Netherlands and Romania. In Canada the market for medicinal cannabis was estimated at \$144 million in 2014, with an expected annual growth of 23 per cent to 2024, when the market is projected to be worth \$1.4 billion.

The bill does not include provisions to regulate the cultivation or manufacture of medicinal cannabis products as this is the purpose of the recent amendments to the Commonwealth Narcotic Drugs Act 1967. The Department of Health and the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries have already commenced work to ensure Queensland is able to encourage and support cultivation and manufacturing. Like many aspects of medicinal cannabis, responsibility for the manufacture and cultivation of medicinal cannabis is shared between the Commonwealth and states and territories. On 24 February 2016 the Commonwealth government passed amendments to the Narcotic Drugs Act to establish a legislative scheme for the cultivation, production and manufacture of medicinal cannabis for research and therapeutic purposes. Under the Commonwealth scheme, licenced businesses will develop the capacity to cultivate and manufacture medicinal cannabis in Australia. The scheme is expected to commence at the end of October.

Any cannabis plants intended for a therapeutic purpose will be required to comply with the World Health Organization's guidelines on good agricultural and collection practice and the Therapeutic Goods Administration's principles and procedures on good manufacturing practice before they may be used. As described previously, these requirements are needed to deliver consistent, contaminant-free and high-grade medicinal cannabis products—essential qualities for any medicine. Domestic cultivation will also be subject to stringent security requirements because of the high risk of raw cannabis plants being diverted for unlawful purposes.

The bill will support the emerging medicinal cannabis industry by providing a legal pathway for people to access medicinal cannabis products, building demand for products. Within the Queensland government, responsibility for issues relating to manufacture and cultivation is shared between the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and the Department of Health. The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries has administrative responsibility for part 5B of the Drugs Misuse Act 1986 which facilitates the processing and marketing of, and trade in, industrial cannabis fibre and fibre products, known as hemp. The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries has responsibility for administering the licensing scheme for industrial cannabis and for the associated compliance monitoring inspection services. This is currently undertaken by Biosecurity Queensland.

The Department of Health is working to support the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries to investigate how Queensland industries can participate in the new Commonwealth licensing scheme. Together these departments have held a recent series of roundtable meetings with industry representatives across the state. The Commonwealth has proposed a role for state and territory governments in licensing medicinal cannabis manufacturing. As a consequence, Queensland will also have a role in licensing manufacturers. In addition to the Commonwealth Therapeutic Goods Administration and Office of Drug Control licensing requirements, a state licence will be required to ensure medicinal cannabis products are stored securely, that the risk of diversion is managed appropriately and that other relevant controls are maintained.

This may require amendments to the bill's framework in 2017 once the Commonwealth's licencing framework is settled. Queensland Health will be the single point of contact at the state level for the Commonwealth's assessment of cultivation and manufacturing licences. Queensland Health will assist in the assessment of these licence applications by gathering information, reviewing licence applications, liaising with other Queensland government agencies as required and providing advice to the Commonwealth as to the suitability of the application from Queensland's perspective. I look forward to continuing Queensland Health's work on these important regulatory issues alongside my colleague the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries, who is working to explore options for cultivating and manufacturing medicinal cannabis in Queensland.

Finally, I would like to briefly address the concerns raised by the non-government members on the committee about the perceived duplication of state and Commonwealth approvals. As I have noted, the Queensland government and the Commonwealth both have a role in relation to therapeutic goods such as medicinal cannabis. Constitutionally, the Commonwealth can and has passed legislation to regulate specific aspects of the process relating to the supply of therapeutic goods, including unapproved goods such as cannabis, using its powers relating to, for example, constitutional corporations and trade and commerce. The states and territories are then responsible for any matters not covered by the Commonwealth's area of responsibilities. As a result, the Commonwealth has broad responsibility for controlling which drugs can be used for therapeutic purposes. The states are responsible for regulating patient access to these drugs.

Commonwealth and state legislation is complementary and generally operates together to regulate medicines and poisons effectively. The Department of Health has spent considerable time satisfying itself that the regulatory framework provided for by the bill complements the Commonwealth system rather than duplicates the Commonwealth requirements.

Medicinal cannabis is a relatively new treatment option in Australia. As it is currently an unapproved therapeutic good, it is still subject to additional controls, including the requirement for the Therapeutic Goods Administration to approve supply of the drug. Until locally manufactured medicinal cannabis products are readily available, all medicinal cannabis products will be imported. This will require treating doctors to obtain customs approvals from the TGA to import suitable products in addition to the other approvals that they need to treat patients with medicinal cannabis.

I acknowledge that there is some duplication in the information required to meet both of those processes. However, the Queensland government is taking steps to minimise any duplication for doctors or their patients. For example, information in the state application form for access to medicinal cannabis can be used in the TGA application form. If confidentiality issues can be resolved, the TGA and Queensland Health can deal directly to exchange information without having to follow up with the applicant. To ensure that processes are streamlined wherever possible, Queensland Health engages regularly with its interstate counterparts and Commonwealth authorities. The TGA's cannabis access working group, which includes representatives of Queensland Health and all other states and territories, considers these issues at its meetings. Importantly, the streamlining of processes is not just Queensland's responsibility. Commonwealth agencies have every opportunity to identify and pursue streamlining initiatives.

Non-government members were concerned that clauses 206 and 207 of the bill, which deal with liability for offences, may breach fundamental legislative principles without appropriate justification. Firstly, let me say that clauses 206 and 207 reflect standard provisions used across Queensland legislation. Broadly, clause 206 provides that an act done for an entity by their representative—for example, an employee—is taken to have been done by the entity unless it can prove it could not, by the exercise of reasonable diligence, have prevented the act. It would enable an employer, such as a pharmacy, to be held liable for a breach of the bill's provisions where an employee commits the breach. The employer would not be liable if they can establish that due diligence on their part would not have prevented the breach. This standard provision ensures that legal entities can be held liable for the actions of their employees.

Similar provisions are included in many Queensland acts including, for example, the Agents Financial Administration Act 2014, the Biosecurity Act 2014, the Education and Care Services Act 2013, the Food Act 2006 and the Further Education and Training Act 2014. Clause 207 is an executive liability provision and is consistent with other executive liability provisions used in Queensland legislation.

The Directors' Liability Reform Amendment Act 2013, introduced by the Newman LNP government, standardised executive liability provisions across Queensland's statute books and amended approximately 30 acts to include provisions that are equivalent to clause 207. This type of provision encourages company directors to ensure that they take steps to avoid the company being in breach of the bill. Breaches of the bill's provisions could have serious consequences, including unlawful diversion of cannabis products or personal harm to patients. For that reason, clauses 206 and 207 are considered justified as they will encourage corporations to take particular care to avoid harm.

Queensland Health's *My health, Queensland's future: Advancing health 2026*, the 10-year vision and strategic framework for health in Queensland, recognises the importance of encouraging clinicians and researchers to identify and embed new evidence based practices in day-to-day care. The Palaszczuk government is committed to advancing the health of Queenslanders by finding new and

innovative approaches to medical treatment. We know that, where traditional medicine alone is not helping a patient, medicinal cannabis may improve a patient's quality of life. Queensland is leading the way in Australia in providing access to medicinal cannabis.

The bill is expected to commence in March 2017. The Palaszczuk government has consulted extensively on this bill and it is important that key stakeholders have an opportunity to provide input into the supporting regulation to be made under the bill. During this period, Queensland Health will develop guidance materials to support the new processes. However, patients will not need to wait until March to access medicinal cannabis. The Palaszczuk government has already taken steps to ensure that medicinal cannabis treatment is available in appropriate cases in Queensland by amending the Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation 1996 in December 2015. This framework will remain in place to support appropriate access in the interim. The Palaszczuk government is committed to providing Queenslanders with access to medicinal cannabis as a treatment option where it may assist these patients. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (8.06 pm): I rise to speak to the Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill 2016. I thank the committee for its work in assessing this bill.

Earlier this year, the federal government passed a number of changes to Commonwealth legislation that opened the door for the states and territories to enact legislation that would aid the availability of medicinal cannabis to approved patients in certain circumstances. Such changes included an amendment to the Commonwealth Therapeutic Goods Act 1989—the TGA—and the Commonwealth Narcotic Drugs Act 1967. The amendment to the TGA down-scheduled some cannabis derivatives from a schedule 9 to a schedule 8 when used for medical purposes. The down-scheduling for scientific or medicinal purposes is intended to ensure that those qualified have access to the substance for medical and scientific research while maintaining strict controls so that it is not manipulated for illicit purposes. Further, the Narcotic Drugs Act 1967 was amended in February to establish a national licensing scheme.

This framework facilitates the cultivation of cannabis for strictly medicinal or scientific purposes in Australia or, as Minister Ley described, it 'provides a secure supply chain from farm to pharmacy that will give patients access to medicinal cannabis products'. In effect, these changes mean that the states and territories can allow selected patients in their states access to medicinal cannabis if they decide to do so.

In light of these changes federally, the bill before us today—and I quote the explanatory notes—creates 'a new regulatory framework under which medicinal cannabis products may be prescribed and dispensed to patients in Queensland while also preventing their unauthorised use'. Under this bill, the term 'medicinal cannabis' is defined as 'a cannabis product ... used ... for human therapeutic purposes' but is not a product that is already registered that is part of the cannabis plant, derived from the cannabis plant, or a drug that has or is intended to have a substantially similar pharmacological effect to a part of the cannabis plant or something derived from the plant.

Specifically, this framework consists of two pathways for a patient to receive medicinal cannabis, the first being a single-patient prescriber and the second a patient class prescriber. The single-patient prescriber allows medical practitioners to submit an application with the chief executive of Queensland Health for approval to prescribe medicinal cannabis to a patient. The bill provides that the chief executive may consider a number of factors when deciding whether to approve medicinal cannabis for a patient.

According to the report, some of these factors include, but are not limited to, the patient's medical condition and symptoms, the form and dosage of the medicinal cannabis proposed and the patient's history of drug dependence.

The second option, which is the patient class prescriber, waives the abovementioned approval process by allowing specific practitioners an as-of-right to prescribe medicinal cannabis to patients. The committee report indicated that the list of eligible patient conditions under this pathway could grow as more research is conducted or made available. Both processes would still require applicants to seek approval through the Therapeutic Goods Administration, the TGA, and is thus a two-step process.

Some concerns were raised—and I note the minister has attempted to address those—about the potential duplication of the process under the state of Queensland's bill, the bill before us now, and the Therapeutic Goods Act. As my colleague the member for Caloundra and deputy chair of the committee rightly pointed out in his statement of reservation—

The question raised needs to be fully explained as to whether a duplication exists, more importantly if the duplication exists why it exists and critically if that duplication does exist what steps the government is taking to rectify the concern raised.

The director of the Legislative Policy Unit in the Department of Health also stated on 29 August before the committee—

As the situation stands at the moment, the TGA would go through its own consideration of the patient's details, diagnosis and circumstances and its own consideration of the clinical justification for the drugs being sought. In that sense there is a duplication of the considerations occurring at state and Commonwealth level, but, as Ms Forrester has said, we are working with the TGA, as are other jurisdictions, to streamline that consideration. The end goal would be perhaps we get to a point where, if there is state approved access, the TGA would then endorse that approval.

I note that the minister has attempted to explain how that is going to work in a practical sense, but they were the concerns raised by the committee and by the member for Caloundra in the statement of reservation.

The bill as it currently stands does not sufficiently outline what steps will be taken to ensure that this duplication is addressed. I would like the minister to advise how a streamlined process would be negotiated, either with the federal Department of Health or at a COAG level, notwithstanding the explanation that he has just given in his second reading speech. Can I also say that the LNP opposition is supporting this bill.

I note other concerns raised during the committee process include the time scales associated with obtaining medicinal cannabis, the cost of obtaining medicinal cannabis and the current requirement to import medicinal cannabis products and restrictions on varying the dose of medicinal cannabis prescribed to patients. However, it is not recommended that these concerns hold up the passage of the bill. I also acknowledge the committee's recommendation to remove references to criminal history from clauses 10 and 11 and omit clauses 28 to 31.

Under the bill the chief executive of Queensland Health will also grant dispensing approvals as part of the framework. This will allow selected pharmacists to supply medicinal cannabis to authorised persons. The bill also allows a person to apply to the chief executive for an approval to include medicinal cannabis in clinical trials. It is important to note that any use or distribution of cannabis outside this framework will continue to be illegal under the Drugs Misuse Act 1986, which labels cannabis as a dangerous drug. The bill also does not allow for people to grow their own cannabis, even if it is for therapeutic purposes. The bill also provides provisions to prevent misuse—namely, it introduces 28 new offences; provides the chief executive the power to cancel, suspend, vary or impose conditions on an approval; and appoints authorised persons to investigate, monitor and enforce compliance. The 28 new offences include performing a regulated activity with medicinal cannabis without authorisation and misusing a lawful direction for the use of medicinal cannabis. These offences can carry maximum penalties between 100 penalty units, or \$12,191, and 750 penalty units, or \$91,425.

To give an historical overview of the situation in relation to cannabis, the topic of cannabis and the validity of specific compounds as an effective medicine for some conditions has been debated for some time. In fact, cannabis has been used for medicinal purposes since 4000 BC in China, with other textual records evidencing use in Greece, China, India, Egypt and the Middle East in 2000 BC.

The substance was introduced in Australia at the request of Sir Joseph Banks in 1788 when the First Fleet arrived. At this time the primary use of hemp was to grow rope for the British Navy and, in some instances, for cigarette production. Reports show that cannabis was introduced into Western medicine in 1839 by Sir William Brooke O'Shaughnessy, a British doctor who recognised some benefits of using the substance as a treatment option while serving in the army in India. Following his initial study on the effects of cannabis as a treatment on animals, Sir William Brooke O'Shaughnessy pioneered the drug as a form of relief from the symptoms of then fatal or debilitating diseases including rabies, epilepsy and rheumatism. He reported that it stimulated appetite, eased pain and lessened neurological symptoms such as shaking. However, once Sir O'Shaughnessy's cannabis supply and research was transferred to British pharmacist Peter Squire for commercial medical use, the drug was popularised and widely used for many symptoms. These included pain associated with childbirth and excessive coughing. It had also become popular because of its euphoric properties.

The turn of the century spurred a paradigm shift from an era when self-medication and even the use of cannabis as a treatment was common practice to a time defined by prohibition and multilateral bans on psychoactive drugs. This resulted in a decrease in the medicinal use of cannabis due to the increasing availability of other medications as well as resistance to social use. During this time international legislation played a large part in influencing Australian domestic policy, particularly the United States of America's prohibition efforts. This resulted in Australia becoming a signatory to the 1925 Geneva Convention on Opium and Other Drugs. It must be noted that in the early 20th century cannabis was not viewed as a primary target for these controls which mainly focused on opium.

In 1926 the federal government introduced restrictions on the use, sale and possession of cannabis and banned importation. These efforts were echoed by states and territories shortly after. Victoria was the first Australian state to legislate a control on cannabis use in 1928 and in 1937 we saw Queensland enforcing similar controls with the introduction of the Health Act. Whilst extracts of cannabis were still included in some medicines available in pharmacies in 1950, an increase in non-medical use of cannabis solidified efforts to restrict the drug not only in social instances but also for medical use during the 1960s. I note that something similar happened with the use of cocaine in my profession of dentistry. Because of concerns with the use of cocaine due to its addiction problems, other derivatives that have been developed, such as novocaine and lignocaine, are what dentists currently use.

Australia became a signatory to the United Nations Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs 1961 which amalgamated prior international agreements. These multilateral commitments by member nations resulted in legislation which fostered increased controls of narcotics and psychotropics in Australia. It must be noted that these agreements do not restrict any scientific or medical use or research. Non-medical use of cannabis was not a major social issue in Australia until the 1960s. The increase in the use of recreational cannabis is attributed to social issues and generational disagreements often now attributed to issues such as the Vietnam War. The political dialogue on cannabis use then turned to focus on illicit recreational use, with US president Richard Nixon declaring a war on drugs in 1971. The Howard government followed suit in 1997, implementing a tough-on-drugs policy in November that year. Premier Joh Bjelke-Petersen here in Queensland was an early supporter of this crackdown.

Despite the fact that international treaties continued to enforce prohibition throughout the 1980s, the federal government's focus turned to harm reduction during this time, launching the National Campaign Against Drug Abuse. It was not until the 1990s that rhetoric returned to discuss the medicinal use of cannabis. The earliest official report in Australia was in 1994, when the New South Wales government acknowledged that 'synthetic preparations (of cannabis) were being used in the United States of America, Canada and Ireland to treat nausea and pain in terminally ill patients'. Further, the 1999 New South Wales Working Party on the Use of Cannabis for Medical Purposes report stated that 'some cannabinoid substances may have value in the treatment of a limited range of medical conditions' and suggested 'a regime for limited compassionate provision of cannabis to patients who may benefit from its use'.

Internationally, in 1978 New Mexico was the first jurisdiction in the USA to legalise medicinal cannabis, with 20 other states reportedly legalising or decriminalising its use in the USA since that time. Further, in 2001 Canada introduced a medicinal cannabis program, whilst in 2003 the Netherlands made a provision to make medicinal cannabis available to terminally ill patients. Medicinal cannabis has also been approved for use in varying degrees in Austria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Israel, Italy, New Zealand, Spain and Sweden.

Whilst international frameworks and legislation could provide precedent for a framework for Queensland, at the public departmental briefing the Chief Medical Officer, Dr Jeanette Young, rightly pointed out that frameworks that liberate the use of cannabis have been implemented with little research, particularly on the effectiveness of cannabinoids as treatments and the long-term effects on a user. She also mentioned that research is limited to a couple of compounds out of the numerous compounds contained in cannabis. Therefore, it is not advisable to replicate those international models.

First and foremost, the LNP remains supportive of trials to ensure that medicinal cannabis products that we make available to the public work and that they are safe, particularly for children who are taking those medicines during their early developmental stages. According to Dr Young, some research has been conducted that indicates that a small group of children with Dravet syndrome, Lennox-Gastaut syndrome and forms of drug-resistant epilepsy have responded to Epidiolex, which is a cannabidiol or CBD. It has also been found that tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC, masks or changes the patient's perception of symptoms and thus can be of some assistance to terminally ill patients. As a result of this, in 2014 the New South Wales government established the Terminal Illness Cannabis Scheme, which allows terminally ill adults over the age of 18 to register for limited quantities of cannabis for medicinal use.

In Queensland, high-profile cases where individuals have unlawfully sourced cannabis for medicinal purposes can be attributed to an increase in public discussion on the topic. Such cases include the prosecution earlier this year of a man who was providing cannabis oil to his terminally ill daughter because he claimed it assisted with her appetite and, in his words, 'calmed her'. That has prompted significant public debate regarding the current legislation, which has criminalised medicinal use, as well as the validity of cannabis and cannabinoids as a pharmaceutical drug. In that case, the

father was charged with three counts of supplying dangerous drugs to a minor and two counts of possessing dangerous drugs. Part of his bail conditions included a ban on seeing his daughter, a two-year good behaviour bond and a \$500 fine. No conviction was recorded. In making his decision, Justice Peter Flanagan considered factors including—

... the doctor's evidence; Mr Koessler's positive references and his belief that he was helping his daughter; and the risk that the cannabis oil could have harmed Rumer but that it did not.

Other common law cases include *R v Stone* [2006] QCA 103, *R v Burgoyne* [2005] QCA 28 and *R v Brown* [1997] QCA 170.

It is difficult to estimate demand in Queensland, or nationally for that matter. Currently there are 10,588 people with HIV/AIDS with severe pain, 15,875 multiple sclerosis patients with severe muscle spasticity and pain, almost one million cancer treatment sessions per year and a small number of life-threatening childhood epilepsy sufferers in Australia who may be candidates for such alternative treatments. Epilepsy Queensland estimated that 94,000 Queenslanders have epilepsy, with 30 per cent unable to manage their conditions through medications currently available to them. In their submission to the committee, MS Australia highlighted that while Sativex, which is a mouth spray containing THC and cannabidiol, has proven to assist with some symptoms, it is currently unavailable because of the scheduling of cannabis products. The organisation also noted that Sativex can have some undesirable side effects. In that instance, under the proposed framework a medical professional can discuss with the patient to determine the best treatment to manage their condition.

With regard to cultivation, whilst not contained in the bill, the committee recommended that the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries prioritise its investigation of options for obtaining a licence to cultivate and manufacture medicinal cannabis in Queensland. The committee rightly noted that the bill would be reviewed after two years of operation to ensure it meets the needs of patients, health service providers and enforcement agencies, and complements related developments in this rapidly evolving policy space, particularly with regard to the proposed domestic cultivation, production and manufacture of medicinal cannabis.

We support this bill, which will ensure that Queenslanders with treatment resistant conditions have access to the medication they need. However, I would like to stipulate the LNP's reservations with regard to the current duplicative and complex process in place for someone to be approved for treatments containing cannabis and the need for the government to work with the federal health department to transmit that to patients in Queensland and the wider community and to develop a more efficient process.

 **Ms LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (8.25 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill 2016. The purpose of the bill is to create a regulatory framework under which medicinal cannabis products may be prescribed and dispensed to patients in Queensland while preventing unauthorised use. The bill provides a formal process for doctors to follow to obtain approval to prescribe medicinal cannabis as part of a patient's treatment in one of two ways: a patient class prescriber pathway, where specialist medical practitioners and their registrars have the authority to prescribe medicinal cannabis products for sufferers of specific conditions without the need for approval from the chief executive of Queensland Health; or a single-patient prescriber pathway, which allows a medical practitioner to apply to the chief executive for a medicinal cannabis approval to prescribe medicinal cannabis to a specific patient. The bill also allows for medicinal cannabis products to be provided for use in clinical trials to help improve the evidence base for their safety and efficacy.

The committee received 69 submissions, held public briefings on 15 June and 9 September and public hearings on 17 and 29 August. The committee made three recommendations, including that the bill be passed.

For some time medicinal cannabis has attracted significant public attention here in Queensland, across Australia and overseas. For some, the efficacy of the some 400 chemical compounds contained in cannabis for the treatment of some conditions is not in question. Others are of the opinion that its efficacy as a genuine medical treatment is far from decided. However, there is no doubt that there is growing community interest in the therapeutic potential of cannabis compounds for a number of conditions, including neuropathic pain, muscle spasticity associated with multiple sclerosis, reducing seizures in children with treatment resistant epilepsy and cancer related nausea. Treatment with medicinal cannabis for those conditions and symptoms may have a positive impact on a patient's quality of life, particularly where traditional treatments have failed.

On 11 December 2015, Queensland became the first state in Australia to legalise the use of restricted medicinal cannabis products. On that date, the Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation 1996 was amended to give the chief executive of Queensland Health discretion to approve the use of

medicinal cannabis products for the treatment of a person where an approval to access the product has been given by the Commonwealth Therapeutic Goods Administration. While this was an important first step to permit the lawful use of medicinal cannabis products, a more comprehensive and robust regulatory framework is required. The bill before the House provides that framework.

As mentioned earlier, the bill provides two pathways for Queensland patients to obtain medicinal cannabis treatment. The first pathway involves patient class prescribers. Under the patient class prescriber pathway, a regulation will give certain specialist doctors an as-of-right authority to prescribe medicinal cannabis products to patients suffering specific conditions without the need to obtain any further state approval. The department advised that a national working party will decide the initial list of specialists; however, specialty areas are likely to include paediatric neurology, oncology for the treatment of symptoms arising from chemotherapy and palliative care medicine. A patient class prescriber must make a medicinal cannabis management plan for managing the known and foreseeable risks associated with an activity that involves medicinal cannabis.

The second pathway in the bill will be used where a patient is ineligible to be treated by a patient class prescriber. Under the single-patient prescriber pathway, a patient's medical practitioner may make an application to the chief executive of Queensland Health for approval to treat the patient with medicinal cannabis, with the written consent of their patient. Applications must be in an approved form and include a copy of the patient's written consent and any specialist medical opinion obtained about the patient's treatment with medicinal cannabis. Applications made under this pathway will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

An expert advisory panel will assist the chief executive to decide whether applications should be approved and what conditions should be imposed. A medicinal cannabis approval granted under the single-patient prescriber pathway may be subject to conditions. One likely approval condition will be for the prescriber to report back on the clinical outcomes of their patient's treatment. This clinical feedback will assist the chief executive to decide whether suspension or cessation of the approval should be considered and will also add to the knowledge base of the expert advisory panel. For both prescriber pathways all medicinal cannabis must be dispensed by a pharmacist who has either been granted an approval by the chief executive or works in a hospital pharmacy.

The bill establishes an expert advisory panel to advise and assist the chief executive in the administration of the bill. It is anticipated that membership of the panel will consist of persons with experience and expertise in the areas of science or medicine, justice and law, ethics, culture, sociology or agriculture. The expert panel will also undertake ongoing monitoring of the use of medicinal cannabis in Queensland and may make recommendations to the chief executive about research activities, including targeted clinical trials to refine the safety and efficacy of these products. Submitters were supportive of the establishment of the expert advisory panel, with some discourse and suggestions regarding what skills and experience should be held by its membership.

The regulation of all medicines, including medicinal cannabis, involves the application of both state and Commonwealth laws. The Therapeutic Goods Administration schedules all medicines according to the level of regulatory control required to protect public health and safety, and states and territories give effect to these scheduling decisions in their own legislation. Most medicinal cannabis products are not approved therapeutic goods. Therefore, in addition to obtaining state authority or approval to use medicinal cannabis for patient treatment, the treating doctor must obtain TGA approval to access the medicinal cannabis products to be used in the treatment. At present, medicinal cannabis products are not readily available in Australia. TGA approval must be sought for the supply or importation of a medicinal cannabis product, prior to a practitioner prescribing the medicinal cannabis product to a patient under the authorised prescriber scheme. In almost all cases, this means the treating doctor must also obtain customs approval through the TGA to import a suitable medicinal cannabis product from overseas.

The department during their consultation on the draft bill released an early draft of the bill, published a discussion paper explaining the bill's proposals and ran a survey seeking people's views. Over 96 per cent of the 1,052 respondents were in favour of allowing medicinal cannabis treatment. Key health industry stakeholders were also extensively consulted, including medical professionals and representatives from hospital and health services. The bill, and particularly the strict controls around prescribing, dispensing and possessing medicinal cannabis products, was strongly supported by these stakeholders.

During the committee's deliberations on the bill a similarly strong result was evident in regard to allowing access to medicinal cannabis treatment. However, views varied widely in regard to the approach that should be taken to allowing access to the same. Submitters including Epilepsy

Queensland, MS Australia and MS Research Australia, the Cancer Council Queensland, the Royal Australasian College of Physicians, the Queensland Nurses' Union and the Australian Medical Association Queensland supported the bill. Conversely, the Medical Cannabis Advisory Group Queensland, the Medical Cannabis Users Association of Australia and the Queensland Council for Civil Liberties did not support the proposed approach set out in the bill. These submitters preferred a scheme whereby patients were permitted to grow their own cannabis for their own personal medicinal use.

The department, the AQ, the Royal Australasian College of Physicians and Dr Jennifer Martin opposed any proposal to make cannabis widely available outside of a medical framework, including homegrown cannabis for self-medication, due to the lack of quality control and safety concerns. Such submitters considered that more clinical trials need to be undertaken to understand fully the efficacy and safety of medicinal cannabis. Further, when obtained illicitly, whether from a criminal supplier or grown in the back garden, patients have little certainty about the concentrations of active ingredients in the products they are consuming or knowledge about the contaminants to which plant products may be exposed, which could have a significantly detrimental or potentially catastrophic effect. For this reason, it was argued that the use of medicinal cannabis must be regulated properly like any other schedule 8 drug with a higher potential for misuse or dependence.

The bill does not entertain the option for people to grow their own cannabis, even if intended for their own therapeutic use, nor does it authorise any recreational use of cannabis. These activities remain offences under the Drugs Misuse Act 1986. The bill does not regulate the cultivation or manufacture of medicinal cannabis products in Queensland. Much of the correspondence my office has received in regard to the bill, and submissions and witness testimony to committee hearings focused on these two issues.

In regard to cultivation, the Department of Health is working closely with the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries as the lead agency about how Queensland industries can participate in the new Commonwealth licensing scheme for local cultivation and manufacture of medicinal cannabis. These opportunities have been discussed with relevant Queensland industry representatives over the past few months, in a series of roundtable meetings jointly chaired by Queensland Health and the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. I look forward to seeing progress in this regard.

A point of contention during the committee's hearings was the provision contained in the bill that the chief executive may apply to the Police Commissioner for a criminal history report on an applicant or a patient as part of the chief executive's consideration of whether they are suitable persons to hold an approval. The Police Commissioner must also notify the chief executive about any subsequent changes to an individual's criminal history once an initial criminal history report has been provided. Under the bill, spent convictions would still form part of a person's criminal history report.

A significant number of submitters opposed the chief executive's ability to request a criminal history report on medical practitioners and patients. Submitters argued that the proposals may hinder patients' access to medicinal cannabis, and that criminal history reports were not a relevant consideration in clinical determinations about a patient's medical treatment. In response, the department stated that the provision reflects the government's intent to strike a balance between facilitating treatment with medicinal cannabis products and creating the controls necessary to ensure these products are used safely and not diverted for unlawful purposes. Further, that the provisions were discretionary and that the chief executive would use a criminal history report to consider the imposition of conditions rather than to reject an application for a medicinal cannabis approval.

The committee, however, shared submitters' concerns about the appropriateness of a practitioner's and patient's criminal history being a determining factor in the treatment of a patient's medical condition. It is the committee's understanding that such criminal history checks are not undertaken on patients when determining appropriate treatment in any other circumstance in Queensland. Medical practitioners are already required to disclose any criminal history as part of their registration process and the bill provides other safeguards, including significant penalties for unauthorised regulated activity and investigations to address any risk of diversion of medicinal cannabis from practitioners or patients. The committee therefore recommended that the power for the chief executive to request a criminal history report about an applicant or patient should be omitted from the bill.

Other key concerns raised during submissions were the time scales associated with obtaining medicinal cannabis, potential duplication with Therapeutic Goods Administration approval processes, the cost of obtaining medicinal cannabis and the current requirement to import medicinal cannabis products. The department accepted there was a duplication of information requested by the state and the Therapeutic Goods Administration, but clarified that the Commonwealth and states play related and complementary roles in the regulation of medicinal cannabis.

The committee was advised that the Therapeutic Goods Administration regulates what drugs are available for use through the Narcotic Drugs Act 1967, while individual states and territories regulate patient use of those products, including prescribing and dispensing. Further, the department is liaising closely with the Therapeutic Goods Administration to identify ways of ensuring the approval process under both state and Commonwealth schemes can run efficiently and are not unnecessarily duplicative in terms of the information requested. The department also considered that the response times for applications would improve as more applications go through the system.

On 24 February 2016, the Commonwealth government passed amendments to the Narcotic Drugs Act 1967 to establish a legislative scheme for the domestic cultivation, production and manufacture of medicinal cannabis for research and therapeutic purposes. Under the Commonwealth scheme, licensed businesses will develop the capacity to cultivate and manufacture medicinal cannabis in Australia. The scheme is expected to commence in late 2016. Therefore, in time, patients allowed to receive treatment with medicinal cannabis under the bill may be able to access suitable medicinal cannabis products produced within Australia or within Queensland, reducing the time and cost to access and import suitable products.

While it was not the role of the committee to assess the efficacy and safety of medicinal cannabis as part of our examination of the bill, the committee received and heard firsthand of the growing body of evidence that medicinal cannabis may be effective in treating certain medical conditions. I am encouraged by the growing body of evidence that demonstrates the possible therapeutic benefits of medicinal cannabis as an appropriate treatment option, particularly when used to complement traditional treatments.

Eight years ago when caring for my mother, who was suffering with wasting and acute pain from late stage ovarian cancer, she read of the potential benefits of medicinal cannabis in providing palliative relief. She, like many cancer sufferers and palliative care patients, was on a significant dose of schedule 8 drugs, which did not for her adequately mask her pain and resultantly she suffered. I do not know if medicinal cannabis would have brought her some relief. She did not have the opportunity to benefit from the bill before the House, but I hope others will.

I am very hopeful that the Queensland trials announced by the health minister, and those taking place elsewhere in Australia, will build a body of evidence and an accelerated pathway for access to medicinal cannabis products in this country in future. I am very empathetic to those who desperately want access to a treatment that may hold potential for them when many or all other treatments have failed. I believe strongly that a considered, evidence based approach is the best way to achieve this—one that ensures Queensland patients have access to safe, consistent and well-understood treatments, of which the efficacy has been tested and is understood.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge the minister's leadership in bringing the bill before the House. Queensland is ready to have the discussion and the minister has taken an appropriately cautious and balanced approach in the best interests of Queensland patients, many of which are vulnerable. The minister has also continued to be very responsive to the committee's recommendations and feedback and has once again taken these on board in regard to amending the bill in relation to criminal history reports. I thank the minister for his continued responsiveness to submitters and to the committee process.

Finally, I would like to thank those individuals and organisations who lodged written submissions and appeared before the committee at public hearings. I would also like to acknowledge the expertise of the Queensland Department of Health, who briefed the committee on a number of occasions, the Commonwealth Department of Health and the Therapeutic Goods Administration, and the committee secretariat and my fellow committee members for their diligent consideration of the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (8.42 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the bill before the House and, in doing so, commend my fellow members of the committee for their work, plus the witnesses, the department and committee staff. I think all those on the committee will agree that this bill was complicated, involving both state and federal areas of jurisdiction and interplay between the legislation.

Page 7 of the report covers the objectives of the bill, incorporating putting in place a patient class prescriber pathway, a single-patient prescriber pathway and clinical trials. The first thing to note is that the bill does not open up the use of cannabis for recreational purposes nor for the growing of it. The committee received many requests that the bill should legalise the use of cannabis and pointed to

numerous jurisdictions in the United States which have claimed to have done so. When I asked Dr Jeannette Young on 15 June what research had been done by the 23 states in the United States before they agreed to release medicinal cannabis into the medical arena, she stated—

They have done some research in the United States, but it is very limited, looking at various different products. Most of the products that are for sale in the United States in their separate small stores are not being sold through a medicinal process. They are being sold by people who do not have that health background that we are requiring people here to have. We are requiring doctors to be involved to make sure that it is part of the treatment plan for a patient and that it is appropriate and being monitored and it is being dispensed by pharmacists who are approved. That is not the case in most of those states in the United States.

Further, she said—

They are not necessarily produced under good manufacturing processes so you are not sure what is in them, you are not sure of the concentration of the different elements, you are not actually sure what you are giving to people.

Thus there is a strong, if not compelling, argument to adopt an approach involving medical oversight. It would be unacceptable and almost criminal for this parliament to allow a free hand in relation to the use of cannabis without a medical guiding hand in the circumstances of this bill.

As the report indicates, cannabis is an illegal substance but it can be applied if it is approved for access under the Therapeutic Goods Act. The TGA has approved three cannabis products which are classified as schedule 8 drugs. However, an application to the TGA can be made for access to an unapproved therapeutic drug to treat a particular patient under the Special Access Scheme or a class of patient under an authorised prescriber scheme or for use in a clinical trial. In fact, the requirement to seek TGA approval continues to apply even under the terms of the bill before the House. The discussion paper issued in March 2016 on the draft bill states this very clearly. Irrespective of whether you have the state consent to use the drug, you still must obtain TGA approval, and therein lies a problem.

Before we go into the Commonwealth-state jurisdictional question, it is important to understand how the TGA operates in this arena. As I said, an application can be made to the TGA under what is called the Special Access Scheme, which has two limbs. Firstly, category A patients are those who are very ill with a condition from which death is reasonably likely to occur within a matter of months. The form lodged does not require the patient's name—only the initials—and contact with the TGA may happen. Category B patients are all other patients. However, they require much more detail and an investigation by the TGA of the necessity for, type of and quantity of drug.

Approval by the TGA is given on a patient by patient basis to reflect the needs of different patients. In fact, a publication by the then federal department of health and ageing entitled *Access to unapproved therapeutic goods via the Special Access Scheme* at pages 14 to 18 explains how to obtain approval for category B patients. At pages 15 to 18 is listed the criteria to decide if approval is to be given to supply to category B patients. The criteria headings are (a) 'The patient', (b) 'The product' and (c) 'The prescriber'. Under the heading 'The patient', the basis of the application must be justified on clinical grounds. In fact, the document reads—

This should include an outline of the seriousness of the patient's condition and details of past treatment. If other approved treatments are available, the applicant will need to justify the use of the unapproved product in preference to those treatments. It is important for the justification to balance the availability of approved therapies against the seriousness of the patient's condition and to include an appraisal of the expected benefits from the use of the unapproved product.

The document states, 'The criteria contained herein is merely a guide.' What it does mean is that the TGA, before it allows access under the Special Access Scheme, will need a thorough medical history and, as a consequence, may require further and expensive reports and tests to be undertaken before approval is given. This can be lengthy and expensive. The process can take a long period of time, and the determination rests solely with the TGA as to what, if any, drug they will prescribe, what quantity and for how long.

We have here a process that looks very closely under the TGA model at the medical condition and the needs of a patient. It is indeed not a rubberstamp. There is a rigorous process undertaken by qualified staff, and so it should be because we are dealing with human beings. I have no doubt that the TGA is a very professional body which is rigorous in its endeavours. The TGA permits access to the drug, but it is the various states and territories that govern its use. Until 2015, section 270A of the Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation 1996 read as follows—

The chief executive must not grant an approval to a person to manufacture, obtain, possess or use an S9 poison for human therapeutic use.

However, I believe it was in November 2015 that the regulation was changed and section 270B was inserted which permits the chief executive to give approval to a person to 'administer, dispense, manufacture, obtain, possess, prescribe, supply or use an S9 poison' if, under paragraph (a), it is

cannabis and, under paragraph (b), the approval is for either an approved clinical trial or an approval that has been given already under the TGA process. As such, at this point, if the approval is given by the TGA, the chief executive can approve its use in this state. The bill before the House puts in place a framework to facilitate treatment with medicinal cannabis. The bill was preceded by a draft bill and a discussion paper, the terms of which I believe are still relevant.

It is important at this point in time to acknowledge that this bill does not do away with the requirement to obtain TGA approval before access to the drug can be obtained and used. In fact, this bill cannot do that. It is also important to remember that section 270B exists to allow access if TGA approval has been obtained without further procedure.

What does the bill before the House put in place? Put simply, it is a framework that replicates the TGA process in approving the use of the drug. In fact, pages 10 to 12 of the discussion paper list what must happen to obtain state approval. In part, it reads as follows—

When deciding the application, the chief executive may have regard to a range of factors, including:

- the suitability of the medical practitioner to be granted a medicinal cannabis approval
- the suitability of the patient to be treated with medicinal cannabis
- the patient's medical condition
- the form and dosage of the medicinal cannabis ...
- whether treatment with medicinal cannabis can be integrated into the patient's existing medical treatment
- any alternative treatments suitable for the patient's medical condition.

The patient can also be referred to an expert advisory panel for ongoing assessment. The process contained in what I have explained to the House is exactly what takes place in the TGA process. It is a medical assessment by the state body that replicates the medical assessment undertaken by the TGA with different outcomes in relation to access and use, but the process is identical. We have in place two applications for the same thing—one federal and one state—where people are required to jump through the same hoops on a state and federal level. We have two bodies which have the right to seek ongoing reports at the expense of the applicant. These bodies are independent and will act independently, and may seek and require different documents, different further reports and different assessments at different periods of time. All of that adds to the cost of the applicant and duplicates the process.

Page 6 of the discussion paper states that, if the bill is passed, the regulation I referred to will be repealed. What that does is take away the right of the patient to go through the one process and cements a dual process for a patient to have to deal with. The discussion paper states that the government wants a comprehensive framework. What we have here is a duplication, one that touches the person suffering. No-one wants a drug to be given to a person which is dangerous, but this duplication is a major concern and the minister needs to outline what steps are being taken to smooth this process.

In questioning Ms Forrester on 29 August, I requested details of how long an approval process or an approval certificate under the TGA lasts. It was either she or Mr David Harmer who advised me that it lasts for a period of 12 months only. Does that then mean that the process of going back to the TGA and back to the state body will occur? Does it mean that after 12 months an application has to be made to the TGA to obtain access but then the state body will also have to review the documentation to approve the use of that drug after the TGA has reapproved access to it? Secondly, is it the case that a variation of the medication is required to go back to the TGA, and if the TGA then approves that process does the applicant have to go to the state government yet again and go through that process to have a variation approved by it? That is, is the duplication covering not just the initial application but also a reassessment or reapplication for extension and/or a variation to the drug itself?

The issue of the licence was also canvassed in the report of the committee. However, there is some doubt as to whether or not a licence that allows local cannabis to be grown for the purposes of medical use will alleviate the duplication between the TGA and the state government processes. I would ask the minister that, if a licence is granted, will that alleviate that process? It is certainly referred to in the discussion document that, unless there are amendments to the Therapeutic Goods Act, the approval of the TGA will still be required even if a product is grown on a local basis. If that is the case, that does not alleviate the concern of duplication. It certainly may alleviate the issue of the tyranny of distance and not knowing the producer of a cannabis product, but it does not alleviate the issue of duplication.

Finally, can I ask the minister to advise how many patients it is contemplated will access the scheme contained within the act over the next two years outside of trials? In relation to the quantity of land that may well be required to cultivate a local product, what is the area the government is considering? I want to gauge that in relation to the statements by the minister that this could be a windfall crop for Queensland.

There is no doubt that the LNP supports the purpose and intent of the bill, but there are issues that need to be dealt with. Duplication is one. Section 270B is another. There needs to be a full explanation as to why that duplication is required—in particular, why the one person has to seek a medical approval supplying exactly the same documents to two different bodies, two different jurisdictions and thereby potentially incurring significant ongoing cost. It might well be that the TGA approval comes back that they will undertake an approval for a period of time but want ongoing assessment of that patient and more medical reports to be provided. Does that mean that impacts upon the state process as well? That is, if the TGA gives conditional approval upon the patient coming back to it, does that patient in a 12-month period have to go to the state government and the TGA to seek that clarification? Again, the LNP supports the bill, but the questions posed I believe need answering.

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (8.57 pm): I rise to give my contribution to the Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill 2016. Following the member for Caloundra, it is good to hear that we have bipartisan support of this bill and its intent. The intent is for the patients of Queensland, a select group. I am pleased to see Queensland leading the way in medical advances and evidence based research that will support the anticipated increase in demand for access to medicinal cannabis treatment.

I would like to talk about a patient in my electorate of Thuringowa. I met this young man probably three or four years ago, before my election. I have treated him on a number of occasions. He was only about five years of age when I first met this young man who suffered from treatment and drug resistant epilepsy. For anyone who has ever seen children have 30 to 40 epileptic seizures a day, it is quite a difficult and challenging case to treat. Needless to say, ongoing interventions are needed. In my previous role as an intensive care paramedic, I have had to put in intravenous lines and give benzodiazepine drugs which, in themselves, when dealing with these particular patients, can depress respiratory rates and have side effects.

I am actually quite excited about the way that we are going forward. I commend the minister, the department and everybody involved in the journey so far, even though we might be taking our first steps with these clinical trials for medicinal cannabis. I have had numerous interactions with the parents of that particular young patient, one of whom is a nurse in Thuringowa. When the medicinal cannabis bill was first touted, we had some interactions and they were quite excited to potentially get this young man on to the trials. Over the passage of time, he went ahead and got another medical intervention at the good hospital that is the Lady Cilento and he has had great success in decreasing those epileptic seizures.

This bill is about the patients at the end of the day. In response to the point made by our chair, the member for Nudgee, we can only empathise with those palliative care patients who are on a range of schedule 8 drugs. This is just another avenue where they can potentially get pain relief at a point in time. I think this is an exciting time. We are on the verge of something reasonably special in Queensland, once we get to the outcomes and the evidence base of these clinical trials in medicinal cannabis.

There is a growing body of evidence about the therapeutic potential of medicinal cannabis, in particular that cannabinoids—being the substances contained within cannabis that produce those pharmacological effects—may be effective for a range of treatments, such as neuropathic pain, muscle spasticity for patients with multiple sclerosis and, of course, as I have just mentioned, reducing seizures in children with drug and treatment resistant epilepsy. Importantly, it can control nausea for those palliative care patients who are on a range of schedule 8 drugs like morphine which quite commonly has side effects of nausea and vomiting.

The treatment with medicinal cannabis for these conditions and symptoms may have a very positive impact on a patient's quality of life. I take it back to the point where we are talking about patients in Queensland. It is about their quality of life, particularly where traditional treatments have failed and the potential benefits outweigh the risks of any unwanted side effects.

The objective of the bill is to create a new framework under which medicinal cannabis products may be prescribed and dispensed to patients in Queensland whilst also preventing their unauthorised use. One of the joys, I would almost say, of being on the health and everything else committee—the committee with the world's longest title—is actually looking at these particular treatments that are before us. As I said, it provides an exciting opportunity for where we are going.

It is always important to look at where other jurisdictions have gone. In New South Wales, initiatives involving the use of medicinal cannabis involve a terminal illness cannabis scheme, which enables adults with a terminal illness to register to use and possess cannabis for therapeutic purposes. The Victorian government recently passed legislation to allow a limited cohort of patients to access treatment with certain medicinal cannabis products and then went on to establish the Office of Medicinal Cannabis to oversee the expansion of medicinal cannabis treatment to other patients and using a wider range of products. From an international perspective, we have heard tonight from a few other speakers that medicinal cannabis has been approved in many other countries, including Austria, Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Israel, Italy, New Zealand, Spain, Sweden and the United States.

Through our committee process, there was broad consultation on the bill and we met with a number of advocates who spoke for or against the medicinal cannabis bill. I thought it was quite interesting to hear from people from MS Research Australia, Epilepsy Queensland, the Medical Cannabis Users Association of Australia and the Medical Cannabis Advisory Group of Queensland. We also heard from AMA Queensland, the Royal Australasian College of Physicians and the Queensland Council for Civil Liberties—all with different views but at the same time it was good to hear their particular viewpoints. We also heard from general practitioners, medical specialists particularly those in the oncology, paediatrics and palliative care space, neurologists, pharmacists, nurses, Indigenous health workers, Commonwealth agents including the TGA, drug and alcohol treatment services, and advocacy groups in support of medicinal cannabis.

All up, I think the bill strikes an appropriate balance between allowing greater use of medicinal cannabis products and ensuring medicinal cannabis products are used safely and are not diverted for unlawful purposes. As I said earlier, there is a growing body of evidence about the potential therapeutic benefits but there is also strong support from the community to allow greater access to the medicinal cannabis products to treat a range of medical conditions. It is also clear that it is a relatively new treatment option and we must proceed with some caution. The use of cannabis other than in accordance with the bill will of course remain illegal in Queensland. We must also ensure that medicinal cannabis products are not diverted for illegal purposes. As I said, it does strike the appropriate balance by providing a flexible scheme to support timely access to medicinal cannabis in appropriate cases, while ensuring that the medicinal cannabis products are used safely and the products are not diverted for unlawful purposes.

The framework includes a robust approval process for medical practitioners under the single-patient prescriber pathway and expanded reporting requirements for specialists under the patient class prescriber pathway. In deciding whether to approve an application under the single-patient prescriber pathway and whether to impose any conditions on that approval, the chief executive will be assisted by an expert advisory panel. Regardless of the pathway chosen, medicinal cannabis products will only be able to be dispensed by either an approved pharmacist or in a hospital pharmacy. The Department of Health will also maintain records about patients who have been prescribed medicinal cannabis under either pathway.

The chief executive is also empowered to suspend, cancel, vary or impose conditions on a medicinal cannabis approval. There are a couple of amendments to the bill. One is to remove the chief executive's ability to request a criminal history report about a patient or an applicant for an approval for medicinal cannabis, which we have heard about tonight as well. Our committee tabled its report and recommended that the bill be amended to remove references to criminal history from clauses 10 and 11 and omit clauses 28 to 31, which provide for the chief executive to request a criminal history report about an applicant for an approval for medicinal cannabis or a patient.

At the end of the day, as I said at the start, I think we are in for some interesting results as part of the clinical trials. Again I commend the minister for taking us forward in Queensland. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr CRAMP** (Gaven—LNP) (9.09 pm): I rise tonight to speak on the Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill 2016. Although there is currently no provision in Queensland law that allows for the therapeutic use of cannabis in any circumstance, a number of states and territories are noted as moving ahead with law reform in relation to the use of medicinal cannabis products. The Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill 2016 will establish a regulatory framework in Queensland to facilitate treatment with medicinal cannabis while preventing unauthorised use.

The regulatory framework in the bill provides two pathways for a patient to receive treatment with medicinal cannabis. Under the single-patient prescriber pathway, a medical practitioner who believes their patient may benefit from treatment with medicinal cannabis may apply to the chief executive of

Queensland Health for a medicinal cannabis approval to prescribe a medicinal cannabis product for the patient. Under the patient class prescriber pathway, a regulation may state a class of specialist doctors having an as-of-right authority to prescribe specific medicinal cannabis products for patients suffering a specific range of conditions without the need for any additional chief executive approval.

I was a member of the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee that examined and reported on this bill, which will be known as the committee in my speech. The committee provided the following recommendations. The committee recommends that the Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill 2016 be passed. The committee recommends that the Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill 2016 be amended to remove references to criminal history from clauses 10 and 11 and omit clauses 28 to 31, which provide for the chief executive to request a criminal history report about an applicant for an approval for medicinal cannabis or a patient. The committee recommends that the Queensland government, through the lead department, the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, prioritise its investigation of options for obtaining a licence to cultivate and manufacture medicinal cannabis in Queensland. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the committee and secretariat for their hard work and due diligence, as with all of the bills that we examine, on this bill.

Federally, cannabis is a prohibited substance under the Therapeutic Goods Act 1989—the TG Act—Narcotic Drugs Act 1967 and the Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation 1996. This, however, has not precluded three cannabis products which are classified as schedule 8, regulated controlled drugs, and can be used lawfully in Queensland, subject to restrictions such as approval by the chief executive. Nabiximols, which is used for MS, is currently the only medicinal cannabis product that has been registered on the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods. An application may be made to the TGA for approval to access an unapproved therapeutic good for treatment of a particular patient under the Special Access Scheme, the SAS, a class of patient under the Authorised Prescriber Scheme or for use in a clinical trial. I took on board the minister's comments, but I would hope that any question of duplication between the federal and state legislation that presents for individuals seeking to use therapeutic goods will be addressed.

The Medical Cannabis Advisory Group Queensland's submission states—

The Bill proposes to put in place at a state level a process for doctors to obtain State approval when the doctor has already been approved by the TGA under the Special Access Scheme which is a duplication of the TGA process, and approvals for doctors who have been approved by the TGA as authorised prescribers, another duplication of the TGA process, as well as a State approval only for TGA approved research trials.

The statement of reservation by the non-government members of the committee highlighted the need for the government to fully explain whether a duplication exists and, if it does exist, why it exists. Further, if it does exist, what steps will the government take, or is the government taking, to rectify the concerns raised in the submissions and during hearings by witnesses? The statement of reservation also details the concerns of non-government members with regard to licensing for the cultivation and manufacture of medicinal cannabis in Australia, which is allowable under Commonwealth legislation, the Narcotic Drugs Act. The Commonwealth will need to clarify what effect this would have in regard to the TGA and the state approval processes, or whether it will relate to shortening the timeline in obtaining appropriate therapeutic drugs. It is imperative these questions and concerns are addressed as they arise in the shortest possible time frame as any delays would have the potential to negatively impact many people throughout Queensland who are in need of these therapeutic goods.

During the committee hearing process, the want to grow medicinal cannabis was discussed by several witnesses. However, this was mainly from the viewpoint of being for personal use, although still on a medicinal basis. I personally do not believe that there was a strong argument that growing cannabis for personal use, for medicinal purposes or otherwise, should be acceptable in Queensland. A strong and robust framework should always be adhered to in order to facilitate the approval and use of all medical products, especially those in the S8 category and, as is currently the case for these products, S9 category. Only then can we ensure that such goods and substances are prescribed and used in a controlled and stringent process.

As a member of the committee conducting the examination of the bill, I also placed questions to witnesses regarding the growing of medicinal cannabis. However, this was in regard to growing on a commercial scale, providing a potential positive economic benefit for Queensland. I do understand that this matter is being addressed by the minister. I would like to put on record that I do believe there is a real opportunity for Queensland to not only supply medicinal cannabis for our state but also provide it for national and international markets for any countries seeking this product.

The groundswell of support by Queenslanders is plainly evident on this issue. In November 2015 I shared a post on social media from my friend and colleague the member for Buderim, Steve Dickson MP. At that time he was pioneering this very issue of access to medicinal cannabis for Queenslanders who were suffering ongoing illness and medical conditions, including terminal conditions. I will take this opportunity to congratulate the member for Buderim on his perseverance and diligence in the face of adversity, both politically and from some areas of the community, to continue to champion this cause for some of our most vulnerable Queenslanders who are crying out for assistance.

**Mr Dickson:** Thank you.

**Mr CRAMP:** It is a pleasure. The response from sharing the social media post of the member for Buderim was overwhelmingly positive. The vast majority of comments posted clearly displayed people's understanding that this was a medical issue that had incredible potential benefits for those suffering in our communities. Many people posted about their own experience suffering medical illnesses and conditions and how traditional medicine was failing them. Multiple people also posted about the need to ensure that this was purely a medicinal exercise and not an excuse for easier access to cannabis for recreational users. These people also noted their absolute agreement to the use for medicinal purposes. Overall, it is heartening to see bipartisan support for this bill and for an issue which has the potential to provide relief from pain and medical conditions for thousands of Queenslanders who desperately need it.

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef) (9.16 pm): I am proud to stand in support of this bill that will allow the delivery of medicinal cannabis to people suffering in Queensland. There is evidence to suggest that medicinal cannabis can help patients with multiple sclerosis, arthritis, chemotherapy induced nausea and vomiting, epilepsy and severe seizures, HIV and AIDS related symptoms, and chronic pain. For people who are suffering with unrelenting pain, this bill is good news. All I can say is that it is a shame we did not do it sooner.

Human beings around the world have used cannabis as medicine for thousands of years. Even in Australia medical marijuana was legal until the 1950s. The problem we have now is that until very recently, research has been directed towards the hazards of its recreational use rather than the benefits of its medicinal use. Australians already benefit from the medical use of drugs such as morphine, ketamine, cocaine and amphetamine. It is illegal to use these substances recreationally, but there are medicines that contain all of them. Medical professionals have oversight of these patients but not the patients who are turning to marijuana secretly. We do not know how many Queenslanders with serious health conditions use cannabis medically because their prescribed medications have not worked.

Cannabis may not be a miracle drug, but there are well documented benefits. It is often very effective in relieving distressing symptoms, especially in cases where the usual drugs have not proved effective or safe. The side effects appear to be uncommon and pretty mild, especially when compared with other medications such as opioid analgesics—think morphine and oxycodone. The risk of becoming dependent on medicinal cannabis is much less than those commonly prescribed pain medications and even much less than alcohol or tobacco. Some research suggests it may even be a wonder treatment for obesity. I know that sounds counterintuitive, but it shows how little we know about cannabis. THC is the chemical that gets people high, but other chemicals in the plant such as THCV actually block certain receptors, reducing appetite and the tendency to store fat, so we could see some very exciting things in this field of research.

There is also an opportunity to create thousands of skilled jobs and generate tens of millions of dollars in foreign investment from farming and harvesting to research and innovation. Most importantly, Queenslanders overwhelmingly support the introduction of medicinal cannabis, with more than 96 per cent of respondents to a public survey conducted earlier this year supporting its use.

In December 2015 Queensland became the first state in Australia to permit patient access to medicinal cannabis products through amendments to the Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation 1996. This bill builds on these important first steps by providing a more comprehensive and robust regulatory framework to manage the use of medicinal cannabis products in the longer term. The bill also establishes controls to ensure that these products are used safely and only for lawful purposes, which is why Queensland Health will work with the Therapeutic Goods Administration to support the safe and appropriate operation of Queensland's medicinal cannabis scheme. It does not make sense to limit any genuine medical inquiries into new treatments just because of outdated movie stereotypes. The medicinal use of cannabis is now permitted in more than a dozen countries including Canada, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Israel. It is time that Queensland did the same. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr JANETZKI** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (9.21 pm): I rise tonight to contribute to the debate in relation to the Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill 2016. I note the contribution of the committee, the secretariat and stakeholders to the formulation of this bill.

Cannabis may have been used for medical purposes for thousands of years. As previously mentioned, cannabis was still stocked in Australian pharmacy shelves in some way, shape or form in the 1950s and was a registered medicine in the United States until 1942. There have been research reports prepared for Australian parliaments on medicinal cannabis since the 1990s, with public debate in Australia being dominated by high-profile cases where individuals have sourced medicinal cannabis, although unlawfully, to treat chronic pain suffered by their loved ones. The committee accepted the department's advice that there has been a growing body of evidence to suggest that medicinal cannabis may assist patients in alleviating a range of serious illnesses. The committee was not in a position, or furnished with the necessary resources, to evaluate the merits of the medical evidence relating to the efficacy of medicinal cannabis.

However, my attention was drawn to the recent United Kingdom All-Party Parliamentary Group report released last month which called on the new May government to legalise medicinal cannabis based on the results of their seven-month inquiry. That inquiry drew on the findings of an independent review of evidence collated from around the world. The review in the United Kingdom—known as the Barnes report—was published together with the results of the All-Party Parliamentary Group's findings. The report outlined that they had analysed over 20,000 scientific and medical reports.

The Barnes report provides the most comprehensive review of the medicinal cannabis question ever undertaken. It established that there is clear evidence that cannabis provided medical benefits for a range of conditions. The report concluded that there was good evidence that medicinal cannabis helped alleviate the symptoms of chronic pain, including neuropathic pain, spasticity often associated with multiple sclerosis and the relief of nausea and vomiting symptoms brought about by chemotherapy treatment. The report found that there was moderate evidence it could help sleep disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder and the symptoms of Parkinson's disease. The report also found that there was limited or no evidence to suggest that cannabis helps with dementia, epilepsy, glaucoma, Tourette syndrome, Huntington's disease, headache, depression or curbing cancer growth. There was also discussion in the report regarding the risks associated with the usage of medicinal cannabis ranging from the impairment of the ability to drive, causing harm to lungs if smoked and harm to mental health, fertility or unborn babies.

Given the matters previously outlined, the primary obligation for the committee in considering the bill was to ensure that a stringent framework which guarantees the prescription and dispensation of medicinal cannabis products had been established under the proposed bill. The bill proposes to allow patients to obtain medicinal cannabis in one of two ways: namely, a patient class prescriber pathway, whereby specialist medical practitioners have the authority to prescribe specific medicinal cannabis products for sufferers of specific conditions; or a single-patient prescriber pathway, which allows a medical practitioner to apply to the chief executive for a medicinal cannabis approval to prescribe medicinal cannabis to a specific patient. Patients would then need to obtain their medicinal cannabis prescription from an approved pharmacist. The bill provides that a regulation may specify a class of specialist medical practitioners—the patient class prescriber—who will be granted 'as of right' authority to prescribe medicinal cannabis products.

Submitters including the AMAQ, Queensland Network of Alcohol and other Drug Agencies, Medical Insurance Group Australia, MS Australia and MS Research Australia supported the patient class prescriber pathway. This pathway will provide a balance between the prudent assessment of eligibility while reducing the burden around the application process for those people who need urgent access to treatment. The single-patient prescriber pathway will allow for the chief executive to grant a medicinal cannabis approval upon consideration of a range of factors including, but not limited to: the patient's medical condition and symptoms; the form and dosage of medicinal cannabis proposed; an opinion of a specialist medical practitioner; and whether the proposed treatment can be integrated into the patient's existing treatment. The chief executive must also be satisfied that medicinal cannabis will be supplied to the patient in accordance with the applicable Commonwealth legislation.

The Therapeutic Goods Act 1989 regulates how a medicine may be supplied and accessed in Australia. It was raised in submissions to the committee, and has been well canvassed again in the debate here tonight, that there may be duplication in that the bill proposes to put in place at a state level a process that may already have been approved at the federal level. The department acknowledged that there was duplication evident, although it argued that the Commonwealth and state play related

complementary roles in the regulation of medicinal cannabis. It is important for the government to assess whether a duplication exists and can be remedied so that a patient who urgently requires a therapeutic good is not unduly delayed.

The committee questioned the appropriateness of a patient's criminal history being a determining factor in the treatment of a patient's medical condition. This was particularly concerning in view of the fact that criminal history checks are not a determining factor in evaluating the appropriate treatment of any other medical condition in Queensland. Notwithstanding the department advising that the power to obtain a criminal history was discretionary in nature, the committee formed the view that it had not persuasively justified the necessity of the power. The committee was also cognisant that medical practitioners, who were also proposed to be subject to criminal checks, were already obliged to disclose any criminal history in order to obtain their relevant registrations. The committee also resolved that the bill afforded other safeguards, including significant penalties for unauthorised regulated activity and a range of enforcement powers that would protect against medicinal cannabis falling into unauthorised hands. I support the proposed deletion of the power of the chief executive to request a criminal history report about an applicant or patient.

As befitting the introduction of such a significant reform, it is appropriate that the bill establishes an expert advisory panel which will serve as a sounding-board to the chief executive to help administer the reform. In appointing members to the panel the chief executive must have regard to the person's experience and expertise in connection with the manufacture and use of cannabis products as well as factoring in their expertise in science, medicine, justice and law, ethics, culture or sociology, and agriculture. The recreation of an expert advisory panel was well supported by submitters to the committee, and a range of comments about the potential composition of the panel were canvassed. The department advised that the expert advisory panel may also seek advice from other experts from related fields as required from time to time.

There is no doubt that legislating medicinal cannabis will create an environment in which additional research may be commenced in Queensland. I submit that with additional research there is an opportunity to alleviate suffering from other illnesses in our state. The New South Wales government has been granted approval to cultivate cannabis under licence from the Commonwealth government as part of research to determine the most effective method by which to grow the plant. The New South Wales government has also invested in conducting clinical trials associated with the efficacy of medicinal cannabis treating chronic childhood epilepsy, a burgeoning area of research, and nausea related to chemotherapy treatment. There has also been a significant philanthropic investment from the Lambert family which has created a cannabis research centre at Sydney University.

Section 20 of the bill provides for a person to apply to the chief executive for an approval to include medicinal cannabis in clinical trials. The department advises that clinical trials may build an environment where a rigorous evidence base for medicinal cannabis will be established and furthered in the years ahead.

There is also an opportunity for a well-regulated Queensland industry under licence from the Commonwealth government. A study by the Sydney University Business School stated that legalising medicinal cannabis in Australia may build an industry worth \$150 million per annum. We know that Tasmania has a significant poppy-growing industry and supplies half the global supply of the lawful narcotic raw material. Although industry conditions fluctuate with the season, at its peak Tasmania produced a 28,000-hectare poppy crop in 2013. A small but tightly controlled Queensland industry that would bring about opportunities for primary producers and regional communities is possible.

It is timely that this chamber considers this bill and delivers potential alleviation of suffering for Queenslanders with a range of serious illnesses. The Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill 2016 strikes the appropriate balance, offering relief from suffering while also enacting the necessary safeguards for the regulated introduction of medicinal cannabis. I offer my support for the bill under consideration by the House.

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (9.31 pm): I have cared for both adults and children with epilepsy who have responded poorly or not at all to available treatments. It is a distressing condition for the person and their family. For those patients who do not respond to treatment, sometimes the level of medication they require makes them present as though they have a permanent brain injury. For those members of the House not familiar with this, it can mean a lack of muscular coordination, slurred speech, increased fatigue and impaired cognitive function.

Watching someone have a seizure every few minutes is disturbing, even for an experienced healthcare professional. Watching someone enter status epilepticus, a life-threatening condition where a seizure continues until medical intervention or death, is not something I will ever forget. Nor will I

forget the promising young volunteer in his early 20s I worked with many years ago who, like many young people, was studying, working on weekends, had a girlfriend and found time to volunteer with adults with intellectual disabilities. Nor will I forget attending his funeral after his epilepsy caused a seizure while he was in the shower and he fell face down in the bath and drowned.

I have cared for people with multiple sclerosis at every stage of the disease. I have had to feed, dress and toilet people who are mentally sharper than me but who have such bad muscle spasticity they are no longer able to perform those basic functions. I have cared for patients with cachexia caused by AIDS, cancer and other diseases. For those unfamiliar with that term, it refers to a severe muscle-wasting syndrome characterised by weight loss, fatigue, weakness and a severe loss of appetite. Sometimes it feels like you are literally watching someone disappear before your eyes.

I have cared for people with acute and chronic pain, both nociceptive and neuropathic pain—pain that has been caused by burns, cancer, long-term alcohol abuse, multiple sclerosis, stroke, diabetes, kidney stones, spinal injury, eczema, cardiac problems, penetrating injuries and, most frustratingly of all, sometimes for no identifiable reason.

Ask any nurse and they will tell you that night shift is a very lonely time. It never gets more lonely than when you have a patient who cannot sleep due to pain or some other condition that will not respond to treatment. When everyone else has gone and the distressed family members have been coaxed to go and get some rest, you are left alone with the patient, trying to offer comfort and care for someone who cannot find peace. There is nobody to call and nothing left to offer but human kindness, sympathy and company—nothing left but to try to help the person get to the next day with the promise of perhaps an improvement in their condition or a new approach that brings relief.

I do not share these stories from my own practice seeking any personal accolades. Sadly, these stories are not exceptional or unique. Every healthcare professional could share them. Like every healthcare professional and rational compassionate human being, if I could stop people suffering in these ways today I would have wanted it done yesterday.

I have described some tough situations for nurses and healthcare professionals, but our distress is nothing compared to the distress of the person affected and the family and friends who love them. It would be extremely distressing being a parent of a child who has frequent life-threatening seizures or a person whose partner can never find peace from pain. The people in these situations face this reality every day and I fully understand why they are desperate for relief.

This bill, for me, has been a journey. I will admit to being quite sceptical about the benefits of medicinal cannabis. I have read over the years the claims made about the health benefits cannabis can offer. Like most health professionals, my view has always been that if any substance can be used ethically and evidence has proven it to be effective to treat the cause or symptom of a disease, then we should make that substance available and we should use it. If we think something might work, we should research it properly and gather the evidence to allow us to make that determination as to whether it could be used by evidence based health practitioners.

Earlier in my speech I described four conditions. There is strong evidence that medicinal cannabis products can reduce spasticity in late-stage MS. There is a growing body of evidence that it may be effective in treating certain forms of drug resistant epilepsy, cachexia in patients with AIDS and pain. As the member for Toowoomba South noted, recent studies have added to that list. As a health professional I would say that we should make this product available for the conditions where there is evidence that it works and make it available for research where the evidence is growing. The bill does that, and that is why I support it.

However, as I said, at the start of this process I had some hesitations. This process for me started long before I was elected. I have been thinking about these issues and dealing with policy discussions in relation to them for many years. First, as I said, I was concerned that the evidence was not strong; however, I now believe that the evidence is strong in some cases and growing in others. The member for Buderim is a passionate advocate on this issue and I was sad that he left the committee before the inquiry began. We had several discussions about why we simply cannot use the anecdotal evidence that has been gathered by the people who are already using cannabis medicinally. I am not a researcher, but I would imagine that this data could potentially be used; however, it may have many problems. For a start, we could not control the quality or content of the product, the conditions of the patients or other treatments they may be receiving. We would also use valuable research resources gathering and analysing this data instead of setting up properly controlled trials. I put this question to Dr Finn of the Australian Medical Association, and he drew an analogy with methadone, which was first

used by non-medical practitioners in New York City. After reports of efficacy grew proper research was done, and that medication has been added to the treatment options for addiction related health conditions.

With a background in health economics, I always think about the opportunity cost and ask in relation to any new medicinal product: what does it do that is not already done; does it do it more effectively, more safely or more efficiently; and if we choose to develop one medication, what other medication are we not developing? In the case of medications for pain relief, I wondered why we would need yet another medication for pain. We already have a vast array of pain medications, and I have personally administered doses of pain relief well above the limit that normally would ease pain and still had those patients reporting pain. In other instances I have cared for people whose conditions should be causing extreme pain but who seem to get by with little or no medication or any other pain-relieving interventions. If we choose to invest resources into researching another pain medication, perhaps we will forgo the opportunity to find the treatment for another condition or disease for which there is no treatment. The same could be said for cachexia, where nutrition can be maintained using nasogastric feeds, PEG feeds or total parenteral nutrition. However, the same cannot be said for drug resistant epilepsy.

I discussed these issues with Dr Jeannette Young during the course of the inquiry and she advised that there is a solid base for pursuing research in all of these areas without resources allocated to do so. In that sense my concern in that area is well satisfied. My other main concern relates to the manner in which medicinal cannabis has been made available in various parts of the world, particularly in the United States. The approach in that country varies considerably, but in many places the approach seems to be very unscientific and does not involve a rigorous medical scientific methodology. In effect, the medicinal tag has been used to justify the recreational use of cannabis. I know that the debate about the recreational use of cannabis and other drugs is active, ongoing and important and I personally think it is a debate that will happen in this parliament at some point in the future.

However, I have deep problems with health and medicine being used as a mechanism to introduce the recreational use of cannabis. If society wants to debate and do that, then we should debate and do that. However, in my view, medicinal cannabis should be considered, regulated and managed in exactly the same manner as every other medication available to evidence based health practitioners. That is why I was disturbed by the provisions of this bill that required criminal history checks for patients before they could be approved to be prescribed medicinal cannabis. I understand the heightened concern over this drug, but as a health professional I could think of no other situation where I would ask a patient's criminal history before offering treatment. This would have presented a significant ethical issue for health professionals and I am glad that the minister has responded to these concerns and is amending this section of the legislation. With this provision removed, I believe this bill will make medicinal cannabis available to people, both patients and health practitioners, in a manner that will facilitate treatment and research.

I also want to address a few other issues raised during the inquiry. Many submitters suggested that we should allow the personal growing of cannabis, self-administration and establish a testing regime. We already have well-established regulations and processes for medications relating to their research, development, approval, manufacture, transport, storage, prescription, dispensing and administration. We also have regulations and processes for managing those situations where damage occurs to a person because of a problem at any point in that chain from research to consumption of a medication. This system protects consumers first and foremost but also maintains the important scientific integrity.

The resources required to replicate this system for the personal use and growth of any product would be immense and impractical. I asked Dr Jim Finn about establishing a specialised testing regime for one particular product. He stated that he felt it would be more efficacious and cheaper to supply people with pharmaceutical grade product rather than requiring them to grow their own. Many submitters also suggested that cannabis is only effective in the whole plant form. I put this to Dr Jennifer Martin, who made a private submission to the inquiry and who has extensive experience in clinical pharmacology, including all aspects of pharmaceutical design, development, clinical use, regulation and addiction medicine. In her response she talked about the therapeutic products isolated in fish and red wine and stated that there is evidence that whole food consumption of fish particularly is more beneficial than the isolated therapeutic products. With regard to cannabis, she stated that there is a theoretical reason why the whole plant may be more beneficial to the patient but that the evidence is not yet available. However, there is research being conducted by her team in New South Wales and others around the world and I believe we must keep an open mind on this issue, and I note that this bill will assist in enabling this research.

I share the concerns of many submitters relating to the potential time delays occurring between the point at which a doctor recommends a patient use medicinal cannabis and when that use actually occurs. I have seen many new products introduced in my career and things are initially frustratingly slow, but they get faster with time. I raised many questions on this issue with witnesses during the inquiry and I am satisfied that the system, once started, will move faster as these medications become a part of the normal treatment options available to patients and health practitioners. However, I do think it is important that it is reviewed specifically as part of the review that is to be conducted by the health department after two years.

I want to thank all of the people who made submissions and appeared as witnesses and my fellow committee members. I pay particular tribute to those people who are suffering from various diseases or are caring for someone who is suffering from a disease. I sincerely hope that this bill will provide some capacity for those people to obtain relief from the symptoms that affect them and their families. I hope medicinal cannabis works for the conditions I described at the start of this speech and for many others. I want people to get relief from symptoms and I want researchers to answer more questions about other diseases and about cannabis. I want what I have always wanted: I want people to stay healthy in the first place, but if they get sick I want them to get better or I want to be able to relieve their pain or other suffering. This bill represents an important step in achieving that goal and I commend it to the House.

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (9.44 pm): I rise to support the Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill 2016. In so doing, I particularly want to pay tribute to two members of the Maleny community which I have the privilege of representing. In early 2014 two gentlemen, Harold Hopper and Bill Price, came to see me about medicinal cannabis oil usage in our community. Both Harold and Bill cited many examples that were known around the world of how medicinal cannabis was producing remarkable results. Harold explained the incredibly difficult situation he was facing with his wife suffering from severe dementia and going downhill very quickly. Bill, on the other hand, has a daughter who began seizures at the age of nine. She is now 40 and in full-time care. Even as recent as today, Bill informs me that she has had a severe seizure and has had to be hospitalised again for fear of cardiac arrest. Bill often laments that if only his daughter could have accessed cannabis oil she may have led a near normal life, but I must also point out that Bill's daughter has never had medicinal cannabis oil because of its illegality and because she has been under the constant care of a doctor.

Harold ended up coming to a branch meeting of the LNP in Maleny, and he outlined the serious need for medicinal cannabis to be prescribed by local doctors to reduce the pain and suffering not only of the patients but also of the family members who have to stand by and watch helplessly as their loved ones suffer. In Harold's own words, it is no wonder that many people simply took matters into their own hands rather than wait for the government to take action. As a result of Harold and Bill's input into the Maleny branch of the LNP, two resolutions were passed and forwarded on to state council that met in Townsville. I want to read both of those resolutions, but I would reflect that at that time there was a bill before the federal parliament considering the establishment of medicinal cannabis trials. The first motion read—

That this State Council of the LNP supports the Commonwealth government's multi-party group who are working on a bill that, if passed, will allow a medical trial for cannabis oil to be used in the treatment of illnesses.

The second was—

That this State Council of the LNP encourages the State Government, should the Commonwealth Government pass the medical trial for cannabis oil, to offer to run a medical trial in Queensland.

It is testament to the fact that those two motions were passed and agreed to by the state council of the LNP that there was clearly a need and there was clearly a desire within the state of Queensland, and indeed within the members of the LNP, that trials be commenced in Queensland, and Harold and Bill certainly wanted to see those trials started on the Sunshine Coast. The fact that they were carried also confirmed to Maleny branch members that their grave concerns were shared across the state. Subsequently, a few of those members travelled to Canberra in March 2015 to appear before the Senate select committee to give evidence of the great need for regulation so that medicinal cannabis could be prescribed by doctors in Australia. To Harold and Bill I am pleased to say that hopefully tonight their desires will come into law, and for their sake I want to touch on a few key aspects of the bill.

The first is that it will establish a regulatory framework, that is, a legal framework, to facilitate treatment with medicinal cannabis whilst preventing unauthorised use, and that framework provides two pathways for a patient to receive treatment. The first is under the single-patient prescriber pathway where a medical practitioner who believes that their patient may benefit from treatment with medicinal

cannabis may apply to the chief executive of Queensland Health for a medicinal cannabis approval to prescribe a medicinal cannabis product for the patient. The second is under the patient class prescriber pathway, where a regulation may state a class of specialist doctors having an as-of-right authority to prescribe specific medicinal cannabis products for patients suffering a specific range of conditions without the need for any additional chief executive approval.

The bill defines the term 'medicinal cannabis' as a cannabis product used for human therapeutic purposes but not a product already registered. It defines a 'cannabis product' as being part of the cannabis plant, derived from the cannabis plant, or a drug that has or is intended to have a substantially similar pharmacological effect as part of the cannabis plant or something derived from the plant.

It was noted by the committee in its deliberations on this bill that—

A national working party will decide the initial list of specialists, however, speciality areas are likely to include paediatric neurology, oncology for the treatment of symptoms arising from chemotherapy and palliative care medicine.

The committee noted further—

It is expected the list of suitable patient conditions for medicinal cannabis treatment under the patient-class prescriber pathway may expand as more reliable scientific evidence becomes available.

As an aside, I know that there are a number of primary producers in the electorate of Glass House who are potentially looking forward to the ability to produce medicinal cannabis. It is important to point out that, although this matter is not contained in the bill, the committee has recommended that the Queensland government, through the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, prioritise its investigation of options for obtaining a licence to cultivate and manufacture medicinal cannabis in Queensland.

It is also important to point out that this bill will be reviewed after two years of operation. Therefore, it is with much pleasure, and after speaking with Harold and Bill today, that we see this bill potentially come to fruition so they can potentially see some light at the end of the tunnel. In the case of Bill's daughter, here is hoping that it is not too late.

 **Ms FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (9.51 pm): I wish to speak briefly in support of the Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill 2016. Eighteen months ago I had a parent of a child who suffered severe epileptic seizures sitting in front of me in my office begging me to be part of a government that was going to reach the point that we are at tonight. I am going to be so pleased to ring that father tomorrow and say that this bill has passed through this House. I would like to acknowledge the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services for his commitment to finding a solution for those people and for other people for whom this bill is going to be so important. I know that he has taken on this issue as a personal mission. It is very important to so many people.

It is great to see Queensland leading Australia in providing this safe and timely access to medicinal cannabis products. Queenslanders overwhelmingly support the introduction of medicinal cannabis, with more than 96 per cent of respondents to a public survey conducted earlier this year supporting the use of medicinal cannabis. In December 2015 Queensland became the first state in Australia to permit patient access to medicinal cannabis products through amendments to the Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation 1996. An application to allow a Queensland patient to be treated with a medicinal cannabis product has already been granted using these provisions.

To ensure that Queensland patients can have timely and safe access to appropriate treatment, the Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation was amended in anticipation of the Commonwealth's proposed rescheduling of medicinal cannabis products from a schedule 9 to a schedule 8 product. The amendments to the Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation give certain specialists an as-of-right authority to prescribe specific schedule 8 medicinal cannabis products to treat certain conditions. They also allow the chief executive to approve a doctor treating a particular patient with a schedule 8 medicinal cannabis product.

These approval pathways are replicated in the bill as the patient class prescriber pathway and the single-patient prescriber pathway. The bill builds on these important first steps by providing a more comprehensive and robust regulatory framework to manage the use of medicinal cannabis products in the longer term. The bill also establishes controls to ensure that these products are used safely and only for lawful purposes.

I am so proud to see Queensland again leading the way in medical advances. I am confident that this bill will support the anticipated increase in demand for access to medicinal cannabis treatment. I acknowledge the excellent work of the parliamentary committee in examining this bill. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (9.54 pm): It is a pleasure to rise to speak in support of this bill. This is not a ‘grow your own dope’ bill for recreational users. It is about a carefully produced, consistent medicinal cannabis pathway for those who have a genuine need. The Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill 2016 establishes a regulatory framework for the therapeutic use of medicinal cannabis prescribed by a medical practitioner or a specialist doctor. I note the evidence to support the possible therapeutic benefits of medicinal cannabis products for a range of conditions when used to complement traditional treatments. This bill is supported by Epilepsy Queensland, MS Australia, MS Research Australia, the Cancer Council Queensland, the Royal Australasian College of Physicians, the Queensland Nurses’ Union and the Australian Medical Association of Queensland. I also note that the bill in no way allows people to grow their own cannabis, even for therapeutic purposes.

Although I know that some people have advocated for the right to grow their own cannabis and for its use to be decriminalised, that is not what this bill is about. I believe that it is important to state clearly that cannabis is still a dangerous drug that must not be used improperly or without close medical supervision. If obtained illicitly from a criminal supplier or homegrown, it is potentially harmful owing to a lack of certainty about the concentration of active ingredients or any contaminants to which plant products may have been exposed. For just some of those reasons alone I believe that the use of medicinal cannabis must be carefully and properly regulated.

The bill provides a regulatory framework—a carefully considered framework—of controls around who can prescribe, dispense and possess medicinal cannabis products. Patients will be able to obtain medicinal cannabis treatment through one of two pathways: either being prescribed by a medical practitioner with approval from the chief executive of Queensland Health to prescribe the product for the patient, or being prescribed by a specialist doctor, such as an oncologist, who has an as-of-right authority to prescribe specific medicinal cannabis products for patients suffering a specific range of conditions.

The bill provides for applications for a medicinal cannabis approval by a medical practitioner to be decided on a case-by-case basis by an expert advisory panel assisting the chief executive to decide whether an application should be approved and what conditions should be imposed. For example, the panel may provide advice on the appropriateness and safety of treatment based on medical evidence about the patient’s condition and symptoms, the opinion of a specialist medical practitioner and the patient’s history of drug dependence. The framework will ensure that appropriate powers are available to help prevent misuse and the risk of medicinal cannabis being dispensed, supplied or issued to a person not authorised under the bill.

This bill will be reviewed after two years of operation to ensure that it meets the needs of patients, health service providers and enforcement agencies and complements related developments in this rapidly evolving space, particularly with regard to the proposed domestic cultivation, production and manufacture of medicinal cannabis.

I also wish to acknowledge the committee members in particular for the excellent work that they have undertaken. I think it shows that, in addition to the processes of government and the many people in the community and advocates for this new framework, the parliamentary committee process is able to appropriately deal with the many heartfelt submissions from those who have a very real need to see alternative pathways provided. Such a committee process has been an excellent way to not only enable people to have a voice in this process but also have access to expert clinical advice as to what is the best way forward in regard to assessing appropriate treatments. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr MADDEN** (Ipswich West—ALP) (9.59 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill 2016. While cannabis is currently a prohibited substance in Queensland, scientific studies around the world suggest that medicinal cannabis, in particular the cannabinoids contained in the plant material, may be effective in the treatment of a range of medical conditions including multiple sclerosis, neuropathic pain, muscle spasticity for patients with multiple sclerosis, reducing seizures in children with treatment resistant epilepsy, wasting due to HIV/AIDS and in controlling nausea with cancer patients.

As the Minister for Health stated in his first reading speech, we know there are Queensland patients out there right now who can benefit from having access to medicinal cannabis. We know this because the Palaszczuk government has consulted extensively and widely with the community and with health industry stakeholders about reforms proposed in this bill. More than 96 per cent of respondents to a recent government survey on the Get involved website regarding the draft bill supported treatment with medicinal cannabis products.

In Australia responsibility for regulating medicines and poisons is shared between the Commonwealth and the states. The Commonwealth controls what drugs may be used for therapeutic purposes and individual states regulate patient access to these drugs. The existing regulatory framework comprises the Commonwealth Therapeutic Drugs Act 1989, the Narcotic Drugs Act 1967 and Queensland's Drugs Misuse Act 1986 and Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation 1996. Cannabis can be a dependence-forming drug and there is evidence that over time it may cause harm, particularly to young people. While there is a growing body of evidence as to the therapeutic potential of medicinal cannabis, it is also important to ensure medicinal cannabis products are used safely. For this reason both Queensland Health and the Therapeutic Drugs Administration, the TGA, have vital roles to play in supporting the safe and appropriate operation of Queensland's proposed medicinal cannabis scheme to ensure medicinal cannabis products supplied in Australia are safe and effective. The role of Queensland Health is to provide the regulatory framework under which these products may be prescribed and dispensed to Queensland patients.

On 11 December 2015 Queensland became the first state in Australia to legalise the restricted use of medicinal cannabis products. The Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill proposes that a patient can be prescribed with medicinal cannabis in two ways: firstly, by a single-patient prescriber pathway whereby a medical practitioner can apply to the chief executive of Queensland Health to prescribe medicinal cannabis; or, secondly, by the patient class prescriber pathway where a class of specialist doctors have an as-of-right authority to prescribe specific medicinal cannabis without the need for chief executive approval.

On 12 April 2016 the Victorian parliament passed the Access to Medicinal Cannabis Act 2016. The Victorian act provides for a scheme to permit the cultivation, manufacture and prescription of medicinal cannabis. This legislation provided a template for the Queensland legislation. Recent changes to the Commonwealth Narcotic Drugs Act 1967 will, for the first time, allow for the issuing of licences for the cultivation of cannabis and the manufacturing of medicinal cannabis products. This act will come into force on 30 October 2016. Australia is already one of the leading producers of opioid products with the Tasmanian poppy crop and has a long tradition of probity and quality control of such substances. The regulatory framework proposed by the bill proposes that, with appropriate Commonwealth authority, cannabis could be grown and processed in Queensland.

There are two mothers of children with treatment resistant epilepsy who are watching me speak right now on the internet. Epilepsy drugs are available for their children but unfortunately they cause serious side effects. The treatment is worse than the condition. Medicinal cannabis is the last chance for these children and their loving mothers to have a normal life. One of the children is a 16-year-old boy whose condition is so debilitating that he suffers dozens of seizures every single day, and those seizures are not something he recovers from quickly. The other person is a bubbly young lady of 22 years who, unlike other children of her age, cannot enjoy the freedom of having a driver's licence because of her condition. Her seizures cause her great distress and memory loss. She has also suffered the indignity of being dismissed from a part-time job when she innocently informed her employer of her condition. I know that these two young people, as well as their mothers, would like me to pass on their thanks to the Minister for Health, Cameron Dick, for tirelessly pursuing this very important law reform. I am honoured to speak in support of this important, far-sighted bill and I commend it to the House.

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (10.06 pm): I rise to address the Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill 2016. The objective of the proposed legislation is to create a new regulatory framework under which eligible patients in Queensland who have been appropriately diagnosed and assessed as meeting the relevant health requirements are able to be provided with access to pharmaceutical cannabis products. The definition of a cannabis product is clearly defined in the legislation; therefore, the new regulatory framework allows for medicinal cannabis products to be prescribed and dispensed to patients in Queensland.

In October of 2014 the then LNP health minister, the honourable Lawrence Springborg MP, gave his support to the following position which was adopted at the then COAG health council meeting. The position statement was as follows—

The use of medicinal cannabis was discussed at the COAG health council on the 10th of October. Ministers discussed the issue of medicinal cannabis. They noted the significant body of evidence linking recreational use of cannabis to mental ill health and reinforced their opposition to the recreational use of cannabis. Ministers agreed to work collaboratively to share knowledge and information on issues relating to the use of appropriate therapeutic products derived from cannabis for medicinal purposes.

I believe it is important to recognise the role of the former LNP health minister with respect to where we are now on this issue. I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the member for Buderim, Steve Dickson MP, for his advocacy on this issue over many months.

There is current scientific evidence with respect to a number of cannabinoids and cannabis related derivatives which suggest that they have value for a range of health conditions. Whilst the evidence base is not absolutely conclusive and more research is required to determine definitive clinical effectiveness, I am of the view that the framework proposed within the auspices of the Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill 2016 is worthy of support. Having examined the current literature and reviewed peer published articles on the subject, I am satisfied that a case can be made for appropriate authorisation in relation to treatment resistant epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, muscle spasticity, certain chronic pain conditions and also in specific palliative care circumstances.

Currently in Australia there are limited pharmaceutical cannabis products which are available, such as Dronabinol, which is a synthetic cannabis product, and Sativex, which is an extract from the cannabis plant. I am a registered addiction medicine specialist with the Medical Board of Australia and I am a former president of AMA Queensland and RDAQ. As such I am well aware of the physical, social and psychological harms of illicit substance use and misuse, particularly in relation to the recreational use of cannabis. However, the Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill 2016 is not about the legalisation of illicit drug use; it is about components of cannabis being developed, utilised and administered as tablets, liquids or sprays for certain medical conditions in a similar way as occurred with respect to prescription analgesic medications.

Cannabis is a plant with many different chemical components which vary in strength and, consequently, clinical efficacy. Such cannabinoids and their effect vary depending on genetics, growth conditions, preparation and how they are consumed. In order for prescription cannabinoid medication to be further developed, strategic alliances between the agricultural sector, universities, other research institutions, pharmaceutical companies and government regulators need to be developed in order to assess cannabinoids beyond delta 9 tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC, and cannabidiol, or CBD. In December 2014, the New South Wales LNP government announced it would invest \$9 million over a five-year period for clinical trials with respect to cannabis products. The Queensland, Victorian and Tasmanian governments have partnered with New South Wales to participate in those trials and that is extremely important to give and develop an ongoing scientific evidence base.

I note that the proposed legislation in Queensland contains greater flexibility than some other state jurisdictions, with both a single-patient prescriber pathway and a patient class prescriber pathway. With respect to the latter pathway, the bill provides that a regulation may specify a class of specialist medical practitioner and their registrar who have an as-of-right authority to prescribe specific medicinal products for patients under their care for a specific range of health conditions without chief executive approval. This is very appropriate. I request clarification from the minister that any registrar who is permitted to prescribe would need to be in an accredited training program and position recognised by the relevant and appropriate specialist medical college.

It is also my view that the requirement for criminal history checks should be removed from the legislation. I was pleased to hear that the minister and the government have accepted the recommendation of the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee to remove references to criminal history from clauses 10 and 11, and to also omit such criminal history references from clauses 28 to 31. I acknowledge the committee for the due diligence with which they undertook their work and for their excellent report. I particularly acknowledge the chair and member for Nudgee, Leanne Linard, and the deputy chair and member for Caloundra, Mark McArdle, for all of their work. I also acknowledge all the other committee members.

Whilst I am of the view that the proposed governance framework appears adequate, the real risk for individual prescribers could be duplication of required documentation and approvals at both the state and Commonwealth levels. Certainly I believe that there is scope to examine that further. I ask the minister to consider that in collaboration with his colleagues at the federal level. In conclusion, I note that there will be a review after two years of operation of the legislation. Therefore, on the balance of probabilities and the current available information, I offer my support for the Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill 2016.

 **Hon. G GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (10.12 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill 2016. I have long supported the legal use of medicinal cannabis where clinically appropriate. It is something that I feel very passionate about and it is something that many of my constituents in Brisbane Central also support very strongly and have spoken to me about. As lawmakers, we have a responsibility to do the right thing by patients with chronic conditions and diseases who may be able to benefit from medicinal cannabis. Right now in Queensland, there are children with treatment resistant epilepsy suffering violent seizures, cancer patients in palliative care

who need help to control nausea, and I could go through a long list. How can we, in good conscience, deny those patients the medical treatment that they need; treatment that will ease their suffering and that of their families?

This bill will give Queensland nation-leading laws that will provide safe and timely access to medicinal cannabis products. Cannabis use will remain unlawful in Queensland. This bill will not change that. Importantly, the bill provides robust approval processes for medical practitioners who prescribe medicinal cannabis. It includes strong safeguards to ensure those products are used safely and only for lawful purposes, including the appointment of authorised persons to investigate, monitor and enforce compliance with the act. The bill also provides for strict labelling requirements on any lawfully prescribed and dispensed medicinal cannabis products. Health authorities will also be empowered to suspend, cancel, vary or impose conditions on a medicinal cannabis approval. Therefore, I believe all of the safeguards are in place.

The evidence is clear that under the right medical supervision medicinal cannabis can deliver powerful therapeutic benefits to particular patients. I do not want to deny those patients access to effective treatments that will improve their quality of life and that of their families and carers. We already know that Queenslanders overwhelmingly support the introduction of medicinal cannabis in this state. We have heard that 96 per cent of respondents to an online survey said that they would support the appropriate use of medicinal cannabis. That is another compelling reason to change the law so that those who need to access medicinal cannabis can do so safely and under the proper supervision of medical experts.

I thank the committee for the great work that they have done. The committee is chaired by the wonderful member for Nudgee, who does a great job. I am so proud to be part of the cabinet to which the health minister brought this issue for consideration. Since it was introduced to the House, there has been unwavering support for the bill that is before the House tonight. I congratulate the minister for doing that. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr ELMES** (Noosa—LNP) (10.15 pm): I rise to make a very short contribution to the debate on the Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill. The amendments and the legislation that we are talking about tonight are very important in terms of the care and compassion that we as Queenslanders can show for people, whether they are friends or relatives, who are suffering great pain as a result of the illnesses that they have. In a world that is rapidly changing in every possible way, the inevitability of death remains constant. We are living longer courtesy of advances in medical treatments, but for some the side effects are so unbearable that lifesaving or life-extending treatments are denied, placing families, carers and health professionals in excruciating predicaments.

In my electorate of Noosa, almost 25 per cent of the population is aged 65 years and over, which compares to the Queensland state average of 14.4 per cent. We are all aware of the health challenges that are part and parcel of the ageing process and, sadly, the strain that ultimately places on the public health system.

In history, there are many examples where fear and ignorance have stifled governments from making the right decision or the caring decision. Of course, in the absence of sufficient evidence it is always right to do no harm and protect citizens. In the case of medicinal cannabis, a significant amount of research has been conducted, compiled, reported on and, indeed, taken up by governments all around the world, including our own federal government, which in February of this year amended the Narcotic Drugs Act 1967 to establish a national licensing scheme for the lawful cultivation and manufacture of medicinal cannabis products. As a result, New South Wales has established the Medicinal Cannabis Compassionate Use Scheme.

I am very pleased to see that, as part of the safeguards within our own legislation, Queensland will review this legislation in two years time. Most of us are aware that medicinal cannabis would be helpful for terminally ill patients. However, as more research is conducted, we have learned that children suffering with epilepsy also benefit. If medicinal cannabis can significantly reduce the numbers of debilitating seizures with minimal or no side effects and give millions of sufferers a chance to live a relatively normal life, what other brain or nerve disorders will prove to benefit from its use? Who are we to stifle that ground-breaking research, particularly when we have been open to botanical science before? It would simply be short-sighted and cowardice not to do so again.

Surely the use of medicinal cannabis can be fully explored as part of the end-of-life discussion that we are currently having as a global community. ABC presenter Andrew Denton's campaign for dying with dignity and the significant number of supporters who seek to have more control on their end-of-life experience try to remove the taboos that prevent us from looking at death differently. Before

we as a society or a state can have a debate on euthanasia, we should have explored all of the possibilities for lessening pain and suffering. How can we take the leap from where we are today to debating euthanasia when there are other options to help reduce the unrelenting pain and suffering that is so intolerable and so excruciating the only solution appears to be death? In an electorate-wide survey I conducted last year, 79 per cent of respondents supported voluntary euthanasia. If pain and suffering could be significantly reduced and if a reasonable quality of life could be achieved, one wonders whether that statistic would have been different. Of all of the forms of life that make up our world, humans are the only ones with the ability to cure or ease suffering. To legislate and to legalise medicinal cannabis is an act of compassion. It is humane and it is a prudent step in our collective journey toward the end of life.

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (10.19 pm): I rise tonight to speak in support of the Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill 2016. There are a number of Queenslanders who are forced to live their lives with chronic pain or untreatable disease. It can be anything from phantom limb syndrome, where a person experiences pain from a limb that has been surgically removed, to a child with treatment resistant epilepsy. In many cases chronic pain is untreatable and people can be left to suffer through pain that we can only imagine. Tonight we have the potential to get this kind of treatment to our constituents through the form of medicinal cannabis.

As many members are aware, there has been a growing body of evidence to suggest that in particular cases, which are consistently growing, there is therapeutic potential for medicinal cannabis. Just last year the Palaszczuk government amended the Health (Drugs and Poison) Regulation 1996 to allow the chief executive of Queensland Health to approve the use of certain medicinal cannabis products for a clinical trial of its potential usefulness.

We were the first state in Australia to permit patient access to medicinal cannabis products through this amendment. While this was an historic step, our government's position now is to ensure that there is a more comprehensive regulatory framework which will allow us to effectively regulate the use of medicinal cannabis products and ensure it gets to those who would benefit from it most. That framework is the topic of this bill.

Every day there are thousands of Queenslanders who are visiting their specialists, their GPs or their hospitals—people suffering from cancer who are undergoing chemotherapy, people suffering wastage from HIV/AIDS or any other illness. These are people whom our medical professionals deal with regularly and who have tried every trick in the book to assist them to no avail.

I therefore commend the Minister for Health and the Palaszczuk government for providing these people with a potential treatment in the form of medicinal cannabis. This treatment will be guided by a stringent regulatory framework—one that will ensure that the people who receive it are those who need it and provide flexibility as more potential users are discovered.

For a patient to receive this kind of treatment there are a number of approval steps that must be taken to ensure that only those most in need are those who receive it. This will be accomplished through two flexible pathways introduced in this bill—the patient class prescriber pathway and the single-patient prescriber pathway, both of which will provide timely access to safe, high-quality medicinal cannabis.

Becoming a patient class prescriber is no easy feat. To begin with, they must be a specialist within a class of specialist listed in the regulation to ensure that only those who will have frequent dealings and substantial knowledge are the ones prescribing. Given that there is much development and continued research in this field, this pathway will be open for expansion whenever new breakthroughs are discovered, allowing for greater flexibility and development.

The single-patient prescriber pathway will be an option for those who do not fall under the patient class prescriber pathway. In this instance, for any patient who is suffering with intense pain a patient's doctor, including their GP, can apply to the chief executive of Queensland Health for approval to prescribe medicinal cannabis treatment. In certain particular cases this referral may lead to clinical trials that patients can participate in, paving the way for an expansion of the patient class prescriber pathway.

Our state is already leading the way in this regard, with a clinical trial for children suffering the most severe treatment resistant epilepsy expected to begin before the end of the year. This emphasises the flexibility of this bill in addressing any potential beneficial perks that may be waiting around the corner. I commend the health minister again for having the foresight to address this. Whether we are talking about patients who suffer from conditions where it is proven to help or patients who could benefit from a trial, there is no question that we should do everything we can to help, unshackling ourselves in the process from the outdated views of the past.

In the first year alone, medicinal cannabis could provide up to \$100 million in revenue. Given our state's bountiful agricultural land and high-quality growing conditions, Queensland would be primed to take a lion's share of that revenue and job creation.

It is not often that there is such universal agreement among a single industry. I believe that we should take note of the fact that doctors, medical researchers, nurses and paramedics have been approached and consulted. There is widespread agreement amongst them. In a recent poll 96 per cent of Queenslanders support medicinal cannabis. The writing is on the wall. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr DICKSON** (Buderim—LNP) (10.24 pm): I rise to speak to the Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill 2016. On 10 May this year the Minister for Health tabled a very important bill in this House. The purpose of this bill is to create a regulatory framework to prescribe medicinal cannabis to patients in Queensland, while preventing unauthorised and recreational use. In short, this may well be the most important bill we see before this House this year.

Medicinal cannabis is used as medical therapy to treat a disease or alleviate symptoms, with a growing body of evidence detailing that medicinal cannabis may be effective in treating certain medical conditions. The bill would allow patients to obtain medicinal cannabis in one of two ways: a patient class prescriber pathway, where specialist medical practitioners, and their registrars, have the authority to prescribe specific medicinal cannabis products for sufferers of specific conditions, without the need for approval from the chief executive of Queensland Health; or a single-patient prescriber pathway, which allows a medical practitioner to apply to the chief executive for a medicinal cannabis approval to prescribe medicinal cannabis to a specific patient. Under the proposed framework, patients will need to obtain their medicinal cannabis from a pharmacist approved to dispense it.

Members would remember that late last year I wrote to every state member of parliament seeking their support to ensure that patients have access to medicinal cannabis without fear of prosecution in Queensland. I was appalled to learn that in 2015, and still now in 2016, Queenslanders have to turn to black market options to find relief from a range of debilitating and life-threatening conditions.

I have been a strong advocate for the use of medicinal cannabis for treating chronic illnesses since the issue was brought to my attention by a local healthcare worker on the Sunshine Coast some 18 months ago. In November 2015 I sponsored a parliamentary petition calling for an amnesty relating to the use of medicinal cannabis. This petition was signed by over 13,000 Queenslanders in only 24 days. This groundswell of public support has given the mandate, and renewed purpose, to pursue the implementation of a legislative framework for the legalisation of medicinal cannabis.

It was a huge step forward in February 2016 when the federal government passed historic legislation that will allow patients to access locally produced medicinal cannabis products from farm to pharmacy. Today, hopefully, we take another big step forward in ensuring that medicinal cannabis will become available to Queensland patients.

Although we are making progress, I find it gut wrenching to stand here before this House tonight, contributing to the debate for a future legitimate pathway for Queensland patients of any age, and with a range of conditions, to access legal cannabis products to alleviate their suffering. I find it gut wrenching because I know that there is a father out there who has to make a decision whether or not to take his eight-year-old to hospital because he is not able to get compassionate access to medicinal cannabis in the hospital. The cannabis oil gives his daughter a better quality of life and it helps control her seizures. After contracting a virus recently, this little girl needs palliative care. As a father, what does he do?

It is impossible to not be moved by the stories of families with young children with epilepsy, who suffer life-threatening seizures, and what these families have to go through on a daily basis. I will never forget meeting Jai Whitelaw and his courageous mum, Michelle, who told me that Jai went from having up to 500 seizures a day to four seizures in 15 months by using whole plant medicinal cannabis. There are so many more patients, young and old and all ages in between, who need decisive action from this House right now.

In his introductory speech on 10 May 2016, the Minister for Health said—

This bill is proof that the Palaszczuk Labor government listens to Queenslanders and is leading the way in providing those most in need with comprehensive treatment options to improve their quality of life.

I can only hope the minister is listening now. Queenslanders need to have access to safe, reliable and legally available whole plant medicinal cannabis, grown here in Queensland, not some synthetic derivative imported from overseas.

During the committee inquiry, several submitters, including the Medical Cannabis Users Association of Australia, Hempemployment Australia and the Medical Cannabis Advisory Group Queensland, said that medicinal cannabis products derived from the cannabis plant are superior to synthetic cannabis products. They stressed the importance of using the whole cannabis plant in a medicinal cannabis product to obtain the full therapeutic effect of medicinal cannabis. I urge the minister to commit to making Queensland grown, whole plant medicinal cannabis product available to Queenslanders. I heard the minister refer to that in his second reading speech tonight.

I urge the minister to work closely with his colleagues at the federal level to make these much needed medical options available for Queensland patients. Several submitters to the inquiry also raised concerns about potential duplication between the arrangements proposed in this bill and the existing TGA processes. Notably, Epilepsy Queensland said, 'There is confusion and negative expectations about the red tape and questions about why we need both the TGA and Queensland Health approval pathways.' I cannot stress enough to members of this House how important it is to get this right, how important it is to avoid conflict between federal and state processes and to avoid any unnecessary duplication.

The Australian government has sole responsibility for regulating the cultivation and production aspects of cannabis for medicinal and related scientific purposes. However, the manufacture of, and patient access to, medicinal cannabis products is a joint responsibility of the Australian government and the states and territories. I agree with the concerns raised by several submitters, and indeed the committee, about the appropriateness of a practitioner's and a patient's criminal history being a determining factor in the treatment of a patient's medical condition. I understand that criminal history checks are not undertaken on patients when determining appropriate treatment in any other circumstances in Queensland.

Criminal history reports should simply not be a relevant consideration in clinical determinations about a patient's medical treatment, noting that medical practitioners are already required to disclose any criminal history as part of their registration process. As such, I support recommendation 2, with the committee recommending that the power for the chief executive to request a criminal history report about an applicant or patient should be omitted from the bill. The minister spoke about this earlier. I have also noted that the committee considers that the cultivation and manufacturing of medicinal cannabis in Queensland may create agricultural and business opportunities. I think they are absolutely spot on.

In particular, I believe the Sunshine Coast provides the perfect environmental conditions to be a leader in growing and manufacturing medicinal cannabis in Australia. However, the committee recommends that the Queensland government 'prioritise its investigation of options for obtaining a licence to cultivate and manufacture medicinal cannabis in Queensland'. I do not believe that is where the Queensland government's priority should be. I am sure that there is enough interest from the private sector to cultivate and manufacture cannabis in Queensland. I believe that the Queensland government should prioritise timely access, particularly for severely and terminally ill patients and that this access should include a wider variety of illnesses including epilepsy, cancer, arthritis, chronic pain and post-traumatic stress disorder. I believe that the Queensland government should prioritise education, training and guidelines for medical practitioners and other health professionals.

If after all of this members are still uncertain, I suggest that they read the submissions sent in to the committee by several desperate parents—parents who are only trying to do what is right for their children. They are not difficult to find among the many submissions. They are those submissions that have their name suppressed in fear of prosecution. We need to do better for these parents and the children they represent. We need to do better for all of those Queenslanders who may benefit from safe, legal and reliable access to the whole plant cannabis medication.

I would like to thank the health minister for his second reading speech. He clarified so many things. I seriously mean this when I say to every member of this House that we are voting on the right thing tonight. We are voting unitedly to look after Queenslanders' health. I will leave members with a couple of snippets. Tasmania grow 53 per cent of the world's supply of medical opium; it makes heroin. We are talking about medicinal cannabis that will save the lives of the sick and dying. If we can take that pain away just a little bit, it would be so important to us all.

The member for Noosa touched on something important earlier tonight about the discussion we may have in the future about euthanasia. This medicinal cannabis opportunity may relieve pain. In Israel they give medicinal cannabis to the aged in the retirement villages. It takes away the pain of arthritis. It

increases their appetite in the mornings. They get up; they go for a walk; they ride a bike. If we can alleviate that pain and suffering, think what we have done for these people. It may take away the need for them to want to access euthanasia.

This is an opportunity for Queenslanders. I thank the minister and I say that very sincerely. You will not hear me say that a lot in this House. Tonight I am going to say it. He is a man of his word. He has delivered an outcome that I believe is going to be fantastic for Queenslanders. I thank the opposition shadow minister as well because we are working unitedly for a common goal. Wouldn't it be bloody fantastic if we saw this happen a lot more often?

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

**Mr DICKSON:** I apologise. I withdraw that. Thank you for your time. I am a little bit excited. This is a big night for Queensland. I think it is the most important bill of the year maybe in my mind alone but for many, many sick and dying Queenslanders.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I completely understand your enthusiasm.

**Mr DICKSON:** I want to table this survey as well.

*Tabled paper:* Document, undated, titled 'Summary of medicinal cannabis survey data' [[1849](#)].

*(Time expired)*

 **Hon. LE DONALDSON** (Bundaberg—ALP) (Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries) (10.35 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill 2016. The aim of the bill is to create a regulatory framework to facilitate treatment with medicinal cannabis, while preventing its unauthorised use. It allows medical practitioners to prescribe medicinal cannabis for certain conditions and authorises pharmacies to dispense these products.

The bill demonstrates compassion and empathy for those patients suffering a range of conditions which can be relieved by medicinal cannabis. There is significant support for the use of medicinal cannabis in the broader community. Implementation of the bill will enable patients access and, by consequence, create demand that will potentially expand the medicinal cannabis sector over time in Queensland. The bill does not relate to cultivation or the production of cannabis—this falls under the Commonwealth government licensing scheme.

On 24 February 2016, the Australian parliament passed the Narcotic Drugs Amendment Bill 2016, which establishes a national licensing scheme that allows for the controlled local cultivation of cannabis for medicinal and scientific purposes. The Commonwealth Department of Health, through the Office of Drug Control, will have the responsibility for issuing the licences and permits. This scheme will commence from 30 October 2016.

The Palaszczuk government is supportive of a local industry developing in Queensland to cultivate and produce medicinal cannabis products. I am aware that a number of parties have indicated strong interest in applying for a licence under the federal government's scheme and establishing operations in Queensland. I am very supportive of any parties who may wish to pursue the commercial opportunities and establish their business in Queensland, but it is important to note that the states and territories have no ability to legislate for the cultivation and production of cannabis for medicinal use or related research.

The Health, Communities Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee report No. 26 on the medicinal cannabis bill was released on 30 September. Of particular interest for me is the committee's third recommendation, which is for the Queensland government, through the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, to prioritise its investigation of options for obtaining a licence to cultivate and manufacture medicinal cannabis in Queensland. The Palaszczuk government accepts the committee's third recommendation. In fact, my department and Queensland Health have already started such an investigation.

Earlier this year, Queensland Health and the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries hosted a series of round tables across the state with parties interested in supplying medicinal cannabis. These round tables were held at Atherton, which the member for Dalrymple attended; Townsville; Mackay; Rockhampton; Bundaberg, which I attended; Sunshine Coast, attended by the member for Buderim; Toowoomba, Ipswich, attended by the member for Ipswich West; and Cunnamulla. In total, around 330 participants attended these meetings. I think those figures indicate the level of commercial interest in Queensland.

I am advised that through these round tables and subsequent meetings a number of commercial entities have expressed their intention to seek to obtain a commercial cultivation and/or manufacture licence when the federal government's medicinal cannabis cultivation and production scheme becomes

operational at the end of this month. The important issue for many stakeholders wanting to establish a business in this sector in Queensland relates to market opportunities. The federal government has stated that at this stage implementation of the new medicinal cannabis scheme will be domestically focused. Provision for exports will be addressed at a later date when the scheme has demonstrated that it is sufficiently secure and robust to meet international and domestic expectations surrounding security and safety.

Notwithstanding the federal government's international obligations in this regard, the development of a medicinal cannabis industry in Australia may be significantly hamstrung until access to the global market is granted. I wrote to Barnaby Joyce in his capacity as the federal Minister for Agriculture in May this year asking the federal government to consider, and to make a firm commitment to, the export of medicinal cannabis products at the earliest appropriate opportunity.

A clear commitment to opening up the Australian medicinal cannabis industry to the international market at the earliest opportunity would be beneficial to securing much needed investment to start up this new and exciting industry in Queensland. I would also like to commend the committee for its work and thank the health minister for pursuing this and bringing this debate to the floor. I commend the bill to the House.

 **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) (10.39 pm): I rise to proudly support the Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill 2016. This bill demonstrates that Queensland is leading the way in Australia when it comes to unlocking the therapeutic and medicinal properties of cannabis. This bill will put on the table a form of medication that can help alleviate the cruel symptoms of chronic illness, and I know many sufferers across Queensland have been lobbying for this piece of legislation.

Medical research has shown that marijuana in different forms can alleviate or subdue extreme illness. The rational, mature and science based consultation that the health minister opened up on this topic has led to a strong, fair and progressive bill which will give hope and comfort to many Queenslanders suffering with painful illness. I know that the health minister has made sure that medicinal cannabis does not end up in the wrong hands with numerous safeguards in this bill.

Even before I was elected as the member for Waterford, I got to know the Carter family who have been on a long and at times frustrating journey trying to get treatment for their son, Lindsay. Lanai Carter is the co-chair of the Medical Cannabis Advisory Group Queensland and has been one of the most vocal advocates for medicinal cannabis in Queensland. Lanai's son, Lindsay, was diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumour in 2013. This tumour triggers violent seizures. Lindsay should be enjoying his childhood. Instead, he needs constant care. Lanai—a Logan mum with an incredible heart—swung into action and has left no stone unturned in finding treatment for Lindsay.

This journey has led the Carter family to Washington state in the US where Lindsay was treated with cannabis therapies. The treatment in America proved a huge success for Lindsay and allowed him to live his normal life like a teenager again. When Lindsay returned to Australia without the medication, the seizures came back. If his family were to try to access the treatment that they know works, they would be treated as criminals under our laws. It just does not make sense. We have to put ourselves in Lindsay's and Lanai's shoes to understand how frustrating it would be to have a drug which works and stops seizures only available in countries thousands of kilometres away and at very huge expense.

It was Lanai Carter who said that everyday Australians are being forced to become criminals to save lives and ease the suffering of their loved ones. These families and these Queenslanders do not need the added burden of being deemed criminals. If this medicine is prescribed to them by their qualified doctor, then we must trust the professional decision which is based on science, reason and research. We must trust the medical profession on this. It is because of Lindsay and many others like him that we need to pass this bill tonight. Tonight I want to pay credit to Lindsay, his mother, Lanai, and father, Gavin, for educating me on this topic and for showing me how important it was that the parliament get this right.

When this bill passes, it will bring Queensland into line with other jurisdictions including Canada, Denmark, Germany, Israel, New Zealand and the United States, to name a few. It is time we got this issue out of the too-hard basket and do what we can to help the lives of those suffering like Loganholme's Lindsay Carter. I commend this bill, and I am proud that it is the Palaszczuk Labor government that is again passing legislation which makes lives better for Queenslanders.

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (10.43 pm), in reply: I thank all members in this House for their support for allowing patients a pathway to access lawful medicinal cannabis products. Given the significance of this bill, it is appropriate to see

bipartisan support for this important reform, and it is a testament, I believe, to the quality of the legislation before the House. This bill will ensure that people who need access to medicinal cannabis products can safely access and use them in Queensland under the supervision of their medical practitioner.

The members for Surfers Paradise and Caloundra asked that I provide a detailed clarification regarding the potential to remove duplication between state and Commonwealth frameworks. I welcome the opportunity to do this. Responsibility for regulating medicinal cannabis is shared between the Commonwealth and states and territories. Constitutionally, the Commonwealth can pass, and has passed, legislation to regulate the supply of therapeutic goods including unapproved goods such as cannabis. It is able to do this as it has power under the Constitution to regulate constitutional corporations and trade and commerce. States and territories cannot regulate in a way that is inconsistent with Commonwealth legislation and must therefore prepare complementary legislation.

To the extent that there is any duplication of the information required by the agencies administering the Commonwealth and state legislative frameworks, this must be addressed through cooperation between the responsible regulatory agencies. I can assure honourable members that my department is working closely with the Therapeutic Goods Administration and other Commonwealth and state and territory entities to ensure an effective framework. The Chief Health Officer has already written to the TGA expressing Queenslanders' desire to work with it to reduce duplication. Departmental staff are also participating in the TGA's cannabis access working group, which considers these issues at its meetings.

The member for Surfers Paradise commented that the bill does not appropriately outline how duplication will be reduced. It is not appropriate that a bill or explanatory notes speak to the relationship between state and Commonwealth legislation. However, the bill has been designed with streamlining in mind. For example, the general provisions relating to information disclosure in chapter 12 of the bill give the department and others the ability to provide information to the TGA so patients do not have to provide this information again. The patient class prescriber pathway established by the bill will further streamline access to medicinal cannabis. In practice, this will mean that a patient who has epilepsy, for example, will only need to see their treating specialist. They will not need to apply to the state or the Commonwealth for an approval.

The member for Caloundra noted that section 270B of the Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation 1996 will be repealed when the bill takes effect. This would, in his view, remove the ability for a patient to go through a single process to obtain medicinal cannabis products. The member for Caloundra has misunderstood the effect of this section. It does not provide a single process for a patient to obtain a medicinal cannabis product. A medicinal cannabis approval granted under this section will only be effective if the TGA also approves the supply of the product and an import permit is subsequently granted. In other words, the bill's provisions operate in the same way as the existing section 270B of the Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation.

The member for Caloundra also sought more information about the quantity of land required for cultivation. The truth is that we do not know how much land may be required. This is a rapidly evolving system where demand is unknown. I must make the point that the Commonwealth has an important role to play here to ensure that the cultivation and manufacturing framework that it is developing is effective and that businesses are able to apply for licences with certainty. As the member for Toowoomba South has reminded us, this is an industry with real potential, along with other honourable members who spoke on that point. I am keen to ensure Queensland businesses are able to participate in this industry and will support the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries in that regard.

Today this House takes a significant step forward for seriously ill Queenslanders. The Palaszczuk government has listened to Queenslanders and has been responsive to their needs. We moved quickly to amend the Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation 1996 late last year to ensure medicinal cannabis treatment was made available in appropriate cases as soon as possible. This bill is the next step in the journey, putting in place a more comprehensive and flexible framework for medicinal cannabis in Queensland.

There is already evidence of the possible therapeutic benefits of medicinal cannabis, and the evidence is growing. We know that, where traditional medicine alone is not helping a patient, medicinal cannabis may improve a patient's quality of life. The members for Greenslopes and Thuringowa, with their experience in the medical profession, have shared their firsthand experience in caring for patients suffering debilitating conditions such as intractable epilepsy and muscle wastage caused by HIV/AIDS. I, like the member for Greenslopes, can understand the desire to do everything in our power to alleviate this suffering.

The bill will provide a safe and legal pathway for these patients to seek access to medicinal cannabis products. It will also ensure that we can gather evidence on the use of medicinal cannabis through the results of clinical trials which the government is funding and feedback from prescribing doctors. This evidence will inform future treatment decisions and potentially expand the circumstances in which medicinal cannabis products are used in the future.

We have also heard this evening about the potential offered by the medicinal cannabis cultivation and manufacturing industry. We hope that as this industry develops locally a range of medicinal cannabis products will become available at affordable prices. These advances mean the framework may require adjustment in the future. That is why I have given an undertaking to review the act after two years of operation to ensure it remains fit for purpose. This demonstrates the agility with which the Palaszczuk government is responding to emerging approaches to health care.

I would again like to thank the members of the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee and the staff of the committee for their detailed consideration of the bill. Feedback received during the public consultation process demonstrated strong community support for medicinal cannabis. This support was echoed during the committee process. I would also like to thank the medical practitioners, industry groups and individuals who took the time to provide feedback on the bill. I particularly thank Epilepsy Queensland, the Australian Medical Association Queensland, MS Australia and MS Research Australia, Health Consumers Queensland, the Queensland Nurses' Union, Carers Queensland and Leading Age Services Australia for their support of the bill.

I would also like to acknowledge officers from the Department of Health for their outstanding work in developing this bill. Particular thanks goes to the Department of Health officers Dorothy Vincenzino, Sue Ballantyne, Greg Perry, William Alker, Louise Blatchford, Tanya Bain, Jacqui Heywood and Nola Simpson; and the legislative policy unit, particularly David Harmer, Mark Zgrajewski, Sha Lang, Kirsten Law, Ryan Robertson, Rosie Caulfield, Eve Gibson, Sally Stubbington and Megan Pretorius. I particularly acknowledge the leadership of Dr Jeannette Young, Queensland's Chief Health Officer and Chief Medical Officer, and Kathleen Forrester, deputy director-general, for their expert advice to the committee.

At the heart of this bill is a need to assist those in our community who are suffering from illnesses and disease which we know from a growing body of evidence may respond to treatment with medicinal cannabis products. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

### Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 9, as read, agreed to.

Clause 10—



**Mr DICK** (10.52 pm): I move the following amendments—

- 1 **Clause 10 (Suitability of person to hold approval)**  
Page 15, lines 13 and 14—  
*omit.*
- 2 **Clause 10 (Suitability of person to hold approval)**  
Page 15, line 15, '(d)'—  
*omit, insert—*  
(c)
- 3 **Clause 10 (Suitability of person to hold approval)**  
Page 15, line 19, '(e)'—  
*omit, insert—*  
(d)
- 4 **Clause 10 (Suitability of person to hold approval)**  
Page 15, line 21, '(f)'—  
*omit, insert—*  
(e)

**5 Clause 10 (Suitability of person to hold approval)**

Page 15, line 25, '(g)'—

*omit, insert—*

(f)

I table the explanatory notes for the amendments circulated in my name, which include amendments to clauses 10, 11, 28 to 31 and 217 and schedule 1 to the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill 2016, explanatory notes to Hon. Cameron Dick's amendments [\[1850\]](#).

These amendments I move this evening respond to the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee's recommendation that the criminal history check provisions in the bill be removed. The bill would allow the chief executive of Queensland Health to request a criminal history report for a health practitioner or pharmacist who applies for an approval under the bill or a patient who wishes to undergo medicinal cannabis treatment. These provisions were intended to enable additional conditions to be imposed to mitigate the risk of unlawful diversion of cannabis products. Some stakeholders have expressed concern that patients may be denied access to medicinal cannabis on the basis of their medical practitioner's criminal history or their own criminal history. As I have previously explained to the House, this was never the intent of the provisions. However, the amendments respond to these concerns by removing the criminal history provisions from the bill.

Clause 10 of the bill outlines the suitability matters that a chief executive may give consideration to in deciding the suitability of a person to hold or continue to hold an approval. One of these considerations is the criminal history of the person seeking to hold or continue to hold an approval. The amendment to clause 10 of the bill will remove the chief executive's ability to consider a person's criminal history in determining their suitability to hold an approval. Although this discretion will be removed, all medicinal cannabis approvals will still be subject to conditions designed to ensure the safety of patients and the security of cannabis products. Amendments Nos 2, 3, 4 and 5 are necessary to renumber clause 10 of the bill as a result of the omission of the reference to the person's criminal history.

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 10, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 11—



**Mr DICK** (10.55 pm): I move the following amendments—

**6 Clause 11 (Suitability of patient to undergo treatment with medicinal cannabis)**

Page 16, lines 12 and 13—

*omit.***7 Clause 11 (Suitability of patient to undergo treatment with medicinal cannabis)**

Page 16, line 14, '(d)'—

*omit, insert—*

(c)

**8 Clause 11 (Suitability of patient to undergo treatment with medicinal cannabis)**

Page 16, line 15, '(e)'—

*omit, insert—*

(d)

**9 Clause 11 (Suitability of patient to undergo treatment with medicinal cannabis)**

Page 16, line 16, '(f)'—

*omit, insert—*

(e)

These amendments to clause 11 of the Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill 2016 are related to the other amendments moved in my name which I have already described.

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 11, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 12 to 27, as read, agreed to.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Farmer): I note that the minister's amendment No. 10 proposes to omit clauses 28 to 31; therefore, the minister should oppose the clauses. The question is that clauses 28 to 31 as read stand part of the bill.

Clauses 28 to 31, as read, negatived.

Clauses 32 to 216, as read, agreed to.

Clause 217—



**Mr DICK** (10.56 pm): I move the following amendment—

**11 Clause 217 (Regulation-making power)**

Page 133, line 18, 'criminal history checks and'—  
*omit.*

This amendment is related to the other amendments I have referred to earlier in the evening.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 217, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 218 to 226, as read, agreed to.

Schedule 1—



**Mr DICK** (10.57 pm): I move the following amendment—

**12 Schedule 1 (Dictionary)**

Page 141, lines 6, 7 and 12 to 21—  
*omit.*

This amendment again aligns with those other amendments moved in my name and which I described earlier in the evening.

Amendment agreed to.

Schedule 1, as amended, agreed to.

### Third Reading



**Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (10.58 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. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (10.58 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) (10.58 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

### Historic Motorcycles, Registration



**Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (10.58 pm): I rise to speak on behalf of the many historic motorcycling enthusiasts in Queensland. The Historical Motor Cycle Club of Queensland has 14 branches and 1,140 members with motorcycles dating from the early 1900s through to the mid-1980s. The problem they are currently facing is the cost of registering historic motorcycles in Queensland, which falls under the category of special interest vehicles, or SIVs. Currently, it is cheaper to register a special interest car than a motorcycle in the same special interest category. Queensland also has the dubious honour of having the highest annual registration cost of all states and territories in Australia, with a cost of \$206 annually.

The next highest was \$107 in the ACT and Western Australia has the lowest with \$40 per annum. A large number of historic motorcycle enthusiasts have multiple machines due to their generally lower cost and less storage area required in comparison to cars. However, multiple special interest vehicle registrations have become cost prohibitive, especially when one considers the very low level of usage permitted. If the SIVS motorcycle registration was more cost-effective this would result in more machines being registered, used and displayed for the benefit of the community as a whole.

I met recently with constituents Naomi and Jim McKenzie in Clifton—the McKenzies—who own a local garage and are members of the Historic Motor Cycle Club of Queensland. The business they own and operate restores old motorcycles. They are very concerned about the large cost of registration for motorcycles in the special interest vehicle categories and how this will affect their business in both the short and long term. The majority of HMCCQ members would like the Queensland government to adopt the schemes operating in Victoria or the current trial in New South Wales, which encourage high participation rates due to their lower costs and less restrictive vehicle usage parameters. Historic motorcycles have a low impact on the road as they are rarely used within built-up areas or on congested roads. Most usage occurs on country back roads and on weekends.

I would urge the minister to review the registration of special interest motorcycles as soon as possible to ensure that business owners can be assured of their future and historic motorcycles are preserved for the generations to come.

### Burpengary State School

 **Mr RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (11.01 pm): Last month, the Burpengary State School celebrated a very important milestone: its 140th anniversary of providing exceptional academic opportunities for the young people of the Burpengary community. While Queensland's first school opened in 1826, the opening of Burpengary State School in 1876 still makes it one of the oldest continuing state schools in Queensland. Current school Principal, Brad Fox, provided a great history of the school at the official 140th anniversary celebrations and school fete on Saturday, 10 September 2016, and there is certainly lots to celebrate in the school's history. The first school building at Burpengary was a slab hut with a bark roof. It had an earth floor, covered in part by strips of stringy bark, and was roughly furnished. There was one small window. In 1879 a storm tore the roof off and it had to be rebuilt. In 1889, a new purpose-built school building was constructed at the cost of 70 pounds. It measured eight metres by five metres. This simple wooden building endured until 1956, when it was demolished to make way for the construction of other buildings.

Since those early times, Burpengary State School has grown into one of the biggest primary schools in the Caboolture region. The school has been honoured to have exceptional school leadership, exceptional teachers and school staff and exceptional students throughout its history. It is this outstanding record that has caused Burpengary State School to be consistently recognised for its impressive academic outcomes and its strong community spirit. Perhaps this is why His Excellency, Sir Peter Cosgrove, Governor-General of Australia, sent his best wishes to the school community by video on the celebration day and last week visited the school in person to offer his belated birthday wishes. It may also be why the celebration day was so well attended by the Burpengary community including past students and community leaders such as the federal member for Longman, Susan Lamb, state member for Murrumba, Chris Whiting, and Councillor Peter Flannery. It was certainly a pleasant surprise to also have our Premier, Annastacia Palaszczuk, drop by the celebrations and help turn the sod on the school's \$1.5 million hall renovation project. The state government, the school, the school's P&C Association in partnership with Caboolture Basketball are very proud to be partnering to deliver this project, which will be open for use in 2017.

The school's celebration day was held in conjunction with the school fete. The fete was a cracker event and was well supported by the community. Special thanks must go to school Principal Brad Fox and his team including Deputy Principal Samantha Waldron, P&C President Wayne Summersford and his P&C team and all the students who made it a great day.

### Barry, Mr P

 **Mr McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (11.04 pm): In November this year Paul Barry, a member of Ithaca-Caloundra City Life Saving Club, will attend Buckingham Palace to receive a certificate from Prince Michael of Kent to celebrate Paul's contribution to Royal Life Saving in Australia. Only 125 people worldwide will receive one-off certificates and this year marked the 125th anniversary of the Royal Life Saving Society being founded in London. The society was established in Queensland in 1905 and the Ithaca club was founded in March 1954.

Paul was born on 1 May 1968 to Tony and Patricia. He is married to Lynda and they have two children. Paul joined Ithaca at Christmas in 1981 and has held numerous positions including club captain, chief instructor and treasurer. He has competed at world events in Germany in 2008, Egypt in 2010 and Adelaide in 2012.

The club is located at Bulcock Beach and since 1981 Paul and his team have performed hundreds of rescues. Paul tells me that the most dangerous sequence of near tragedies occurred some three to four years ago. It was coming to the end of the day when three separate and difficult rescues had to be performed in very quick succession, all led by Paul. Honourable members can imagine that at the end he was totally exhausted.

Paul has been a stalwart of the club for years and he has devoted thousands of hours to protecting people who use the beach. Bulcock Beach is known to many people in this House. Although it has a visual sense of safety, I can assure them that the tide turns and runs swiftly, with the risk of being dragged towards the sea. Paul Barry is the most senior lifesaver at the club and he has put his life in jeopardy on many occasions. Paul is one of the thousands of Queenslanders who, as volunteers, perform invaluable tasks and do so because of the passion they hold for others. Each day of the season members will find Paul on duty at Ithaca and he has done this for many years.

Paul is indeed a worthy recipient of the award. In his usual humble tone Paul, though very grateful for the award, acknowledges the work is of many: his wife, his children, his parents and members past and present. I, and indeed the people of Caloundra, congratulate Paul and wish him and his wife, Lynda, all the best when they attend Buckingham Palace.

### Prince Alfred Hotel

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (11.07 pm): I rise tonight to speak about a pub in Ipswich, the Prince Alfred Hotel. The PA, as it is known, is one of the oldest and most iconic hotels in Queensland. It is now also officially the best pub in Queensland having earned the trophies for best hotel overall and best redevelopment up to \$2 million at the Queensland Hotels Association awards recently.

Built in 1842 by Mr D Bergin, the PA was originally a two-storey hotel surrounded by 40 acres of cotton fields. In 1961 the Prince Alfred Hotel was destroyed by a fire, with the original coldroom the only part of the original building that still stands today. The hotel was rebuilt and opened in 1963. In 1987 Mary-Anne and Clive Johnson purchased the hotel and have remained the proud and passionately independent owners ever since.

In December 2012 the PA opened its doors to its new steakhouse, Char'd. The name was a tip of the hat to the hotel that burnt down in 1961. The 250-seat steakhouse which Char'd has become is setting the standard for dining, with a combination of decor and technology that will ensure a dining experience not to be forgotten. The success of Char'd led the way for the construction of the Tap'd bar in 2015. Tap'd is a dedicated craft beer bar with 72 taps.

The millions of dollars of investment and hard work that has been put into the PA by Mary-Anne and Clive and the PA staff including the PA Hotel Manager, Peter Coultas, have paid off with the QHA awards for best hotel overall and best redevelopment up to \$2 million. The latest awards are just a continuation of the state and national awards that the Johnsons have earned since purchasing the PA in 1987. It is important to recognise the Johnsons' passion not only for the PA but also for the local community and local businesses. The recent redevelopment of the PA was undertaken using Ipswich architect Peter Johnston, builder Cec Miles and interior designer Allison Burke—all Ipswich people with local businesses.

The Prince Alfred Hotel was a finalist in five categories of the 2016 Queensland Hotel Association Awards for Excellence. Taking away the top award for Hotel of the Year for the supreme all-round quality of its bar, steakhouse and service is public and industry recognition of something that Ipswichians have known for a long time: we do have the best hotel in Queensland.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I now call the member for Gympie for his contribution for which I understand he has been preparing for some time.

### Tin Can Bay Seafood Festival

 **Mr PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (11.10 pm): Last month almost 10,000 people converged on Tin Can Bay to celebrate the annual seafood festival. Run by the Tin Cay Chamber of Commerce, it is a magnificent way to celebrate and showcase Tin Can Bay, the Cooloola coast and their famous seafood and tourist industries. Organisers including Tin Can Bay Chamber of Commerce president Cameron Henderson and deputy chair of the Queensland Seafood Industry Association Key Reibel are to be

congratulated for their outstanding planning, organisation and promotion which were integral to the success of the day. I would also like to thank sponsors Gympie Regional Council, the Gympie Times and Bernards Petroleum, who provided support.

We were presented with an extensive variety of activities, stalls and entertainment, including the return of the famous frozen mullet-throwing contest and prawn-eating competitions. I was able to host the member for Burdekin and the member for Beaudesert in their respective capacities as shadow ministers and also the member for Condamine. As the festival is an annual celebration of the sometimes competing interests of commercial and recreational fishers, it represented both sides of the fishing argument from commercial and sporting anglers. As the member for Beaudesert said, 'Recreational and commercial fishing are both vital for the Queensland economy; it's just about getting the balance right.' We met with many residents of the Cooloola coast, including Rainbow Beach Chamber of Commerce president Mark Beech and business operators who were vocal about their concerns of the impact of government policies. As Peter Lee of Lee's Fishing Company gutted and filleted fish and served customers he clearly let us know the grassroots concerns of the local seafood industry.

Residents have genuine concerns that government policies and proposals will severely impact their businesses, livelihoods and the future prosperity of the region. The government's plans to extend World Heritage listing in the area, restrictive rules on commercial fishermen, the Queensland fisheries review green paper, road issues which are compounded by tourist visitations, improved access for tourists and concerns about management practices in the national parks have the potential to impact the economic health of the area. The member for Burdekin told the local paper that the government's conservation plans are important but excessive and that the preservation of 60 per cent of marine biomass would leave too little for all kinds of fishing folk. The agricultural, fishing and forestry industries are a valuable component of the Gympie regional economy. They contribute more than \$180 million to the regional gross national product and make up 25 per cent of the more than 4,300 local small businesses.

The event provided a brilliant way to support and showcase the region and it ensured that everyone was there, including a certain Clerk of the Parliament who was spied holidaying in one of the best spots in Queensland.

### **Mackay Eisteddfod; Shuttlewood, Mrs N**

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (11.12 pm): If you happen to be travelling past the Mackay entertainment centre any time until 23 October you will probably catch a glimpse of dancers, singers, musicians and drama performers all dressed like the superstars they are and shining even brighter. The Mackay Eisteddfod is one of our town's longest and fondest traditions. I was honoured to attend the official opening of this year's 70th anniversary of the eisteddfod. Generations of Mackay locals have participated in the eisteddfod, and some have gone on to become accomplished artists while others have just been in it for the fun of it. I remember my mum sitting in the audience watching me and 36 other 10-year-olds playing the piano. We all played the same tune, but it was in different keys and to varying degrees of ability. I have done the same for my daughter and for my grandchildren, just as countless other proud families have done for the past 70 years. I might be a little biased when I state Mackay's claim as the epicentre for the arts in North Queensland. We are a talented bunch; it is in our DNA and has evolved from generations of performing with fearless enthusiasm and without criticism or expectation. That is the wonderful thing about the eisteddfod, and that is why it is such an important part of our cultural history.

The eisteddfod is an opportunity for everyone from the very young to the very old to express themselves in the performing art of their choice and to be applauded by people from their community who admire and share their passion for performing. Norma Shuttlewood remembers performing at Mackay's first eisteddfod 70 years ago. 91-year-old Mrs Shuttlewood has collected a lifetime's worth of eisteddfod memorabilia which she has stored in six binders and 14 scrapbooks. Mrs Shuttlewood is the proud owner of every Mackay Eisteddfod program since 1947. Her passion for performing in eisteddfods began in early childhood. When she was 10 her mother entered her in the eisteddfod in the Burdekin. Young Norma also sang solo, played the violin and sang with the Home Hill school choir. A decade later Mrs Shuttlewood's singing continued in Mackay at the very first post-Second World War eisteddfod in 1947. Back then there were only four sessions: piano, singing, choral and highland dancing. Today the Mackay Eisteddfod covers most major musical dance disciplines for schools and individuals with contestant age categories ranging from tiny tots to mature aged, motivated, and everything in between.

I would like to wish all the performers and their families and teachers the very best for the remainder of the eisteddfod and I congratulate all involved for their dedication and hard work.

### North Stradbroke Island, Economic Transition Strategy

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Cleveland—LNP) (11.15 pm): I rise to speak about the government's North Stradbroke Island economic transition strategy. It saddens me to report early sackings and local confusion resulting from Labor's green laws to prematurely shut down sandmining. The government made a decision, introduced a law without a plan and then decided afterwards how to deal with the fallout. Instead of 'ready, set, go' Straddie got 'go, set, not ready'. Against the will of the people, Straddie got an early shutdown of mining at a cost of 150 mining and mining related jobs plus an expected 150 other local jobs put at risk. Labor's ETS is an inadequately funded and poorly focused Green preference payback deal. The workers' assistance package is also inadequate according to Ben Swan, state secretary of the Australian Workers' Union. To add insult to injury, the government recently lumped two pre-existing LNP projects together, Toondah Harbour and Weinam Creek, added them to their failing Straddie ETS and called it a Moreton Bay plan.

It gives me no joy today to inform the parliament that sadly just a few weeks ago 30 Sibelco miners were sacked and the whole mining community advised that there would be an extended Christmas shutdown. Clearly this is not the Christmas that mining families on Straddie expected. My office was approached by some of the sacked workers saying that they had problems accessing information about the workers' assistance scheme, which is the scheme that is supposed to transition mine workers into other employment. My office contacted Treasury, who said that it was no longer their responsibility. We were sent to the office of the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines who said, 'It is not us. Try employment.' Next my office contacted the office of the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, but the minister's office had no idea about the sacked workers and they were 'still finalising the package'. We have 30 workers who were sacked well over four weeks ago, and they are still 'finalising the package'. Workers further told us that the promised government office had not been set up on Straddie. Through word of mouth some of the redundant workers found out that there is now someone at the Little Ship Club waiting for the office to be established. There is a glossy brochure called *North Stradbroke Island: sandmining workers assistance scheme* with all sorts of promises that are not helping anyone.

In conclusion, the whole process is a shambles and it is the workers and island residents who are suffering. What is needed is immediate assistance for the first 30 sacked workers, more funding for the ETS and better focus on the ETS and tourism-boosting projects like the Dunwich Harbour redevelopment, destination marketing and the *HMS Tobruk* as a new dive site. Labor broke it; now Labor must fix it.

### National Police Remembrance Day

 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (11.18 pm): I rise tonight to talk about an important event that occurred across Queensland last month and one that is very dear to my heart. On 29 September Queenslanders paused to remember and pay tribute to 143 fallen policemen and officers on National Police Remembrance Day. I attended two events in Gladstone: the candlelight vigil and the service held at St Xavier's Anglican Church. I must say that there was a strong turnout of local support at both of these events which was excellent to see. Services, marches and vigils were held throughout the state to remember those officers who have paid the ultimate sacrifice for the communities that they serve. These events also present an opportunity for us to thank the dedicated men and women of our Police Service for their bravery, courage and sacrifice in the name of keeping our communities safe.

My twin brother Wayne is a senior sergeant based in Gladstone, and he has been a police officer for the last 15 years. In that time he has seen more trauma than we could possibly imagine. He has been the first on the scene of fatalities delivering news to loved ones and simply fronting up to work day after day, year after year, not knowing what he might be confronted with and with the ever-present danger that he might be injured or, even worse, killed. In the words of the Police Commissioner, Ian Stewart, 'no matter how experienced, skilled, equipped or courageous an officer may be, at times, fate and circumstances will conspire, resulting in the serious injury or the tragic death of an officer'.

Police officers put their safety aside for the betterment of the community they serve. As the brother of a police officer I want to say that this sacrifice is acknowledged and appreciated. I have talked to my brother on many occasions, and fear for their own safety is a real issue police officers face every single day on the job—day and night and every time they clock in to do their shift.

As a former tradesman, supervisor and maintenance superintendent I have strived every day to ensure that not only I but also my workmates and my workers went home at the end of the shift in a safe way. This concern is replicated with our dedicated police force. I cannot praise them enough,

including my brother, for the work they do and the conditions they sometimes have to deal with in our communities. I also acknowledge the ultimate sacrifice made by those fallen officers—and their families, their partners, their friends and their colleagues, who have also lost so much. We have not forgotten and we will never forget each and every one of those people.

### Toowoomba

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (11.20 pm): Toowoomba is a fantastic place to live, work and play. Spring is the time of year that we really come alive. We have just had the Carnival of Flowers. Many locals and many tourists enjoyed the wine, the food and the flowers. It was a great celebration.

This weekend many schools will be having their school fetes. Toowoomba East State School will be having their fete. I encourage everybody in East Toowoomba to go down and have a look. Highfields State School will host an event on Sunday. I will be there seeing the kids and catching up with some of the teachers who taught my children there. This weekend also sees Fairholme College's spring fair. My daughters attended there, so I will go and see if I can catch up with some of the members of the P&C and see how things are going there.

This weekend St Joseph's school will be celebrating 60 years. St Joseph's was attended by the former member for Toowoomba South and now federal member for Groom. I am sure that he will be there with them celebrating their 60th anniversary. On the weekend just gone Harlaxton Community Centre held a family fun day. It was great to catch up with a few of the families there. It was nice to have a brief chat with the former member, Kerry Shine, who was also there saying hello to everybody.

Not only is Toowoomba a great place to live, work and play; it is also a great place to invest. There are some very exciting things coming up. Toowoomba and Surat Basin Enterprise have been working hard to charter a plane and fill it with people to go over to China and look at investment opportunities, particularly for some of the produce from the downs. What makes that particularly exciting is that in just a few short weeks a Cathay Pacific freighter 747 will fly weekly to Hong Kong. Hopefully that will increase to multiple flights in the future. This is a great opportunity for the businesses of the downs, particularly people dealing in perishable goods who want to get them into one of the biggest markets in the world.

On the weekend just gone we also had the business awards for the chamber of commerce. Cracker Print & Paper was inducted into the hall of fame. That business is associated with Councillor Geoff McDonald's family and is the business of the very first State of Origin coach, 'Cracker' McDonald. My good friend Isaac Moody took out the main award for the night with Gabbinbar Homestead, which is now putting thousands of tourist nights into the Toowoomba community as people come for wedding receptions.

### Beach Day Out

 **Mrs LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (11.23 pm): One in five Queenslanders has a disability of some kind. Disability Action Week is an opportunity to shine a spotlight on social inclusion and promote positive attitudes towards those with a disability. It is also a time to highlight access issues that hinder community members accessing premises, services and public spaces equitably. Beach Day Out at Emu Park does just that but in a way that is fun for everyone.

Beach Day Out is an all-abilities event held as part of Disability Action Week celebrations. It is a free, inclusive, family-friendly event that provides accessible activities that the whole community can participate in. This inclusive and fun event aims to celebrate the contribution those with a disability make to our community; enable opportunity for community awareness in an inclusive environment; educate, link, connect and build awareness for partners, agencies, private and public sector businesses, individuals, families and carers; and improve the health and wellbeing and highlight education and employment pathways for those people with a disability living, recreating and/or visiting the Central Queensland region. It is also about challenging how all Queenslanders think, about their attitudes and how their perceptions may prevent or limit the inclusion of people with a disability. In fact, this year's theme was 'Inclusion: it's a game changer', which aims to promote the inclusion of people with a disability in all levels of sport and the community.

Now in its fifth year, Beach Day Out brings together a number of inclusive and accessible activities that the whole community can participate in. In 2015 over 3,200 people attended Beach Day Out, and in 2016 almost 4,500 local people attended, with over 60 stallholders each providing an inclusive, accessible activity. While we might take a day at the beach for granted, it can be challenging for people with a disability, who face mobility issues as a barrier to accessing the beach, but at Beach

Day Out everyone can get involved in beach sports, face painting, kite making and live music, both on the beach and in Bell Park. Beach matting leading to the sand and sea was rolled out, and there were also floating beach wheelchairs available for use under the watchful eyes of qualified lifesavers.

I congratulate the Beach Day Out organising committee including Ben Cooke, Nina Curtis-Gee and Emma Walls from the Anti-Discrimination Commission of Queensland; Jodie Lord from Spinal Life, a passionate woman with a steely determination to fight for equitable access; Sarah Owens, Ian Dare, Joyce Tinetti and Melissa Minter from Livingstone Shire Council; Michelle Roberts and Rebecca Smith from Smith Family; Michelle Broad from CQUniversity; Peter Smales from the department of communities; Josh Donovan, Paul Freeman and Lisa Eyles from the department of communities; Mary Wilson from Autism Queensland; Jenny Sweeney from Centacare; Debra Poots, Maxine Davies and Yvonne Davis from the Cerebral Palsy League; and Julie Irwin from the National Disability Coordination Officer Program, Community Solutions. I thank all of the volunteers, sponsors and supporters of yet another wonderful Beach Day Out.

Interruption.

## PRIVILEGE

### Comments by Member for Southern Downs

 **Mr SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (11.27 pm): I rise on a matter of privilege suddenly arising. Earlier tonight, in the debate of the private member's motion, I mentioned that when in government we had provided an MRI to the Cairns hospital. When I sat down I realised that I should have said 'PET scanner'. There is an obvious difference, but I felt it was important to correct the record. I apologise to Hansard for any inconvenience and I would ask that the record be amended accordingly.

## ADJOURNMENT

Resumed.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 11.27 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, 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