



# RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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## FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT

### Thursday, 7 September 2017

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## THURSDAY, 7 SEPTEMBER 2017

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The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

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

### SPEAKER'S RULINGS

#### Security of Parliamentary Precinct, Referral to Ethics Committee



**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I refer to my statement yesterday regarding a person being given entry to the precinct and guests being left unattended by a member who had signed in the guests. It appears that, while I was undertaking inquiries in relation to this matter in accordance with standing order 269(5), correspondence relating to this matter was provided to at least one media outlet. While this may not itself be a breach of privilege, it certainly is an unprecedented discourtesy.

In any event, I have decided to refer the entire incident to the Ethics Committee for its consideration because (1) I take breaches of our security procedures very seriously because of the potential risks posed to members, staff and the public; (2) there was a prima facie breach of security procedures; (3) further examination of the facts are required; and (4) this matter involves wider issues of policy, including what sanctions are appropriate to be instituted against members for failing to follow security procedures whilst also taking into account the rights of members. I remind members that standing order 271 now applies to this matter.

#### Tabling of Documents, Referral to Committee of the Legislative Assembly



**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, one of my roles as Speaker is to be the guardian of the privileges of the House, its committees and members. Sometimes as the guardian of privileges you must take action to reduce the likelihood of abuse of those privileges. On 21 February 2007 Speaker Reynolds stated—

With regard to the tabling of documents the Queensland Legislative Assembly is very liberal compared to other houses of parliament. The particular distinction in this House is that members have an almost unfettered right to table documents, at least in the first instance. In most other houses of parliament the tabling of documents is limited to particular classes of documents or tablings by ministers of the crown or otherwise only unless the leave of the House or the chair is first sought and given. For example, in the United Kingdom House of Commons, the Canadian House of Commons and the Australian House of Representatives, private members have no right to table papers without the specific consent of the House.

It must be remembered that the same privilege that members enjoy in their speeches in the House is effectively also transferred to documents tabled by them in the House.

On 17 September 2009 Speaker Mickel noted that, while it was not his intention to infringe the rights or privileges of members in the House, he was concerned about the number of documents tabled that must be archived forever and the nature of some documents that were being tabled in the House. Speaker Mickel was especially concerned about documents that contained information or words that may not be allowed in verbal speeches or documents that contained inferences, imputations and reflections that would have to be withdrawn if made verbally in the House.

Speaker Mickel referred the issue of tabling of documents to the then Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee for its consideration and report. The committee reported in June 2010. The committee recommended the insertion of a new standing order 266(24), making it clear that it would be a contempt for a member to seek to table a document that they know contains material that would otherwise offend standing orders. The committee also recommended an amendment to standing orders restricting the tabling of electronic material unless first vetted by the Speaker or the Clerk. Neither matter was eventually actioned.

I have become increasingly concerned about the unfettered right to table documents, which I believe is open to abuse. On an increasing basis reams of material are being tabled—predominantly under standing order 32—and it then falls on the Clerk and his officers to ensure that they do not breach standing orders. This material often includes matters which offend standing orders and it is either then not tabled or redacted.

The frequency and nature of this activity have now become such that I believe consideration of some fetter or accountability on tabling may be necessary. It appears that we can no longer rely on members to self-regulate the right to table material. I stress that there is no suggestion that members' freedom of speech per se would be impinged upon. I am not talking about freedom of speech; I am talking about the ability to table anything a member wants to table as long as it does not offend rules such as sub judice or make reflections upon other members.

I have decided to refer this matter to the Committee of the Legislative Assembly for its consideration. I invite all members to make their submissions to that committee.

## PETITION

The Clerk presented the following paper and e-petition, lodged and sponsored by the honourable member indicated—

### Proserpine, Alf Casey Road, Signage

**Mr Costigan**, from 389 petitioners, requesting the House to take all steps necessary to deliver a turning-in lane and improved signage on the Bruce Highway into Alf Casey Road, south of Proserpine [[1599](#), [1600](#)].

Petition received.

## TABLED PAPERS

### TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

#### MINISTERIAL PAPERS

The following ministerial papers were tabled by the Clerk—

Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport and Minister for Infrastructure and Planning (Hon. Trad)—

[1601](#) Response to an e-Petition (2783-17) sponsored by the Clerk in accordance with Standing Order 119(4), from 724 petitioners, requesting the House to halt the 50% increase of an additional 500 residential lots for the PDA at Lot 9968 on SP163061 Pub Lane, Greenbank

Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services (Hon. Dick)—

[1602](#) Response to an e-petition (2742-17) sponsored by Mr Langbroek, from 292 petitioners, requesting the House to enforce mandatory annual or bi-annual training and education for paediatric nurses, doctors and therapists on autism

[1603](#) Response to an e-petition (2744-17) sponsored by Mr Langbroek, from 270 petitioners, requesting the House to introduce "Harry's Rule" implementing a range of measures to ensure that hospitals in Queensland meet the needs of children with autism

[1604](#) Response to a paper petition (2795-17) presented by Mr Crandon and an e-Petition (2749-17) sponsored by Mr Crandon, from 301 and 193 petitioners respectively, requesting the House to ensure planning and construction of a hospital in the medical precinct adjacent to the Coomera Railway Station and the "under construction" Coomera Town Centre

[1605](#) Response to a paper petition (2793-17) presented by Mr McArdle, from 3,580 petitioners, requesting the House to ensure the Urgent Care Centre at the Caloundra Hospital be open and operational 24 hours a day, seven days a week

#### MEMBER'S PAPERS

The following member's papers were tabled by the Clerk—

Member for Cairns (Mr Pyne)—

[1593](#) Bundle of documents (with redactions), dated 7 September 2017, titled 'Union of Mayors and Councillors attacks Residents & Ratepayers groups'

[1594](#) Document (redacted), dated 5 September 2017, titled 'Cook Shire Council'

## MINISTERIAL PAPERS

### Fraser Coast Regional Council, Mayor



**Hon. M FURNER** (Ferry Grove—ALP) (Minister for Local Government and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (9.37 am): I rise to table a letter containing a direction pursuant to section 116 of the Local Government Act 2009. I am directing that the mayor of the Fraser Coast Regional Council take remedial action to improve his performance. Unfortunately, I have been left with no other option.

*Tabled paper:* Letter, undated, from the Minister for Local Government and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Hon. Mark Furner, to Councillor Chris Loft, Mayor, Fraser Coast Regional Council regarding remedial action under section 116 of the Local Government Act 2009 [[1595](#)].

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

### Tourism Industry, International Flights

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.38 am): One of our 553 commitments at the last election was to boost the Attracting Aviation Fund by \$10 million over three years for new flight routes to attract international visitors. Since then we have secured new flights which will bring 600,000 additional seats to Queensland airports from Coolangatta to Cairns and inject \$450 million into our economy every year. The latest international tourist data shows that last financial year we welcomed more than 2.6 million overseas visitors. For every two Queenslanders we now welcome an international guest to our state. Combined, these tourists spent an estimated \$5.2 billion in Queensland last financial year, which is the equivalent of \$100 million every week.

Last week we built on that success when the Treasurer, state development minister and I joined Qantas CEO Alan Joyce to announce that Queensland will be home to the east coast and Pacific operations of Qantas's newest aircraft, the Boeing 787-900 Dreamliner. This alone will support 470 jobs. While we were making that announcement in Brisbane, the tourism minister was in China finalising with Hainan Airlines to fly twice a week between Shenzhen and Cairns. This project will make a direct injection of \$64 million into the Far North Queensland economy.

Today I can announce that China Eastern Airlines will increase its direct Shanghai-Brisbane flights to daily. This is great news for Queensland. This means another 120,000 new visitors to Queensland over the next four years. The increase, from four flights a week to a daily service, will inject \$138 million into the Queensland economy. The additional services have been secured with the support of our Connecting with Asia fund and will provide Chinese visitors access to our best destinations right across Queensland.

China is Queensland's most valuable and fastest growing international market, with visitors spending \$1 billion over the past year. Approximately 120 million Chinese visitors travelled overseas in 2016, with 1.2 million passengers coming to Australia. With Brisbane the main gateway to Queensland, these additional flights are also a significant win for the Gold Coast and the Whitsundays. The flights were secured by a consortium including Tourism and Events Queensland, Brisbane Airport Corporation, Gold Coast Tourism, Brisbane Marketing, Tourism Whitsundays and Tourism Australia.

### Jobs

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.40 am): Once again, by working together my government is ensuring we get more Queenslanders working. Last month the ABS reported that 94,500 new jobs had been created since January 2015. Putting Queenslanders first, getting them into a job or back into work underpins and drives everything my government strives to achieve. There is no greater source of hope or opportunity than a job. According to the latest Australian Bureau of Statistics data, 100 new jobs have been created each and every day since my government came to office.

As I move around the state I can sense a new spirit of optimism and confidence. The bitterness and fear that divided Queensland are fading fast. We had a plan for a better Queensland and we have stuck to it. Many local business owners I meet are keen to take advantage of our positive economic policies, particularly the recently expanded \$177.5 million Back to Work employment package. Employers right across Queensland now are backing this exceptional program in droves. Since it started in July last year to the end of August this year, employers have taken on an impressive 6,750 new jobseekers and there have been a further 530 expressions of interest in the program from south-east employers.

My government's Back to Work program is an ongoing investment in jobs and businesses that help the Queensland economy to prosper. Employers in regional Queensland have already received more than \$38 million in support payments under this scheme. Back to Work is a great initiative producing outstanding results in our regions and cities that have been doing it tough.

I have heard so many stories of how this vital program is transforming lives. In Wide Bay, for example, 1,350 jobseekers have been employed so far. Wide Bay has the second biggest regional take-up rate just behind Far North Queensland, where 1,544 jobseekers have been hired.

## Governing from the Regions, Wide Bay

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.42 am): Next Monday cabinet will meet and host a community reception in Maryborough to mark the start of a week of governing in the Wide Bay region. I know that the member for Maryborough is looking forward to that visit, as is the member for Bundaberg. My ministers and I will travel throughout the region meeting with residents, stakeholders, councils and business leaders. On Tuesday evening I and my ministerial colleagues are especially looking forward to another big turnout and a lot of questions at my public meeting at Maryborough—a town hall meeting where the community can come and meet with us.

I am proud of what we have delivered and what we will continue to deliver for the Wide Bay region. I am keen to inspect the completion of stage 1 of the \$45 million new emergency department for the Hervey Bay Hospital, which was very much needed. I will also inspect the \$450,000 of new imaging equipment at Maryborough Hospital which is now comparable with imaging available at our biggest hospitals. In Bundaberg, health minister Cameron Dick and emergency services minister Mark Ryan will open the new South Bundaberg fire and ambulance station. Throughout the week there will be a busy round of meetings and other announcements of significance and importance for this fast-growing region.

My government is building and supporting jobs and economic growth across our state. We listen to Queenslanders. We know what their needs are. Governing from Wide Bay will highlight the hard work and effort by hardworking local MPs the members for Maryborough and Bundaberg in their respective communities to deliver local projects, jobs and services.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Ms Trad:** Ted feels left out.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Don't worry, member for Hervey Bay. I am coming to see your area.

## Carnival of Flowers

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.44 am): Next weekend I will have the privilege of officially opening the Carnival of Flowers in Toowoomba. This will be the 68th Carnival of Flowers, which has become one of Queensland's most successful and iconic events. The carnival showcases Toowoomba, the garden city and one of Australia's great inland cities. The carnival attracts almost 200,000 people. I am proud that my government, through Tourism and Events Queensland, is supporting the Carnival of Flowers and we have locked in support for the event this year, in 2018 and in 2019. Well done, Minister for Tourism.

TEQ held a forum for the region's tourism operators last week. Tourism in the Southern Queensland country region, which incorporates Toowoomba, the Darling Downs and the Granite Belt, is growing strongly. There has been a more than 11 per cent increase in overnight visitor expenditure in recent years, to a record high of \$773 million.

I am proud to be attending and opening the carnival as my father, Henry, did in 2002, 15 years ago. I am advised that the dress instructions have not changed: florals, hats and spring colours. Henry took the dress instructions to another level. He challenged a local radio announcer to wear a brighter floral outfit than him. I have been challenged by much admired ABC Toowoomba presenter Belinda Sanders to wear a brighter floral dress than her at the carnival. I know that I can meet that challenge.

## Child Protection Week

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.46 am): This week we have seen Queenslanders getting right behind Child Protection Week. Child Protection Week reminds us that child protection is everyone's business. As a community and as individuals, we all have an important role to play in keeping children safe. Today I am tabling three Queensland Family and Child Commission reports: *Strengthening capacity across Queensland's child protection system*, the Apelt report; *Keeping Queensland's children more than safe: review of the foster care system*; and *Keeping Queensland's children more than safe: review of the blue card system*.

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Family and Child Commission: Blue Card and Foster Care Systems Review Report on Term of Reference 5: Strengthening Capacity Across Queensland's Child Protection System [[1598](#)].

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Family and Child Commission: Keeping Queensland's children more than safe: Review of the foster care system, Blue Card and Foster Care Systems Review [[1596](#)].

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Family and Child Commission: Keeping Queensland's children more than safe: Review of the blue card system, Blue Card and Foster Care Systems Review [[1597](#)].

I know that everyone in this House believes that Queensland children deserve to be cared for in a safe and supportive environment. Our children deserve to grow up in loving and caring homes, including when they are vulnerable and in the care of the state.

The Apelt report I table this morning provided the detailed analysis for the preparation of this year's budget, in which I was proud to announce the biggest investment in front-line staff in more than a decade. Our 2017-18 budget provides a \$200 million package to address pressures and capacity issues in the child protection system including 236 additional Child Safety staff in 2017-18, increasing to 219 Child Safety staff in 2018-19. The reports being released today have helped us to target our unprecedented investment of more than 400 new Child Safety staff over two budgets. This means more Child Safety staff where they are needed, and better services for children and families.

I would like to thank Commissioner Vardon, her staff and members of the expert panel including a former director-general of the Queensland department of communities, Linda Apelt; Bravehearts founder and chair, Hetty Johnston AM; former Queensland Police Service assistant commissioner, Ethical Standards Command, Paul Doyle; Foster Care Queensland Executive Director, Bryan Smith; CEO of Surf Life Saving Queensland, John Brennan OAM; Chief Executive Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service, Shane Duffy; Director of Civil Law, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service, Simon Burgess; and CEO of Create Foundation, Jacqui Reed.

In commissioning these reports I tasked the expert panel with providing advice to the government on how the systems which underpin the way we protect and care for Queensland's children could be improved. These three reports have all been formed through extensive consultation with key stakeholders and experts—listening to their views, understanding the issues and hearing their ideas for improvement. Importantly, the expert panel listened to young people who had experience in the foster care system. Each of these reports I am tabling today represents a significant body of work, and my government has already made significant steps to improve and strengthen the child protection system and will continue to do so.

We have more than 5,000 foster carers in Queensland. While we already have stringent processes in place for the assessment and approval of foster carers, it is our absolute priority to ensure that they are all working in the best interests of the children in their care. We want to ensure that we have the right carers for the right children. The QFCC foster care report identifies opportunities to strengthen carer assessment, approval and renewal processes and to strengthen safeguards. The report also confirms the importance of the Office of the Public Guardian's Community Visitor Program and makes recommendations to improve that program.

In relation to the blue card system, this review found that Queensland has one of the strongest systems in Australia, and we are going to make it even stronger. We will do this by increasing the number of people who will require blue cards, broadening the range of offences that automatically exclude applicants and modernising the application and renewal process. I remain committed to transforming Queensland's child protection and family support system to ensure the safety and wellbeing of Queensland children. This review found that Queensland has one of the strongest systems in Australia, and we are going to make it even stronger. My government remains committed to transforming Queensland's child protection and family support system to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all Queensland children now and into the future.

### 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) (9.50 am): I rise today to speak on the vital reforms that are making Queensland the safest state in Australia for children. At the outset I place on record my thanks to all of the expert panel members led by Queensland's Family and Child Commission. The report tabled this morning on the capacity of the child safety system confirms the devastating impact the LNP's cuts had on areas already under pressure. Some 225 permanent Child Safety staff were cut and 177 temporary positions were also lost under the LNP, and 130 of those who lost their jobs were Child Safety officers and regional support officers on the front line. It is no surprise that these reports also identified that ice corridors in our state in the south-west, south-east and north coast regions are particular pressure points for the system. Increased awareness and reporting about domestic and family violence and the rise of ice use amongst families have created the perfect storm, magnifying the pressure already created by the LNP's job cuts.

The report's findings have underpinned our massive commitment in this year's budget of \$200 million to employ almost 300 new Child Safety staff in the right locations to ease that pressure—pressure that was already being relieved by 129 new staff in the previous budget and of course new policies like our mandatory drug testing for parents where drug use is suspected. Consistent with the report's recommendations, we have already acted by making sure new staff go where they are needed, creating better training and career pathways for staff and introducing a relief pool to cover staff whilst on leave. The government has accepted this report's recommendations and action plan in full and is getting on with the job of restoring life-saving front-line services.

Our valued partners at the front line of course are Queensland's more than 5,000 carer families. The review of the foster care system has also been tabled by the Premier this morning, and that review confirms our system is working as intended but important improvements can be made. Again, we are accepting and implementing all of these recommendations. We will toughen background checks on prospective foster carers so that domestic violence history, traffic history, referee checks and a medical clearance are mandatory right across the state. We will improve training for foster and kinship carers and strengthen our Community Visitor Program to ensure our system is even more accountable. We will also double our efforts to listen to and include the views of children and young people and better match the needs of children with our carers.

We are already well on our way to improving the system, having already introduced legislative changes for new permanent care orders, professional foster care and boosting childcare subsidies for our carers. There is more work to do, and these reports provide us with the blueprint needed to build a stronger system. These reforms, along with the recommended improvements to the blue card system, will provide the safest out-of-home care system in the nation because Queensland's most vulnerable children deserve no less.

### Blue Cards

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (9.54 am): The Palaszczuk government welcomes the recommendations made in the review of the blue card system which the Premier has tabled this morning. We are committed to streamlining and toughening the process for working with children checks. The review found that Queensland's current blue card system is a strong foundation and is one of the strongest systems in Australia, but we are committed to making it stronger. We recognise that in order to keep pace with changing community expectations and emerging risks it is timely to update and strengthen this very effective base.

We welcome all of the findings and broadly support the intent of all 81 recommendations made by the Queensland Family and Child Commission. The recommendations are wideranging and are framed around four key areas. Firstly, the report recommends overarching reforms which include a detailed legislative review and a review of funding arrangements. Secondly, it includes streamlining the blue card system through new online systems. Thirdly, the report recommends strengthening the blue card system by expanding its scope and coverage, enhancing compliance, improving decision-making, enabling better information sharing and refocusing the system on child-safe standards. Lastly, the report recommends improving support and maintaining public confidence by building capacity and cultural capability and supporting communities and organisations.

These recommendations are significant and will require a planned and considered implementation to ensure that Queensland's blue card system continues to be one of the strongest in Australia. The implementation will be resource and time intensive and require extensive industry and community consultation. It is also extremely important that we ensure our response is informed by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, which is due to report later this year. We recognise the importance of nationally consistent standards to ensure consistent levels of safeguards for children across Australia.

In line with the interim findings of the royal commission, the blue card report recommends to expand the scope of the blue card system to include a number of new services, including commercial children's services, gym and play facilities, overnight camps and children's transport services. Expanding the scope of screening will introduce stronger safeguards for children participating in activities in these environments and will also better align the screening requirements in Queensland with other jurisdictions across Australia.

It is important we get the staging of these reforms right. Some of the recommendations are dependent on other recommendations being implemented first, and others will require agreement across states and territories. Within the next 12 months a detailed implementation plan will be developed to provide a road map for implementing reforms. The Palaszczuk government is committed to further strengthening the blue card system by increasing the number of people who will require blue cards, broadening the range of offences that automatically exclude applicants and modernising the application process.

### Works for Queensland

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport and Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (9.57 am): The Palaszczuk Labor government is rolling out the next \$200 million round of Works for Queensland, even as new figures show what an outstanding success this program has been. Thousands of Queenslanders have been employed through round 1 of Works for Queensland. That is jobs—3,985 of them, to be precise—created, sustained and supported as reported by councils carrying out the works as at 31 July this year, and there is more to come.

No wonder Bundaberg Mayor Jack Dempsey says this program is putting smiles on the faces of residents in the region. That is the story being repeated right across regional Queensland. Bundaberg council forecast 759 jobs from the program but to date it has achieved 796—that is 37 more than its initial estimate. Similar or better results are being reported by other councils. Cairns estimated it would produce 60 jobs and to date it has produced 100. In Mackay the initial estimate of 182 jobs has been exceeded by nearly 140, with 321 jobs created or supported. North Burnett Regional Council has nearly trebled its forecast, turning an initial estimate of 119 jobs created, sustained or supported into a whopping 347 jobs. That is just from round 1, the first \$200 million round of the program! With another \$200 million to come, the 65 eligible councils have jumped at the opportunity to have important shovel-ready projects funded to deliver infrastructure and create local jobs, and very soon the councils will be notified of their successful submissions. I look forward to updating the House on these projects in the near future.

I am particularly pleased to report that some of our smaller councils are leading the way in delivering round 1 projects for their communities. Perhaps the most encouraging statistic is that of the top six performing councils in getting the money out the door there are Indigenous councils. Doomadgee and Cherbourg have spent more than half of their allocation towards a combined total of 16 projects. Across Queensland, 72 projects are completed with 642 in progress. As I said, this program is making a real difference to communities right across the state, and I look forward to keeping the House updated as more Queenslanders are employed through this important and successful funding initiative.

### Queensland Economy

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (10.00 am): The Palaszczuk government has made a commitment to Queenslanders to create jobs. We are keeping that commitment. The latest ABS figures show that, since the last state election, 94,500 net new jobs were created in our state. We have kept our commitment because we have implemented an economic plan that has seen strong growth return to our state economy.

The recent Queensland state accounts show gross state product growing at 3.9 per cent in the 12 months to the March quarter. Compare that to just 1.4 per cent in the last full year of the former government. While GSP takes into account our record-breaking trade performance, this week's figures for state final demand are evidence that we are seeing a continuing upturn in our state's domestic economy as well. They show a 2.7 per cent rise in state final demand over the year to the June quarter, higher than New South Wales at 2.4 per cent. It was the sixth consecutive quarterly rise after eight quarters, or two years, of contraction. The contraction in state final demand peaked at negative 0.9 per cent in the September quarter 2014 under the LNP's scorched-earth approach to economic management. I table a graph that demonstrates the difference we are seeing in the domestic economy.

*Tabled paper:* Graph depicting Queensland State Final Demand, quarterly change (trend) [\[1606\]](#).

A major contributor was continuing our economic plan and initiatives implemented in three state budgets which have revived the Queensland economy that we inherited. That is because our budgets have been focused on creating jobs, not cutting them. Compared to when we assumed office, growth is up, confidence is up, debt is down and our unemployment rate is down. Previously, we saw jobs growth in the south-east corner but now see positive trends in some regions.

The opposition and its almost exclusive use of the highly volatile outback statistical area would have people believe that this is indicative of what is happening across the entirety of regional Queensland. That is not the case. In Mackay, the unemployment rate fell since the election from 5.6 per cent to 5.2 per cent in July. On the Sunshine Coast the rate is down from 7.3 per cent to 5.5 per cent since the election. Also since the election the Gold Coast is down from six per cent to 4.9 per cent; Cairns is down two percentage points since the election from 7.9 per cent to 5.9 per cent but also down from the peak of 8.9 per cent it hit in December 2012; and Wide Bay is down from 10.7 per cent at the election to 8.7 per cent in July.

I grant that not all regions have seen drops in their unemployment rates, including the outback region in answer to the member for Nanango's question. That is why we are supporting jobs in that region through the development of hospitals and healthcare centres at McKinlay, Boulia, Blackall, Aramac, Longreach and Cunnamulla; works on the Kennedy Developmental Road and widening the Landsborough Highway; infrastructure at Mica Creek; and the Lake Julius solar project. Also, as the Premier outlined this week, we are protecting our sheep and wool industry in Western Queensland through more than \$30 million in the past two years for wild dog exclusion fencing. These are just a few of the projects we are funding to support outback communities and outback jobs.

Our statewide youth unemployment rate has fallen from 14.1 per cent to 13.5 per cent since the election. This includes a huge shift in Cairns, which has seen youth unemployment in the Far North come down from a peak of 28 per cent to 15.6 per cent. Falls have also been seen over that period in several other regions: Darling Downs/Maranoa, Ipswich, the Gold and Sunshine coasts, and Toowoomba. But, like the general unemployment rate, it can come down further which is why, unlike the former government, we will not abandon the commitment we made to Queenslanders and young Queenslanders in particular. It is why we implemented our Back to Work program focused on regional communities and now extended to the south-east corner. It is why we introduced the Back to Work Youth Boost of \$20,000 for employers hiring people aged between 15 and 24. Almost 4,000 young Queenslanders have secured jobs under the Back to Work Youth Boost since July last year. That includes about 600 in North-West and South-West Queensland.

Unlike those opposite, under our watch there is no power dive into the abyss and no scaremongering. We are getting on with the job of creating jobs in Queensland for a better Queensland. We will continue implementing our economic plan that has seen growth up, debt down, confidence up, and unemployment down. We will continue implementing budget initiatives that focus on strengthening our state economy and fostering growth, investment and innovation, the necessary ingredients for jobs growth. Our job is about Queenslanders' jobs and we will get on with it.

### Queensland Health

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (10.05 am): Honourable members will remember the turmoil and conflict that engulfed the Health portfolio during the years of the Newman government as cuts were imposed by the member for Clayfield when he was the Treasurer. Let me remind members opposite of the 4,400 staff cut from Queensland Health, including 1,800 midwives, attacking the beating and compassionate heart of our healthcare system—our nurses and our midwives. It was a government that was at war with its own workforce; it was a government that cut staff from preventative health, patient safety and mental health without any regard for the consequences. Trust between Queensland Health staff and the government was shattered. Essential non-government organisations faced oblivion due to cancelled funding contracts, namely, community groups that helped men and women dealing with stillbirth, groups that helped terminal cancer patients, and groups that helped families dealing with challenging health conditions like muscular dystrophy, asthma and epilepsy. All those groups felt the razor of the member for Clayfield when he was Treasurer. All those organisations faced cuts led by Campbell Newman's cutter-in-chief, the member for Clayfield.

Bit by bit, the Palaszczuk government has been repairing the damage of the member for Clayfield. We have been putting back together our health system. We are investing in front-line services and staff to ensure that our health system meets the needs of an ageing and growing population. Our investment is paying dividends. When we came to government, 104,000 people were waiting longer than clinically recommended for a specialist outpatient appointment and, despite year-on-year growth in referrals of 10 per cent, that figure is now down to just over 38,000, a reduction of 64 per cent. This is a remarkable achievement that would not have been possible without government investment and the dedication and commitment of our hardworking Queensland Health staff.

However, there is one achievement that I am particularly proud of, that is, the reversal of the member for Clayfield's war on nurses and midwives. I am pleased to report to the House that over the past two financial years we have recruited 3,443 new graduates in nursing and midwifery. That is a record-breaking nurse graduate recruitment program. I am pleased to outline to the House how every part of Queensland is the beneficiary—

**Mr Bleijie** interjected.

**Mr DICK:** I take the interjection from the member for Kawana. We are paying our staff because one cannot pay them if one sacks them. Every hospital and health service has benefitted.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Thank you, members.

**Mr DICK:** One cannot be paid if one does not have a job as a nurse or midwife. I am pleased to outline to the House how every part of Queensland is a beneficiary. Every hospital and health service has benefitted from our recruitment of nurse graduates: the Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service, 221 nursing and midwifery graduates; Central Queensland, 123; Central West, 27; Children's Health Queensland, 108; the Darling Downs, 206; the Gold Coast, 414; Mackay, 107; Metro North, 840; Metro South, 575; the north-west, 47; south-west, 49; the Sunshine Coast, 180; the Torres and Cape, 18; Townsville, 251; West Moreton, 179; and the Wide Bay where we will be governing from next week, 98 new graduate nurses and midwives.

I welcome each and every one of them to our system and I wish them a long and satisfying career in our health system. They are living examples that out of the wreckage of the Newman-Nicholls years the Palaszczuk Labor government is rebuilding the front line of health care in Queensland to build a better future for all Queenslanders.

### China Eastern Airlines

 **Hon. KJ JONES** (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism, Major Events and the Commonwealth Games) (10.09 am): As announced by the Premier this morning, China Eastern Airlines will be boosting to daily their flights between Shanghai and Brisbane. These new flights were secured through our \$33 million Connecting with Asia fund and delivers on our commitment to grow tourism from Asia. A daily flight from China's second biggest city opens our skies to a new era of Chinese tourism. China Eastern Airlines will increase their flights from four a week to a daily service that will inject \$138 million into the Queensland economy. The daily flights are expected to bring an additional 120,000 new visitors to Queensland.

China is Queensland's most valuable and fastest growing international market worth more than \$1 billion a year to our economy. We know that securing additional international flights to Queensland is the best way to grow tourism and to grow tourism jobs. I want to thank the consortium led by Tourism and Events Queensland, Brisbane Airport Corporation, Gold Coast Tourism, Brisbane Marketing, Tourism Whitsundays and Tourism Australia. Our Connecting with Asia fund paved the way to bring these partners together to secure these additional flights.

The Whitsundays and Gold Coast will benefit directly from these flights with itineraries designed to disperse visitors into Queensland's regions. These new flights deliver on our commitment to grow tourism and tourism jobs throughout Queensland.

## MOTION

### Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.11 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That, notwithstanding anything contained in standing and sessional orders, the Minister for Housing and Public Works and Minister for Sport be permitted to move at 5.30 pm today the motion of which he gave notice yesterday, with time limits for speeches and debate as follows—

- 5 minutes for each member; and
- total debate time before question put—30 minutes.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

## NOTICE OF MOTION

### Electricity Prices



**Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (10.12 am): I give notice that I shall move—

That this House condemns the Palaszczuk government for using record high electricity prices as a secret tax which is slashing family budgets and making it harder for Queenslanders to get ahead.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Palaszczuk Labor Government, Behaviour



**Mr EMERSON** (Indooroopilly—LNP) (10.12 am): This is a government that likes to play the blame game.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr EMERSON:** They are still playing the blame game! Instead of taking responsibility for their own incompetence and failures they want to point the finger. They direct blame at a domestic violence victim. They claim the victim should have done more. They claim the victim should have acted, not them. It is not just domestic violence victims, they also blame a whistleblower who points out where a minister has disgracefully used and abused a family and says such contemptible behaviour should not be allowed to be kept hidden. They blame a whistleblower who believes ministers should set high standards not conduct shameful stunts.

As I said, Labor likes to play the blame game. Here is Labor's hypocrisy: in 2012 the Premier said, 'The only thing this government knows is how to play the blame game.' All Labor does is blame victims and those trying to do the right thing. They do not blame everyone. They do not blame the minister who uses and abuses a grieving family. They do not blame a minister who there is a reasonable suspicion has acted corruptly. They never blame their union mates. Queensland is the strike capital of Australia, but Labor never blames the unions and their union mates like Dave Hanna and Michael Ravbar. Labor will never blame the CFMEU.

They will never admit those strikes are one of the reasons Queensland had the second-worst domestic economic growth in yesterday's result despite the Treasurer telling Queenslanders they have never had it so good. Have a look at the job numbers since Labor came to power: Darling Downs-Maranoa more than 3,000 jobs lost; Fitzroy, more than 3,000 jobs lost; Outback Queensland, more than 15,000 jobs lost; Sunshine Coast, more than 2,400 jobs lost; on to Townsville, more than 7,000 jobs lost. This is the record of this Treasurer who just told parliament Queensland has never had it so good. In Brisbane East, 2,000 jobs lost since Labor has come to power; in Brisbane North, 4,000 jobs lost since Labor came to power; in Brisbane's inner city more than 200 jobs lost. This is a government that likes to blame other people. They blame victims and whistleblowers who try to hold the government to account. This is a weak Premier who cannot control her ministers and wants to play the blame game. This Premier should show some leadership and lead Queensland rather than blaming victims.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr Bleijie** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I can hear you, member for Kawana. You will have an opportunity, if you want to, to talk later on.

### Member for Clayfield



**Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (10.16 am): That speech by the member for Indooroopilly was like being run over by an out-of-control segway. I think he is the only bloke in Queensland who owns one. The shining great initiative of the minister for transport was segways for Queensland. They have never again been seen in Queensland.

Some anniversaries are worth celebrating whereas there are other anniversaries that are best forgotten. Birthdays and weddings are occasions to be celebrated by family and friends. However, there are some anniversaries that are best forgotten, that some want to airbrush out of history, and one of those has arrived. This month is the fifth anniversary of the member for Clayfield's first budget as Queensland treasurer. It was the budget that sent 4,400 health workers, 14,000 public servants and

1,800 nurses and midwives to the scrap heap. It was a budget big on ideology but short on common sense. I can assure members that no-one working in the health system in Queensland will be celebrating that anniversary. It is a time in their lives they would rather forget.

Non-government organisations were stripped of funding. Organisations that had been dutifully serving the Queensland community for years were suddenly in the sights of the member for Clayfield. Such subversive organisations like the Red Cross, the Advanced Breast Cancer Group, the Alzheimer's Association of Queensland, the Amputees and Families Support Group Queensland based in the area of Woodridge, the Arthritis Foundation of Queensland, the Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Support Group (Queensland) and the Queensland Asbestos Disease Support Society were all stripped of funding by the member for Clayfield. This is the man who pretends that he wants to be the Premier of Queensland.

This anniversary will not be forgotten by Queenslanders. As much as people want to forget it they cannot forget what the member for Clayfield did and they will not give him the chance again. They know if he gets his hands on the levers of power again he will do exactly the same thing. He has not repudiated what he has done. The only thing he has ever apologised for is for getting the communication wrong, for getting the messaging wrong. He has never admitted fault for anything he has done, including ripping \$100 million out of the health system in three months which resulted in the closure of the Barrett Adolescent Centre. Forget this cant and hypocrisy about an apology that we get from the other side, why does the member for Clayfield not apologise for what he did because Queenslanders have not forgotten what he did to Queensland.

### No-Body No-Parole Legislation

 **Mr WALKER** (Mansfield—LNP) (10.19 am): Four weeks ago today, the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and the Attorney-General callously used the grieving parents of a homicide victim for a media stunt to praise the government with respect to laws that they knew could not help those parents find the body of their son and give them some form of emotional closure and a sense of justice, at least in the short term. Leanne and Gary Pullen from Mackay are good, decent people who just want to find out what happened to their son, Timothy, following his death in 2012. They want to recover his body so that they can say goodbye and give him the burial that he deserves. They deserve our respect, not to be used as convenient props. However, their treatment by senior ministers in this government has been appalling. In the Pullen's words, they were used as political pawns and deceived into thinking that they might have some light at the end of a five-year long traumatic journey.

After the deceitful treatment of the family was exposed in the national media, it took the minister two days to ring up and apologise to the Pullens, 'If that's what they wanted'. Talk about kicking people when they are down. We then heard of a review of the decision by the Parole Board, which held out false hope to the Pullen family for another week, only to have the original decision upheld. We have grave doubts as to whether there was an actual and thorough review of the original decision to grant parole and we will get to the bottom of that matter, as well. We also want to know why the decision was made before the no-body no-parole legislation was assented to, without the benefit of that legislation. I have written to the Parole Board president to seek an explanation on the terms of the review and so far the response has been extremely unsatisfactory, to say the least.

The shadow minister for corrective services, Tim Mander, has already written to the CCC about whether the minister or his office intervened in ensuring that the Pullens were not notified of the Parole Board decision, despite being on the Victims Register as required by the law. If I do not receive a satisfactory explanation as to the terms of the review and its conduct, I will also be referring that element of this escalating saga to the CCC, because in my mind it deserves a thorough investigation.

The treatment of the Pullens, the family of a homicide victim, has been disgusting. We will continue to fight for justice for them and to get to the bottom of this matter. In contrast, the government's twisted priorities in delaying an apology, blaming everyone else and then, to rub salt into the wound, going after the departmental whistleblower, the person who lifted the lid on this sorry saga, speaks for itself. This is a government that is not interested in standing up for vulnerable Queenslanders. It is a government that will say and do anything to protect the jobs of its own members.

### Leader of the Opposition

 **Hon. KJ JONES** (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism, Major Events and the Commonwealth Games) (10.22 am): There are very few things that the former member for Ashgrove, Campbell Newman, and I agree on but there is one: it is calling out the honourable member

for Clayfield for not having the leadership to back his own decisions; he just walks away. Do members remember the Shaggy moment: 'It wasn't me.'? Do members remember the moment when he said that the decisions he made as treasurer were nothing to do with him?

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Ms JONES:** That is your fault, Billy Gordon! He said that about the decisions he made as treasurer. Five years ago today he was the treasurer of Queensland—although we know he tried to outsource it to Peter Costello, because he was too lazy to do the work—who brought down the budget that ruined the lives of thousands of Queenslanders and took away their livelihoods.

**Ms Trad:** And he blamed Campbell Newman.

**Ms JONES:** He blamed Campbell Newman; that is right. We all saw Campbell Newman's tweet. This morning, we again saw the member for Clayfield fail to stand up for what he believes in. This morning on ABC Radio, when asked directly whether or not he was going to do a deal with One Nation—and the member for Indooroopilly might want to listen to this, because I assure him that it will affect him and his electorate—do members know what this amazing leader said? He said, 'Oh, well, ah, oh. Look, it's a bit too early to decide. I think we'll need to make a decision when we see who the candidates are.' He wants to see who the One Nation candidates are? Give me a break! One Nation has not changed in 20 years.

Let us look at some of the candidates they have had to disendorse lately. John Cox was disendorsed for questioning on social media whether 9/11 really happened. Mark Ellis threatened to kill employees at his security firm. There were also photos of that One Nation candidate performing a Nazi salute. Those are the people with whom Tim Nicholls wants to get in bed. Another of their candidates claimed that abnormal sexual behaviour led to crime. In a blog, Peter Rogers claimed that media reports of a three-year-old Syrian refugee boy whose body was photographed on a beach in 2015 were fabricated. That is the calibre of One Nation candidates in Queensland.

It is time that the member for Clayfield stood up and said that he will never ever do a deal with One Nation. I can tell the member for Clayfield, the member for Indooroopilly and the member for Mount Ommaney that the people of Brisbane do not support One Nation. If I were the candidate for Maiwar, I would be deeply worried. It is time that the member for Clayfield grew a backbone and said, once and for all, that he will not do a deal with One Nation.

*(Time expired)*

### Queensland Rail

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.26 am): What a week we have seen with a rail-fail government that has conjured train debacle after debacle while weaving excuse after excuse, and this week was no exception.

**Ms Trad** interjected.

**Mr Langbroek** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I apologise, Leader of the Opposition. Member for Surfers Paradise and Deputy Premier, you can take your sparring outside. The Leader of the Opposition has the call.

**Ms Grace** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I do not need your help either, Minister for Industrial Relations. Leader of the Opposition, would you like to start again, please?

**Mr NICHOLLS:** What a week, and we have just seen more of it play out across the chamber in the past 30 seconds. This is a rail-fail government that has conjured train debacle after debacle while weaving excuse after excuse, and Tuesday of this week was no exception. In fact, as Queensland's worst rail-fail crisis approaches its first anniversary, we find a crisis that is getting worse and not any better. That is because this government is so bereft of solutions that it believes it can con Queenslanders by refusing to take responsibility for anything.

On Tuesday, across the rail network from about 4.58 onwards we saw widespread delays lasting the best part of an hour. Amid the chaos caused by this government, tempers flared again; confusion reigned again; and passengers scrambled for buses, taxis and ride-share vehicles again. What did the erstwhile transport minister do by way of fronting up to yet another unfolding rail fail? She passed off responsibility again. What did she say? She said, 'I'll talk to my agency', as only a freelancing Minister

for Transport could! There are three words for this bad Labor government: cons, costs and crises. Three are another three words for a transport minister who will not shoulder the responsibility to put an end to the rail fail: not good enough.

It is not good enough from the Minister for Corrective Services. We have a Minister for Corrective Services who is so averse to taking responsibility for his repeated bungles—despite the heavy human cost in each of them—that sorry seems to be the hardest word. On Tuesday in this place, when called to respond to his appalling handling of a parole case which left a Gold Coast domestic violence victim frightened for her life, the minister was mealy-mouthed and dismissive. He effectively blamed the victim, wiping his hands of responsibility to help keep survivors of domestic violence in Queensland safe, protected and alive. The minister's unmistakable inference was that this terrified woman should, of her own accord, have discovered and placed herself on the Victims Register if she wished to know whether her violent ex-partner had been handed a free pass. This is despite the fact that the website was not up and running.

It is time to end the cons, costs and crises. I say to the Premier: just name the election date so we can see real leadership back in Queensland.

*(Time expired)*

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Ms Grace** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I can hear you, Minister for Industrial Relations. Before we proceed to question time, I am informed that we have a group from the Runcorn Indian seniors from the electorate of Stretton observing our proceedings in the public gallery. Welcome.

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

**Mr SPEAKER:** Question time will end at 11.30 am.

### One Nation

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (10.30 am): My question without notice is to the Premier. I have ruled out any deals or coalition with One Nation.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Thank you, members.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** My question without notice is to the Premier. I have ruled out any deals or coalition with One Nation. I table—

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Members, I know the Leader of the Opposition's comments may be provocative, but the rules are that we need to hear the question in silence. I will take action if I cannot hear the question and there is not silence.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** My question without notice is to the Premier. I have ruled out any deals or coalition with One Nation.

**Ms Jones** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Minister for Education, you are warned under standing order 253A. I will take the appropriate action against anyone else if the interjections continue.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** I have ruled out any deals or coalition with One Nation. I table a letter to the editor of the Bundaberg *News Mail* written by the member for Bundaberg.

*Tabled paper:* Letter to the Editor of Bundaberg *News Mail*, dated 5 June 2017, from the member for Bundaberg, Ms Leanne Donaldson MP [[1607](#)].

It reads—

I'm also more than happy to work with Dr Truscott where we have common ground.

While the Premier is in the Wide Bay region next week, will she be discussing the member for Bundaberg's proposed policy alliance and deal with One Nation?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Mr Speaker—

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I can sense the enthusiasm.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question because I will not believe the Leader of the Opposition until I see the statutory declaration.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I remind members that under standing order 133 a question must relate to the public affairs with which the minister is connected or responsible for.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** When it comes to before the election and after the election there will be no deals with One Nation on this side of the House. On that side of the House where is the statutory declaration? Let us recap—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** No, it is about your leadership.

**Mr SPEAKER:** We have all heard the question. The Premier has the call to answer the question. We have had enough frivolity.

**Mr Seeney** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Callide.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** The Leader of the Opposition cannot keep a position from breakfast radio to morning tea. He says that he will have to wait until the election is called, look at the candidates and look at it on a seat-by-seat basis. That is what the Leader of the Opposition says on breakfast radio. Then at morning tea time he comes in here and professes something, but where is the evidence? He changes his position from breakfast radio to morning tea. Until we see and until Queenslanders see that statutory declaration, as far as I am concerned the Leader of the Opposition will do a deal with the member for Buderim. They will do a deal with One Nation.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. A number of members' interjections are designed to disrupt the Premier in answering the question. I would urge members to consider their behaviour.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Why would they not do a deal with One Nation because most of the One Nation candidates are former LNP members. They are like peas in a pod.

**Mr Bleijie** interjected.

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

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** We will not believe anything until we see that statutory declaration from the Leader of the Opposition. Until we see that statutory declaration no-one believes Tim Nicholls. No-one believes the member for Clayfield. I am happy to debate this question any time with the Leader of the Opposition because we know that they want to try to sneak into power by doing a dodgy preference deal with One Nation. I say very clearly: we will do no deals with One Nation.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Members, I know we are all excited, but this is the final time I am going to say this. If I find members' interjections are designed to disrupt the minister who is answering the question I will take the appropriate action. We will move on.

### **Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply**

**Mr NICHOLLS:** My second question without notice is also to the Premier. Premier, it has now been 54 days since Minister Bailey was stood down under a reasonable suspicion of corrupt conduct and Queenslanders continue to pay record high power prices. When will the Premier show some leadership and appoint a permanent replacement to the critical portfolio of energy or is the Premier too risk averse to sack the ETU's minister?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. Let us just repeat questions that we have already had during the week. There are no new ideas. There are no new questions. I could write better questions. When I was leader of the opposition I could write better questions. It is embarrassing. The backbench should be completely embarrassed.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Premier, I would urge you not to debate the question. I know that that is the topic you want to talk about, but I would urge you to make your answer relevant to the question.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I am happy—

**Mr Seeney** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Callide, I do not need your assistance. You will join the list if you persist. Premier, can you make your answer relevant to the question.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I will. As I said earlier this week, the matter is being finalised by the CCC and we are waiting for the outcome of that CCC investigation. As I also said during question time this week, we have two ministers acting in Minister Bailey's portfolios, and they are doing a very good job. They will continue to do that job because they will continue to deliver for Queenslanders.

Whilst we are talking about electricity, let me say this very clearly: there is absolutely no national leadership when it comes to electricity policy in this nation. It is an absolute embarrassment that Malcolm Turnbull is now considering purchasing an outdated coal-fired power station. That is the LNP policy. We also know what those opposite want to do. They want to build—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Premier, I know you would like to pursue that, but I urge you to be relevant in your answer.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** They asked about electricity.

**Mr Seeney:** We asked you about replacing the minister.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** And I answered that question earlier in the week.

**Mr Bleijie:** Well, then sit down.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I am not going to sit down.

**Mr Seeney:** Sit down!

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Oh, very rude. It is going to be a much nicer parliament when you are not here next time, member for Callide—a much nicer parliament.

**Mr Seeney:** You're a nasty little girl.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Callide, you are warned under standing order 253A for speaking whilst I was on my feet. Who else?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I find those comments offensive and I ask them to be withdrawn.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Members!

**Ms Trad** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I do not need your help, Deputy Premier. Member for Callide, will you withdraw?

**Mr Seeney:** Of course I withdraw.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Members, we will move on. I think the Premier has answered the question.

### Front-Line Services

**Mr CRAWFORD:** My question is to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on the government's commitment to restore front-line services and is she aware of alternative approaches?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for Barron River for the question because we know how important it is to have front-line services across Queensland. We also know that the member for Barron River was a former paramedic before he came into this House and he understands how important it is to serve the public.

We are coming up very clearly to the fifth anniversary of the member for Clayfield's first budget when he was treasurer in the Campbell Newman-Tim Nicholls' years. Who can forget that first budget? It was a cut-to-the-core budget where people across Queensland lost their jobs—14,000 people. Let us never forget these are people with families, with children, who have feelings. They were treated appallingly. They were treated without due care and without consideration.

My government has been restoring those front-line services that were savagely cut by the previous government. As I said earlier in this House—and I will say it again this week—and as the Minister for Health said as well, we now have more than 3,000 nurses in this state; more than 1,100 doctors; more than 3,000 extra teachers and teacher aides; 250 extra ambulance officers; 330 extra police; 205 new fire and emergency service workers; and of course we are committed to more child safety officers. In fact, we will improve that capacity with 400 extra child safety officers over two budgets, making sure that with a growing state and with growing demand we have the people there to serve the community. Let us never forget that first budget of the member for Clayfield, when he said—

To give Queensland public servants greater certainty, the Government has decided to bring all FTE losses into 2012-13.

That was all in one fell swoop. With 14,000 people having lost their jobs, some of those job cuts included over 4,000 in Health; over 1,450 in Transport and Main Roads; 1,425 in Housing and Public Works; 510 in Justice and Attorney-General; 450 in Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry; 405 in Education, Training and Employment; and 385 in Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services. That was the legacy. This is the five-year anniversary—five years that we will never, ever forget.

*(Time expired)*

### Wide Bay, Infrastructure

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** My question without notice is to the Premier. The Palaszczuk Labor government has cut \$400 million of infrastructure projects in the Wide Bay region compared to the LNP's last budget. Will the Premier apologise to the people of the Wide Bay region and reverse those cuts during her visit next week?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for the question. There were cuts to front-line services across the state including in the Wide Bay region. My government has been restoring those cuts. We have been empowering those communities. With our Back to Work program, which I talked about today, over a thousand new people have jobs in that community through my government. I find it very hard to comprehend that the member would ask a question about cuts when they cut to the core. It is also very clear with Works for Queensland that we are working with the councils to give them the capacity to get money out the door and build infrastructure.

Our plan for Queensland ensures that roughly fifty-fifty is spent in regional Queensland compared with the south-east. We are delivering for all of Queensland. I look forward to going to the Wide Bay region next week where we will be governing for the week. I look forward to going to Hervey Bay. I look forward to going to Maryborough. I look forward to going to Bundaberg. We are a government that delivers for people.

In the Wide Bay-Burnett area, we will deliver \$197.4 million of road infrastructure in 2017-18—a record investment in road and transport infrastructure for the second year in a row. We are committed to governing for all of Queensland. You cannot trust those opposite, Mr Speaker. We saw three years of cuts to funding and of cuts to staff, and it is simply not acceptable. I am more than happy to go and talk to the people of the Wide Bay region next week. I look forward to that visit. I look forward to having a town hall meeting, because that is what my government does.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I apologise for not informing the Premier that we have just had students from the Durack State School in the electorate of Inala observing our proceedings in the gallery.

### Cross River Rail

**Mr RUSSO:** My question is to the Deputy Premier. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on the Cross River Rail procurement and is the Deputy Premier aware of any alternative policies?

**Ms TRAD:** I thank the member for Sunnybank for that important question because I know, like all members on this side of the House, we are keen to build and create jobs for Queenslanders. This is about delivering the infrastructure that Queenslanders need. It is also about driving economic growth and job opportunities in Queensland.

As we reported to the House, expression of interest registrations are now open for the tunnel, stations and development package to be delivered as a PPP with the private sector—and we will soon award the contract to start demolition works on the Goprint site. This means 1,500 jobs a year during construction and 3,000 during the peak of construction. That is a lot of Queenslanders employed on this project. That is a lot of apprentices and trainees getting their qualifications on this job.

Sadly, today we see the latest evidence in the LNP's campaign to destroy Queensland jobs again and again. In the *Australian Financial Review* there is a report that some major contractors want greater certainty about Cross River Rail because they are concerned about the LNP cuts. They are concerned about the LNP once again cutting this critical infrastructure project for Queensland.

No wonder contractors are concerned about this when the member for Clayfield refuses to commit to the Cross River Rail project. Steve Abson from the infrastructure peak body IAQ said last week—

... after 8 years and 3 different incarnations of this project we're entitled to now call on the LNP to get fully behind it and provide industry with improved certainty.

Unfortunately, because the Leader of the Opposition refuses to commit to infrastructure, refuses to commit to jobs and refuses to commit to investing in Queensland, there is a climate of concern. I table for the benefit of the House the *Australian Financial Review* report that was published today.

*Tabled paper:* Media article, undated, titled 'Contractors stall on Qld rail project' [1608].

There is only one way to make sure that we invest in critical infrastructure in Queensland, create the jobs Queenslanders need and continue to keep our region and our state moving, and that is by making sure that the member for Clayfield does not become the Premier of Queensland with the help of One Nation. There is one way to secure Queensland's economic future to make sure Queenslanders have the jobs, services and the infrastructure they need, and that is to stop the cutter, the seller and the sacker from becoming Premier.

*(Time expired)*

**Mr SPEAKER:** The member for Chatsworth and the member for Albert are now warned under standing order 253A. I find your interjections were designed to disrupt the minister from answering the question. If you persist, I will take appropriate action.

### Wide Bay, Youth Unemployment

**Mr BLEIJIE:** My question is to the Premier.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** They are very rude, aren't they? They are very nasty, Mr Speaker. Where is the respect?

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** They are very nasty people, Mr Speaker. I can start again, Mr Speaker.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I remind the member for Callide that you are on your first warning and your sparring partner may join you soon. Member for Kawana, can you please ask your question?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** My question is to the Premier. Youth unemployment in Wide Bay is the second worst in Queensland. When the Premier swans into Bundaberg next week, will the Premier apologise to the 1,000 young people who have lost their jobs in the past year because of her government's inexperience and lack of planning for the Wide Bay region?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for Kawana for the question on the five-year anniversary of the budget that was handed down by the member for Clayfield, where 14,000 people lost their jobs. It was the former government that axed the successful Skilling Queenslanders for Work. We have seen thousands of people across the state employed through Skilling Queenslanders for Work. In fact, the independent report on Skilling Queenslanders for Work, as I recall, recommended that it not be axed by the former government and they still went ahead and did it.

In relation to Hervey Bay, as I said, we are seeing the second highest take-up rate of our Back to Work program and also through our Youth Boost program. Those opposite had no plans. They did not care about young people. They did not care about workers full stop, and they still do not care.

The number of employees who have been hired in Wide Bay is 1,370—as I said, the second highest take-up rate in the state. In relation to the Youth Boost, we want to make sure that as many employers as possible are looking at putting on young people, because there is nothing more important than making sure there is a training opportunity for young people to get a foothold into a new sector.

That is why my government is actively working on creating new industries in this state. With the advent of our biofuels biotechnology, we are seeing the capacity of new industries to start up, especially in the Wide Bay region. I look forward to making further announcements about that.

In tourism we have seen incredible growth over the last 2½ years helped by our aviation attraction industry creating even more jobs in the tourism sector. Our Buy Queensland policy will also encourage people to buy locally and create jobs locally, because on this side of the House we will always put Queenslanders first.

### **Stanwell Corporation, Drones**

**Mr PEARCE:** My question is to the Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment. Will the minister please update the House on the safety procedures in place for Stanwell Corporation's critical infrastructure which includes Stanwell Power Station and any recent incidents involving drones?

**Mr PITT:** I thank the member for Mirani for his question. As he knows, Stanwell's power stations are, quite rightly, critical infrastructure. We know that any interruption or cessation of the power that is generated from there will have economic impacts as well as social impacts. We take very seriously the security of these facilities. It is essential that these facilities are safeguarded from any external threat.

The estimates committee this year was told that a person was detected flying a drone in the vicinity of Stanwell's power station, allegedly taking photographs and footage of the site. At that time Senator Hanson's chief of staff, James Ashby, was not identified even though I had the opportunity to do that. The incident has now been ventilated in the media so I will make a couple of remarks. As a result of the actions of security staff and in line with standard procedures, the incident was reported to the Queensland Police Service, ASIO and the Civil Aviation Safety Authority. I am advised that CASA is investigating the circumstances surrounding this event and the use of a drone in light of the rules it lays down for their use. Unfortunately, Mr Ashby and One Nation have form when it comes to drones, and I table two documents.

*Tabled paper:* Article from Skynews online, dated 6 July 2017, titled 'Pauline Hanson says drone investigation by Civil Aviation Safety Authority does not worry her' [1609].

*Tabled paper:* Media article, dated 30 August 2017, titled 'One Nation investigated over another drone' [1610].

They were recently investigated for flying a drone in the Townsville area and around Parliament House in Canberra. We can only guess what Mr Ashby's motives were on the day he was undertaking this activity near Stanwell, but what we do know is that Mr Ashby is somebody whom those opposite want to see as their co-pilot. Who can forget when a senior LNP staffer went to One Nation and said, 'Come fly with me.' Of course, the staffer quickly had his wings clipped. We know that those One Nation preferences are still on approach and the member for Clayfield is guiding them in for a landing. Mr Ashby might be using a drone to survey the political landscape in Queensland through his proxy the member for Buderim, but all that Mr Ashby is doing is helping the member for Clayfield reach the lofty heights that he so desires and craves.

Mr Ashby says that he has done nothing wrong. If that is the case, Mr Ashby should sign a statutory declaration to tell us exactly what happened on the day and what really transpired. Perhaps at the same time the member for Clayfield can finally sign a statutory declaration so he can rule out doing a preference deal with One Nation, instead of all the loop-the-loop midair acrobatics that he has been doing to avoid scrutiny on this issue. As the Premier said earlier, he cannot keep the same line between breakfast radio and question time. He is completely inconsistent. He is an opportunist. Make no mistake: a vote for One Nation is a vote for the LNP. What Queenslanders need is stable government. They do not need the LNP taking—

*(Time expired)*

### **Wide Bay-Burnett, Road Funding**

**Mr POWELL:** My question without notice is to the Premier. This parliament has carried a motion condemning the Palaszczuk Labor government for cutting \$84 million of road projects in the Wide Bay region compared to the 2016-17 budget. Will the Premier apologise to the people of Wide Bay and reverse her cuts before her visit next week?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** As I said, in the Wide Bay-Burnett region we are delivering \$197.4 million in roadworks. We have a statewide program which ensures that roads are built right across Queensland, unlike those opposite who cut RoadTek staff.

**A government member** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I take that interjection. They wanted to cut all of them. We will continue to build the roads.

At the outset, let me say that I am so looking forward to going to Wide Bay next week. I am so looking forward to going there, meeting with the business groups, meeting with community organisations and meeting with people because we are delivering for this region. We have a hardworking member for Maryborough and a hardworking member for Bundaberg. They stand up for their communities and call out what happened to their communities under the former LNP government where it was a complete and utter disaster. We will continue to build the infrastructure that is needed in those communities, and we will continue to deliver for those communities.

### Health Services

**Mr STEWART:** My question is to the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services. Will the minister update the House on Queensland Health's plan to restore front-line services and is he aware of any alternative plans?

**Mr DICK:** I thank the member for Townsville for his question and acknowledge his ongoing commitment to ensuring Queenslanders in the north of our state access the best quality health care. At the same time, I thank and congratulate the member for Townsville and the member for Stretton for raising the issue of prostate cancer in the parliament this week and championing that cause. I thank them for that.

The Palaszczuk Labor government is committed to restoring front-line health services in Queensland. One of those vital services that we provide is the 13HEALTH contact call centre—a service where registered nurses provide confidential health advice over the phone to people in their time of need. That service has taken 3,117,849 calls since it first commenced operation during the Beattie Labor government in February 2006. In the last financial year, that service answered 349,776 calls—almost 350,000 calls. I can confirm that the number of nurses at the health connect call centre will again increase this year to around 106 full-time-equivalent positions, and that is in stark contrast to what happened under the LNP. When the member for Clayfield was treasurer, the number of nurses supporting the 13HEALTH call centre reduced—what more would we expect? The number went from 74 full-time equivalents in 2012-13 to 66 full-time equivalents in 2014-15. We only need to look to the Commission of Audit—the hand-picked team led by Peter Costello, chosen by the Leader of the Opposition—to see what future that call centre had. I table recommendation 74.

*Tabled paper:* Extract from Queensland Commission of Audit Final Report, titled 'Volume 3, Part D, Front-Line Service Delivery', p 3-60 [\[1611\]](#).

What did that say? It said that the government should transition support services from 13HEALTH to the National Health Call Centre Network, healthdirect. It stated that the transition process would need to take into account the potential transfer of staff and assets. Where is healthdirect based? Is it Cairns or Townsville or a big regional city like Toowoomba? No, it is based in Sydney. Not only did the Leader of the Opposition want to cut jobs when he was in government, he wanted to outsource the jobs that were left behind and deliver them to another state. That is the sort of man who says he stands up for Queensland. He wanted to outsource jobs to New South Wales.

The Palaszczuk Labor government will always put Queensland first and we will put Queensland jobs first—first and foremost. We are not outsourcing jobs to New South Wales. If anyone thinks that the member for Clayfield would do anything different as premier, they are absolutely kidding themselves. He has not repudiated; he has not apologised. The reason for that is that he believes these things. He believes in selling public assets, he believes in contracting out services, he believes in privatising public services and he believes in contracting jobs out to other states. If it were otherwise, he would say so. That is what is on the line in the election. The Palaszczuk Labor government and our Premier will always put Queensland first.

### Sex Offender Register

**Ms BATES:** My question without notice is to the Premier. I table a report detailing the member for Maryborough's support for a public sex offender register in Wide Bay. Does the Premier agree with Bruce and Denise Morcombe and the LNP that Queensland needs a public sex offender register?

*Tabled paper:* Article from the *Fraser Coast Chronicle*, dated 24 August 2016, titled 'M'boro MP weighs in on having public sex offenders' register' [\[1612\]](#).

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** This issue has been canvassed at length over many, many years. It has been genuinely the view of most people that a register at this point in time is not needed. However, having said that, of course we are a government that listens and we are more than happy to speak to people about any views that they particularly have.

**Mr Bleijie** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** As I said, there is no intention at this point in time for there to be a public register.

### **Jobs, School Infrastructure Program**

**Ms PEASE:** My question is to the Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism, Major Events and the Commonwealth Games. Will the minister please update the House on how the Palaszczuk government's school infrastructure program is supporting Queensland jobs?

**Ms JONES:** I thank the honourable member for Lytton for her question. I have had the privilege of being in her community a number of times visiting schools, and they do a great job there. I get to travel around Queensland and visit lots of schools where we are making a record investment in infrastructure. Since we have been in government, we have spent more than \$1.5 billion on infrastructure investment in Queensland schools. In Catholic schools, state schools and independent schools right across Queensland, we are delivering education facilities for all children no matter where they live and no matter what school their parents choose to send them to. This has created more than 6,000 jobs for Queenslanders by building a significant investment in our infrastructure program—an investment of \$1.5 billion.

In the member for Lytton's area, at the moment we are refurbishing classrooms at Brisbane Bayside State College, with more than \$200,000 worth of work there. There is a further \$200,000 worth of work at the new outdoor learning area at Wynnum West State School. We have been talking a lot about Wide Bay and I am very excited to be looking at our investment of \$4.5 million for a new hall at Maryborough State High School. I want to thank the member for Maryborough for his lobbying on behalf of his local community so that we can deliver that project.

We said when we came into government that we would have a very different government to the one led by the member for Clayfield. Instead of cutting, we were going to build. Instead of slashing jobs, we would support and create jobs. That is why I am very proud to be standing here as the education minister in a Palaszczuk government that has now delivered \$1.5 billion worth of investment in education infrastructure, supporting 6,000 jobs across Queensland. We promised we would get people back into work and that is exactly what we have done. That is why, no matter where you live in Queensland, we are seeing this record infrastructure investment in our schools making a big difference.

Mr Speaker, you know me pretty well and you know that I am a sentimental kind of person. Today there is an anniversary. It is the five-year anniversary of Tim Nicholls's first budget. Traditionally, on a fifth anniversary, you give wood so I have a little present here for the Leader of the Opposition for his fifth anniversary. I bet he has had a few woulda, coulda, shoulda moments in the last five years. 'Would I be sitting here in opposition if I had not promised that people's jobs would be safe and then slashed 14,000 workers? Would I be sitting here in opposition if I didn't just cut, slash and sell? Would I be polling at 34 per cent if I actually stood up for something? Would I have the guts to rule out a deal with One Nation?' These are the woulda, coulda moments that the member for Clayfield will be reflecting on. I wish the member for Everton did get the numbers—

*(Time expired)*

**Mr SPEAKER:** Minister, is that a gift or is that a prop?

**Ms JONES:** It is a genuine gift, Mr Speaker.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Would you please pass it to the attendant to hand it on?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I wish to raise a matter in relation to standing order 87—the 'Same question not to be again proposed'. I suggest to you that the motion which the member for Burleigh has given notice of today is substantially the same question as one moved by the member for Indooroopilly on 22 August. I ask you to consider the matter and report back to the House.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I will consider it and I will report back to the House.

### Parole System

**Mr MANDER:** My question without notice is to the Premier. It has now been almost a month since Minister Ryan stood next to the Pullen family at a media event for his political gain without telling them that the convicted killer of their son had been granted parole, and the Premier has refused to call them and apologise. I ask: why is the government's priority to get square with the whistleblower rather than to try to overturn the decision to give parole to the convicted killer of the Pullens' son?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I rise to a point of order. The member for Everton, both in his preamble and his question, has delivered imputations against a member of this House. Mr Speaker, you gave good direction to a member yesterday in relation to this sort of matter. I ask that you give guidance and direction to the member for Everton or perhaps we can move on to better questions.

### Speaker's Ruling, Question Out of Order

**Mr SPEAKER:** I rule the question out of order.

### Job Creation

**Mrs GILBERT:** My question is to the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Hansard needs to be able to hear the questioner and I do, too.

**Mrs GILBERT:** My question is to the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations. I ask: will the minister update the House on the government's efforts to create and support jobs for Queenslanders and any alternative approaches?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Before I call the minister, I understand the member for Mount Ommaney has just made some comments that I did not hear but others did. I put her on notice. If I had heard them, that would have been a reflection on the chair and I would not have been just simply making an order under 253A.

**Ms GRACE:** I thank the member for Mackay for her question. I know she has been a strong advocate in her area for the Back to Work program, which has resulted in nearly 1,000 jobs supported in the Mackay-Whitsunday area. I know she is out in her electorate speaking every day about the benefits of getting back to work. This Labor Palaszczuk government has supported 94,500 new jobs in Queensland since we were elected in January 2015. This includes 64,000 new jobs in the past 12 months alone. We recognise the importance of investing in jobs as opposed to the cuts to jobs from those opposite when they were in government.

Under our Back to Work program the government has invested \$177.5 million into jobs throughout Queensland and we have paid nearly \$40 million to employers in the regions. To date we have reached the \$100 million committed to employers throughout Queensland under this program. Employers in regional Queensland have been backing this exceptional program in their droves since it kicked off in July last year. With applications pending, we now have 7,500 workers supported under Back to Work. The great news about this is that 4,000 of the 7,500 are young workers under the Youth Boost. Honourable members would know that in the state budget we extended it to the south-east corner and already we have nearly reached 200 people in jobs spread throughout the south-east.

Let's contrast that with the cuts and the sackings that were made by those opposite when they were in government. What do we have? We have the cruel hoax where they went to the election last time and told Queenslanders they had nothing to fear. The minute they got in they sacked 14,000 public servants. That was 14,000 public servants who lost their jobs. Families were destroyed, careers were destroyed and nurses were marched out of the hospitals. That is their legacy. What is their response? They want to issue a \$500 tools voucher or allowance or something else that the member for Kawana has invented. The interesting thing about it is they are not providing the allowance when they start their apprenticeship; they are giving it at the end of their apprenticeship. Then they say it is going to create 20,000 jobs. Let me tell the member for Kawana, because he has no idea about employment or industrial relations, vouchers are not jobs. They are not going to get the jobs.

On the fifth anniversary of that budget, we reflect that 14,000 public servants were sacked, and the member for Clayfield will never live that down.

*(Time expired)*

### Coal-Fired Power Station

**Mr DICKSON:** My question without notice is to the Premier and Minister for the Arts. The ALP members and, indeed, the LNP members voted for 50 per cent renewable energy targets in the current budget. I ask: will the Premier confirm whether the current government or a re-elected Labor state government will undertake the construction of a coal-fired power station in Queensland?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** The answer is no, we will definitely not be building a new coal-fired power station in Queensland because it is not needed. Secondly, if it was needed, the market would have determined that many, many years ago. Since the member has asked the question let me also talk about our renewable energy target of 50 per cent by 2030. I was in Townsville recently with the Solar Council, and \$5 billion worth of investment in renewables is on the books in Queensland and more than 3,000 jobs. The honourable member might want to know that those jobs are located in regional Queensland. What the member is obviously trying to say today is that they do not support our renewable energy target of 50 per cent by 2030.

Let me also make it clear to members of this House that Queensland is the energy powerhouse of the nation. As we know, Malcolm Turnbull lacks the courage to actually implement a national energy policy in this nation. It is my government that has a clear plan, a Queensland energy plan. Yesterday the Treasurer brought on more capacity for next summer by recommissioning Swanbank E that was mothballed under the former government of which the honourable member was a minister, a cabinet minister who sat around the cabinet table and decided to mothball Swanbank E. Not only that, construction of these renewable energy projects is commencing.

My government will be looking at connecting the transmission lines to where these new renewable projects are being started to actually bring extra capacity into the market, unlike those opposite, who have no plan. The reception observed by the member for Burleigh when he attended that Solar Council meeting—I do not know how he lasted because they have no plan.

Let me say this in conclusion. I went to a COAG meeting. All of the leaders sitting around the table agreed on the national energy plan. They agreed on the Finkel report. Unfortunately, there is no national leadership because the federal government cannot make a decision. Will the LNP support our 50 per cent target by 2030? It appears not. Will the One Nation Party support our target? No. What they are doing is putting jobs for regional Queensland at risk.

*(Time expired)*

### Building and Asset Services

**Ms DONALDSON:** My question is to the Minister for Housing and Public Works—

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Thank you, members. You understand and you are aware of my rulings.

**Ms DONALDSON:** My question is to the Minister for Housing and Public Works and Minister for Sport. Will the minister please advise the House of the value provided to Queenslanders by the Building and Asset Services workforce and the differing approaches taken to this workforce in recent times?

**Mr de BRENNI:** I thank the honourable member for the question. Everybody on this side of the House understands that the staff of Building and Asset Services, formerly QBuild, do an amazing job. They are hardworking and diligent and they are good at their craft. Just last week I joined the Building and Asset Services staff on the restoration of the stonework here at Parliament House and saw the amazing and painstaking work that they have been doing over many years. It is our Building and Asset Services staff who are often the first responders once disasters strike right across the state. They help to make sure that communities, streets, schools and hospitals are safe and operational, as they have done recently with Cyclone Debbie up and down the state from Airlie Beach to the Scenic Rim.

Queensland has a proud tradition of a strong public works capacity. It has put our state in very, very good stead in good times and bad. We support our BAS workforce because it is Labor that builds. I was asked by the honourable member about the different approaches, and nothing could be more starkly in contrast to the approach those opposite took to QBuild and the Project Services workforce. What was the LNP approach? It was to cut and sack. It is not news to anyone here in this place that while in government the LNP sacked 14,000 of Queensland's hardworking public servants. I am advised that approximately 2,400 of those were from my Department of Housing and Public Works, and 1,627 were front-line tradies and BAS support staff. That is 1,627 secure, decent jobs that were cut.

But that is not the worst of it, Mr Speaker. The member for Burnett sat on his hands while the LNP's razor gang cut and sacked. The razor gang—the member for Clayfield and the former member for Ashgrove—sacked the member for Burnett's mates and the member for Burnett did nothing about it. I bet that made him extraordinarily popular at weekend barbecues: it was around half the workforce in his area. The member for Burnett promised his QBuild colleagues that he would look after them, but then he turned his back on them and walked away. That is not how a Queenslanders treats his mates. That is not how a man treats his mates. Five years later there is still no hint of an apology from the member for Burnett. I have visited the BAS workforces across the state, including the member's region, and we will see them next week when we are in Wide Bay. The question for the member for Burnett and the member for Clayfield is: five years later, when will you ever apologise?

*(Time expired)*

### Parole Board, Pullen Family

**Mr WALKER:** My question without notice is to the Premier. Premier, I table my letter to the Parole Board dated 25 August regarding the Pullen matter and the board's response of 28 August.

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 25 August 2016, from the member for Mansfield, Mr Ian Walker MP, to Mr Michael Byrne QC regarding a decision by the Parole Board [\[1613\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 28 August 2017, from Menaka Wickramasinghe, Principal Legal Officer, Parole Board Queensland to the member for Mansfield, Mr Ian Walker MP, regarding Mr Benjamin Francis Graeme Oakley letter [\[1614\]](#).

Why is the government hiding from answering the question about the so-called review of the decision to grant parole to the convicted killer of the Pullens' son? Does the board's response not indicate that no rigorous review was actually undertaken?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for the question. If the member wanted to discuss that issue with me privately or hand me the correspondence before—I am not going to answer a question when I cannot view the correspondence that he has just tabled, so I am happy to take that question on notice.

### Jobs, Innovation

**Mr WHITING:** My question is to the Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy and Minister for Small Business, and I ask: will the minister update the House on how the Palaszczuk government is helping to grow innovation and jobs after the disastrous cuts of previous years?

**Ms ENOCH:** I thank the member for Murrumba for his question, and I thank him for his tireless advocacy for innovation and job creation in his electorate. As we have heard, five years ago this month when the member for Clayfield was treasurer in his very first budget he cut 14,000 government workers from across the state. The now Leader of the Opposition, the member for Clayfield, is asking Queenslanders to forget about what he did alongside Campbell Newman. He is asking Queenslanders to trust him to lead this state.

The member for Clayfield ripped \$50 million from the science and innovation division. In fact, between June 2012 and February 2015 the total number of staff employed in the department of science, IT and innovation was reduced by 950 scientists, IT specialists and innovators. This illustrates the LNP's complete lack of support for science and innovation in Queensland. As is usually the case with the LNP, we have since heard a lot of rhetoric about supporting innovation entrepreneurs and diversifying the economy but we have not heard any policies to back it up.

What we have seen from Campbell Newman's former right-hand man and shadow minister are constant attacks on Queensland's hardworking and aspirational entrepreneurs and our \$420 million whole-of-government Advance Queensland initiative, which was co-designed and supported by industry experts. Our long-term vision for Advance Queensland is delivering now, transforming the Queensland economy and driving new jobs. In December 2016 the member for Clayfield's hand-picked team, with the member for Mount Coot-tha as the shadow minister, said that Advance Queensland was about handing out cash to backpackers and anyone with a social media account. Given that Advance Queensland is backing 1,650 innovators whose projects are driving 4,821 new jobs and leveraging more than \$130 million in co-investment, is that still the view of the member?

It is time that the LNP told Queenslanders and the industry whether they support Advance Queensland or whether it will go the same way as many other great Labor programs when they were in government. In just over two years of Advance Queensland we have committed more than three

times the amount the former LNP government invested in three years, and that funding is driving more than 33 times the jobs that they drove. Over two years we have seen Advance Queensland support over 85 research fellowships; in their entire three years in government it was only 14. We call on the opposition to support Advance Queensland.

*(Time expired)*

### **HMAS *Tobruk***

**Mr BENNETT:** My question without notice is to the Premier. Premier, I table a media article outlining long delays and Labor bungles around the scuttling of the *Tobruk*.

*Tabled paper:* Media article, dated 4 August 2017, titled 'Bundaberg not the best place for *Tobruk* ship to be prepared for scuttling, bureaucrat says' [1615].

Premier, after 12 months why have no local contractors been awarded any significant contracts in relation to scuttling the *Tobruk*?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I am very pleased that we have been able to secure that project for the region. We all worked very hard to deliver it and we will ensure that everything that is done—

**Mr Bleijie:** You know that you dredged the wrong spot, right? You know that you put the dredger in the wrong spot?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I take that interjection from the member for Kawana. The Minister for Tourism just mentioned to me that at the time people wanted the *Tobruk* to go to Tasmania. Malcolm Turnbull wanted it to go to Tasmania, but we fought for Queensland. We love fighting for Queensland in this state, unlike those opposite. In relation to that, we will continue to work with people to ensure that all the processes are done and to make sure that the work is carried out.

### **TAFE Queensland**

**Mr MADDEN:** My question is to the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills. Will the minister please advise the House why the Palaszczuk government is committed to jobs in TAFE Queensland and whether there are any alternative approaches?

**Mrs D'ATH:** I thank the member for the question. I know that he is passionate about our public provider, TAFE Queensland. Before I even got to my feet the member for Kawana yelled out, 'I'll take that question.' I would love to hear what the opposition's policy plans are for TAFE Queensland. What are their plans for TAFE Queensland? Almost 2,000 staff were sacked when they were last in government under Tim 1.0, but what we want to know is what will we get under Tim 2.0? We will get more cuts, more sacking and more selling—that is what we will get under Tim 2.0. Unfortunately, Queenslanders are going to be a bit disappointed with Tim 2.0, because I think it will come as a much slower, lazier version of Tim 1.0 when he was the treasurer in the previous government. It is only a Palaszczuk Labor government that will invest in TAFE. It is this government—

**Mr Bleijie** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. I would urge all members to address their comments through the chair. Member for Kawana, you are warned under standing order 253A. If you persist I will take the appropriate action. The Attorney-General has the call.

**Mrs D'ATH:** It is because of the extra funding we put into TAFE, through Rescuing TAFE, that we have more teachers and more support staff. Importantly, we have more staff in learning support roles—disability support officers, Indigenous support officers and job placement officers—across this state. People are getting second chance funding. We are getting training places across this state. Over 12,000 people have been assisted through these training places—12,000 extra training places in Queensland because of our commitment to TAFE.

Those on the other side are silent on their strategy for TAFE going forward. We saw the parents and the carers of people with disabilities campaigning against those programs being cut across our TAFEs. We saw how run down those facilities were. Those opposite established QTAMA and stopped our TAFEs getting access to their own premises and their own equipment. Will they do it again? Will QTAMA be back? What is their strategy? The people of Queensland have a right to know what an LNP government, supported by One Nation, will do to TAFE.

It is only the Palaszczuk government that will commit. Those opposite have no commitment to training. They are walking out while I am talking about TAFE. That is appalling. That sends a message to Queenslanders: they have no commitment to TAFE and no commitment to training. You cannot trust the LNP.

*(Time expired)*

**Mr SPEAKER:** I remind members that until the dinner break the Minister for Education and the members for Callide, Chatsworth, Albert and Kawana are all on first warnings under standing order 253A.

## PETITIONS

### Motion to Take Note



**Mr DICKSON** (Buderim—PHON) (11.31 am): I move—

That the House take note of a paper petition and an e-petition from 10,252 petitioners requesting the House to work collaboratively with Brisbane City Council to ensure that the Natural Assets Local Laws are enforced in respect of the proposed mosque development at 161/161A Underwood Road.

I rise to speak on behalf of the residents who have put forward this petition. This petition with over 10,000 signatures is about a mega religious facility, approximately 4,700 square metres with 400 car parks, that has been given a green light in an established residential area. Its approval demonstrates the failure of Queensland planning laws, which my party is committed to fixing. The community has serious planning, traffic and environmental concerns with the development and believes it has been unfairly denied the opportunity to raise these concerns.

Council initially rejected the development on the basis that it would destroy intact habitat areas and compromise habitat connectivity and wildlife movement corridors. In the council's own words, the development was inconsistent with the reasonable expectations for development in the area. The developer subsequently appealed to the Planning and Environment Court.

By operation of the Sustainable Planning Act 2009, the more than 500 people who made submissions on the development were entitled to receive notification about the appeal so that they could elect to join the proceedings. Many of these people believe that they did not receive the proper notice of appeal. Some received a letter addressed to the Department of Transport and Main Roads which did not properly explain their rights. Given the letter was not addressed to them, many thought the letter had been sent for information only and did not require action. Others do not recall receiving a letter from the developer about the appeal. In fact, the man who led the initial community opposition to the development did not receive a letter and had no knowledge of the appeal.

Despite acknowledging the very serious nature of the issue, the Lord Mayor and the council have made it very clear to the community that it is on its own and it must get its own legal advice. The community unfairly lost its right to be around the negotiating table when the council and the developer reached an agreement on the development during the court process.

The approved development appears to be more favourable than the development contemplated by the judge. The judge clearly stated that he would only approve the development on a lesser scale. The community considers that the approximately 16 per cent reduction in size agreed to by the council is wholly inadequate. It is also concerned that the agreed development package refers to a retirement village being located on the land the judge said must be preserved.

The community cannot help but wonder whether the developer received favourable treatment from the council and the Department of Transport and Main Roads under the previous LNP government. In 2012 the future road requirements for the Gateway Motorway were changed, delivering a windfall to the developer. It seems that the developer may have avoided the requirement to build a noise wall. There are residential houses and an approved subdivision development directly adjacent to the site, with only six to 10 metres buffer at some points. The facility has approval to operate between 4 am and 10 pm and to use amplifiers between 7 am and 8 pm. How could such a facility be approved when it is expressly prohibited under the city plan?

There is a policy and state planning law with respect to all places of religion. Australia is a multifaith nation with a diverse range of places of worship. Most places of worship contribute to our community cohesion, harmony and safety; however, there is evidence that this is not always the case.

Currently, code assessed places of worship applications allow no community consultation. Legislation favours the applicant over the community. Despite public opposition and concerns for public safety and social cohesion, applications are approved. It is recognised that councils must apply the current legislation correctly or face legal challenges in the land and environment court.

Communities must be given the right to influence the future social, cultural, economic and environmental nature of their neighbourhoods. It is both the individual's and the collective's right to safe and healthy living spaces. State legislation must empower local councils to preserve the social, environmental, cultural, health and welfare, religious or secular identities of existing communities.

Today proves that petitions that are signed by 10,000 or more people can be discussed in this House. We are giving the people a voice and putting people before politics.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Farmer): Before I call the member for Stretton, I acknowledge the presence in the gallery of more students from Durack State School in the electorate of Inala.

 **Mr PEGG** (Stretton—ALP) (11.37 am): I am not sure whether the member for Buderim has ever visited my electorate. I am not sure whether he even knows where the proposed development is. If the member for Buderim and Pauline Hanson ever visited my electorate, I can only imagine they would get a very interesting reception.

I have lived in my local area for nearly 20 years. I live in the same suburb as the proposed development. I do understand that people who have lodged objections in relation to the proposed development were not informed of the hearing in the Planning and Environment Court in February and March 2016 and that some have said that they did not get a chance to have their say in that forum. I understand that there is further legal action on foot in this regard. Obviously, people have the right to use the courts.

Whilst people can exercise their legal rights, I do want to speak about some of the ugliness that has crept into my community. People have approached me on the street and in shopping centres and have said some really appalling things in relation to this particular development. Last month a pig's head in a bag with a swastika was dumped at the Islamic College of Brisbane on a school night.

Also, some signs have been put up on Warrigal Farms on Warrigal Road. Signs have been put up and have sometimes been taken down. You hope that the signs will not go up again but they are put back up. I say to the people at Warrigal Farms and whoever is responsible for putting up those signs: please take the signs down and do not put them back up again.

Warrigal Road is a very busy road in my electorate. In fact, on Warrigal Road is Warrigal Road State School, which is one of the biggest state schools in Queensland in terms of enrolments, and to the east is Kuraby State School and to the west is Runcorn State High School. It is a really busy thoroughfare. I can only imagine what young people going past those signs going to school every day would think and what kinds of discussions they would have with their families.

I am really proud to live in my local community. It is one of the most multicultural areas in the state. In fact, it is the most multicultural electorate in the state. It also has the highest proportion of people identifying Islam as their religion. It is a strong, vibrant, tremendous place. I note that the Leader of One Nation in this place has moved a motion to take note of this petition. Community cohesion is extremely important. We all need to work together. We all need to stay together and we need to lead the way for our young people, and they are the future. People have the right to exercise their legal rights, but people do not have the right to say appalling things about other members of our community. If they do, that has the potential to do some tremendous damage now and into the future. I will always speak up for my community. I will always speak up about these issues.

Fundamentally, this is a council planning issue. It has gone through the council process. There was a decision in the Planning and Environment Court. Anyone interested in the development at Warrigal Farms—the member for Buderim in particular—should read page 16, paragraph 43 of the judgement of the Planning and Environment Court, which states—

From the south, that is from the Warrigal Farms land as it now presents, the mosque would be very visible indeed and, entirely out of character. However, Warrigal Farms has been approved for a relatively intense residential development. That subdivision incorporates significant areas of what will become privately owned open space, which includes an area to the north, that will accommodate the waterway which flows through the subject land and, of particular relevance, an area immediately to the south of the subject land.

With regard to those signs at Warrigal Farms, the fact that there was a development approved at Warrigal Farms was an integral part of the Planning and Environment Court decision. I want to finish by saying to Warrigal Farms and those responsible for putting up the signs: take down those signs and keep them down.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

*The division bells having been rung—*

**Mr SPEAKER:** I apologise, members. There is no capacity for a division in relation to a debate on a petition that has been tabled. It is in the sessional orders and there is no capacity in the sessional orders for a division on the noting of a petition under this provision.

**Mr DICKSON:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I seek clarification. Given the documentation I got from the Deputy Clerk last night, I was of the understanding that a division could be called and the question would be voted on.

**Mr SPEAKER:** No, there is no capacity. I am happy for you or other members to confer with me or the Table Office later, but there is no capacity. Sessional order 2A(7) states—

A division on any question or quorum call shall not be permitted during debate of the Order of the Day.

Motion agreed to.

## PUBLIC WORKS AND UTILITIES COMMITTEE

### Report, Motion to Take Note

Resumed from 24 August (see p. 2484), on motion of Mr King—

That the House take note of the Public Works and Utilities Committee report No. 38, *Auditor-General report to parliament 5: 2016-17—Energy: 2015-16 results of financial audits*, tabled 31 May 2017.

 **Mr COSTIGAN** (Whitsunday—LNP) (11.45 am): I want to back up the comments and sentiments of my colleagues on this side of the House from the last sitting Thursday when speaking to report No. 5 from the Auditor-General in relation to energy and the financial results in the year 2015-16. I want to go back to what was said in the House last sitting Thursday with regard to the borrowings of all the energy companies—Ergon, Energex, Energy Queensland, CS Energy and Stanwell. In fact, I had a bird's-eye view of Stanwell Power Station coming down to the House this week.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr COSTIGAN:** There are a couple of drones across the chamber, and you do not need remote controls for them! Their heads are always in the clouds. If they want to talk about flying over Stanwell, I will talk about it any day of the week, member for Murrumba and member for Gladstone. Talk about the butcher, the baker and the candlestick maker! The fact of the matter is that it is \$1 billion—it is easy to say, isn't it?—with all of those aforementioned power companies. I note the shadow minister taking great interest in this. He is all over this like a cheap suit. It is \$1 billion, member for Burleigh. Imagine what that could do for the people of Queensland in borrowings across-the-board with all of those energy companies. The mind boggles. I refer to the damage bill caused by Tropical Cyclone Debbie—\$1 billion. It is so easy to say, yet it is an extravagant amount of money in borrowings in interest alone. There is no doubt about that.

I want to come back to some of the earlier contributions made last sitting Thursday, particularly in relation to former Ergon boss Ian McLeod. He was not a very popular man in Townsville in the end, with Ergon of course being in regional Queensland, but Mr McLeod was not in regional Queensland at the end as I recall. One thing that I will draw members' attention to is that supposedly 800 jobs would have been removed with the efficiencies of a merger between Ergon and Energex, yet it never materialised. All we have at the moment is that the people of Queensland, particularly regional and rural Queensland, have no competition—still no competition. People like me bang on about a coal-fired power station—a high-efficiency, low-emissions coal-fired power station particularly for North Queensland.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr COSTIGAN:** I hear the interjections from the member for Burdekin—my great friend from next door.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr COSTIGAN:** Those in the cheap seats up the back are interjecting because they do not understand. I would dare say that they have competition in their areas. Those people across the aisle and their constituents have competition, but my constituents do not. The member for Burdekin's constituents do not. The member for Burnett's constituents do not. My constituents do not have a choice at all. We do want to see a coal-fired power station in North Queensland and a state-of-the-art one. They are burning Queensland coal in Japan with high-efficiency, low-emissions technology being used near Yokohama, as I understand it.

**Mr Springborg** interjected.

**Mr COSTIGAN:** I hear the interjections from my great mate and soon-to-be-retired member for Southern Downs. What he does not know about a lot of things ain't worth knowing. They are doing it in Germany and in Scandinavia. Why are we not doing it in North Queensland, particularly, say, in Collinsville on the other side of the range from my office, represented by the member for Burdekin?

It defies logic, because at the moment Queenslanders, particularly regional Queenslanders, are being used as cash cows. Irrigators, pensioners, mums and dads, families and people in small business have had a gutful of high, over-the-top power prices and the wholesale cost of power increasing more than 70 per cent under the Palaszczuk Labor government. Members opposite own this increase of over 70 per cent. We see borrowings as per that report equating to nearly \$1 billion in interest alone. The mind boggles. How much bitumen would that make? Regional and rural Queenslanders in particular are copping the rough end of the pineapple and it stinks.

 **Mr WHITING** (Murrumba—ALP) (11.51 am): I did find it very revealing to read this report. One thing that really stuck out to me on page 4 of report No. 38 concerned the statement that 45 per cent of the revenue across the sector is not regulated by the AER. I do not know if members remember, but when we talk about electricity prices LNP members always say, 'You set those prices when you were last in; it was Bligh and Fraser. They set us on that path. We were locked in. We could not do a thing about it.' The report states that 45 per cent of revenue across the sector is not regulated. When members opposite were in government they had the opportunity to do something yet did nothing. They just sat on their hands and decided once again to blame Labor. It is a very inefficient way to work and it does not help anyone. They could have taken a variety of actions, such as those we subsequently took. I shall refer to some of those actions outlined previously by the committee chair.

We directed Energy Queensland to remove the cost of the Solar Bonus Scheme from electricity bills over the next three years, which would reduce projected household bill increases by half. We directed Stanwell Corporation to modify its bidding practices to put as much downward pressure as possible on power prices. As a result, we saw an immediate decrease by 10 per cent in forward contract prices. We also directed Stanwell Corporation to restart Swanbank E Power Station. These are all actions that we took. These are actions that the LNP could have undertaken, but in this place we constantly hear about the 43 per cent power rise under their regime and those opposite saying there is nothing that they could have done. Those opposite say, 'Ex-premier Bligh and treasurer Fraser put us on this path. We could not do a thing about it.' Let me state again that 45 per cent of this revenue is not regulated by the AER.

Our actions show what an active government can do to put downward pressure on electricity prices. All it takes is the ownership of generation and distribution mechanisms in the state—and we have done that, because we will not sell our electricity assets, as those opposite proposed. Those opposite spent between \$70 million and \$100 million—no-one is really sure—in preparing the state for the Strong Choices campaign.

It is very clear from this report that we have a set of healthy figures. The report states—

... we do not have any going concern about the issues within these sectors.

The report states that (1) these entities are earning enough revenue in the context of debt and (2) the debt and equity proportions are not outside industry practice. They have no concerns about debt and equity proportions or about revenue in the context of debt. Despite what those opposite say, it is very clear that the report outlines a very healthy government sector. It did refer to the reduction in revenue, the increase in interest costs and the imposed debt increases in the future but, once again, the report says that we are in a healthy position. It directly addresses those concerns that were raised. For example, it says that the energy government owned corporations, GOCs, are financially sustainable and that the entities will have a profitable business in the medium term. It is quite useful to examine these reports in detail and not just cherry-pick the odd sentences and phrases but look at it in its entirety in terms of the healthy state of these GOCs. It does emphasise why it is so important to keep these GOCs in the hands of the people, so that they can work harder for the people of Queensland.

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (11.56 am): Before commencing, I recognise in the gallery students from the Miami State School who are from my electorate but who soon will move to the electorate of the member for Mermaid Beach.

It is interesting that the Auditor-General's report No. 5 was handed down in May 2017. It is now September and we are finally debating electricity prices in this House in terms of an Auditor-General's report containing some very interesting things. I will get to those in a moment. Before doing so, I shall tackle some of the issues to which the member for Murrumba referred.

The member said that 45 per cent of the items in this report were not regulated by the AER. As we all know, network costs represent about 50 per cent of electricity bills. All of that is regulated by the Australian Energy Regulator. While the member for Murrumba said that it is important to read these documents, it is also important to understand these documents and how the Australian energy network works, because quite clearly the member for Murrumba has no idea how this works.

When the Labor Party was elected in 2015, the first thing it did was start to push up the price of electricity, to the detriment of the people of Queensland. When the government was elected, network costs in this state were under control. The Australian Energy Regulator handed down its decision in 2015 saying that electricity prices should stabilise but in fact they did not. The reasons they did not are contained in this Auditor-General's report. If members opposite bothered to look at it, they would see that in the Labor government's first budget, in the 2015-16 year, they shifted \$4.586 billion on to the government owned corporations. They shifted that debt.

**Mr Springborg:** Who pays for that?

**Mr HART:** I take that interjection from the member for Southern Downs. The people of Queensland pay for that through their electricity bills. It is quite clear. I said in my reply to the budget in 2015 that if debt was shifted to these GOCs it would end up flowing through to electricity prices. That is exactly what has happened. People out there are hurting from electricity prices. As I travel around the state I see more and more people and businesses suffering from electricity prices. Pensioners are worried about putting their heaters on at night, turning on their TV, doing their washing and putting on the kettle because they cannot afford their electricity.

Those opposite have loaded up those GOCs with additional debt which they are being forced to repay. They are being forced to be more commercial than they have ever been. They are being forced to gouge the people of Queensland to get the return that they need in order to pay back that debt and in order to pay the dividends that this government is requiring those GOCs to pay. We have all heard that the government has insisted on 100 per cent dividends from these GOCs. They are ripping money out of electricity generators left, right and centre. As the member for Southern Downs says, that flows directly to the people of Queensland through their electricity bills.

It is clear when one reads the chair's foreword that he does not understand. It is surprising that a member who came out of the ETU thinks that the 'Stanmore Corporation' runs electricity in Queensland. It is the Stanwell Corporation! Perhaps the member ought to get his facts right before writing reports like this. Members should read the report: the \$4.586 billion worth of debt moved to our GOCs is pushing up the price of electricity.

 **Mr BAILEY** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (12.00 pm): I was not going to contribute to this debate, but the hypocrisy of the opposition needs a response. The misleading approach in this debate and generally is shameful. We saw a government with the biggest majority in Australian—not just Queensland—political history lose power after one term. One of the key reasons they lost power was that power prices went up 43 per cent in only three years. That is a fact. We have never had an apology from those opposite in the LNP for ripping off Queenslanders to that extent. Their excuse is 'the dog ate my homework', 'it was someone else's fault'. They owned the assets. They could have made decisions. They could have intervened on behalf of Queensland consumers for three years but they did not. Why didn't they? It was because they thought they had the biggest majority in history and they could safely rip-off Queenslanders and get away with it. They did not get away it. They are in opposition because they ripped off Queenslanders, and they are trying to do it again.

Let us get to some basic facts about electricity. We saw a 43 per cent price increase under Tim Nicholls as treasurer and Campbell Newman as premier of this state. We have seen average price increases accumulative of only about five per cent at the retail level over the three years of the Labor government—43 per cent under LNP, five per cent under Labor. That is a fact. We have had the lowest wholesale prices in the country since March this year and we are projected to have the lowest prices

for the next three years. Let me say that again: Queensland has the lowest wholesale prices in the nation and will have for the next three years because we are managing power assets and we are keeping them in public hands. That is a fact.

This year we moved to slash by more than half the projected increase of 7.1 per cent by the Queensland Competition Authority, delivering the lowest increase in electricity prices of any mainland state by a long way. It was 19 per cent this year in South Australia and in the ACT, 11 per cent across the border in New South Wales and nearly 10 per cent in Victoria and yet we are looking at a three per cent increase in the retail price in Queensland. Let us get the facts on the record.

Let me also point out the weakness of the members of the LNP. They will not stand up to their mates in Canberra. They are lily-livered, they are weak-kneed and they will not stand up to Malcolm Turnbull and Josh Frydenberg and say, 'Implement the Finkel review.' We have a broken national electricity market within which Queensland is performing the best of any state in terms of getting price outcomes compared to 19 per cent, 11 per cent and nearly 10 per cent. We need national reform. We need real leadership from the Turnbull government for a clean energy target. Do Tim Nicholls and other members of the LNP stand up to their mates in Canberra and say, 'Get your act together. Stop being paralysed on policy. Stop being divided. Stop being dysfunctional and get on with it after four years in power.'? Do they say that? No! They come in here with their distortions and selective statistics and think they are going to get through this election that is coming in the next six months with that sort of pathetic lack of policy development.

They are not going to get away with it. They will pay dearly for it. Promising a ninth coal-fired power station in this state when we have eight massive baseload generators when nobody in the marketplace, none of the energy providers, support it is an absolute nonsense. In terms of the Australian Energy Council and a whole range of businesses there is no support out there. The market is not delivering it. It is now more expensive to go with coal-fired power stations. It is old technology. We have an opposition that does not understand the energy market. They are promising a pathetic policy that even the Treasurer of the Turnbull government has demolished by saying that cheap coal is a myth and it takes seven years to deliver. Those opposite do not have a policy. They put up prices 43 per cent before and they will do it again. That is what they are lining up to do by having a ridiculous policy and it needs to be pointed out.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

## SPEAKER'S RULING

### Same Question Rule

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I have considered the point of order taken by the Leader of the House regarding the notice of motion given by the member for Burleigh this morning and the motion agreed to in the House on 22 August 2017.

There are similarities in relation to both questions. They are both condemning the government for using electricity prices as a secret tax: one referencing the effect on Queensland business and jobs, the other referencing the effect on family budgets. It has long been held that questions do not need to be identical to breach standing order 87. If both questions are substantially the same the rule applies.

It is essentially argued by the Leader of the House that the questions are both the same as they are condemning the government for using electricity prices as a secret tax. I concur. The motion is therefore out of order. We will, therefore, deal with the motion standing in the name of the member for Mount Isa this evening.

## PUBLIC WORKS AND UTILITIES COMMITTEE

### Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Mr COSTIGAN** (Whitsunday—LNP) (12.07 pm): I move—

That the House take note of the Public Works and Utilities Committee report No. 39, *Auditor-General report to parliament 5: 2016-17 Energy: 2015-16 results of financial audits*, tabled 31 May 2017.

I am going to go straight for the jugular. This is a snapshot of the rail and port entities in question. I will go to the reference to North Queensland Bulk Ports. North Queensland Bulk Ports owns and operates the port of Mackay, the port of Abbot Point and the port of Hay Point, which comprises the two

coal-loading facilities initially at Hay Point and more recently at Dalrymple Bay. NQBP also has under its umbrella the port of Weipa in the far north of this state. It is interesting to note that the Auditor-General noted that this financial year the Queensland government as owners increased the dividend payout ratio from 80 to 100 per cent of net profit after tax. This is the real kicker for my part of the world. The report states, 'Additionally, NQBP returned capital of \$20 million to owners this year.'

It is no wonder that they are loaded up in terms of their borrowings. I wonder why this money could not have been reinvested into the port of Mackay for local jobs, particularly given the downturn in the resources sector. It is pretty well documented that our region took the biggest hit with the downturn. I acknowledge that other regions represented by government and non-government members in the parliament suffered as well. Certainly, 8,000 jobs disappeared from the three local government areas of Mackay, Isaac and Whitsunday. I am sure Mayor Williamson, who has had a fair bit to say in the past couple of days—more Adani bashing, I might add—Mayor Wilcox, who was here in the parliamentary precinct yesterday, and Mayor Anne Baker, who is on the other side of the political divide, would agree with those sentiments.

I come back to the \$20 million that NQBP returned to its owners this year. I wonder how much better it would have been for our local community if that money was reinvested in the port, maybe to enhance live cattle trade exports. In years gone by we have had live cattle go out of the port of Mackay. I have constituents who send cattle to the port of Townsville, which is twice the distance. NQBP could do a lot better commercially by exporting cattle to markets in places such as Vietnam and Indonesia. I know that is an area of interest to the member for Burdekin, given that we share common boundaries. Cattle leave my electorate and are sent to the port of Townsville. That is great for the port of Townsville, but not so good for the port of Mackay under the auspices of North Queensland Bulk Ports.

Certainly there are a lot of issues in relation to our ports. I would love nothing more than to see those profits reinvested in our ports, rather than the money being flicked across to its owners.

 **Mr KING** (Kallangur—ALP) (12.11 pm): I will actually talk to the Auditor-General's report. I note that the member opposite had some things to say about reinvestment into our ports. The Auditor-General's report noted that, for the port entities, revenue increased by three per cent and that is primarily driven by the commodities imported and exported through them. The LNP did have a plan for ports. It was to sell off Gladstone and Townsville. This government does not sell ports. Their plan was to sell ports. We are investing in our ports. I reiterate that this government does not sell ports, but that is all that the previous government wanted to do.

**Mr COSTIGAN:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The honourable member is talking about this government not selling ports.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Farmer): Order! Do you have a point of order, member for Whitsunday?

**Mr COSTIGAN:** I think the member is misleading the House.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** If you feel so, you can write to the Speaker.

**Mr COSTIGAN:** I will.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Lockyer, did you have a point of order?

**Mr RICKUSS:** My point of order was that the member is misleading the House. The Labor government sold the Brisbane port.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** If you feel that is the case, you can write to the Speaker.

**Mr KING:** I reiterate that the Palaszczuk government does not sell ports; all the previous government wanted to do was to sell our ports. We are investing in our ports by keeping our government owned corporations in public hands so that they can continue to work for the public. Queensland government owned ports provide—

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! It would be almost impossible for Hansard to hear the member for Kallangur. Would everyone please allow the member for Kallangur to speak.

**Mr KING:** Thank you for your protection, Madam Deputy Speaker. I appreciate it. Queensland government owned ports provide a central role in the facilitation of trade, which creates jobs, mostly in our regions, and investment in the Queensland economy. I will not say too much more, except that we are investing. I notice that the member opposite said that some money would be well spent on the port

of Mackay. The North Queensland Bulk Ports Corporation will spend \$7 million on wharfs 4 and 5 fender upgrades at the port of Mackay and a further \$2.9 million to complete the Port of Abbot Point module offloading facility. We are investing in our ports and we are keeping them in government hands.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

## PUBLIC WORKS AND UTILITIES COMMITTEE

### Report, Motion to Take Note



**Mr KING** (Kallangur—ALP) (12.14 pm): I move—

That the House take note of the Public Works and Utilities Committee report No. 40 titled *Auditor-General report to parliament 7: 2016-17 water: 2015-16 results of financial audits*, tabled 31 May 2017.

On behalf of the committee, I thank the committee secretariat and the Queensland Audit Office for their assistance with our consideration of the report. I also thank the committee members for their work during our examination of the report. The Queensland Audit Office's audit found that all our GOCs are financially sustainable. There is a ripple in Seqwater, but they do have a planned path to address that financial position in a way that is fair and sustainable. As we know, Seqwater is the owner of the South-East Queensland Water Grid, which has drought proofed South-East Queensland through strategic investments in large-scale water infrastructure during the millennium drought. During a different examination, our committee visited some of those facilities. We saw the investment that has saved us several times.

It is because of the Labor government's investment in climate resilient water sources and the water grid that South-East Queensland was better able to respond when poor summer rainfall left some of the region's dams in worse shape than others. When we have disasters in this area, such as ex-Tropical Cyclone Debbie, water treatment plants can go down, pounded by high rainfall events. As we saw during our visit, the Gold Coast desalination plant does not have any rust, as those opposite like to say. There is no rust whatsoever and there never was, except during construction. The Gold Coast desalination plant kicked into gear and was running at 100 per cent capacity to ensure that water supply was maintained.

By building one of Australia's first water grids, we now have the flexibility to change supply sources when we need to and move drinking water across our region. Those investments ensure the south-east always has a reliable high-quality water supply. I note that the member for Southport was a big advocate for the desalination plant when we were down there. He loved it. Seqwater is on a price path, set by the Queensland Competition Authority, to reach a sustainable and fair bulk water price to pay down those investments, which have proven to be highly valuable to our state again and again. I am pleased to report that Seqwater has developed and implemented enhanced financial government practices to address the QAO's other findings.



**Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (12.17 pm): I rise to also speak to report No. 40 from the Public Works and Utilities Committee in reference to the Auditor-General's report to parliament No. 7 for 2016-17 on water in 2015-16 and the results of financial audits. This report highlights the fact that the figures reported by the various water entities were accurate. However, it does not accurately portray what an absolute mess Labor has made of our water assets and our borrowings across the state of Queensland.

As the member for Kallangur rightly pointed out, as a councillor with the Gold Coast City Council I was a supporter of the desalination plant at the height of the drought. The first proposal council had was to build a small desalination plant for emergency water backup at a cost of about \$300 million. Then suddenly there was a looming election and the state government was in a panic because they had no answers to solve the water problems of South-East Queensland. A letter arrived from Peter Beattie's office, telling the Gold Coast City Council that they will take over the control of the desalination plant and reimburse the Gold Coast council for the money that had been spent on land acquisitions in preparation. It went from a \$300 million project to about a \$1.6 billion project.

What do we have now? We have a desalination plant that is over capacity, has been over speced and has been built at a level that was absolutely unsustainable and unnecessary. That is what Labor does. We heard from the member for Yeerongpilly, Mark Bailey, a little earlier. He accused the LNP of a lack of policy development. The policy that they have developed with regard to energy is building solar panel farms all over Queensland when we are one of the largest miners of coal and one of the cleanest generators of coal-fired power in the Southern Hemisphere, if not the world.

**Mr KING:** I rise to a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. I seek your guidance, Madam Deputy Speaker. We are talking about water assets not solar panels.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Farmer): I did not hear what the member was saying, but I would ask you to remain relevant.

**Mr MOLHOEK:** The accusation was that the LNP has no credibility in terms of policy development. I just wanted to point out that importing more solar panels from China is not necessarily going to create jobs in Queensland. That is classic 'Labornomics'.

One of the questions that the committee asked the Audit Office was whether they could supply a schedule that provided some detail around the extent of borrowings, the amount of money that was being spent on maintenance and what the current policy direction was of the government. Again, as we saw with the energy audit report and the figures provided in an answer to a question on notice then, the figures for maintenance came through reading 'Not disclosed. Not disclosed. Not disclosed. Not disclosed.'

My question to the government is: what are they trying to hide? I know what they are trying to hide. They are trying to hide the fact that they have raided the water entities of money to prop up their budget. What we heard from the Audit Office was that debt amongst the water entities is now at \$13.6 billion. The debt has not gone down. We would have thought that it might have gone down, but it has actually gone up again. The Audit Office said that this represents nine per cent of total state debt. They expressed concerns around some of the government policy. They went on to state—

... there was one significant or high-risk matter identified and this related to inadequate control processes at Seqwater relating to asset valuation.

...

Our report also highlighted the returns to government from this sector and sustainability challenges faced by the water entity in Queensland. These include profits and retained earnings for 2015-16 supported the dividends and participation returns ...

There was \$169 million taken out of the water entities. There was another \$130 million taken as a special dividend and then another \$130 million taken as a share capital return. This is chipping away at the reserves of those water entities at a time when they should have been looking to pay off debt and at a time when they should have been looking to service the debt rather than pulling more money into the state coffers to prop up their appalling budget. There is so much more I could say on this issue.

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (12.23 pm): I rise to speak to the Public Works and Utilities Committee's report on its inquiry into Auditor-General report to parliament No. 7 of 2016-17, titled *Water: 2015-16 results of financial audits*. On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank the committee secretariat and the Queensland Audit Office for their assistance in our consideration of the Auditor-General's report. I also acknowledge the chair of the committee, the member for Kallangur, and my colleagues on the committee. The committee made one recommendation which was for the Legislative Assembly to note the contents of the report.

Our government owned water entities operate across the state to deliver essential services to Queensland households, businesses and irrigators. The Palaszczuk government's commitment not to sell our assets, unlike those on the opposite side, means that public ownership of our water providers means that we can deploy them for the benefit of the people of Queensland.

Just this year, under our Powering North Queensland Plan, we committed a \$100 million equity injection into SunWater and a reinjection of dividends to fund works to ensure that Burdekin Falls Dam not only continues to meet design standards, but also is able to support the installation of a 50-megawatt hydro power plant—which will involve another \$100 million investment—to provide the Queensland electricity grid with a new source of dispatchable power generation. Further, SunWater owns many of the dams and bulk water assets our agriculture sector relies on.

The SEQ water grid comprises 600 kilometres of pipelines which connect the region's major water treatment plants and water supply dams. This grid ensures that South-East Queensland has one of Australia's most secure drinking water supplies because it allows us to move water across the region from where it is plentiful to where it is scarce. Seqwater uses the grid daily to move drinking water across South-East Queensland to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of the region's water supply and has undertaken steps to improve its processes in line with the Queensland Audit Office's report. Further, the Queensland Audit Office found that all water entities are financially sustainable.

 **Mr COSTIGAN** (Whitsunday—LNP) (12.25 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution in the debate on the committee's report on the Auditor-General's report to parliament No. 7 of 2016-17 titled *Water: 2015-16 results of financial audits*. I want to go back to something that my colleague the member for Southport, our committee deputy chair, touched on. That is the nondisclosure of maintenance costs. I want to draw the House's attention to the water entities, and particularly SunWater.

There are a lot of irrigators that I represent in the electorate of Whitsunday who cannot afford water. It is interesting that we cannot seem to find out what the maintenance costs were for SunWater going back quite a number of years. SunWater owns and operates a number of water infrastructure assets in North Queensland, not just Peter Faust Dam, which was opened in the early 1990s. It is a tremendous community asset for industry as well. There are close to half a million megalitres at Peter Faust Dam or Lake Proserpine.

There are other dams in Central Queensland, North Queensland and Far North Queensland under the control of SunWater that come to mind. I speak of dams like Kinchant Dam in the Pioneer Valley, Teemurra Dam in the Upper Pioneer Valley and Eungella Dam on top of the range at Broken River. That reminds me of my passion—and I know it is shared by a number of people in this House—to see the vision of the great Sir Peter Delamothé, the longest serving attorney-general and minister for justice in this place, to build Urannah Dam become a reality. We need to be building dams.

Going back to the report it says in terms of maintenance costs, 'Not disclosed. Not disclosed. Not disclosed.' I am sure a lot of irrigators in my electorate would love to know what the maintenance costs were for our dams—dams such as the Burdekin Falls Dam. I want to build Urannah to be a sister dam to Burdekin Falls Dam. That was always the plan. If people come up to the electorate of Burdekin—and I am sure the member for Burdekin has taken people there many times—it has a diagram of where the Burdekin Falls Dam is and points to where Urannah Dam should be. Sadly, it never happened.

I am sure that people like Mark Stoneman, the former member for Burdekin, and others who were in this House many moons ago would lament the lack of dam construction, particularly in North Queensland. It is something that I am very passionate about. Whether it is Nullinga Dam on the Walsh River or others, there are a number of great projects of merit.

Needless to say, I concur with what the member for Southport said in his contribution that all we see is the government owned water corporations basically propping up the Palaszczuk Labor government's budget. That is what is happening here. I am sure that if I were talking to a lot of cockies in my part of the world and said to them, 'We could not actually find out what the maintenance costs were for each of those financial years in black and white'—

**Mr Rickuss:** Shame.

**Mr COSTIGAN:** It is a shame. I take the interjection from the member for Lockyer. I am sure there are farmers in Kelsey Creek, Silver Creek, Crystal Brook, Gunyarra, Lethebrook—all over the place in my electorate in the Whitsundays—who have plenty of issues to deal with as we speak and as we tick up towards six months since Cyclone Debbie. They would say, 'Costo, how come we do not know how much they are spending on maintenance?'

I know that the mayor has shown some great leadership in terms of the economic plan for the Whitsundays in growing Lake Proserpine and Peter Faust Dam as a tourist attraction. I think it is an underutilised resource. That is a sentiment shared by Karen Vloedmans from the local chamber of commerce who is also a board member of Tourism Whitsundays, whose CEO, Craig Turner, was here on the precinct yesterday looking to get something more out of the Palaszczuk Labor government to drive tourism in the Whitsunday.

Peter Faust Dam is a SunWater asset. Remarkably, the maintenance costs for these dams that are controlled, owned and operated by SunWater, as this report shows, are 'not disclosed', 'not disclosed', 'not disclosed'. It is amazing to see that in print. I look forward to talking to the barflies, the local cockies, about this at the Metropole Hotel, the Grand Central Hotel, the Prince of Wales Hotel—

**An honourable member:** The Reef Gardens?

**Mr COSTIGAN:** I will go to the Reef Gateway Hotel at Cannonvale as well. We will chew the fat and say, 'I wonder why we could not find out what the maintenance costs are for these dams that are controlled, owned and operated by SunWater.'

Debate, on motion of Mr Costigan, adjourned.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Farmer): I would like to acknowledge another group from Durack State School in the electorate of Inala who are just leaving the gallery now.

## MINES LEGISLATION (RESOURCES SAFETY) AMENDMENT BILL

### Introduction

 **Hon. AJ LYNHAM** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (12.30 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Coal Mining Safety and Health Act 1999, the Coal Mining Safety and Health Regulation 2017, the Mining and Quarrying Safety and Health Act 1999 and the Mining and Quarrying Safety and Health Regulation 2017 for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee to consider the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Mines Legislation (Resources Safety) Amendment Bill 2017 [\[1616\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Mines Legislation (Resources Safety) Amendment Bill 2017, explanatory notes [\[1617\]](#).

Queensland's mining safety legislation is considered some of the best in the world, but to uphold our track record we need to ensure it remains current. There have been no substantial amendments to the legislation since 2010. Every worker has the right to go to work expecting to go home safely to their family at the end of the day, and this must hold true for workers in Queensland mines. The Palaszczuk government holds true to our commitment in protecting all workers with the introduction of these amendments to safeguard our miners.

The reidentification of coal workers' pneumoconiosis is a timely reminder that there is no place for complacency in worker safety and health. As I have said previously in statements to this House, any failure by any company to meet their safety and health obligation is not acceptable. No worker in any industry should ever have to feel dread that the workplace they enter each day holds risks that may make them ill or, ultimately, kill them. That is why I am here to do this today, to amend legislation to protect workers in one of the most undoubtedly risky workplaces.

While Queensland's Mines Inspectorate has a range of enforcement actions that they can take to punish wrongdoing, the government is today bringing to the House a bill that strengthens and gives rigour to the enforcement powers available to the regulator. To add to the current powers to audit or prosecute an operator or shut down a mine, the chief executive of the Mines Inspectorate will have new powers to suspend or cancel statutory certificates and other competencies held by individuals if they fail to meet their obligations, and to impose civil penalties on companies to provide for swift action to be taken to address noncompliance. This is particularly important where a breach has the potential to directly and immediately impact the safety and health of persons at the mine.

It is proposed that the chief executive will be able to impose civil penalties of up to 1,000 penalty units, or \$126,000, against corporations who are mine operators or contractor companies and who fail to comply with certain obligations or requirements under the mining safety legislation. These two types of penalties will deter negligent decision-making which potentially results in serious injury or death. We will also require higher levels of competence for statutory positions, such as ventilation officers at underground mines, and require holders of statutory certificates to maintain high standards of professional competence throughout their careers.

The Mines Legislation (Resources Safety) Amendment Bill 2017 proposes changes to the Coal Mining Safety and Health Act 1999 and the Mining and Quarrying Safety and Health Act 1999 to deliver on the government's commitment to improve safety and health outcomes for mine workers. Unions and industry have been instrumental in the development of the key proposals via tripartite committees.

Across 15 reform initiatives these improvements will provide for greater transparency and accountability, improved safety and health systems, and stronger enforcement and compliance powers within the mine safety and health framework. Seven of the reforms will improve transparency and accountability within the mining industry through initiatives such as higher standards for certification of underground coalmine ventilation officers. Ventilation officers play a crucial role in the health and safety of underground coalminers, and it is absolutely vital that we have rigorous checks and balances in place to ensure they are qualified to an acceptable standard.

Other initiatives include strengthening the accountability of mine operators by implementing proactive executive officer obligations and the expansion of who is responsible to notify reportable diseases. These changes will mean that site managers are required to notify my department when a worker is diagnosed with an occupational disease such as miners' lung dust diseases. Other initiatives include requiring manufacturers and suppliers to mine sites to notify hazardous/defective equipment or substances supplied to a mining operation; improving mines inspectorate representation on statutory

advisory committees to balance tripartite membership; providing for a public register of certificate holders; and allowing inspectors to release relevant safety information soon after an incident, where this information will provide important learnings to industry.

Three of the reforms will improve safety and health management systems. These three reforms will improve contractor management safety by providing for the inclusion of contractor safety management systems into a single safety and health management system at a mine site. This is a crucial amendment to protect contractors who currently are involved in over 70 per cent of serious incidents, injuries and fatalities on mine sites. They will include health surveillance of current and former miners as an objective in mining safety legislation and they will upgrade safety and health in small mines by removing the safety and health management system exemption. A small mine is a mine of 11 workers or fewer. Over the years my department has noticed an overrepresentation of small mines experiencing serious accidents onsite. The department is working with these small mines to assist them in getting a safety and health management system in place, recognising some of the constraints they experience in comparison with large operations.

The remaining five of these 15 reforms will provide improved enforcement and compliance powers for the mines inspectorate by requiring holders of statutory certificates of competency to maintain competence for the life of the certificate through continuing professional development; allowing certificates to be suspended or cancelled for noncompliance; increasing the maximum penalties under the mining safety legislation; clarifying the entry powers of inspectors to sites that could reasonably be considered a workplace associated with a mining operation; and providing the power for the chief executive to impose civil penalties on mining companies who fail to meet their obligations.

This bill is needed to ensure mineworkers are supported by legislation that is effective and contemporary. The government is committed to progressing improvements to legislation to keep workers safe. These improvements will play a critical role in rebuilding trust and respect with the resources sector as we take responsibility for the errors of history. I commend the bill to the House.

### First Reading

**Hon. AJ LYNHAM** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (12.38 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

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

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Farmer): In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee.

### Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date

**Hon. AJ LYNHAM** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (12.38 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That, under the provisions of standing order 136, the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee report to the House on the Mines Legislation (Resources Safety) Amendment Bill by 23 October 2017.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

## LABOUR HIRE LICENSING BILL

### Second Reading

Resumed from 6 September (see p. 2772), on motion of Ms Grace—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (12.39 pm): I rise to address the Labour Hire Licensing Bill 2017. It is rather timely that we are debating this today, because last week I had an opportunity to catch up with some of the more successful strawberry growers in the electorate of Glass House—John Allen

from Oaklands Farms, Charmaine Davey from Berry Patch Marketing and the Schiffke clan, being father Merv and daughters Laura, Tracey and Sam. We met at John Allen's property in Beerwah following the receipt of a letter by my office from John regarding what he sees as a very serious issue for the horticultural industry.

**Mr BAILEY:** I rise to a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. I believe the member for Whitsunday is using his phone in the chamber, and that is clearly against standing orders, especially while a speaker from his own party is on his feet.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Farmer): Order! Member for Whitsunday, is that correct?

**Mr Costigan:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I was not talking on the phone. I was making sure it was off.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I call the member for Glass House.

**Mr POWELL:** As I was saying, I had a meeting with John, Charmaine and the Schiffke family following a letter I received from John. I think it is important to read some of this into Hansard. John and his family have been growing strawberries for 36 years on the Sunshine Coast. They have had not one loss until five years ago and he correlates that roughly to the time when labour hire contractors started appearing in the industry. In the last five years they have had one good year and three losses. He does acknowledge that there are other factors at play here. At Oaklands Farms they have personally had experience with two labour hire contractors. In John's own words—

One was a criminal. The other managed to do things right with pressure applied. We think!

The criminal payed cash, did not pay tax, did not pay super, did not pay workcover, on the majority of employees. On our farm he did pay correct wages as we made sure of that.

Autsafe super have expressed concern as the contributions they receive from the strawberry industry have gone down despite the fact that each year a larger volume of fruit is produced.

We have backpackers knocking on our door regularly that are getting \$6 and \$7.00 per hour after two weeks picking ...

A grower at Caboolture told me he did the figures on another grower he knew to be underpaying his employees and worked out that said grower pocketed an extra \$1,500,000 dollars above what would have been correct.

The outcome for my business is that we are not able to compete and make a profit. We will be forced to close the strawberry business down.

I would suggest this situation is common across all of horticulture where a large number of employees are required for a relatively short period of time. This means that there are very large amounts of money changing hands and I suspect that this has already attracted criminal elements.

As we sat around the table at Mrs Allen's property at Oaklands and discussed this, that view was shared very passionately by Charmaine from Berry Patch Marketing and by the Schiffke family, particularly Merv and his daughters. It was very clear that most horticulturalists are trying to do the right thing. They are trying to ensure that labour hire companies which come on to their properties are doing the right thing, but there are individuals out there who are abusing the system.

When we discussed the fact that the Fair Work Commission had made a ruling that a local grower would be fined—if I recall correctly, the fine was in the order of \$50,000—the response was that that is a slap on the wrist. When a company is pocketing \$1½ million in unpaid workers' wages and super, \$50,000 is a slap on the wrist. As we discussed what the solution should be for the industry, not once did those strawberry farmers come up with a solution that we should be licensing labour hire companies. Instead, not guided by me whatsoever in this discussion, this is what they said needs to be done. We need to increase the penalties for breaches of existing laws. As I said, \$50,000 is a slap on the wrist. The first fine is \$50,000, the second fine is \$200,000, and the third fine is to shut the business down. They were the words of my strawberry growers. Shut the industry down if they continue to abuse existing laws.

Interestingly, they also picked up the fact that under the award there is a definition known as 'piece work'. I will not pretend to fully understand this but there is a definition of piece work. They believe that because of the way the definition is worded unscrupulous operators are misusing that definition to do what they are doing. Their suggestion to my federal colleagues is to clean up this piece work definition.

The third and final aspect that they said needs addressing is to boost the Fair Work Commission, the ATO, superannuation companies, WorkCover and Immigration so they can get out on the ground and check out these businesses which are doing the wrong thing. Equip them with the right number of investigators and stronger penalties and enforcement and break the back of those that are doing the

wrong thing. Not once was it mentioned that the solution was to license labour hire companies. When I mentioned that there was a bill before the House they got quite concerned that they themselves might be captured by this bill in terms of licensing and having to go through a whole lot of paperwork.

Following my meeting with them, two days later John met with his federal member, the member for Fisher, Andrew Wallace MP. Andrew also received the same information I did and quite clearly heard the message that the issues pertain to federal legislation, federal authorities and bodies, and that it is a case of cleaning up the legislation, strengthening the penalties and ensuring that those bodies have sufficient staff to enforce them. Andrew has gone further and asked that if Mr Allen and others know of companies that are doing the wrong thing to write down the names of those companies and provide it to him so he can forward it to the relevant authorities to investigate. We have seen efforts by the Fair Work Commission to crack down on this. We now have commitments from these farmers to do in those companies that are doing the wrong thing.

The Fair Work Commission has the legislative power with what is being proposed to potentially clean up some definitions within the award and strengthen some penalties. That is the way to address this issue. I do not think anyone in this House would deny that there is an issue. I have just confirmed it using the words of Mr John Allen of Oaklands Farms. There is an issue, but the solution is not for the state of Queensland to relegislate by creating a licensing structure for labour hire companies. Given that the state government which includes those members sitting opposite seceded our award system to the federal government, the solution is to ensure that the federal government knows what its legislative responsibilities are. If there are problems with the legislation, clean it up. If there are problems with enforcement, strengthen it. If there are problems with the scope of the penalties, strengthen them. That is the solution. It is not for the state of Queensland to create more red tape for the strawberry industry in my electorate and horticulturalists across the state of Queensland. It is not right but it is what we have come to expect from this lazy Palaszczuk Labor government.

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (12.49 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Labour Hire Licensing Bill so that I can relay some of the effects that an out-of-control labour hire system can have on a community and individual workers. At the outset, I would like to put on the record that not all labour hire companies out there have been behaving like cowboys; some have been fair to their workers.

Last night I was really gobsmacked at the lack of understanding shown by those opposite in their contributions on the effect that uncontrolled labour hire is having in the regions. The men and women are given no option but to engage them if they want to work in the mining industry. It would be interesting for members opposite to come to my community and give the speeches they gave last night. They need to come up to Central Queensland and get a real understanding of what it is like for families in my region who are working under labour hire. These are regional Queenslanders, not just backpackers out there picking fruit. These are mums and dads and families. We need to make sure that we put a stop to this debacle.

As the trend to use labour hire has increased, the number of people with insecure work in my community has increased. I know of workers who have had at least 13 years of casual contracts in the mining industry. It is not just large mining companies that are opting to use labour hire; smaller businesses are also starting to take up the option. One business owner of a smaller restaurant under a franchisee agreement told me they were directed by the franchise to use labour hire to circumvent the fair work arrangements.

When labour hire first raised its head in my community, wages and conditions for workers were not too bad. There was no secure work but the pay and conditions were livable. As more labour hire companies jumped on board and they competed for contracts at mining sites, they drove wages and working conditions into the ground to the point where we could start to think there was wage theft and worker exploitation in the mining industry. There have been cases where a labour hire firm has changed the time frame for which a contract can be ended. For example, the agreement once was that they would be given two weeks notice, then the next agreement they needed to sign was that it was the end of the tour, and I now know of many workers who are under threat that the contract could be terminated at the end of any shift. This places workers under enormous pressure. There is no consideration given by labour hire firms to the fact that the worker is a person.

I want to talk about safety, which is very dubious on some sites. I have been told by workers when they go out to sites that the permanent workforce are supplied with quality PPE but contractors from labour hire get nothing. There is no responsibility for their safety. There is no-one to report unsafe practices to. I have also noticed that the number of apprenticeships being offered by large companies

has dropped off. A lot of the larger companies leave it to the labour hire firms to go out and find their skilled workers. They are not taking up their responsibility to our communities to put on trainees. They are just hoping somebody else will do it. This is a shame for everyone in Queensland.

On Monday I noticed in the Senate in Canberra that the Liberals, Nationals and One Nation could have supported Labor's amendment to the Fair Work Amendment (Protecting Vulnerable Workers) Bill 2017 but they shamefully failed to do so. They had an opportunity to ensure the protection of workers' wages from dodgy labour hire firms across the country. Those opposite need to send a message of disgust to their federal colleagues to let them know that they have let down Queensland workers. We deserve better. There was an opportunity for a national approach to protect vulnerable workers and we have all been let down. The LNP always seem to side with the big end of town over workers' rights. One Nation have nailed their colours to the mast showing where they stand, and it is not for workers. Shame. Only Labor stands up for Queensland workers. I commend the bill.

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (12.53 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Labour Hire Licensing Bill 2017. I do this as a former member of the Finance and Administration Committee which conducted the inquiry into this very matter. For me and the non-government members, our position on this legislation has not changed. This legislation is a heavy-handed approach to the misbehaviour of a small number of labour hire operators. Simply imposing a licensing system on the industry will not resolve the problem. There is already legislation in place to address misbehaviour in the industry and to prosecute these rogue operators should that legislation be enforced. Just recently, there were two labour hire services in the Lockyer Valley that were prosecuted for underpaying employees. If the processes are followed, it can be enforced.

If the minister is concerned that there are rogue operators out there, then it would be better to allocate further funding to the Fair Work Ombudsman and increase the inspectors and resources on the ground. This was a common complaint during the inquiry—a lack of enforcement of the existing legislation. Will a licensing system stop the housing problems that we heard of in some areas of the horticulture industry? These are local government issues. What about the transport issues that we heard of. Will it address them? No, it will not.

Whilst recognising that there is a small number of rogue operators that need to be stamped out, many industry groups stated that this legislation was not the answer and would be a major impost on honest operators. This was of particular concern to groups such as AgForce, Growcom and QFF whose members simply could not survive without labour hire workers. When fruit and vegetable crops need to be harvested, they need to be harvested quickly and there needs to be a large number of employees on the ground over a very short period of time. It is simply beyond the capability and scope of most of these small farmers to put a workforce like that on the ground and supervise them over that period. Labour hire is essential in that industry.

Nobody wants to see employees exploited. If this legislation was the answer, then it could be supported but it is not. The truth is that this legislation is not designed to fix any of these problems. This legislation is simply designed to allow the unions into the labour hire industry in an effort to bolster their numbers and bolster the Labor Party campaign funds.

I have listened with interest to the contributions of those opposite. The member for Mackay was the first one to acknowledge that not all labour hire firms are rogues—the first one. Listening to some of the contributions from that side of the chamber could make one think that these labour hire workers turn up to work on a long chain with rings around their necks. I have not heard hysteria like that since the Vegetation Management Act, when all members lined up to vilify and run down landowners. This is exactly the same hysteria. I have not seen anything as bad as that since that legislation came into the House.

The recommendation from the former inquiry was to work with COAG to address these issues and work to achieve a whole-of-government response, but that does not suit this government's agenda. This is the thin end of the wedge. This is not about regulating the labour hire industry; this is about getting the union in there and boosting union numbers and getting extra funding for the Labor Party campaigns. This is not about regulating the labour hire industry; this is about destroying it. This is about the union takeover throughout the labour hire industry. This legislation is only a union encouragement and should be seen for what it is and voted down.

 **Ms DONALDSON** (Bundaberg—ALP) (12.58 pm): I also rise to support the Labour Hire Licensing Bill 2017. At the outset, I would like to support what the member for Mackay said. We do know that there are good operators out there and people who are doing the right thing. They are trying to ensure they support workers and not employ dodgy labour hire contractors. These are not the people who should be concerned about the legislation. It is all of the other ones.

In my electorate, I have a lot of backpacker hostels, a lot of backpackers and a lot of labour hire contractors. Very often, they are one and the same. There is a relationship between the hostels and the backpacker labour hire. The backpackers come into the area believing they will get work when they arrive. Unfortunately, quite often they turn up to the hostel and there is no work because the crops are not quite ready to pick or not ready to be packed yet and they have nothing to do so they do not earn an income. Effectively, they are stuck in the hostel. They have no income and they are already incurring a debt before they have even got out on to a farm or earned the small pittance they are earning. This is well known throughout the area. Despite Fair Work coming into our area, nothing has changed. Despite it being common knowledge, there has been no change. If self-regulation were the answer, people would have cleaned up their act a long time ago. In the soup kitchens in my electorate, it is not just the homeless people who are turning up to get a meal at night; it is the backpackers as well. They are not doing it to exploit or rip-off soup kitchens; they are doing it because they do not have any food and they have no income.

Debate, on motion of Ms Donaldson, adjourned.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Farmer): Before retiring for lunch, I remind all members who are wearing red socks to show their support for the fight against prostate cancer that there is an opportunity for a photo with the Speaker down on the front steps.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.30 pm.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Pumicestone Passage

 **Mr McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (2.30 pm): Pumicestone Passage and its catchment is 748 square kilometres in area. The main body of the catchment drains eastward from the D'Aguiar Range via Bells, Mellum, Coochin, Tibrogargan, Hussey, Elimbah and Ningi creeks. In addition, Bribie Island drains west into the passage. Those of us who live on the Sunshine Coast, in particular in Caloundra, get to enjoy the passage almost daily. However, it is important that we all understand that the passage catchment is a much wider area and includes terrestrial ecosystems, swamps and lakes to name just a few of its components. The passage supports a large variety of wildlife and includes seabirds, fish, turtles and in places dugong. Importantly, it is listed under the UN Convention on Wetlands of International Importance in relation to migratory birds that travel there each year. This is particularly important as it recognises once again the environmental importance of this wonderful body of water.

At the same time, industry does flourish, with poultry, strawberries, pineapples, turf, nurseries and macadamias being the mainstays. The passage has been there in one form or another for thousands of years and is enjoyed by thousands of people each year. The gap between the mainland and the northern tip of Bribie Island is very narrow and the beauty of both the passage and the island is breathtaking. Although people are very close to the mainland when they walk to the east of Bribie Island, they are confronted with the Pacific Ocean which is in stark contrast to the calm of the passage.

Importantly, we will see large increases in population in and around Caloundra with Stockland's Aura development stage 1 well and truly underway. Ultimately 50,000 people will live in Aura and around 14,000 in Palmview. These increases plus their visitors will mean more people using the passage and placing it under greater stress. Pumicestone Passage is our heritage, but it is not only our asset; we hold it on trust and that carries with it obligations. These obligations are to protect and enhance its fragile environment, ensure it provides a safe and enjoyable holiday destination and plan for its sustainability well into the future.

The passage is important to Caloundra for two reasons: its natural beauty and the tourism benefit. These can coexist, but that comes down to us and the steps we take together to protect its future. Pumicestone Passage will be around for thousands of years to come, but how it looks at the end of that time line is up to people like you and me and those who live on the Sunshine Coast. I recommend the Pumicestone Passage to all members of the House as the best destination and the best body of water in Queensland.

### Octopus Foundation

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (2.33 pm): Sometimes we need to be a little bit brave to be a member of parliament. The Golden Octopus Foundation was established in 2015 by a brave, caring and resilient young lady, Ms Keely Johnson. Throughout her own journey with childhood cancer, Keely

aims to help others and make a difference to other children and families dealing with childhood cancer. Keely is achieving this through her Golden Octopus Foundation, which has now gone national. September is Childhood Cancer Awareness Month. Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, you know me; I am very happy to support any worthwhile cause, particularly if it is born in North Queensland. I am standing in this House in a gold suit to pay tribute to, and raise awareness of, the Golden Octopus Foundation, to Keely and her family for her outstanding work with the foundation. Mr Deputy Speaker, for a few minutes perhaps you can refer to me as 'Gold Member'.

Keely's family, who live in the Burdekin, have been committed to the foundation and do a remarkable amount of work and travel getting out to regional communities and interstate to talk about the foundation and its good work. I have met Keely on numerous occasions with her work, including at meetings at the Townsville Hospital regarding how she can support paediatric oncology services through raising funds for the first community based childhood cancer nurse. They have already raised \$150,000 towards this, but in a remarkable achievement Keely has already raised \$650,000 for this cause.

I would like to give Keely a shout-out. I know she is watching this with her mum, Cathy, in the Burdekin, a nurse who knows how much work the foundation and Keely are doing. I say: well done, mate; you are indeed a shining light. No-one wants to see their child go through any cancer treatment. My observation of Keely is that she is an outstanding young lady who puts herself before others. I would like to commend the Premier for her ongoing support of the foundation by once again agreeing to light up the Queensland parliament in gold this September. I know she is writing to all her local governments to ask them to do the same thing in their area. I am aware that Keely is travelling to Western Australia on the 10th of this month—and they are also lighting up their parliament in gold—to meet children with cancer and cheer them up.

Keely has a special talent and that is her golden voice. This girl can sing. The ambassador for the Golden Octopus Foundation is Mr Lee Kernaghan who, along with Keely, recorded the song *Turn This to Gold*. All funds raised are delivered to regional hospitals such as in Townsville. This foundation raises funds for improving the services of paediatric oncology such as telehealth to regional areas to prevent families having to travel so far from home in stressful times. I only ask that members of this House google the Golden Octopus Foundation and make a donation because that's gold.

### Coomera Electorate, Petitions

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (2.36 pm): I rise to remind several ministers of the time line for responding to petitions tabled by me on 8 and 9 August. The people of the northern Gold Coast have been treated poorly regarding infrastructure for far too long. An ever-increasing lag has developed, so I ask ministers to please not be discourteous to them by not responding within the prescribed time frame. That would be, to say the least, extremely rude.

The e-petitions that I refer to were tabled on 8 August and the paper petitions were tabled on 9 August. These petitions are along the following lines. I should say in relation to the first one that the Minister for Health did in fact table his response today, which is wonderful to see. The problem is that it did not address the actual petition at all; it just talked about health services on the Gold Coast. The actual petition related to constructing a hospital.

The next one was to construct a police station and provide 50 additional police officers. That was to the Minister for Police. I look forward to him providing that response by the close of business today. I would imagine that would be the closing time. Another one was to upgrade exit 41 north and southbound. That was to the acting Minister for Main Roads. How many ministers for main roads have we had?

**Mr Costigan:** Pick a minister.

**Mr CRANDON:** Pick a minister—any minister. For that minister there was also a petition to upgrade exit 45 southbound including the addition of an off ramp and an upgrade to exit 49 northbound.

Another petition was to upgrade the bus services—this one is for the Deputy Premier and Minister for Transport—between Ormeau station and Coomera station. Another was to upgrade car parks at Ormeau station, once again for the Deputy Premier and Minister for Transport. Another was to upgrade the car park at Coomera station, once again for the Deputy Premier and Minister for Transport. I know there is a lot of work involved in this, but believe me, it is worth it. The people of the northern Gold Coast would really appreciate a timely response.

In addition, several paper petitions were tabled on 9 August and they are due tomorrow. One was to put pressure on Australia Post to provide a postbox so that people in and around the Coomera area do not have to travel miles to mail a letter. Yes, some people still mail letters in this day and age. Another petition was asking for an upgrade to school parking facilities, bus services and road access. That is for the Minister for Education. The House should be made aware that there is an urgent need for an upgrade to the school parking facilities and there are inadequate bus services and inadequate road access to and from Pimpama State Primary College.

Finally, there was a petition to upgrade two lanes of a 250-metre section of Yawalpah Road, Pimpama. That again goes back to the acting Minister for Main Roads. I ask these ministers to please respect the people of the northern Gold Coast and deliver those responses by the close of business today.

### Electricity Prices

 **Mrs LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (2.39 pm): At the 2015 election I campaigned hard in Keppel against the Newman-Nicholls government's proposal to sell off our state's electricity assets. Workers, community organisations—

**Ms BATES:** I rise to a point of order. Mr Deputy Speaker, you have made rulings in the past about referring to Newman-Nicholls or Trad-Palaszczuk. Can you rule on that, please?

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Stewart): Member for Keppel, you need to refer to the previous government by its correct name.

**Mrs LAUGA:** Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker. If I may start again I will replace the term that I used.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** No, you will need to continue on.

**Mrs LAUGA:** At the 2015 election I campaigned hard in Keppel against the LNP's proposal to sell off our state's electricity assets. Workers, community organisations, students, nurses, families, lawyers and people from all aspects of our community came together to join my campaign and stand up to the LNP to say—

**Mr Power** interjected.

**Mr COSTIGAN:** I rise to a point of order. Mr Deputy Speaker, I would appreciate your guidance on this matter. We just heard an interjection by the member for Logan referring to the Newman-Nicholls episode again. You and your colleagues in the chair have made a ruling. I think most members have abided by that, and we have heard an interjection along those lines.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Logan, I did not hear your interjection. If it was around the previous ruling I counsel you not to repeat it, otherwise you will be warned under 253A. The member for Keppel has the call.

**Mrs LAUGA:** At the 2015 election I campaigned hard in Keppel against the Newman-Nicholls proposal to sell off our state's electricity assets—

**Ms BATES:** I rise to a point of order. That was in blatant disregard of your previous ruling on my previous point of order. The Newman-Nicholls government was mentioned yet again by the member for Keppel.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I rise to a point of order. The rulings that have been made in this House in relation to the point of order that was made by the member for Mudgeeraba relate to the phrase 'Newman-Nicholls government'. There have been a number of occasions, including this morning, where members have made reference to the Newman-Nicholls days to Newman-Nicholls proposals and there have been no rulings made in relation to that. The ruling has been made in relation to the concept of referring to the former government as the Newman-Nicholls government. There are all sorts of circumstances where references are made to periods of time in the state's history, and that includes the last few years.

**Mr COSTIGAN:** I rise to a point of order. I listened very intently and respectfully to what the Leader of the House said, but I would argue that what we have just heard goes against the spirit of the ruling.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** My understanding is that the ruling has been made with regard to the government and calling the government by its correct name. I counsel all members in the House to make sure that, when they refer to governments or previous governments, they use their correct names. I call the member for Keppel.

**Mrs LAUGA:** Regardless, I campaigned hard in Keppel against the Newman government's proposal to sell off our state's electricity assets. Workers, community organisation, students, nurses, families, lawyers and people from all aspects of our community came together to join my campaign and stand up to the LNP to say, 'We don't want our assets sold.' The 2015 election was an important election for us in Central Queensland. At stake for us in Central Queensland was Stanwell Power Station—one of the largest and most efficient and economic power stations in Australia—and Ergon, our government owned corporation which operates regional Queensland's electricity network and retail operations. Combined, Stanwell and Ergon employ thousands of Central Queenslanders and provide significant employment and business opportunities within our region. Despite the benefits to our local economy and community, and despite strong backlash from the Central Queensland community, the Newman government was determined to sell off our electricity assets. In fact, the Newman government made some very bad choices when it came to their Strong Choices campaign. They spent over \$70 million of taxpayers' money in advertising—bad choices, not strong choices whatsoever.

The Queensland Labor Party fought hard to save our electricity assets, and with the support of Queenslanders we won. The retention of our power industry assets in public ownership has enabled the Palaszczuk government to place downward pressure on electricity prices. We know that price rises hit many Queenslanders because they came on top of the 43 per cent leap in bills inflicted on them by the LNP, which was too lazy to even try to influence power prices. Queenslanders simply cannot afford another surge in electricity prices under the LNP and One Nation similar to the 43 per cent price rises under the three years of the previous LNP government. New coal-fired power stations are unnecessary, as we already have four supercritical power stations and a huge level of base load capacity. The Palaszczuk government is 100 per cent committed to continuing to use public ownership to keep electricity prices as low as possible.

### Western Queensland, Airfares

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (2.45 pm): I rise this afternoon to highlight an ongoing concern about the regulated air route between Longreach and Brisbane. I have raised this issue in this House before and I am here today raising it again. I say this because the people of Western Queensland continue to pay almost \$500 to travel one way from Longreach to Brisbane. This is highway robbery! For almost a year I have been passionately advocating for a fairer price structure for passengers on this route. I have made a number of representations to the minister and to Qantas, but unfortunately they have largely fallen on deaf ears.

Last Friday Qantas announced plans to trial a 30 per cent discount on base fares from Mount Isa to Cloncurry to Brisbane. I acknowledge that that is a good thing for people in Mount Isa and Cloncurry—and I welcome that, because they have also been paying exorbitant fares—but why is it that Qantas can run a 12-month trial to give passengers in north-west Queensland some price relief, yet Longreach residents are expected to continue to max out our credit cards and take out personal loans so that we can afford to fly from Longreach to Brisbane. Qantas continues to treat Longreach, Barcaldine and Blackall residents with contempt. The Palaszczuk Labor government is again proving that they are a government for Brisbane, not a government for Queensland, and Qantas is ripping off the home of Qantas: Longreach. It is disgraceful!

I am calling on the Palaszczuk Labor government and Qantas to give western Queenslanders a fair go. Showing compassion for the residents of Mount Isa and Cloncurry is good. They deserve to have cheaper airfares as well, but so do Longreach, Barcaldine and Blackall. We are talking about people who use this flight not for luxury—they are not wearing hibiscus shirts and board shorts to go on holidays—but to do business down here in Brisbane or to go and see a medical specialist. They need to have affordable flights. I have continued to argue this. I continue to call on this government to help me pull Qantas into line and tell Qantas that they have to provide more residents' fares. If they are going to provide a discount for Mount Isa and Cloncurry—which again I welcome—they can do the same for Longreach, Barcaldine and Blackall. Western Queensland residents deserve a fair go when it comes to travel. Maxing out the credit or the overdraft just to fly to Brisbane to see a cardiologist or the accountant on business matters is not good enough. We have an opportunity to make sure that we pull Qantas into line to provide affordable fares for Western Queensland. I call on the minister and the Palaszczuk government to help me pull Qantas into line to make sure that we have cheaper fares for Western Queensland.

### International Prostate Cancer Awareness Month

 **Mr PEGG** (Stretton—ALP) (2.48 pm): As members would know, September is International Prostate Cancer Awareness Month. Mr Deputy Speaker, I know that you have distributed red socks to members here and I know they are being sported around the chamber. I am not sure whether the member for Thuringowa was wearing the red socks with his gold suit.

**Mr Power:** He is always wearing red socks.

**Mr PEGG:** I take the interjection. He was wearing the red socks, and that is wonderful to see. On Tuesday many members, including the member for Thuringowa, wore pins in support of ManUp! for Prostate Cancer, which is a group that I have been fortunate enough to be involved with over the last few years.

ManUp! was established by Brian and Jill Costello in 2010 after Brian was diagnosed with prostate cancer and they had difficulties finding relevant information and assistance. I lost my grandfather to prostate cancer some years ago, and I know that I am not the only person here to have lost a loved one to prostate cancer or to have their lives affected by prostate cancer either through suffering from prostate cancer or having a loved one suffer from it.

The great thing ManUp! does is focus on education. Jill and Brian have a real focus on education. They do tremendous work all around Queensland, with a particular focus on our rural and regional communities. They liaise and work with local councils and with a lot of mining companies as well. They deliver a tremendous program that saves lives and educates people about this disease. Education and early detection are the keys when it comes to prostate cancer. That is something we should all support.

Brian and Jill have been running ManUp! since 2010. They do get some government support but ManUp! is predominantly funded through fundraising and donations. Jill and Brian do a fantastic job raising funds to support their work all around Queensland. It is a cause that I have supported in past years and am happy to continue to support in the future.

I thank all honourable members who wore the badge and supported ManUp! for Prostate Cancer and Prostate Cancer Awareness Month. It is a very important thing. As soon as I was elected, Brian and Jill Costello knocked on my door, introduced themselves and asked for support. All newly elected members meet wonderful community people who are looking to engage and to get involved as soon as they can.

Brian and Jill visited the parliament on Tuesday, and I can tell members that they were very happy to see so many members supporting this cause. I thank all honourable members for their support and I thank the Speaker for enabling the badges to be worn. Brian still has a tough fight on his hands but he is a very resilient character. I say to Brian Costello: keep up the fight. We are supporting you all the way.

### Albert Electorate, Lions Clubs

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Albert—LNP) (2.51 pm): Many times in this chamber I have spoken about the wonderful northern Gold Coast, a place I am proud to call home. Who would not be proud to live in our beautiful region, apart from the traffic congestion on the M1 motorway? There are some absolutely fantastic Lions Club groups in our area. I will start with the Ormeau Lions Club, of which I am a proud member. This club is famous for hosting the annual Ormeau Lions Fair, which is held over two days in July. The Ormeau Lions fair is the largest event on the northern Gold Coast and has been for over a decade. It was first held in 2004 under the leadership of Norm Jessen. Since that time it has had success after success. I thank Ormeau Lions Club president Pauline Weatherby and her team of dedicated volunteers for their service in organising the fair again this year. I should add: this same Lions Club cooks a weekly barbecue at the Ormeau IGA. Every Saturday morning they set up at six o'clock, ready for their first customers at seven—true dedication to service.

The newly formed Upper Coomera Lions Club is a satellite club of the Ormeau Lions Club. As is the case with their colleagues to the north, this is a wonderful, proactive club of individuals who have big ideas for our local community. Even if it means spending long hours working at the barbecue at Bunnings Oxenford, fundraising for many different projects, they are always the first people to put their hands up for those in need. Lions Club president Carey Dobson should be very proud of his team. I should also mention Lion Andrew Killick, who is especially passionate about road safety and reducing the road toll. He has started his own initiative which emphasises people taking extra care on the roads.

Lastly, Helensvale Lions Club is an organisation that was first chartered back in 1982. Since that time this club has been a shining example of a service club in our region, whether it is holding their monthly Helensvale car boot sale or the Anzac Day breakfast. I have to say that Stewart Proud and his army of master chefs make an amazing bacon and egg burger. I would be remiss if I did not mention the efforts of this club every year in hosting the highly successful Australian citizenship ceremony on Australia Day at the Helensvale Community Centre. Australia Day would not be complete without the good old Aussie favourite, the lamington. Those across the ditch may try to claim the lamington, but the members of the Lions Club of Helensvale believe that it is our lamington. They certainly tell the new citizens of this country the truth. I thank president Lyn Goodman and the team. The northern Gold Coast would certainly be lost without them.

### Social Housing

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (2.54 pm): I am proud to be part of the Palaszczuk Labor government, which has created 94,500 jobs including more local jobs in Greenslopes. Skilling Queenslanders for Work and the Back to Work boost program are supporting small businesses and community organisations to create more local jobs. The \$800 million investment in TAFE is creating more local jobs. Putting nurses, teachers, police and child safety workers back to work is creating more local jobs. Of course, our investment in infrastructure such as Cross River Rail and the \$200 million investment in schools is creating more local jobs. The Queensland Housing Strategy, which is building over 5,000 residences for those in greatest need in our society, is also creating more local jobs.

Social housing is essential to ensuring vulnerable people do not fall through the cracks of our society. I meet great people who live in social housing—people who live decent, meaningful lives and make meaningful contributions. Many have had challenges in their lives. I recently met a man of my age who had spent the past 10 years living on the streets, mainly due to mental illness. Social housing gave him the stability to deal with his mental health issues, join a local support group and become a regular user of the local library. Not far from him I met a young mum who had been able to bring her two children together under one roof, enrol them in local schools and start a part-time job. I love the Buranda housing garden competition. I really enjoyed dropping over to Laura's unit in Holland Park to have a cup of tea in the garden that she and her neighbours care for.

When I meet these wonderful people who are part of our community, who are living dignified and meaningful lives and who are contributing to our community, I wonder why my LNP opponent would distribute information that suggests that people who live in social housing are not part of our community, seek to scare people about the prospect of more social housing being built in my electorate and ostracise the people who live in social housing.

I am proud to be part of a government that is building more social housing, that is helping more people in our community. The Palaszczuk government is here to help people, whether that is providing support for business to get started, supporting farmers in times of drought, preventing the spread of diseases or providing housing. My local community has been built on the contributions of many people who live in social housing. I promise all of my constituents that I consider them part of my community—part of our community—and I will respect them and I will represent them.

At every opportunity the former LNP government worked to destroy social housing and a future LNP government would do the same. The local LNP candidate has shown his disdain for the people who live in social housing and will support, as he did in the past, more destructive LNP social housing policies. The Queensland Housing Strategy delivers more accessible and more affordable housing. It also boosts local employment. It is yet another way the Palaszczuk Labor government is delivering more local jobs.

### Insurance

 **Mr COSTIGAN** (Whitsunday—LNP) (2.57 pm): Today in the House I call upon the Australian insurance industry to lift its game in the wake of shocking revelations that I continue to hear every day as I pound the pavement in my electorate of Whitsunday in the wake of Tropical Cyclone Debbie. When I gave my maiden speech in this House I referred to 'the forgotten people', in the words of Sir Robert Menzies. If you go around the Whitsundays—from Preston to Proserpine and from Dingo Beach to Airlie Beach—you will find plenty of forgotten people. These people have been paying their insurance premiums—through the nose, invariably—for a long time. Despite what we heard from the Insurance Council of Australia recently, these people have been badly let down.

A public forum hosted by the ICA was held in Proserpine on 7 July. I remember walking out there on the night when I was going to another function at the museum. I said to the ICA, 'Why the heck are you doing this on a Friday night, when people normally have a beer, have dinner with their kids or stay at home to watch the football?' I gave them a spray. Guess what? Thank goodness, they are coming back with some key insurers to listen to real people with real issues—people who are hurting in my community. They have mental health and all sorts of other issues. They need certainty, clarity and a fair go. Thankfully, the ICA and key insurers are coming to Proserpine, Cannonvale, Hideaway Bay and Dingo Beach this coming weekend.

I mention Debbie Cartmell from Proserpine, Carle and Sam Parkhill from Myrtlevale north of Proserpine, Gary Hughes—I caught up with him recently, literally on Whitsunday Passage—and Sue and Wayne Quantock from Bloomsbury. These are just a few of the real people who are waiting to see a scope of works and some action. They do not know what is going on; they are in no-man's-land. It is disgraceful, as our community comes to terms with the reality of dealing with the effects of Cyclone Debbie.

Our Main Roads office looks like it got bombed during the war and it is frustrating for local people. It was destroyed. We are not seeing any progress from the Palaszczuk Labor government or a commitment to build another TMR office. There are people who have been burnt from insurance getting together on Saturday in Cannonvale. I look forward to meeting these people because they are hurting and I am trying to help my constituents as best I can. The insurance industry needs to pull up its socks but so too does the Palaszczuk Labor government, because Canberra gave \$14½ million a couple of years ago to the Queensland government to assist with the assessment on strata properties in terms of property risk assessment and that money is just sitting there somewhere.

Minister de Brenni knows all about this and Margaret Shaw, who has been a great consumer advocate in the Whitsundays and a former citizen of the year, knows all about it. When she talks people listen, and that money is there to try and make things a little bit easier for people who have had an absolute gutful after overpaying for insurance. It is about time something happened.

### **Balmoral State High School**

 **Ms FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (3.00 pm): I could not be prouder of Balmoral State High School as the only state secondary school in the Bulimba electorate. Its students, staff and parents are second to none and I delight in their numerous achievements. It is why I lobby hard for every single dollar that goes to the school and, since the Palaszczuk Labor government was elected, that is a total of almost \$5 million worth. What was the cream on the cake? Something that I have been fighting for since I was first the member for Bulimba between 2009 and 2012 is a new hall for the school. We have all been fighting for it—the staff, the students and the parents. When I was able to ring the fantastic principal, Linda Galloway, and tell her we have been allocated \$2.788 million towards a new multipurpose sports facility under the Advancing Queensland State Schools program, I cannot tell members how excited I was to make that call and how excited every single person at that school was to hear the news. The difference it will make is immeasurable and I cannot thank the education minister enough for recognising our case.

I will tell members what happened for Balmoral high when the LNP was in power. While I have fought for every single dollar that has gone to that school, what did the LNP do when it was in government? It did not even really care about Balmoral high. What it clearly saw when it looked on a map was not wonderful Balmoral high with its great parents, students and teachers but a school right in the middle of prime real estate that makes up a fair bit of my electorate with a very big bit of green space attached to it ripe for flogging off and making it a lot of money. We know those opposite are big sellers. That is what they do: they cut, they sack and they sell. When they were in government they looked around the state for things to sell in every single portfolio. They got to Education and they thought, 'We'll sell this school here and we'll sell that school there.' They thought, 'Wow, great! We'll sell that school here and this school there and we'll sell that big bit of land there. What's this big bit of land at this school? What's its name again—Balmoral high? Let's flog off that oval and make some money.'

They underestimated the people of the Bulimba electorate because we came out in droves from right across our community, even if you did not have kids going to the school. We were not having it. We fought hard and we fought long and they just had to give in and leave us alone. We sent a clear message to the LNP when we were in government and on their behalf I send a clear message to the LNP again, just in case it thinks it is coming to government again: in our patch we do not like cutters, we do not like sackers and we do not like sellers, so you can leave us alone.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

### Electricity Prices

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (3.03 pm): The Palaszczuk government in Queensland is leading the way in energy reform. We recognise that households and businesses are struggling with energy prices and through our Powering Queensland Plan we have acted to save money for all Queenslanders. This included investing \$770 million to cover the costs of the Solar Bonus Scheme and directing Stanwell Corporation to undertake strategies to place downward pressure on wholesale prices. This action will limit the bill increases for a typical regional household consumer in 2017-18 to around 3.3 per cent and place downward pressure on prices in 2018-19 and 2019-20. Moreover, our directions to Stanwell have led to Queensland having the lowest wholesale spot and contract prices in the NEM.

In July the federal Minister for the Environment and Energy, Josh Frydenberg, wrote to the Australian Energy Regulator, the AER, asking it to look at the behaviour of Stanwell and CS Energy. Minister Frydenberg has gone down the path of suggesting that the businesses had 'gamed the system'. The AER replied noting that it has investigated high-price events in January and February 2017 where spot prices in Queensland exceeded \$5,000 per megawatt hour and found no evidence that the Queensland generators breached the bidding and rebidding rules. Further to this, today I have written to the AER outlining the actions that the Queensland government has taken and is proposing to take to improve the energy market. While the states have sold off network and generation assets, we have kept them in public hands. Because of this, we can continue to put consumers first. I am proud of these actions and I know that Queensland is leading the way when it comes to energy policy.

However, the same customer-first approach is not necessarily being followed in other jurisdictions and I have concerns over the bidding approach of other generators in the national electricity market, particularly around and during high-pricing events. As such, I requested the AER to consider whether other generators in the NEM are misusing their market power to manipulate prices and increase profits. For instance, we have concerns over the behaviour of Snowy Hydro, which is partially owned by the federal government, and its bidding strategy for its Murray power station following the closure of the Hazelwood Power Station. It is suggested that the bidding strategy increased the frequency and duration of constraints on the system and led to higher wholesale prices in Victoria. Analysis by my department also raises concerns that Snowy Hydro has, over a number of years, manipulated its generation in order to maximise its returns from the renewable energy target, curtailing its load in some years so that it can generate above its baseline in other years. This behaviour could have benefited Snowy Hydro to the tune of \$160 million in 2016.

This type of activity goes against the intent of the renewable energy target, takes much needed support from new renewable energy projects and adds to investment uncertainty. As I have said publicly for some time, this is not about the behaviour of individual generators; it is about a flawed national system. While I do not agree with the accusations around Stanwell and CS Energy from Minister Frydenberg, where I do agree with him is that reform across the national market is needed to prevent this sort of behaviour by generators across the NEM. Given this government's direction to Stanwell in relation to its bidding practices, the return to service of Swanbank E and the review of the structure of its generators, I requested the AER look beyond Queensland and focus its efforts on improving the national regulatory framework that governs the NEM. The rules governing the NEM were drawn up before improvements in renewables technology. We need a redesign of the NEM framework that will work for the generator mix of the future, not yesterday.

While Queensland is doing everything it can to reduce prices, the national framework continues to put upward pressure on prices. The Palaszczuk government will always seek to put Queensland and Queenslanders first, but we also want to act in the national interest. I will continue to call for national reform to address price pressures and work towards a clear and integrated national energy framework.

### Resources Projects, Land Rehabilitation

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (3.07 pm): I want to outline steps being taken by the Palaszczuk government to better manage the rehabilitation of mines and other resource projects where operators have failed to meet their obligations to fund any clean-up and environmental remediation. The new system, expected to be in place by mid-2018, has been developed following the release in May of the first in a series of discussion papers. That was followed by consultation with individual resource companies, peak resource industry and environmental bodies, and members of the public.

The government will introduce new rehabilitation planning requirements as well as proceed with establishing the financial provisioning scheme to replace the existing outdated financial assurance arrangements. At present, and as a last resort, the state government may need to meet the costs for managing the health, safety and environmental impacts from land disturbed by resource activity. To manage this risk, resource project operators provide financial assurance to the government to cover their expected rehabilitation costs, but in some cases that may not be sufficient. The proposed new financial provisioning scheme will lower the risk to taxpayers for footing clean-up bills. Project operators will either make a payment into a fund to cover potential future clean-up costs or be required to provide a surety. Projects deemed to be lower risk will have lower contribution rates to the fund.

The risk based approach will mean sufficient funds are available for rehabilitation while recognising that well-managed projects operated by sound companies pose a lower risk to the government and taxpayers and should contribute less. New rehabilitation requirements will ensure, where possible, resource project operators manage and rehabilitate disturbed land as the life of the mine proceeds instead of leaving the clean-up until the mine closes. Operators will be required to plan for rehabilitation over the life of the mine and report on achieving milestones set out in their plan. By progressively rehabilitating disturbed land, resource project operators will be improving environmental and community outcomes while minimising their financial provisioning scheme costs.

Three more discussion papers will be released today as part of the development process for the new system, and these will be available on the Queensland Treasury website. More discussion papers will be released over the next year, with a new framework planned to be in place by mid-2018. The proposed new system will deliver the right balance between resource development and the protection of our environment and our communities.

## LEAVE TO MOVE MOTION



**Mr PYNE** (Cairns—Ind) (3.09 pm): I seek leave to introduce a private member's bill.

Division: Question put—That leave be granted.

Resolved in the negative under standing order 106.

## LABOUR HIRE LICENSING BILL

### Second Reading

Resumed from p. 2818, on motion of Ms Grace—

That the bill be now read a second time.



**Ms DONALDSON** (Bundaberg—ALP) (3.15 pm), continuing: As I said before lunch, backpackers who come to my electorate do not even have the money to afford to be able to eat. Any night of the week when there is a soup kitchen operating, they line up to get free meals from community volunteers.

A few months ago I was lucky enough to meet, with the Minister for Industrial Relations, Rosie Ayliffe, the mother of the backpacker Mia who was murdered at Home Hill over 12 months ago. Rosie visited Bundaberg to meet with growers and with other people about what is occurring and about the system. She is on a crusade because she let her daughter travel to the other side of the world to a beautiful country, Australia, thinking that she would be safe. She did not want her to go to a third-world country where she thought she might be harmed. Her perception of her daughter visiting Queensland was that she would be safe. When she looked into it, she found a number of issues occurring under the scene. She spoke to many backpackers who visited Queensland and who had similar stories about being exploited by unscrupulous labour hire firms.

I also had the opportunity to meet Alison Rahill from the Salvation Army who is part of the project attempting to stop modern slavery. They are working really hard to ensure that when people send their children to another country for the adventure of their life they come home safely and that when they are there they have enough food to eat and are not exploited. It is something that we in Queensland would not expect. I am sure that when every one of us sends our children off into the world we want them to come home safely. We want them to be in a community that looks out for them, where they do not have to line up at soup kitchens, where they are not exploited by unscrupulous people and where they do not have their passports taken off them until they pay back a debt because they were given the wrong information.

One need only look at the Harvest Trail website to see comment after comment about the treatment of young people. Legislation such as this will go a long way to stamping out unscrupulous labour hire. If there is a little bit of paperwork or if people have to go a little further to make sure that people's children are safe when they go into the world, so be it. That is why I support this bill.

 **Mr DICKSON** (Buderim—PHON) (3.19 pm): I rise to speak to the Labour Hire Licensing Bill. The explanatory notes for this bill state that the objective of the bill is to protect labour hire workers from exploitation and to restore confidence in the labour hire industry through the regulation of providers of labour hire services in Queensland. Clause 7 defines the meaning of somebody who provides a labour hire service for the purpose of the bill. A person provides labour hire services if, in the course of carrying out a business, the person supplies another person with a worker to do work. It also provides an example of a business which would be considered a provider.

A report of the Finance and Administration Committee inquiry released on 30 June 2016 allegedly contained disturbing evidence of exploitation and mistreatment of labour hire workers in Queensland. The report made one recommendation: that the minister progress this issue through a COAG meeting to work with the federal government to address the issuance of ABNs to employees as a way for labour hire companies to avoid employer obligations.

The government accepted the recommendation of the report; however, the government decided that any mistreatment and exploitation was unlikely to be satisfactorily addressed by that single recommendation. In committing to take into account the recommendation of the committee, the government undertook to consider options for a labour hire licensing scheme, including doing more to protect vulnerable workers. This bill would see a scheme introduced that would attempt to strike a balance between the need to provide protections for vulnerable workers while minimising the administrative burden on labour hire providers and those who engage their services. It is the administrative burden on organisations that employ our young apprentices and trainees that I will speak about shortly.

I note within the committee report that submissions to the issues paper acknowledged the evidence that labour hire employees are vulnerable to poor treatment at work and cited examples of mistreatment ranging from cases of underpayment, unauthorised deductions of wages, dangerous conditions of work and substandard accommodation to more extreme cases of exploitation akin to slavery and bonded labour. However, I also note that in his foreword to the report the chair of the committee, Peter Russo, states, 'I acknowledge the majority of labour hire companies appear to be acting in compliance with their legislative requirements as responsible employers.'

The committee received submissions which supported action for reform in the sector, including to protect vulnerable labour hire workers from exploitation, to support ethical labour hire providers and also to provide confidence to host employers who utilise labour hire arrangements in good faith. In its submission the Housing Industry Association submitted that group training organisations such as the HIA are subject to requirements under legislation such as the Further Education and Training Act, which sets out strict standards including auditing requirements. The HIA stated that further regulation under the bill will ultimately add to the cost of hiring an apprentice and negatively impact on skills development in the state. Additionally, it has been suggested that the proposed licensing scheme is no different to licensing real estate agents and motor traders. The HIA further stated—

Unlike the licensing of these businesses or occupational licensing of, say, builders, there are no prescribed skill, training or occupational standards required to be met to obtain a licence.

During July I met with Ed Given and Rod Jones from the Apprentice Employment Network. Like the Housing Industry Association, they expressed concern that group training organisations would be captured under the proposed legislation. They emphasised the point that they exist to provide young people with an opportunity to gain a trade or a skill that will set them up with a decent future and to assist small to medium enterprises meet present and future skilled workforce requirements. Further, they also advised me that they are already heavily regulated under the Further Education and Training Act 2014 and they are particularly concerned that any further regulation will add cost and red tape that will not contribute at all to protecting their apprentices and trainees.

The Apprentice Employment Network, whilst supporting the intent of the bill, consider that their workers are not vulnerable as they already have considerable protections under existing legislation. They make the point that this bill does not assist their industry to find opportunities for young people and could, in fact, hinder their efforts. I note within the report that the department provided the following comments regarding group training organisations—

Section 102 of the Bill provides for the ability to waive a relevant information requirement if the chief executive is satisfied the applicant or licensee has already satisfied the requirement through another regime. This allows the Chief executive to give

recognition to a business that is licenced or accredited under another suitably rigorous scheme. The registration requirements for recognition as a Group Training Organisation may be an example of this. It should be noted however that a Group Training Organisation is considered to be a labour hire provider within the meaning of the Bill and would still fall within the ambit of the scheme ... The Bill, at s108, does provide a regulation-making power in regard to fees payable, which does include waiver.

It seems to me that the bill is having an each way bet in relation to group training organisations. Those comments from the department indicate that there are already measures contained within the bill that could be utilised to lessen the burden for group training organisations, but GTOs are to be considered as labour hire providers within the bill. My question is why not make GTOs exempt from the legislation? I hope that the minister can answer that question. That is what the Apprentice Employment Network is asking for. Simply, the Apprentice Employment Network is seeking that within Section 7 the meaning of provider of labour hire services be specifically amended so that group training organisations be exempted from being captured by the legislation. I note from the committee's report that after examination of the bill, including the policy objectives and consideration of the information provided by the department and from submitters, the committee was unable to agree that the bill be passed. The bill might be passed if sensible amendments, such as the one being sought by the Apprentice Employment Network, are implemented. I ask that the minister respond to that in his reply.

 **Mrs LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (3.26 pm): I rise to speak with respect to and in favour of the Labour Hire Licensing Bill. This bill is about one simple thing: making sure that working people are paid according to the law and are treated with respect in the workplace so they can have security for their family's future. The LNP members, however, have come in here, one after the other, and tried to confuse this debate. They have regurgitated the rhetoric of big business, rhetoric which attacks workers' rights and entitlements, the same rhetoric we hear from dodgy labour hire companies. There can be no confusion that companies that this bill cracks down on are dodgy scam artists. This bill targets those disreputable labour hire companies that underpay their workers, scrape away dignity in work and leave working Queenslanders and their families with deep uncertainty. Jobs are going overseas and local jobs are no longer secure. We need good jobs here in Australia. We need permanent secure jobs that families can rely on. We need good Australian jobs for the benefit of working people, their families, local businesses and local communities.

Urgent changes are needed to the Fair Work Act to stop big business from blatantly sacking permanent workers and replacing them with contract and labour hire. We need the federal government to regulate labour hire, to re-shore work that has gone overseas, set mandatory local minimums for all major work, use local workers first, allow casual workers to become permanent and to save our penalty rates.

This bill introduces mandatory licensing of labour hire companies in Queensland in a bid to crack down on rogue operators who are exploiting and mistreating vulnerable workers. This is the first licensing arrangement of its kind in Australia and Queensland Labor is leading the way. While Malcolm Turnbull and the federal LNP repeatedly turn a blind eye to labour hire rorts, the Palaszczuk government is cleaning up their mess to protect vulnerable workers from exploitation and mistreatment. The Leader of the Opposition and all of those opposite in turn have also refused to support this critical reform.

There has never been a starker choice for Queenslanders. On one side you have the Leader of the Opposition and the LNP rallying behind dodgy labour hire companies that refuse to pay workers correctly and on the other you have Queensland Labor introducing historical legislation aimed at protecting workers and their families from the plague of insecure work. For far too long and far too often we have all heard the stories of vulnerable workers being exploited at the hands of unscrupulous labour hire companies.

**Mr Minnikin** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Stewart): Order! Member for Chatsworth, you have had a go. I suggest you stop your interjections. You were warned earlier today. While that warning does not continue at this point, if you continue interjecting you will be warned again.

**Mrs LAUGA:** For far too long and for far too often, we have all been hearing the stories of vulnerable workers being exploited at the hands of unscrupulous labour hire operators and cases of wage theft and unauthorised deductions, sexual harassment, workers housed in overcrowded and substandard accommodation, a lack of proper safety equipment and training, systemic tax avoidance, sham contracting and phoenixing of companies leaving workers stranded without their entitlements. Those labour hire rorts are fast becoming a national disgrace.

I am proud that the Queensland Palaszczuk Labor government is leading the way by becoming the first jurisdiction to introduce a labour hire licensing scheme. A national licensing scheme for labour hire would be the better outcome, but with the continuing absence of leadership on this matter—in fact, recently the Deputy Prime Minister confirmed that they want nothing to do with it—the Queensland government is determined to do all it can at a state level. We will not sit on our hands and do nothing when Queensland workers are under siege.

The two core elements underpinning the whole scheme in this bill are, first, a requirement that all labour hire providers must be licensed to operate in Queensland and, second, that businesses that use labour hire must only engage a licensed labour hire provider. The bill sets out strong penalties for operating without a license or for using an unlicensed provider. The other major penalty provision in the bill is targeted at avoidance arrangements, which are designed to circumvent or avoid an obligation imposed by the bill.

This week, Senator Pauline Hansen voted in the federal Senate with the LNP against changes that would stop dodgy labour hire companies from ripping off workers. Best buddies, the LNP and One Nation voted against Labor's amendments, which would have stopped dodgy labour hire companies from rorting workers' wages. Labor's amendments were defeated by just two votes in the Senate. If One Nation had voted with Labor, the amendments would have been passed. Because of One Nation's deal with the Turnbull LNP government, labour hire workers will continue to be ripped off and big companies will get away with it. It was very interesting to follow that vote in the Senate on Monday evening. The One Nation candidate for Keppel resorted to a mocking post on his Facebook page, alleging that I am a liar, using silly memes with photos of me and making the sorts of personal attacks that are typical of One Nation, despite the fact that the truth and the facts are in the *Hansard*. We know that, across Australia, thousands of labour hire workers are being ripped off by unscrupulous employers and that often there is little that can be done about it.

In Central Queensland, labour hire companies are not only ripping off vulnerable workers; they are driving down the wages and conditions of skilled local workers, particularly in the mining industry. Corporate employers are increasingly engaging workers through labour hire and washing their hands of any responsibility to ensure the workers are paid correctly and treated fairly. That is why, on Monday, federal Labor moved amendments to government legislation that would have made the companies take responsibility for underpayments by the labour hire firms that they engage. I table a copy of the amendments.

*Tabled paper:* Amendments to be moved by Senator Cameron, on behalf of the Opposition, in the Commonwealth Senate to the Fair Work Amendment (Protecting Vulnerable Workers) Bill 2017 [1618].

Sadly, Pauline Hansen and her One Nation senators all voted with the LNP government to defeat Labor's amendments. I table a copy of the *Hansard* that clearly shows that Senator Hansen and her One Nation senators voted with the LNP to defeat the amendments.

*Tabled paper:* Commonwealth Senate *Hansard*, dated 4 September 2017, p 114 [1619].

Big companies should not be able to escape liability for underpayments simply by blaming a labour hire firm. In Queensland, One Nation says that they are all for Queensland battlers, but down in Canberra One Nation has voted against working Queenslanders' interests. They have done it on penalty rates, they have done it on pensions and now they have done it on labour hire. From where I am standing, as a Central Queenslanders it is pretty clear that the LNP and One Nation are not in it for working Queenslanders doing it tough: they are in it for themselves, they are in it together and they are in it for their dodgy mates.

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (3.33 pm): I rise to speak on the Labour Hire Licensing Bill 2017. The policy objectives of the bill are to protect labour hire workers from exploitation and restore confidence in the labour hire industry through the regulation of providers of labour hire services in Queensland. The bill establishes a mandatory business licensing scheme for the labour hire industry in Queensland, which is fair enough. It will require labour hire providers to be licensed, which is fair enough. It will require persons who engage labour hire providers to only engage a licensed labour hire provider, which is fair enough. We would all have to support that. It will require a labour hire licensee to satisfy a fit-and-proper-person test to establish that they are capable of providing labour hire services in compliance with all the relevant laws and that the business is financially viable. We would all have to agree with that, too. I cannot see how anyone could argue with that. It will require licence holders to report regularly. It will provide strong penalties for breaches of obligations and will provide an awareness, monitoring and enforcement function through a compliance unit, which is pretty reasonable. I cannot see how anyone could not support that, particularly as this is about stamping out unscrupulous ruthless labour hire companies.

In the past 18 months in Queensland, five coalminers have died. That is the highest death toll in 20 years. Three weeks ago, a mineworker died after an accident at Goonyella Riverside coal mine. Safety at work is one of the most critical issues that anyone will ever face. The ramifications of workplace deaths impact not only the families but also the whole community. Michael Garrels has spent five years seeking justice and helping families impacted by workplace deaths, after losing his son who was electrocuted at a construction site at Clermont. In the past two sitting weeks, legislative changes were passed in this House to protect the safety of workers in the workplace. Had that legislation been passed six years ago, Michael's son would be alive today. That is why I support this legislation. I support it because it is about protecting the safety of workers, protecting workers' rights, and protecting their wages and conditions.

Protecting the vested interests of, in particular, the coalmining companies to use unregulated, unscrupulous labour hire companies reveals that there is no respect or regard for employees, their families or communities. I condemn the actions of the labour hire companies and their draconian approach to employees, families and communities. All that the people I have spoken to want is the same thing—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr KNUTH:** Those fellows voted for a massive pay rise. Campbell Newman's was \$70,000 and they all gave him a standing ovation. However, when it comes to a labour hire worker, there is no way they will do anything but back the ruthless—

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Crawford): Order! The House will come to order.

**Mr KNUTH:** All the people I have spoken to want the same thing, that is, to know that when they turn up to work they will have a job, they will be safe and they will go home to be with their families at the end of the shift. Is that too much to ask? It seems to be very painful for the LNP. They believe, 'This can't happen. We can't have them come home. We can't have them well paid. We must look after the big corporations.' Workers want to know that the contract they signed yesterday will still be valid today. They want to rent or buy a house without the fear that they will not be able to make the rent or mortgage payments next week; that they will not be forced into breaking a lease so that they can look for employment in another town. They want to feed and educate their children and not have to relocate them at the whim of a mining or labour hire company that has no compassion or sympathy. They are not asking for any more than you or I would. The labour hire companies treat the workers like cannon fodder.

Last night we heard the member for Kawana speak. It was a painful speech. I know that all his own members were crying out for mercy, wanting him to stop. When he was the minister, they were all closing their eyes and crying, 'Please, get rid of this bloke.' Some of them wanted to lose their seats because they were in that much pain from listening to the member. Still, the LNP do not know what they stand for. Last night, they said that they were for the farmers. We know that they stand for one thing, which is the big multinational corporations and the ruthless labour hire companies. They back them, but what else? They said, 'We care for the farmers.' They introduced the Mineral and Energy Resources (Common Provisions) Bill that trampled the rights of landowners. Landowners marched against the actions of the LNP. Did they do anything about ethanol? They introduced three private member's bills calling on the Labor government to do something. What happened—

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I rise to a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. I seek your guidance as to where ethanol is in this bill or in the long title of the bill.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Kawana, you beat me by about 30 seconds.

**Mr KNUTH:** You had your say—45 or 50 minutes of it last night.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Dalrymple, I will ask you to bring your comments back to the bill.

**Mr KNUTH:** There are many untold stories about the treatment of employees on mine sites by labour hire companies. There is no compassion or consideration for their families. They cannot make long-term plans because there is no job security. We are constantly being informed that these companies cut shifts without notice from 12 hours to eight hours, translating to a pay cut of \$36,000 a year. Labour hire staff will be on \$70 an hour one day and \$36 an hour the next day. The LNP cheer them on: 'It is great that we dropped workers' rates from \$76 an hour to \$36 an hour. That is good business. It is really great to hear that the labour hire companies are making big profits.' What is happening to the workers? They are losing their homes and they are leaving their communities. They are left with nothing and the LNP cheers this on.

The LNP say that they are the workers' friend. They are the farmers' friend, they say. They marched with the dairy farmers and said, 'We care for you. We are with you.' I introduced a bill to support the dairy industry and they opposed it. Then Labor gave a million dollars to help the dairy farmers. We introduced a bill and Labor gave a million dollars, but what did the LNP give them? They gave them a hot iron—nothing.

When Campbell Newman stood up in this place and made the announcement that he was going to give himself a \$70,000 pay rise, what did the LNP do? They cheered him on and gave him a standing ovation.

**An opposition member** interjected.

**Mr KNUTH:** You were there. You cheered him on. There are about 35 fewer LNP members now, but probably about 25 wanted to leave because of the pain they were going through listening to the member for Kawana. They gave Campbell Newman a standing ovation for the \$70,000 pay rise and the next day they cut pensioner lawn mowing vouchers.

One woman who is a casual employee of a labour hire company asked to have time off to attend her father's funeral. To her disbelief the labour hire company told her that she had only two days to attend the funeral—a 2,000 kilometre round trip. That mine worker has years of experience, but under those devastating circumstances she had no other choice but to move her children and family to another place to find another job, all because she wanted a couple of days off to attend her father's funeral.

There are many other stories like this. Another female employee spoke of her fear of reporting incidents. She said that labour hire staff are treated worse than other staff. They are working in environments that are unsafe for fear that reporting safety incidents could mean that they will lose their jobs for causing trouble. I have also been advised that there are labour hire employees who are powerless to protect themselves and plead with the permanent employees to report safety issues.

What did the LNP do? They gave themselves a pay rise, built the Taj Mahal, sacked 16,000 employees, cut the pensioner lawn mowing vouchers, backed the multinational mining companies and labour hire companies and then said that they are good for Queensland and vote for them. They spent a million dollars trying to get rid of me from my seat because they wanted a party hack who would say yes and do what they are told. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works and Minister for Sport) (3.44 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Labour Hire Licensing Bill. I commend the member for Dalrymple on his contribution. I want to address the interjections of the member for Kawana. You do not need to be a member of the Labor Party to care about people, mate. The member for Dalrymple and members on this side of the House actually understand what is important to working Queenslanders. It is clear that nobody in the LNP understands.

At the heart of the labour movement is a very simple expectation: a day's work for a day's pay. If a person goes to work and does their job then they should expect their employer to be fair, to pay them a fair wage for the time worked and provide a safe and fair workplace. That is all the member for Dalrymple was asking of these labour hire firms. The labour hire market is unregulated, labour hire workers are underprotected and, in some cases, they are underpaid or even unpaid.

Recently in my office in Brisbane I met with three young men who work in the labour hire industry. One was a bloke named Peter who works for a labour hire company. He is also about to become a dad for the first time. Like every other parent in this chamber, I know there is nothing more important I can do for my kids than make sure they have a roof over their heads, the things they need and a few things that they want too.

I remember the huge responsibility and trepidation that came with being a father for the first time. I sat down with Peter. He was excited to talk about his new baby, soon to arrive. He could not stop smiling. That is until I asked him about how he felt he would be able to provide for his little family while working for a labour hire company. It was almost instantaneous that his smile fell away.

He told me about all the times that he had been paid late, or not paid at all, without a good explanation. He spoke of the embarrassment of having to call a loan provider to ask for extensions on repayments because his employer had not paid him on time. He told me he was worried about being able to provide for his partner and his new baby.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Crawford): Order! I will start warning members. I am putting you all on notice now.

**Mr de BRENNI:** I find an extraordinary lack of respect is being shown to Peter and his family and for his concerns for the welfare of his unborn child. He told me how worried he was about being able to provide for his partner and his new baby because he could never predict when his labour hire employer would fail to pay him.

He came along to see me with a bloke called Sonny, who used to work for the labour hire company. He does not work for that labour hire company anymore, but he still works alongside workers who do. He knows many of them from his time with the labour hire company. He never knew who he would get to say hello to at work the next day—who would be working alongside him. As we know, turnover amongst labour hire workers is extremely high. Without any notice workers are told not to come in. No reasons are given as to why they cannot have a permanent contract. These guys do not know whether they are going to be able to show up to work the next day. Just like that, they can be told that there is no work for them today, this week or this month—‘See you; off you go.’

It is not just workers who work for labour hire companies who are concerned. Also in that meeting with me was a bloke called Simon, who is not a labour hire worker. He works in an industry alongside people from labour hire companies. A day’s work should be rewarded with a day’s pay. Simon said that labour hire workers he works alongside, who do exactly the same work as him, are paid significantly less.

Those workers who do exactly the same work but for the labour hire company are paid half what he is paid. I had to stop and ask him to repeat that because it seemed unreal to me—no sick leave, no holidays and a pay rate half that of one’s workmates for the same hours, doing the same job, with the same output. That is why I support this bill. That is why Labor supports this bill. That is why people like the member for Dalrymple support this bill.

I will back legislation to protect workers and restore a level playing field by introducing mandatory licensing for labour hire companies. I want labour hire businesses who do the right thing not to have to compete against those who will not pay their workers or do not pay their workers a fair wage. Workers and businesses alike want to be backed up by a dedicated compliance and penalty regime so that in some cases the dodgy operators will face criminal prosecution. The workers and the companies who do the right thing want to have those things.

I have also raised this issue with members of the sporting community who have expressed broad support for sensible reforms in this sector as well. I raised this because labour hire is being used in the sporting community as a legitimate way to provide employment for our semi-professional athletes. I applaud those efforts of the sporting clubs in Queensland who pursue that path. It is hard for these companies to provide ongoing and decent employees to these athletes if they are having to compete against rogue operators who are pursuing a race to the bottom.

These reforms, however, will level the playing field. That is all the workforce is asking for. We do need to fix the labour hire sector. We need to, and it is our obligation to, protect workers like Peter and to protect his young family. We need to do it because it is fundamentally the right thing to do. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (3.50 pm): I rise to make a contribution on the Labour Hire Licensing Bill 2017. I am very pleased to have an opportunity to speak on legislation such as this. This issue is akin to that of FIFO in an electorate like Mount Isa. It is a burning issue that affects the everyday lives of families and workers in that area.

Firstly, I make reference to the issues raised with us by the labour hire companies in the briefings. They pointed to things such as the coverage of management, the ‘fit and proper person’ test, the impacts on customers and employers if the labour hire licence is not granted and challenging a licence decision. We have done our best to consider both sides of the argument. I think it is important that, as the member for Mount Isa, I make it really clear what impacts these sorts of things have on communities like Mount Isa and Cloncurry, where we rely on having those workers and their families properly represented.

There will always be tension between multinational mining companies and employees. We want those companies to be there. We welcome them and induce them to have their operations in the region, but there is no point in having them there if we do not get the benefit of jobs and pay. There will always be a tension between the mines and their employees. They are not benevolent societies; they will want to make as much profit as they can. Wages are their biggest cost component—between 50 and 60 per cent they say. It is a big cost component to them, so there is strong incentive for employers to do what

they can to drive the cost of wages down. That will always be the case. The mining companies are a pretty powerful force in terms of lobby groups. We have heard a lot about unions, but the mining companies are big entities in themselves. They have a lot of power in that space over the workers.

We have seen over the years in Mount Isa and Cloncurry a diminution in the permanent resident workforce—which we really value and is the cornerstone of those communities—and a push towards labour hire. It has all been very secretive and underhanded. It is very hard to get data and information about what is going on. I hear a lot of stories. We will hear more and more about blokes who have been permanent there for 20 years and from all accounts seem like reasonable employees but who get put off for some reason or other and then they are forced into being contracted out at \$10 an hour less with a labour hire company. There are all of these hidden costs. A young bloke might think it is great to be on \$40 or \$45 an hour but then will find out what he is missing out on when he goes to take his holidays. They can be lured into this arrangement. It is something that has crept in. It now has a massive presence in Mount Isa and Cloncurry, and I am not sure that we want it.

I accept that it is healthy to have some labour hire to iron out the bumps. Interestingly, in the course of consultation I spoke to a friend of mine who worked in a regional town for a labour hire company and he said, 'Rob, it is not good. I worked for them. I think it is good to have a bit of labour hire out there, but it is not good for the communities, mate. There is too much of it and it is growing.' Something needs to be done and something over and above what is being done now. Adding a little bit of effort from the federal sphere is not going to cut it. I would be embarrassed to go back to my electorate and say that that is all it is, so I welcome changes like this.

What appeals to me most is that we will get a visual on the number of people who are now engaged in this area. Often you will be at Mount Isa Mines asking, 'How many permanents do you have? How many contractors do you have?' Often you do not know. The response will come back that there is 90 per cent permanent residents employed. That is fine, but how many contractors do they have on site? If nothing else, we will now get a visual on that which I think will be really helpful. As I said, this is a burning issue for places like Cloncurry and Mount Isa where labour hire is growing. There are some dodgy operators out there who have done the wrong thing. There are some really good labour hire companies who have done the right thing. We need to manage them, but there needs to be some mechanism to stem the flow.

There will always be tension between the employer and the employee. One unassailable truth is that, if big companies can drive down 50 to 60 per cent of their cost base, they will make every effort to do that. What a great way for them to achieve that through labour hire, so at least trying to control the market in that way is a good start. I would love to take that a step further and see a mechanism that will reduce the incidents of labour hire in these areas. As my colleague the member for Dalrymple so rightly pointed out, it has become a really big issue. When you talk to the lenders in Mount Isa, they say, 'It is getting a lot harder for us to do deals with people on contract, with the increase in incidents of contracting in the town.' That starts to affect our property market in Mount Isa. That leads to fewer owner-occupiers and more investment properties—more rentals where people are not looking after their yards. The community fabric starts to crumble when these things are left unattended to. This bill is a really good thing that we can tap into in those areas.

I want to drive home the point that this is a burning issue for places like Cloncurry and Mount Isa. The increase in incidents of labour hire is destructive to these communities. I accept that there will always be an element of labour hire in the workforce, but it is growing and growing at an unhealthy rate. It needs to be curbed somehow. This bill goes some way to curbing that which is good for Mount Isa and good for Cloncurry. That is why we will be supporting this bill.

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (3.56 pm): Anyone who takes the labour of others and runs a business owes a responsibility to those who provide that labour. Most businesses we know run a business that combines the input of ideas and innovation, the land they own or lease and the plant they own and maintain with the people who provide the labour. Other businesses take an approach where they only provide the labour component but little or nothing else. They may have no place of work for workers to work and no plant or machinery for them to operate. This means that the usual direct relationship between the business and the worker is changed and instead an intermediary, the labour hire provider, acts to have this direct relationship.

It used to be that labour hire was only for temporary use—for particular projects such as the Christmas rush or extra workers needed to finish a construction project by a due date. In our hearings we heard an example that it used to be that in a small workplace, such as a doctor's surgery, when the single receptionist was on annual leave the doctor might reach out to a firm that provided temporary

staff. They paid extra for these workers and, whenever possible, directly employed workers and only used labour hire in times of particular need. More recently, this has changed as some firms utilise labour hire not just for brief periods and for a few workers but for long periods and for a significant proportion of the labour they utilise. Whether this is a positive change for Queensland workers and even Queensland businesses remains an open question, and it is something that our society must critically examine.

However, this bill is limited to attempting to regulate labour hire providers who have proved not to live up to the standards we expect of an employer. Normally we can hold these breaches of labour standards against a continuing company and the assets they hold. However, in the case of some labour hire companies, they hold very few or no assets and only supply labour. It should be noted that this is not the business model of many providers—many providers value the reputation of their company and seek ongoing relationships. However, for others the exploitation of workers is a source of profit. This bill seeks to license labour hire providers and refuse a licence to those who have previously breached our labour laws, not allowing an unscrupulous individual to restart as a new provider and continue to exploit workers.

Those opposite seek to attack those who have exposed civil society groups including Australian unions which exposed the systematic exploitation and underpayment of workers. In response, we have made the sensible decision to have a licensing scheme that provides for labour hire and ensures that unscrupulous exploiters of labour will not be able to be a labour hire provider. The bill is intentionally structured to capture those who may attempt in the future to exploit loopholes.

We have heard that ideally we would see the Commonwealth follow the Queensland lead and introduce national labour hire legislation. However, sadly, the Deputy Prime Minister himself has made it clear that he is more interested in New Zealand and less interested in Queensland and protecting these vulnerable workers. We cannot let LNP indifference at a national level stop us from doing the right thing in Queensland.

Having listened to repetitive speech after repetitive speech from opposition members, we see a pattern in their arguments that can be applied to any bill where action is required for workers. Firstly, they will say there is not really a problem. They say that there really is not anything to see. Then when they hear direct evidence of people being exploited they say that it is not really a problem. The expression they use is that it is a few 'rogue operators' whom it should apply to, not standards for all.

Then they say, 'We do need to tackle the entire industry, it is worthwhile and we cannot stand with those things.' However, they say, 'If there is a solution, this is not it.' They will not have a solution but they say that this is not it. They have no action and no requirements but 'this is not it'.

Next they set up the straw man. They portray the bill to be something that it is not. They create all sorts of bogeymen in terms of where it will apply—the Endeavour Foundation—and all sorts of ridiculous things that we find offensive.

The next strategy is to misrepresent stakeholder comments. I notice the member for Toowoomba South is in the chamber and he is one who did this. They said that only socialist red raggars and the trade union movement support this bill. They attempted to say awful things about their values in wanting to look after workers. This must be one of them, and I quote—

It is clear that LHCs—

labour hire corporations—

are not treating workers properly and are placing individual growers and the industry as a whole as a reputational risk.

What socialist organisation was this? I continue—

As an overarching statement, we do support better oversight of the labour hire industry ... We will continue to push for a consistent national scheme and support the work done by the RCSA in developing a national accreditation for labour hire companies.

It is supporting exactly what the minister said. Who was this socialist group? It was Growcom. Another organisation says that they support—

... the objectives of the bill in seeking to protect labour hire workers from exploitation by providers of labour hire services and promoting the integrity of the labour hire industry in Queensland.

What socialist organisation was this? I am not sure what the initials stand for. Perhaps someone over there who knows unions better can help me. The initials are BHP. I will be honest: they did have some reservations about the application of the laws, the definitions and where it might apply. They supported it generally, and I notice that the minister has gone to great lengths to ensure stakeholders about the nature of the comments. That is No. 5 in the trick box of strategies.

No. 6 is that there is a solution but it should be done somewhere else. 'We can't do it in Queensland. It should be done internationally. Maybe Trump could do it or the Commonwealth'. The Commonwealth is failing badly in its duty. It is up to this place to stand up for Queensland workers to see that they are protected because no-one else is going to do it. No-one else is putting their hand up.

Lastly—and this is an old favourite of the LNP whenever it has nothing else to say—they have a rant about unions, and boy oh boy did we not see it this time. We saw them go on and on. There were no facts. There was no detail. Stakeholders from Growcom, BHP and other companies gave important and worthwhile feedback. What made me angry about this process when people misrepresented what stakeholders said was that none of them mentioned the Salvation Army. In The Freedom Partnership: End Modern Slavery project, the Salvation Army put in a submission and looked in detail at the way workers were housed, paid, accommodated and shut off from the rights of ordinary Australian workers. This is something that they refused to speak about, and it is fundamentally dishonest to other members of this House.

We have seen some gross breaches of our labour laws. We have seen appalling treatment of workers and we must act. We must not listen to the false construction of straw men and false arguments that have been put forward by the opposition. Instead we must act in this place. One of the members of the LNP whom I spoke to said, 'We see this every week in my area.' I urge all members to listen to those who have been hurt and to support the licensing of labour hire operators.

 **Hon. G GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (4.05 pm), in reply: I thank honourable members for their contributions to the debate on this very important bill, the Labour Hire Licensing Bill 2017. I am proud that the Palaszczuk government is leading the way by becoming the first jurisdiction to legislate for a state based labour hire licensing scheme. The sector, as I have said before, has been left unregulated for too long. If the parliament is serious about doing something to stop the exploitation—and there is irrefutable evidence that this is occurring—of labour hire workers and clean up the sector, then a legislated labour hire licensing scheme is required. I have said before: if you are in the business of selling labour, you should be licensed in the same way as if you are selling a house, a car or alcohol. Legitimate providers have nothing to fear.

I remind those opposite that those large labour hire companies have union agreements. Those opposite know nothing about industrial relations. Most of them have union agreements, so their argument in relation to this is without foundation. There is nothing to fear from those doing the right thing because they will be able to use labour hire arrangements as long as they are using licensed providers.

I now turn to the matters raised in the debate. This bill is about protecting workers who are being badly exploited in this industry, and there is irrefutable evidence of this. It is almost unbelievable that the two main arguments from those opposite against this bill turn into a union-bashing tirade. It is absolutely unbelievable that while we are trying to protect these workers their main reason for not supporting licensing of labour hire providers is based purely on a union-bashing tirade. The member for Kawana made shameful allegations and tried to link declared donations to being payback for protecting exploited workers. At least we know what the union movement gives as far as donations go, but we do not know who gave \$100,000 that the LNP have secretly squirrelled away.

It is embarrassing. There is no substance whatsoever on this very important issue from those opposite. Speaker after speaker had the same two points. One is the union-bashing line. The second one is that we should not be doing anything; let us leave it to the feds who are doing nothing in this space, who have made it perfectly clear that they will do nothing in this space and who are so dysfunctional at the moment that they would not be able to get anything done even if they wanted to do anything. That is the basis of their refusal to support this bill.

They say that everything is okay; everything is fine. There are a few inspectors out there who are finding all this exploitation. This legislation is about prevention. This has gone on for far too long. Enough is enough. We will now be licensing providers and ensuring that employers use only licensed providers. How many more cases of exploitation do we need before we do something? This Labor government will not sit back and do nothing in this area. We need no more evidence.

I suggest that those who have not seen it should see the recent ABC *Australian Story* on the tragic death of Mia Ayliffe-Chung at Home Hill that once again brings home what is happening with labour hire. It was very moving when the member for Bundaberg and I met with her mother, Rosie Ayliffe, who is on a crusade to clean this up in Australia. She has come all the way from England

because what she is saying is that no-one knows who these people are, no-one knows what they are doing and there is no-one protecting people like her daughter who are lured to these areas on the basis of false work and who then incur debts that they cannot get out of.

The Senate education and employment references committee also handed down their recommendations today. One of their recommendations at the federal level is that the federal and state take action to license and regulate labour hire operators. That was one of their recommendations—federal and state. Those opposite should hang their heads in shame for what they are doing here today by not supporting this bill.

I want to talk about the absurdity of this notion that this is propping up union membership. I do not understand how this analogy is being used except that it is the usual thing when they have no substance. The member for Kawana lacked so much in substance on this issue that he took to reading submissions into *Hansard*. He had nothing at all to say except he used a submission that was actually incorrect. It had interpreted the legislation incorrectly. The explanatory notes had explained fully those areas which he read into *Hansard*. Why would they think that licensing would somehow boost union membership? Is that the case in the real estate industry? Is that the case in the car dealer industry? It is laughable and almost embarrassing for those opposite to use those arguments in this place. It was like a broken record—time after time, the same argument, the same ridiculous and nonsensical reasons for not supporting this bill. They should hang their heads in shame. It is almost embarrassing.

With regard to the scope of the bill, as I have said, there are many arrangements. We want to make sure that we capture the genuine labour hire areas. I have made it clear that the arrangements are not intended to cover those areas such as genuine contracting or subcontracting arrangements, permanent placement and workplace consulting services, and volunteering and student placement—the ones that the member for Kawana read into *Hansard*. It is clear in the explanatory notes that that is not the intention of the legislation. Let me inject a little bit of common sense into this. No-one is suggesting that the scheme is there to license chaplains in schools. That is an absolute nonsense. It is clear in the explanatory notes and in the regulations that that is not the case.

The bill makes provision for regulations to be made, as I have said, to further clarify the scope of the bill and ensure coverage does not capture unintended classes of providers or workers. I cannot remember who it was, but one of the speakers opposite just kept talking about 'unintended consequences'. It was like that scene from *The Castle*—'It's the vibe, Your Honour. It's the vibe.' There was no explanation about what these unintended consequences are or any depth of understanding about how the unintended consequences could manifest themselves. It was exactly that scene—'It's the vibe, Your Honour. It's the vibe.' That is exactly what it sounded like.

**Mr Hinchliffe:** Denis Denuto.

**Ms GRACE:** Yes, that is right. It was Denis Denuto. I will take that interjection from the member for—

**Mr Hinchliffe:** Sandgate.

**Ms GRACE:** Yes, Sandgate. Thank you very much, Leader of the House. I knew it. I was just on a different wavelength.

The scheme will be backed, as I said, by a compliance unit within the Office of Industrial Relations. If after the bill is passed anyone is unsure whether or not they need to be licensed, they can contact that unit. There will be a labour hire website and we will make sure all of the information is there.

I have already addressed the bit about this being addressed at the national level. I have made it perfectly clear that they have turned their back, and I have quoted Barnaby Joyce. He said, 'We don't particularly want to have federal legislation if there's a role for the states.' That is what he said. Well, we are coming in, Mr Joyce, and we are doing it.

There were some allegations that I did not pick up the phone and ring Senator Michaelia Cash about this issue. Let me tell the House about this. I wrote to her on 23 May this year requesting the issue of ABNs, as per the parliamentary committee's recommendations, be put on the agenda for the next meeting of state and territory ministers as part of a broader discussion about labour hire licensing. This meeting was held in Canberra on 11 August, and as per my request agenda item No. 8 was labour hire reform. The Queensland government, Victoria, South Australia and even New South Wales all reported they had undertaken inquiries into labour hire and that, in the absence of any action from the Commonwealth, they were developing state based legislation. That was reported to Senator Cash at that meeting on 11 August. The feds know exactly what we are doing, and it has not stirred them into taking any action in relation to this matter.

Business as usual is not an option here. We need to do something to ensure that we get this right and that this legislation goes a long way. When we talk about support for the bill, the member opposite said that the only people supporting this bill are the unions. As we have demonstrated, that is far from the truth. Let me read an email from a farmer regarding labour hire. I will read this into *Hansard* because it makes more sense than the things that the member for Kawana read into *Hansard*. It states—

Dear Grace

I am a farmer in Bowen.

Many of my peers also agree—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Crawford): Order! Members on my left.

**Ms GRACE:** I will start again. It states—

Dear Grace

I am a farmer in Bowen.

Many of my peers also agree that the new licensing laws for labour hire firm is long overdue.

There will be strong pressure, on yourself and—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Members on my left, I warned you before. I will start handing out 253As, beginning with the member for Kawana, if you do not cease.

**Ms GRACE:** There is a bit of a difference between demonstrating support and just reading submissions that were already on the record. This is not on the record; this is demonstrating support. I continue—

There will be strong pressure, on yourself and the government, to scrap these laws. That is because those doing the wrong thing are lobbying hard to keep the status quo.

The new laws will give so much opportunities to young less skill workers to flourish in a marvellous industry.

I do know for a fact because 25 years ago a farmer employed me to cut asparagus, I found something that I was good at and went on to start my own tomato farm here in Bowen.

I now employ 4 Australians pickers even if I have to compete with large farms underpaying their workers through labour hire firms.

What I see, in regard of labour hiring, on 50% of the farms in Bowen is shameful.

A lot of young aussie workers will benefit from your good work.

That was a farmer from Bowen writing to me congratulating me in relation to it.

**Mr Costigan** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Whitsunday, you are warned under 253A.

**Ms GRACE:** They do not like it. They do not like it when we have these people supporting the bill. The Uniting Church in Queensland stated—

The Uniting Church in Queensland fully supports the introduction of a mandatory labour hire licensing scheme ...

...

The Uniting Church in Queensland accepts this government's proposed legislation will help prevent such criminal activity by reducing the profit of unethical businesses and will increase the risk of being caught and sanctioned.

Then there is the Salvation Army, which said—

The Salvation Army commends the Queensland Government for introducing this legislation to protect fair employers from unethical competition and to protect workers—both Australians and migrants—from all forms of labour exploitation. We see this is a critical step to disrupting the business model built on exploiting vulnerable people and holding those who use it to account.

Even the Queensland Community Alliance, comprising 27 civil society organisations, said in a media release yesterday—

The Government is introducing their Labour Hire Licensing Bill this week, and this is a good start. But what we know is that any rights need to be enforced.

Indeed, I could not agree more, and we will be ensuring that is the case.

The LNP are so blinkered on this bill that their statement of reservation to the committee report even tries to dismiss the views of those employers who are supporting the licensing system. How arrogant is that. They wrote that they do not even know what they are getting themselves into, or words to that effect. They are unbelievably arrogant, rude and shameful.

Queensland is certainly leading the way once again, I am proud to say, but following in our footsteps is the South Australian government, which introduced their own Labour Hire Licensing Bill 2017 on 10 August. It adopts essentially the components of our Queensland bill that we will vote on today and hopefully pass.

Victoria is also working to introduce legislation to licence labour hire firms in response to the same types of issues as this bill seeks to address. International comparisons show that a number of other countries have benefited from labour hire licensing arrangements. Countries with labour hire licensing schemes include Singapore, Japan, South Korea, Belgium, the Netherlands and the UK. With regard to restricting this to certain industries, we only have to look to the Gangmasters Licensing Authority, which oversees a sector specific scheme in the UK. They wrote in response to the Queensland labour hire issues paper. Based on their experience they recommend that a broad approach is the best way to go. Their correspondence stated—

The GLA—

the Gangmasters Licensing Authority—

believes that the ability to effectively tackle labour exploitation across any industry where it arises requires an effective combination of civil and criminal investigative powers and sanctions, without any regulatory restrictions to narrow industry sectors. Our licence holder data identifies that most, if not all, licence holders supply labour into other industry activities and do not restrict their economic endeavours to the agricultural sectors. Logically therefore, if an employer operates exploitative practices in agriculture they will operate them in any part of their business, and effective enforcement must be capable of tackling it wherever it is found.

That is exactly what our bill does.

In conclusion, I am proud to be standing here today bringing this bill to the parliament as an industrial minister in a state Labor government. This is a piece of legislation in the very best traditions of a reformist, progressive Labor government that looks out for those who are not being treated fairly in our society. We are legislating this scheme in response to disturbing and irrefutable evidence and allegations of underpayments, discrimination, harassment, use of illegal business practices and denying workers access to their rightful entitlements and protections that have been unearthed by various state and federal labour hire inquiries. More of the same is not an option. In the absence of federal leadership on this issue, the Queensland Palaszczuk government has taken every step it can at a state level to address these issues through a state based licensing scheme. These are good laws and they are sorely needed. The only way to put an end to this appalling exploitation is the introduction of a rigorous labour hire licensing scheme, and that is what this bill delivers. Shame on those who do not support it!

I also take the liberty to wish the childcare workers all the best in their campaign for fairer wages. I also wish the member for Dalrymple a very happy birthday. I commend the bill to the House.

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

**AYES, 47:**

**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.

**PHON, 1**—Dickson.

**INDEPENDENT, 2**—Gordon, Pyne.

**NOES, 41:**

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

Resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read a second time.

### Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 108, as read, agreed to.

Clause 109—



**Ms GRACE** (4.30 pm): I move the following amendment—

**1 Clause 109 (Supply of workers within 28 days of commencement)**

Page 70, lines 10, 13, 20 and 21, '28 days'—

*omit, insert—*

60 days

I table the explanatory notes to my amendments.

*Tabled paper:* Labour Hire Licensing Bill 2017, explanatory notes to Hon. Grace Grace's amendments [[1620](#)].

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 109, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 110, as read, agreed to.

Schedule 1—



**Ms GRACE** (4.30 pm): I move the following amendment—

**2 Schedule 1 (Dictionary)**

Page 75, after line 19—

*insert—*

- the *Payroll Tax Act 1971*

Amendment agreed to.

Schedule 1, as amended, agreed to.

### Third Reading



**Hon. G GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (4.31 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. G GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (4.31 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.

## LAND ACCESS OMBUDSMAN BILL

## GASFIELDS COMMISSION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

### Second Reading (Cognate Debate)

Land Access Ombudsman Bill resumed from 23 May (see p. 1255) and Gasfields Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Bill resumed from 10 May (see p. 1051), on motion of Dr Lynham—

That the bills be now read a second time.



**Hon. AJ LYNHAM** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (4.32 pm): I rise to speak to the Land Access Ombudsman Bill 2017 and the Gasfields Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. These two bills arise largely from this government's independent review of the GasFields Commission Queensland, and as such it makes

sense for the bills to be considered together. These bills reinforce this government's commitment to a strong and sustainable resource industry that does not compromise the rights of landholders and communities. I will discuss these two bills separately and address the various comments that were raised through the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee process. I thank the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee for its consideration of these bills. I note that the committee has recommended that both bills be passed. I also thank those who took the time to lodge a submission and participate in the committee processes for these bills.

I will speak first to the Land Access Ombudsman Bill 2017, which provides for the creation of a Land Access Ombudsman. The ombudsman will provide a free and independent service to resolve disputes about alleged breaches of existing conduct and compensation agreements and make-good agreements. The bill also preserves the existing provisions contained in the Mineral and Energy Resources (Common Provisions) Transitional Regulation 2016 that are due to expire this month. The bill also adds provisions that relate to the overlapping tenure framework contained in the Mineral and Energy Resources (Common Provisions) Transitional Regulation 2016.

In late 2015 the Premier and Minister for the Arts committed to an independent review of the GasFields Commission Queensland, which I will refer to as the independent review. This review was to determine whether the current structure worked effectively to manage disputes between industry and landholders. The independent review was undertaken by retired Land Court member Professor Robert Scott. The Land Access Ombudsman Bill 2017 has been developed in response to recommendation 10 of the independent review.

The independent review identified a gap in the options available to resolve a dispute over an alleged breach of a conduct and compensation agreement or make-good agreement. The review recommended that an independent statutory body be established with the power to investigate and facilitate resolving these disputes. The passage of this bill will enhance the state's existing land access and make-good frameworks by establishing an independent statutory Office of the Land Access Ombudsman.

I note again that the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee report, which was tabled on 7 August 2017, contained only one recommendation, which was that the Land Access Ombudsman Bill 2017 be passed. Overall, the committee was satisfied that the bill appropriately addresses matters raised during the submission process. In submissions and the committee report it was noted that there was concern about the development of procedural guidelines and ensuring there was stakeholder input during their development.

I would like to reiterate that the Land Access Ombudsman, once appointed, will be responsible for developing guidelines, including key performance indicators on the time frames for the dispute resolution process. This will allow the Land Access Ombudsman to develop its operating guidelines unfettered by government and further ensure the independence of the role. I note the committee was satisfied there were no unresolved issues arising from the amendments to preserve provisions in the Mineral and Energy Resources (Common Provisions) Transitional Regulation 2016.

I note there was a statement of reservation from the opposition members of the committee which was attached to the committee report. I will now respond to some of the matters raised in that statement. The statement of reservation requested that I clarify why the government has chosen to create an ombudsman when this was not recommended in the independent review and why the government has chosen an ombudsman for land access disputes when other jurisdictions do not use an ombudsman model. It is true that Mr Scott recommended the establishment of an independent body which he referred to as the Office of Petroleum and Gas Moderator; however, the government considered that the term 'ombudsman' was a more appropriate and better understood term. An ombudsman is a well-recognised and trusted body known for independent, accessible and impartial review and investigation. As outlined by the Australian and New Zealand Ombudsman Association, the fundamental role of an ombudsman is the independent resolution, redress and prevention of disputes. The Land Access Ombudsman as proposed in this bill will perform the functions as recommended in the independent review.

In relation to why we have decided to create a Land Access Ombudsman when other jurisdictions have not, the response is simple: this is best practice. Queensland is nationally and internationally recognised as having many features of regulatory best practice in our land access framework. The creation of the Land Access Ombudsman will further enhance our land access framework by addressing a gap identified in the independent review for resolving disputes over alleged breaches of existing conduct and compensation agreements and make-good agreements.

The statement of reservation also sought clarification on why the Land Access Ombudsman's services will apply to all resources and not just the petroleum and gas industry. A better question would be: should landholders dealing with coal and mineral tenement holders have access to the Land Access Ombudsman? Why on earth would the opposition want to prevent landholders with conduct and compensation agreements and make-good agreements that relate to minerals and coal exploration or mining tenures from accessing a low-cost dispute resolution service that would be able to assist them?

Conduct and compensation agreements are a statutory requirement under Queensland's land access laws where a resource authority holder is seeking to enter private land to undertake advanced activities. Similarly, make-good agreements are a statutory requirement between holders of petroleum or mining tenures exercising their underground water rights and the owners of impacted bores which may be impaired by these activities. While the focus of the independent review was on the petroleum and gas industry, Queensland has recently adopted a common provisions approach to its land access laws through the Mineral and Energy Resources (Common Provisions) Act 2014, as those opposite should be well aware. As a result, any changes to the conduct and compensation agreement framework will also apply to the state's coal and mineral exploration sector.

Likewise, the Water Act 2000 was recently amended by the Environmental Protection (Underground Water Management) and Other Legislation Amendment Act to expand the make-good obligations which apply to both petroleum and mining tenure holders. It was also raised in the statement of reservation that the government does not hold data for existing agreements which automatically transition to become make-good agreements under the Water Act 2000. Existing agreements for mining will automatically transition to become make-good agreements under the Water Act 2000. I can confirm that this government has established recordkeeping procedures to capture data for make-good agreements, including the parties to mining make-good agreements entered into under the new framework.

I would also take this opportunity to disagree with the claim in the statement of reservation that the government did not consult with the coal and mineral sector in relation to the inclusion of their conduct and compensation agreements and make-good agreements. We have worked to ensure that relevant stakeholders are aware of the scope and impact of this bill. My department engaged with the peak resources industry bodies about the proposed ombudsman. This was acknowledged by the Queensland Resources Council in a submission to the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee. In addition, my department also consulted with the Association of Mining and Exploration Companies. I note there was also concern in the statement of reservation about the qualities and qualifications of the future Land Access Ombudsman. The appropriate qualifications and skill set for the Land Access Ombudsman will be developed as part of the appointment process.

There was also concern as to what would constitute a reasonable attempt to resolve a dispute prior to referral to the Land Access Ombudsman. This was raised in both submissions to the committee and the statement of reservation. As my department has previously clarified to the committee, reasonable endeavours to resolve a dispute may include raising the issue by telephone or in writing and giving the respondent reasonable time to redress the situation. However, reasonable endeavours will not need to extend to exhausting the dispute resolution processes included in a conduct and compensation agreement or in a make-good agreement or the dispute resolution process in the Water Act 2000, which can be potentially costly and lengthy.

It is envisaged that the Land Access Ombudsman will produce a procedural guideline to provide parties with further guidance about what will be considered reasonable endeavours to resolve a dispute. As I have previously mentioned, it is the Land Access Ombudsman that will develop procedural guidelines about practices and procedures for land access dispute referrals and investigations. My department will also prepare communication materials on the role and functions of the Land Access Ombudsman. The Land Access Ombudsman, once appointed, will also establish their own website with guidance materials.

In conclusion, the Land Access Ombudsman Bill will establish an important mechanism through which parties to conduct and compensation agreements and make-good agreements can resolve disputes in a timely and cost-effective manner.

I would now like to speak to the Gasfields Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. I note that the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee made two recommendations to parliament in relation to this bill including that the bill be passed. I now table a copy of the government's response to the committee's report.

*Tabled paper.* Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee: Report No. 46, 55th Parliament—Gasfields Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017, government response [\[1621\]](#).

The government notes recommendation 1 and supports recommendation 2 of the committee's report. Recommendation 1 of the report is that the bill be passed. Recommendation 2 relates to the 2016 review of the Biodiscovery Act 2004. The committee requested that the government report to the parliament on the findings of the review and stakeholder issues, including issues relating to the intellectual property rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as identified in the Nagoya protocol.

Biodiscovery is an exciting and innovative area that falls within the portfolio responsibilities of my colleague the Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy and Minister for Small Business. However, as requested by the committee, I am pleased to provide an update regarding the 2016 review of the Biodiscovery Act in response to recommendation 2. I will provide this update now for the benefit of the parliament before I discuss other components of the bill in more detail.

The review of the Biodiscovery Act undertaken in 2016 identified further legislative and process reforms to improve this legislation. The review's terms of reference considered the purpose and operation of the Biodiscovery Act and the costs and benefits of regulation, interjurisdictional approaches and legislative amendments that would be required to improve the effectiveness, fairness, timeliness and accessibility of the regulatory system.

Some of the key issues raised by stakeholders during the review included: recognition of the importance and rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including their traditional knowledge and access to native biological material on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's land; application of the Biodiscovery Act to different land tenures; and the regulation of commercial and non-commercial activities.

The review's recommendations reflect the principal drivers for improvement of the Biodiscovery Act, being the Nagoya protocol, consistency with Commonwealth government regulation and provision of workable regulatory arrangements that facilitate biodiscovery. The government is considering the recommendations of the review and will issue its response and the review in due course.

The government will consult with stakeholders about reform of the Biodiscovery Act, including the recommendations of the review. For example, issues relating to the rights to intellectual property of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is a new issue for biodiscovery policy and it will be important to ensure that a range of views is considered.

The purpose of this bill is to amend the Gasfields Commission Act 2013, the Right to Information Act 2009, the Sustainable Ports Development Act 2015 and the Biodiscovery Act 2004. The amendments to the Gasfields Commission Act 2013 deliver on a number of recommendations from the independent review of the GasFields Commission. The independent review concluded that the work of the GasFields Commission had contributed substantially to the improved coexistence of landholders, regional communities and the onshore gas industry in Queensland, but the independent review made a range of recommendations to improve the operation of the commission. Some of these recommendations required amendments to the act—for example, allowing the appointment of a part-time chairperson and redesignation of the general manager as the chief executive officer; adding a new function focusing on coordinating the dissemination of information and community participation in health and wellbeing matters; and clarifying that the commission should not be involved in individual disputes.

Amendments to the Gasfields Commission Act will ensure that the GasFields Commission operating model is more consistent with other independent boards and committees. The board will set the strategic direction and the chief executive officer and the staff of the commission will be responsible for implementing the strategic plan. Other related amendments to the Gasfields Commission Act include changes to delegations, declarations of interest, quorums for board meetings, special leave arrangements and temporary appointments during extended periods of leave.

I note in the report from the committee that there was a statement of reservation from the LNP members in relation to the recent closure of the Toowoomba office and the appointment and remuneration of the chairperson and commissioners. As those members would be aware, the commission is an independent statutory authority which is not subject to outside direction. The decision to close the Toowoomba office was made by the commission. I am advised that one of the factors considered was that there had been no walk-ins to the Toowoomba office in the 18 months preceding this decision. The closure is part of the commission's overhaul of extension and communication services to more efficiently deliver services and engage with stakeholder groups across the gas-producing areas of the state.

The commission has recently appointed new regional engagement officers in Roma and Dalby as part of a five-person engagement team led by a dedicated engagement and policy director. The commission intends for this team to ensure engagement with stakeholders in both existing and new petroleum and gas tenure areas across Queensland. I am confident that the reforms being progressed by the commission will lead to improved extension and communication services with regional stakeholders. Recent community leaders forums in Biloela and Roma exemplified the ongoing commitment of the commission to deliver regional engagement.

In relation to appointments and remuneration I am not proposing any changes, with the current chairperson, Ms Ruth Wade, appointed to 31 May 2018 and the three part-time commissioners until 30 November 2019. I consider that stability and continuity of corporate knowledge are important as the commission transitions to a more conventional operating model. In relation to remuneration, the levels for a part-time chairperson or commissioners are set in accordance with the government policy *Remuneration procedures for part-time chairs and members of Queensland government bodies*. This reflects the move to a more conventional style of board, with day-to-day operation of the commission to be undertaken by the redesignated chief executive officer and the staff of the commission, consistent with the recommendation by Professor Scott. I am confident that under these remuneration guidelines we will continue to be able to secure the services of high-calibre members for the commission who will benefit from and make a significant contribution to the community through their participation.

The amendment to the Sustainable Ports Development Act 2015 will make a minor technical change to ensure that a port overlay consistently applies to development in a master planned area. This amendment is required to implement particular port master planning commitments under the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan.

The Biodiscovery Act 2004 is currently designed so that every entity which utilises native biological material along a commercial chain is required to have a benefit-sharing agreement with the state. The proposed amendments to this act will present an alternate agreement option where a biodiscovery entity which has a benefit-sharing scheme with the state can enter into a subsequent use agreement with subsequent users of the native biological material down the commercial chain. These arrangements will of course be subject to minimum terms being met.

These changes ensure that all entities along a commercial chain can operate under arrangement with reduced regulatory burden under the Biodiscovery Act. This means less red tape for entities involved in development of innovative products using native biological material collected in Queensland. This will encourage job creation and innovation in scientific discovery while protecting the state's interests in native biological material. A range of consequential amendments are also proposed to the Biodiscovery Act to deliver this new subsequent use agreement model. These bills not only deliver a number of this government's commitments; they will better serve Queensland's landholders, regional communities and the onshore gas industry. I commend the bills to the House.

 **Mr CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (4.50 pm): I rise to respond on behalf of the LNP opposition to the debate on the Land Access Ombudsman Bill 2017 and the Gasfields Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017 being considered by the House in cognate. From the outset I want to indicate to the House that the LNP will not be opposing either of these two bills. Firstly, I will address the Land Access Ombudsman Bill. The explanatory notes accompanying the bill state—

The primary objectives of the Bill are to:

1. establish an independent land access ombudsman with the jurisdiction to provide an independent service that applies to disputes relating to an alleged breach of a:
  - a. conduct and compensation agreement ... between an owner or occupier of private land and a resource authority holder; and
  - b. make good agreement ... between the owner of an impacted bore and a resource tenure holder;
2. save transitional provisions in the Mineral and Energy Resources (Common Provisions) Transitional Regulation 2016 that would otherwise expire in September 2017 and, as a consequence, amend associated provisions.

The explanatory notes accompanying the bill state that the objective of establishing a Land Access Ombudsman is to provide the owners and occupiers of private land and the holders of a resource authority with an independent body to investigate and make recommendations to resolve a dispute of an alleged breach of a CCA or an MGA and to facilitate the resolution of disputes between the parties to a CCA or an MGA with a view to preserving a cordial relationship between these parties. No-one can really argue with that objective and it is primarily for that reason that the LNP opposition will not oppose this particular bill. However, it is worth noting that, despite this worthy objective, there

was a variety of views about the scope and role of the proposed Land Access Ombudsman amongst submitters to the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee during its consideration of the bill, and I will discuss those issues in more detail later in my contribution.

The Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee considered this bill and it made one recommendation, and that was that it be passed. The background of this bill, as the minister mentioned earlier, is that in December 2015 the Palaszczuk government commissioned an independent review of the Queensland GasFields Commission. That review was conducted by Robert Scott, a retired member of the Land Court. The terms of reference for the review included a requirement to investigate whether an alternative model such as an independent resources ombudsman was needed to provide a mechanism for dispute resolution between resource companies and landholders. Mr Scott's report contained 18 recommendations and was released on 1 December last year. The report raised concerns that there was currently no avenue available to landholders or resource authority holders to discuss any complaints concerning an alleged breach of a CCA or an MGA once any dispute resolution provisions in the agreements had been exhausted other than going off to court or to arbitration.

Interestingly, recommendation 10 of the report recommended the establishment of something that Mr Scott described as an office of the petroleum and gas moderator, with the moderator's role being to mediate disputes between parties about alleged breaches of CCAs and MGAs. It was also recommended that the moderator be provided with the ability to provide those parties with non-binding recommendations. Mr Scott did not, however, recommend that the moderator be called an 'ombudsman' on the basis that ombudsmen have traditionally performed a different role in the area of public administration and all members of the House should be aware of that in terms of their consideration of this bill. As I mentioned, Mr Scott, a former Land Court member, did not recommend that an ombudsman be established. It was the Palaszczuk government that has resolved that an ombudsman is the best model for the purpose of establishing an independent body to assist parties with disputes related to alleged breaches of a CCA or an MGA.

Another issue that needs to be brought to the attention of the House is that while the focus of Mr Scott's recommendation 10 was on the petroleum and gas industry the government has also determined that the Land Access Ombudsman will be available to all landholders and resource authorities to which the conduct and compensation agreement and make-good agreement requirements apply. The resource authority holders operating in the coal sector and the minerals sector in Queensland have a legitimate concern to be advanced in this regard, and the minister responded to those concerns which were articulated in the statement of reservation submitted by the LNP members of the committee, the member for Warrego and the member for Gympie.

If the Scott review of the GasFields Commission had intended for Mr Scott to consider an alternative dispute resolution process such as a resource ombudsman that was to apply to sectors other than the gas sector then they should have been given the opportunity to participate fully in that review at the time that Mr Scott was undertaking it. I think it is probably the reason why Mr Scott's recommendation was for a moderator—a petroleum and gas moderator—rather than a resource industry ombudsman because the minister needs to acknowledge that there needs to be a bit more of a substantial justification for taking this step in the House when he responds rather than just saying, 'We took the view that it should apply to the coal sector and the mineral sector,' because the point being made by the member for Warrego and the member for Gympie in their statement of reservation is not that those landholders should be denied access to the resources industry ombudsman; they are just saying that when the terms of reference were issued for Mr Scott's inquiry it was to be subject to the GasFields Commission. That relates to the gas sector. If we were looking to improve land access arrangements for all sectors of the resources sector, then the government should have given terms of reference to Mr Scott to consider the coal and mineral sector at the same time.

I want to make it absolutely clear that I do not necessarily disagree with the course of action that the government has taken and I think that there is logic to a consistent approach to all resource sectors as far as land access arrangements are concerned. Given all resource sectors now have CCAs and access to make-good agreements—and I might point out to the House that all sectors have access to MGAs, make-good agreements, thanks to the reforms implemented by the former LNP government—other aspects of the regulatory framework applying to the resources sector should also be consistent, and that includes land access arguments. However, that does not relieve the Palaszczuk government of the responsibility to undertake meaningful consultation processes with affected stakeholders. As I mentioned a couple of moments ago, coal and mineral resource authority holders are not the only ones who would have got the opportunity to make a submission to the Scott review because they did not know that these reforms would apply to them. Landowners who may be interacting with coal or mineral

resource authority holders would have also had the opportunity to make submissions to the Scott review to make Mr Scott aware of issues around land access pertaining to landholders interacting with those sectors.

An additional objective of this bill is to provide the Land Court with jurisdiction to decide disputes between parties to a CCA regarding an alleged breach of contract. The benefit of extending the Land Court jurisdiction is that the Land Court has experience specific to conduct and compensation agreements. Further, providing the Land Court with this jurisdiction will simplify the dispute process by providing a single court with the jurisdiction to hear matters relating to CCAs. The Land Court already has jurisdiction to hear matters relating to a dispute over whether a party to a make-good agreement has complied with the agreement under the Water Act 2000. Obviously it is also necessary to extend the jurisdiction of the Land Court to make decisions regarding disputes involving CCAs and MGAs because the Land Access Ombudsman, which the bill also establishes, is not being furnished with powers to make decisions that legally bind both parties.

I note the LNP members of the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee, the members for Warrego and Gympie, as the minister noted, have submitted a statement of reservation highlighting some concerns about how the government selected certain recommendations from the Scott review into the GasFields Commission and not others to proceed with. The LNP members of the committee also highlighted a number of concerns about the consultation process and the specific provisions raised by some of the stakeholders in their submissions to that committee. I will not discuss those concerns expressed by the members for Warrego and Gympie at great length, because I know that both will probably make substantial contributions to this debate. They have applied themselves very diligently to their committee work on this bill, because both have strong interests in land access matters.

Quite frankly, the submissions to the committee were a bit all over the place. They wanted various things and advocated for different scopes of responsibility from the creation of a Land Access Ombudsman. Although all of the submitters supported the establishment of a Land Access Ombudsman in principle, there was very little consistency among the environmental, industry and legal organisations that made submissions to the committee.

At this point, it is worth giving consideration to what the traditional role of an ombudsman is. An ombudsman has always been primarily an alternative dispute resolution mechanism for parties to seek a low-cost, less formal solution to a disagreement between two parties. The trade-off for the affordability and the informality has been that the decisions of most ombudsmen are non-binding and less rigorous than judgements handed down in a court of law. The LNP is inclined to support the model proposed in this bill because it most accurately reflects the traditional ombudsman model. In our view, to pursue a more formal model including the use of lawyers with binding decisions would be approaching a quasi-Land Court forum. This would be inconsistent with what was recommended by the Scott review into the GasFields Commission.

Although this bill seeks to implement some of the land access recommendations included in the review of the GasFields Commission, this is not the first time in recent years that there have been changes in terms of the regulatory framework around land access. Important and ground-breaking reforms to land access arrangements were implemented by the former LNP government in 2014. As the minister for natural resources and mines in the previous government, I oversaw the delivery of a number of progressive recommendations put forward by the Land Access Implementation Committee. This included expanding the Land Court's jurisdiction to hear conduct matters when considering conduct and compensation agreements, requiring the conduct and compensation agreements to be noted on the relevant property title, and allowing two parties to opt out of entering a formal conduct and compensation agreement. These were initiatives that delivered to landholders in Queensland land access property protection that they had never had before. The Land Access Implementation Committee's recommendations were the result of extensive consultation in 2012 through a submission process and individual meetings with stakeholders who had direct experience with or expressed strong interest in land access arrangements.

The reforms to the land access framework delivered by the former LNP government helped to create a better balance between the needs of the state's agriculture and resources sectors and improved the way in which land access negotiations occurred. For example, many landholders indicated that generally they were more concerned about the conduct of resource companies on their property than just the issue of compensation being paid to the landholder as a result of that access. As such, concerns were subsequently raised by submitters to the Land Access Implementation Committee about the Land Court's inability to examine the behaviour of parties during the conduct and

compensation agreement negotiation process. The former LNP government acknowledged those concerns. We expanded the jurisdiction of the Land Court to hear matters concerning conduct in addition to compensation and to enable it to make determinations on matters relating to conduct issues that should form part of a conduct and compensation agreement, as well as examining the behaviours of all parties during that negotiation process.

Stakeholders at the time also expressed concern about the lack of discoverability of a conduct and compensation agreement during a title search and the potential for a property to change hands without adequate knowledge that an agreement existed on that property. The former LNP government acted on that issue as well. Our reforms required a resource authority holder to notify the Registrar of Titles of an executed conduct and compensation agreement which then noted the existence on that particular title. Having a CCA noted on the relevant property title enabled the prospective purchaser to make genuine inquiries as to its content.

The Land Access Implementation Committee also heard feedback at the time about the statutory process for negotiating a conduct and compensation agreement, particularly relating to time frames and costs. Both landholders and resource companies expressed concern that there was no option in the legislation to opt out of entering into a formal conduct and compensation agreement where both parties were in agreement about the terms on which access to the land would occur. During the consultation process, cases were examined in which the formal conduct and compensation agreement process was unnecessary. There were numerous examples of where resource companies and landholders had developed good working relationships prior to the land access framework being introduced, and the conduct and compensation agreement process was considered unnecessary where there was already a history of positive cooperation and coexistence.

The former LNP government therefore introduced reforms to allow two willing parties to opt out of the formal requirement to enter into a CCA. However, there were a number of safeguards put in place to protect the legal rights and interests of landholders who opted out of a former CCA, including that the land access code would continue to apply and that a formal opt-out agreement would need to be completed by both parties. These opt-out agreements were also required to be noted on the relevant property title. As I said earlier, these reforms delivered by the former LNP government provided land access protection rights that Queensland landholders had never had before, a fact of which we are proud.

Briefly, this bill also contains provisions to extend transitional provisions contained in the Mineral and Energy Resources (Common Provisions) Transitional Regulation 2016 due to expire on 27 September this year. These transitional provisions relate to the application of the land access framework; the overlapping tenure framework for coal and coal seam gas tenures relating to where land is released straight to a petroleum lease through a competitive tender process under the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004; overlapping production applications where the minister has approved a coordination arrangement before commencement of the Mineral and Energy Resources (Common Provisions) Act 2014; and overlapping coal and petroleum parties where a safety dispute has been referred to arbitration under the Mineral and Energy Resources (Common Provisions) Act 2014 and the arbitration process has not been concluded by 27 September this year. The LNP has no concerns about these transitional provisions.

In relation to the Land Access Ombudsman Bill, while the LNP will not oppose this bill, we do reserve the right to monitor the performance of the Land Access Ombudsman going forward to ensure that it is delivering efficient and effective outcomes for landholders and the resources sector in Queensland. I think this reservation is fair enough, given the disjointed and uncoordinated way in which these reforms have come to the House, the bits and pieces that have been agreed to and not agreed to by the Palaszczuk government in terms of the recommendations in the Scott report, and the failure of this review of the GasFields Commission to indicate that the subsequent Land Access Ombudsman would apply not just to the gas sector but also to the coal and minerals sector.

Speaking of the GasFields Commission, I turn now to the provisions of the Gasfields Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The explanatory notes accompanying the bill claim that the objective of the bill is to improve the operational structure of the GasFields Commission by clearly distinguishing between the roles of the commission board and its staff. As we already know, a review of the GasFields Commission was undertaken by Robert Scott who was a retired member of the Land Court. The review into the commission made a range of recommendations in relation to the Gasfields Commission Act 2013 as well as recommendations relating to the administrative, strategic and operational changes to the commission.

The amendments propose to give effect to a new structure that separates the strategic and operational aspects of the commission, allow the chair to be part-time and redesignate the role of the current general manager to a chief executive officer. The bill also expands the contractual framework for biodiscovery under the Biodiscovery Act 2004. Currently the Biodiscovery Act provides for agreements between the state and entities carrying out biodiscovery known as benefit-sharing agreements under which entities agree to provide benefits of biodiscovery to the state. This reform will expand the contractual arrangements available to allow other entities to enter into subsequent use agreements with a party to a benefit-sharing agreement. The LNP has no concerns with these proposed amendments.

The bill also seeks to amend the Sustainable Ports Development Act 2015 to ensure that port overlay provisions are applied consistently to development assessed against a local government planning scheme under the Sustainable Planning Act or the Planning Act or a land use plan of the Transport Infrastructure Act in priority port master planned areas. The amendment will clarify that development within a state development or priority development area that is not assessed against the development scheme but regulated under the local government planning scheme or land use plan must consider the port overlay. The LNP has no particular concerns in relation to these proposed amendments.

The Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee recommended that this bill be passed. There was a statement of reservation once again from the members for Gympie and Warrego which outlined some concerns, as the minister alluded to earlier, that the head office of the GasFields Commission will be based in Brisbane rather than in Toowoomba, a matter that was uncovered during the course of the public hearings, and that only 23 per cent of the total staff of the commission would be regional engagement officers. Once again I am confident that the members for Gympie and Warrego will be making some detailed contributions to the debate in relation to these matters and so I do not want to canvass those issues at length, save to say that the minister does really need to explain how these proposals can be reconciled sensibly with the obvious focus and association of the GasFields Commission with the Surat Basin and areas further west.

With respect to the administrative and operational changes to the GasFields Commission, the most significant one is the dramatic shift in executive leadership of the commission from the chair to the CEO. The bill amends the chair's role from a full-time position to a part-time position. The new level of part-time remuneration provided for the chair will be \$6,000 in comparison to the previous full-time chair remuneration package of \$222,000. I do hope that the effectiveness of the GasFields Commission does not decline for want of a full-time chair to give the time, dedicate the attention and provide the commitment that that position deserves. I am strongly of the belief that the success the GasFields Commission has enjoyed so far has been a result of the very hands-on approach undertaken by the previous chair, Mr John Cotter.

The review resulted in a range of recommendations, including altering the commission's functions to exclude convening landholders, regional communities and the onshore gas industry for the purposes of resolving issues. However, new functions for facilitating the provision of information and community participation in health and wellbeing matters relating to onshore gas activities have been included in the bill.

In view of the fact that the government is progressing the establishment of the Land Access Ombudsman at the same time as it scales back the capacity of the GasFields Commission to convene parties and stakeholders for the purposes of resolving disputes, I suppose this is less of a concern than it might otherwise be. It would, however, be worth the minister giving consideration to the potential for there to be some jurisdictional confusion and uncertainty in the community between what is now the role of the GasFields Commission, the new role of the Land Access Ombudsman and, indeed, the fact that there is another bill having been introduced by the minister on the *Notice Paper* that removes the role of the Department of Natural Resources and Mines in alternative dispute resolution processes and enhances the role of the Land Court in this regard for both CCAs and MGAs. I do not really want to touch on those issues too much at this time because they are before the House in another bill, but the point that I want to make is that this space is very busy at the moment and the significant amount of change in these three bills at the moment dealing with four different entities means that all the stakeholders interacting with the land access framework could be forgiven for being a bit confused and overwhelmed. In that regard, I ask the minister what is being done to ensure that all parties are aware of these changes, and proposed changes in terms of the bill that is on the *Notice Paper*, and what do they mean for people in both the resources sector, landholders and local communities in relation to how the land access framework will apply in the future.

While the provisions in the bill implement changes to its structure and the role of the GasFields Commission as a result of the Scott review, the establishment of the GasFields Commission itself was a very important achievement for the former LNP government. That landmark reform was delivered principally by the member for Callide in 2013 when, as the former minister for state development, he oversaw the formal establishment of the GasFields Commission as an independent statutory authority. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the member for Callide for having a profound and enduring influence on the process undertaken by the former government to improve the relationship between the resources sector, particularly the coal seam gas industry, and landholders across the state. If it was not for the efforts of the member for Callide over many years, including when he was the relevant shadow minister and the leader of the opposition, it is not an exaggeration to say that Queensland may not enjoy the benefits of the gas industry and the resources sector more generally as we know them today. There is no doubt that when the former LNP government came to office in 2012 there were some extremely serious tensions between landholders and the resources sector in Queensland. The disquiet and confrontation was no more serious than in the coal seam gas industry, particularly on the Darling Downs and in relation to certain coal projects in Central Queensland. However, it was the member for Callide and the former LNP government that were committed to getting the policy settings right to resolve that tension and promote sustainable coexistence in Queensland.

The establishment of the GasFields Commission in 2013, amongst other initiatives undertaken by the LNP, was a key plank of that commitment and it has proven to be a successful one. The CSG industry is a vitally important contributor to the economic development of our state, particularly in regional areas, but the LNP has always been focused on the paramount importance of striking the right balance between CSG production and agricultural production. The GasFields Commission has played a key role in pursuing that goal. The GasFields Commission has served a vital role in the oversight of the CSG industry, primarily its interaction with landholders but also its interaction with the wider community, something that the previous Labor governments failed completely to do with almost disastrous consequences. This point needs to be made during this debate very clearly: although they sometimes claim to have been responsible for establishing the CSG industry in Queensland, all they did was go around handing out exploration tenures and production tenures like they were going out of fashion without ensuring that there was a modern regulatory framework in place to appropriately manage the interaction between the resources sector and landholders.

Labor left the conflict to fester and inflame with an attitude that can only be described as indifference. In 2017 it might not seem possible, but in 2011 and 2012 the fact was that the gas industry in Queensland was very much at a crossroads. In one direction, you had the unmitigated disaster that has now unfolded in the onshore gas industry in New South Wales and Victoria, because relationships, confidence and trust had completely broken down. Believe it or not, that was a real possibility in Queensland because of the indifference of the Labor governments that preceded the former LNP government. They did not do anything to modernise the regulatory framework as a result of the escalation and intensification of the coal seam gas industry, particularly in Queensland. In the other direction there was the comprehensive policy framework proposed and implemented by the LNP, including the GasFields Commission, the Regional Planning Interests Act, the expansion of strategic cropping land mapping, the enhanced activity of the CSG Compliance Unit and the land access reforms that I outlined earlier.

The member for Callide has made a huge contribution to ensuring that the CSG industry in Queensland has a strong and sustainable future, where all parties are respected. In this House, no other member has a more committed track record of advocacy for private property rights than the member for Callide and for the past 19 years the *Hansard* has recorded that fact. He has advocated relentlessly for private property rights for landholders, but at the same time has understood the importance of an orderly development of Queensland's natural resources for the benefit of the people of Queensland and the communities, particularly in regional areas of the state.

In the same way that the LNP reserves the right to monitor the establishment of the Land Access Ombudsman, we also reserve the right to monitor these reforms to the GasFields Commission. In particular, it remains to be seen how the newly established Land Access Ombudsman interacts with the activities of the GasFields Commission and, indeed, how both of those entities are impacted by the reforms to the jurisdiction of the Land Court, which is currently contained in another bill before the House.

 **Mr PEARCE** (Mirani—ALP) (5.21 pm): This evening, it is a pleasure to rise to speak in this cognate debate on the Land Access Ombudsman Bill and the Gasfields Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. One of the greatest joys of living in this country is the opportunity that many

of us have to work the land or to visit people who live on the land, getting an appreciation and understanding of the lifestyle that comes with living on the land and experiencing what it takes to live on the land. Australia has some of the most committed farmers in the world. We need only look at our clean green image to realise that we are leading the rest of the world in primary production.

The Land Access Bill is about facilitating the timely resolution of disputes between parties to conduct and compensation agreements or make good agreements. I get a little worried about make good agreements, because they do not always benefit the person who has to agree; in most cases, the big companies get their way. Hopefully, what we are doing in this place will make that much easier for people on the land. The legislation will establish the Land Access Ombudsman to investigate and facilitate the resolution of disputes that can eventuate between landowners and resource companies.

I am always pleased to support legislation that simplifies government processes. Most people on the land are ordinary citizens who choose to live on and work the land. They just want to get on with life. Unfortunately, at times government interrupts or interferes with their lifestyle. Effective land use can only be a benefit to the people who live on the land, as well as to our country as a whole.

As I have said before in this place, the state should recognise the expertise of the families who live on and work the land. Over the years you see changes happening, particularly when it comes to environmental issues. You can see the commitment and dedication of the younger families to doing it a little differently to how mum and dad did it. That is a strong positive for our country. As I have said before, when I drive along the roads where the cane fields are—and I know it is part of their practice—it blows me away to see how neat and tidy everything is, because the landowners have put in that little bit of extra effort to make sure that their places look as though they are being looked after properly.

**An honourable member:** They're looking after the reef, Jim.

**Mr PEARCE:** That is a significant contribution that they are making. Too often, the canefarmers, to whom I am close, get a lot of blame that they really do not deserve. I know they do not deserve it because of what I see when driving around and from my knowledge of working on the land.

Members in this place need only a small area of primary production land in their electorates to know of the continuous hardships, such as droughts, floods, financial pressures and relationship breakdowns that can make the life of a farmer almost unbearable at times. It can lead to ill health and even suicide. Those who know landowners will know that they have a no-fuss work ethic and are focused on their families and their land, but often those families fly under the radar and their issues go unnoticed. You have to be observant. You have to listen to what is being said. If you go to the meetings where landowners talk, you realise that they do have issues and some of those issues have a significant impact on the way that they run their business and the way that their families enjoy life.

The more we in this place can do to make life easier for the landowners, the better off we will all be. The functions and powers of the Land Access Ombudsman are common sense. This is about simplifying processes. The legislation will put in place an independent ombudsman to provide an independent service to assist landowners should a land dispute arise. These changes to the legislation are as a result of recommendations from a review undertaken by Robert Scott, a retired member of the Land Court. Mr Scott has had a lot of experience in dealing with issues involving landowners and farmers. From what I have read of Mr Scott's report, I think that he has got it right on most occasions.

I wish to read into my contribution to this debate the functions and powers of the Land Access Ombudsman, so that people in the electorate of Mirani can gain some understanding of what this all means. If you have the right wording, you can understand the intent.

Debate, on motion of Mr Pearce, adjourned.

## ETHICS COMMITTEE

### Report

 **Mr PEGG** (Stretton—ALP) (5.29 pm), by leave: I table report No. 175 titled *Interim report to the Legislative Assembly: an admitted unauthorised disclosure of committee proceedings by the Clerk of the Parliament* provided by the Acting Chair of the PCCC on 27 October 2015. I commend the report to the House.

*Tabled paper:* Ethics Committee: Report No. 175—Interim Report to the Legislative Assembly: An Admitted Unauthorised Disclosure of Committee Proceedings by the Clerk of the Parliament provided by the Acting Chair of the PCCC on 27 October 2015 [1622].

## MOTION

### Buy Queensland

 **Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works and Minister for Sport) (5.29 pm): I move—

That this House—

1. notes the failure of the opposition leader and the LNP to stand up for Queensland small business and Queensland jobs as he has intentionally avoided taking a position on the Buy Queensland policy;
2. notes federal LNP trade minister Steve Ciobo's baseless campaign to force Queensland taxpayer funds to be spent sending jobs interstate and overseas, which proves the LNP will barrack for anyone except Queensland; and
3. calls upon the Leader of the Opposition to finally show some leadership on Buy Queensland and condemn the federal LNP for failing to back Queensland jobs.

The Palaszczuk government unashamedly backs Queensland jobs. It is what the people of Queensland elected us to do. They were sick and tired of the cuts and chaos from those opposite. They were sick and tired of the ruthless cut, sack and sell approach that hurt Queensland communities and Queensland families.

In contrast, we have been getting on with the job of creating jobs—94½ thousand new jobs under this government. We have been restoring front-line services, with thousands of new police, nurses, teachers, fire and emergency services personnel and more. We have major projects in the pipeline, with works commenced on Cross River Rail, the Townsville stadium and the Capricornia Correctional Centre.

Our \$1.8 billion Queensland Housing Strategy provides a \$1 billion five-year pipeline of construction supporting jobs in residential construction right across Queensland. Our Buy Queensland strategy is unashamedly about backing quality local Queensland jobs. This is a landmark strategy. The Palaszczuk Labor government will make sure that when we invest Queensland taxpayer funds on projects, whether they are big or small, the local community will get real value from that investment. Value is more than just about the bottom line. It is about supporting communities.

This policy is a big deal for Queensland and a big deal for Queenslanders. We are proud of this policy because it puts Queenslanders first. The response from Queenslanders has been fantastic. We have had the Chief Entrepreneur say—

This new Queensland government procurement deal for Queensland business is the best birthday present I have ever had.

He went on to say—

I'm really impressed that this has been done. It is a real competitive advantage for Queensland and I'm excited.

He makes an important point. What this strategy does for local business is provide sales not subsidies. We have seen the Chamber of Commerce & Industry Queensland declare its support for the policy.

Our government has launched a Buy Queensland roadshow. I am advised that tickets for the session to be held in Brisbane on 11 September were exhausted within a week. They are going like hot cakes. It sold out with over 120 organisations registering to attend. A second session will now be held on 22 September to cater for the demand. Buy Queensland information sessions will be held in Maryborough and Bundaberg next week while we are governing from the Wide Bay region.

Members would think that the Leader of the Opposition would have something to say on such an important policy for Queenslanders and Queensland businesses. The member for Clayfield might think that he can run and try to hide from his record of destroying Queensland jobs. He might think he can run away from his history of ripping the guts out of regional communities. He cannot hide forever and he cannot continue to hide on taking a position on the issues that matter for Queenslanders.

If he wants to be the Premier of this state, he has to do more than cheesy photo opportunities. Whenever there is a beer or a pie, the member for Clayfield is all over it. Whenever there is an issue of any meaning to the lives of Queenslanders and whenever there is an issue of substance he Copperfields it. He is nowhere to be seen. It is 'Tumbleweeds' Tim. He goes off into witness protection.

Let us take a look at the issues across Queensland. Where is the Leader of the Opposition on Cross River Rail? He has gone into hiding. Where is he on the pay of subcontractors and security of payments? He has gone into hiding. Where is he on Buy Queensland? He is nowhere to be seen. It is the 'Tiny' Tim small target strategy and it is taking Queensland voters for mugs. They will not put up with it.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Miss Barton): Minister for Housing and Public Works, previous Speakers have ruled that that is not appropriate. I would ask that you refer to the Leader of the Opposition by his correct title.

**Mr de BRENNI:** I appreciate your guidance, Madam Deputy Speaker. The LNP machine is fully endorsing this behaviour. Those members opposite hide the member for Clayfield away at any cost. In order to run this protection racket they have outsourced their jobs to Canberra. We have seen Steve Ciobo disgracefully coopting New Zealand comrades as part of his protection racket for the member for Clayfield. The LNP will do anything to help the member for Clayfield hide his plans for Queensland.

We remember the last LNP leader who hid his plans before an election. Remember the slogan 'Public servants have nothing to fear from the LNP'. Do members remember that? All Queenslanders remember that. He said that public servants' jobs would be safe. All Queenslanders remember that. What happened after that election? Their cut, sack and sell strategy was rolled out again. Some 14,000 and more Queenslanders across this state were hurt. That was all led by the member for Clayfield. The member for Clayfield is trying to come back for another round because he wants to finish what he started. The only problem is that he just will not say it.

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (5.35 pm): The LNP has been called on again to provide comment and been asked to endorse Labor's so-called signature policy. We are called on again to comment on why this government continually picks fights with the federal government on anything and everything, challenging concerns raised by the federal trade minister—real concerns for Queensland. We also share concerns that have been expressed by many in the community, including key economists.

While copying nearly word for word our policy from June 2013, the difference is the secondary agenda—the reported business agenda—to appease union and environmental stakeholders. I repeat: this lazy government has copied nearly word for word our policy from 2013. I table a copy of that policy.

*Tabled paper:* Document titled 'Queensland Procurement Policy, June 2013' [[1623](#)].

I table a copy of the government's policy from this year, which proves my point that we cannot get any lazier than this government.

*Tabled paper:* Department of Housing and Public Works—document titled 'Queensland Procurement Policy 2017' [[1624](#)].

I am sure most on the other side have not even read the policy, so I offer for them to do so. They have added a few things like, 'We will back suppliers that act ethically', 'work to minimise carbon emissions', and 'taking into account workplace policies and practices that address domestic and family violence'. The policy also references net zero emissions by 2050 and having PVs on roofs. We can all imagine how the evaluation of those tenders will go within the department.

It is timely that we remind the House that this government has a horrendous record. In the dying days of the Bligh government we all remember the complete mockery of their Buy Local campaign—we have that one today too—when they bought T-shirts from Bangladesh and the US. I table a copy of that policy document.

*Tabled paper:* Article from the *Sunday Mail*, dated 17 April 2011, titled 'Queensland's "Buy Local" T-shirts made in Bangladesh and the US' [[1625](#)].

We all know that this policy will cost taxpayers more, making Queenslanders worse off through higher prices for services and goods delivered or purchased by the Queensland government. The policy defines the term 'local' for Queensland firms as a company within a 125km radius of the tendered work. It talks about giving a 30 per cent weighting. Companies will not have to pre-qualify for contracts under \$1 million. However, what they will not tell us is how the evaluation will be conducted. We know little will change.

This policy is a fake policy providing false hope in trying to re-engineer our society and trying to use government procurement to cure social issues along the way. More disturbing is that Labor are happily loading costs into the economic base to bolster its chances at the next election. We heard a lot today about championing populist policy to try to win votes from One Nation. While they claim they do not do that, this policy is heading down that slippery slope.

For a state that prides itself on its export and import revenue and opportunities, I find it disturbing that the minister responsible for this policy described it as 'breaking the government's trade agreements'. I add that he said that he could not give a toss. That exposes that this recklessness is no accident.

On 28 July this year, Premier Palaszczuk said that the Queensland government works to promote free trade agreements to benefit Queensland. The following day she declared that the state government will no longer be constrained or bound by free trade agreements. If free trade agreements benefit Queensland, why does Premier Palaszczuk want to abandon them? I table for the benefit of the House a summary of the Palaszczuk government's chaos over this very policy.

*Tabled paper:* Media release, dated 1 September 2017, titled 'Pitt shows Palaszczuk Cabinet In Chaos Over Buy Queensland Policy' [1626].

We had the Treasurer on ABC Radio trying to water down inflammatory remarks by the Premier. Then the 'I do not give a toss' Minister for Housing and Public Works, backed by the agriculture minister, made statements and bought into this chaos. In the same interview, the Treasurer conceded that it is a protectionism procurement agenda.

The importance of free trade agreements and our \$41 billion in exports is under threat. We know that 70 per cent of Queensland's exports last year were to countries with which Australia already has a free trade agreement. By walking away from these agreements Labor is walking away from Queensland farmers and businesses that sell Queensland's products, produce and services to the world economy, putting many Queensland jobs at risk—many jobs in regional Queensland, like those in my electorate.

We know that 84 per cent of state government contracts are already awarded to Queenslanders. The question is—and it is a billion dollar question: will this policy provide more opportunities for government procurement spend than the expected loss of Queensland exports to those countries that we have free trade agreements with that will dump us as soon as they can? The Premier and her three predecessors—Goss, Beattie and Bligh—gave written commitments to be bound by Australia's free trade agreements. The Queensland government itself is a party to the Australian-New Zealand Government Procurement Agreement, but I suppose those opposite just do not give a toss.

There are reckless elements to this policy and it is putting Queensland jobs at risk. This is a gamble. We are gambling with \$41 billion in critical exports to those countries that have engaged in free trade agreements. Many of these agreements were hard fought. We are gambling to provide a maximum opportunity to Queensland businesses to tender on a maximum spend of \$2.9 billion. This is a gamble—a roll of the election dice. There appears to be more downsides than benefits, and I am not convinced it is worth the effort.

 **Mrs LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (5.39 pm): It is not a gamble, we do give a toss and we are fighting for Queensland jobs by introducing this policy. I believe that every single dollar of the \$14 billion spent by the Queensland government each year should support the economic resilience of Queensland. Every dollar should support secure, permanent jobs. Every dollar should support the opportunity for our local kids to get ahead through training and apprenticeships.

I am proud to be part of this government that backs local businesses and supports local jobs and the Central Queensland economy. Queensland's new buy local strategy will ensure taxpayer dollars are spent on local projects and supporting local projects. I am so angry that the federal member for Capricornia and those opposite are hell-bent against it, despite the huge benefits it will have for local jobs and businesses.

**Mr Mander:** It's a con job. You've been sucked in.

**Mrs LAUGA:** I take that interjection. It is not a con job. It is very serious, and local businesses are very happy about this new strategy.

Our new buy local policy puts local businesses and jobs first. It has even been welcomed by the Chamber of Commerce & Industry Queensland—the friends of those opposite—as 'an absolute shot in the arm for small business'. The \$14 billion question is: why does the LNP hate Queensland jobs? It is bewildering to understand why our new policy has been met with condemnation by the federal LNP, by those opposite and by the federal member for Capricornia. In fact, the federal member for Capricornia went so far as to make a ludicrous claim on Facebook that this policy is putting Queensland's exports at risk. I table a copy of the federal member for Capricornia's Facebook post where she called the Palaszczuk government's Buy Queensland strategy a 'crazy policy' and shared a link to an article from the *Australian* which reports that New Zealand has moved to take formal action over an alleged trade breach by the Queensland government's new Buy Queensland policy.

*Tabled paper:* Extract, dated 1 September 2017, from the Facebook page of Ms Michelle Landry, in relation to the Premier and Minister for the Arts, Hon. Palaszczuk [1627].

If the New Zealand government wants to take formal action because the Queensland government's new policy prioritises Queensland jobs, then I say to New Zealand and I say to the federal member for Capricornia: be my guest. Be my guest and do your best to condemn our policy, because I will not ever cease to stand up for local jobs. I will never cease to stand up for my community because I was elected by the people of Keppel to stand up and fight for them.

The federal member for Capricornia and those opposite are selling out their Queensland constituents—the very people who elected them—and putting New Zealand ahead of local jobs in Central Queensland. Perhaps Barnaby Joyce is worried about getting his Kiwi relations offside. This policy does not have any implications for any trade agreements. If the federal member for Capricornia, the federal trade minister, the LNP and the New Zealand government want to challenge our determination, then so be it. To do otherwise, like the LNP turning their backs on Queensland jobs and bowing down to New Zealand, is selling out Queenslanders and they ought to be ashamed of themselves.

The Buy Queensland strategy is plain and simple: it makes sure that Queensland companies and Queensland jobs are prioritised when it comes to spending Queensland taxpayers' money. In my backyard that means that if there is a firm in Keppel capable of undertaking the work in Keppel then they should have the best possible shot at winning the work.

Whilst the federal member for Capricornia, the federal trade minister and LNP colleagues are snubbing their nose at local businesses, turning their back on their local constituents and turning down opportunities for our regional economies, the Palaszczuk government has not and never will. I have been unashamedly fighting for better buy local policies for years. I run my own buy local Christmas campaign every year in Keppel in a bid to encourage local people to buy their Christmas gifts locally as opposed to online. I run that campaign every year because I believe in the importance of local dollars being spent in and supporting our local businesses and our economy.

We know that the Buy Queensland strategy will give a real competitive advantage for local businesses. Last week at the Buy Queensland strategy briefing held by the department in Rockhampton, I spoke with local builders, building designers, construction suppliers and engineers about the strategy. They all told me how excited they are to finally be given a competitive advantage when it comes to providing goods and services to government and on government projects. The Buy Queensland strategy unashamedly gives preference to businesses in Berserker before Bangalore, preference to businesses in Parkhurst before Pakistan and preference to businesses in Yeppoon before Yokohama.

No-one can deny the benefits of buying locally to local jobs. The choice is simple: do we want to see Queensland government contracts go to Queensland businesses or should our taxes pay for jobs to go interstate or overseas? It is no surprise that those opposite disagree.

*(Time expired)*

 **Mr JANETZKI** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (5.45 pm): I do thoroughly enjoy it when this Labor government tries to put jobs and small business at the centre of the debate because it shines a spotlight or puts up a mirror to reflect the inadequacies and the failures of this government when it comes to small business and jobs. It reflects their failures and inability to create more jobs. It reflects their failures to support small business across this great state. It simply reflects how they have been unable over the last three years to develop an economic narrative that sells Queensland goods, services and ingenuity to the world. The fact that they have even had to resort to this Buy Queensland jobs policy speaks volumes about these failures.

Let us reflect just for a moment on their record over the last three years. Let us go firstly to the recent Suncorp CCIQ Pulse Survey. It showed business confidence down. It showed operating expenses for businesses across Queensland up. When it comes to unemployment, we know Queensland has the second worst unemployment rate across Australia, trending worse than Tasmania. When it comes to youth unemployment, we know there are failures there too. Youth unemployment across regional Queensland is beyond 20 per cent. In outback Queensland it is beyond 50 per cent. Even in a well-performing area like Toowoomba and the Darling Downs it is beyond 10 per cent. We know that we have low and anaemic wages growth. We are the low-wage growth state in Australia. We know that we have electricity problems. We have electricity prices that directly impact on the viability of small businesses into the future.

What do we hear from the small business minister in this government? We hear nothing. We hear nothing from the small business champion who was appointed to report to the small business minister and actually work and advocate on behalf of small business. What we hear from the opposition

is leadership. We hear ideas—ideas for the future. We hear about \$5,000 payments to companies, to small businesses, to put on apprentices. We hear about incentives like \$4,000 to bear the oncosts when employing future young people to take up apprenticeships in Queensland. It was the LNP opposition that led the charge against trading hours. Many small businesses across regional Queensland would have bitten the dust but for that advocacy.

This motion raises federal issues. Let us look at a few of the federal issues and how the federal coalition is supporting small business across regional Queensland. It is a long list. We have small business tax reductions. We have tax deductibility on assets beyond \$20,000. We have a dedicated red-tape-reduction process and the list goes on.

I think at a time when this motion raises federal issues we should look at what Bill Shorten would do if he had an opportunity to get his hands on the small businesses of Queensland. I have never heard Bill Shorten even talk about small business before. However, when I did hear him talk about it for the first time just a couple of weeks ago, he wanted to tax small businesses in Queensland and across Australia—up to 200,000 of them—by taxing their discretionary family trusts, with a 30 per cent tax rate on their family trust distributions. We know that Bill Shorten's frontbench only has three people who have had any experience with small business across their working lives, and it shows. They have no idea how to represent small business. They have no idea how to create small business jobs in their community.

Stunningly, and in denial of the world trade conditions in which we operate, the mover of tonight's motion recently wrote to his electorate. I note that the member for Burnett has already referred to this. He said to them—

By giving preference to locals, we're breaking the LNP Turnbull Government's trade agreements, and they aren't happy. But I couldn't give a toss.

Such an approach should not come as a surprise because Labor governments and union party apparatchiks have form. They have form for snubbing the rule of law and telling others to ignore it. They have form for not backing and thumbing their nose at free trade agreements, and they have form for putting petty political pointscoreing ahead of the economic health of this state. They want to talk about Buy Queensland tonight. We should be talking about 'better Queensland'. For the last three years this Labor government has led the economic debate from behind, and that is exactly where Queensland finds itself today. Queensland deserves better. Queensland deserves an LNP government.

*(Time expired)*

 **Mr SAUNDERS** (Maryborough—ALP) (5.50 pm): Another day—groundhog day—and another utter failure from the Leader of the Opposition to stand up for Queenslanders. He has refused to stand up for Queenslanders' fair share of category D funding. We all know that. We have been following the debate, reading the newspapers and watching media reports on TV for the last few months and he will not stand up for it. He refuses to say whether he will support Cross River Rail. How hard is it for him to say that he supports it? Now he is refusing to support the Palaszczuk Labor government's Buy Queensland policy, and what a great policy it is. This policy is incredibly important for jobs in our state. What do we hear from the member for Clayfield—crickets. We cannot hear him. All we hear from that side of the House is rabble. They say that empty vessels make the most noise, and that is what we have across the chamber.

We all know where he stands when it comes to keeping jobs in Queensland. We know where he stands when it comes to supporting Queensland businesses. That is what he tells us. The truth is that he has never met an asset he did not want to sell out from under Queenslanders and he has never seen a Queensland job he did not want to outsource. His fingerprints were all over the three years of the Campbell Newman era. He was Campbell Newman's right-hand man. I think if we get the CSI in here they will find his thumbprints, his handprints and the lot. The Newman-Nicholls razor gang tried to sell off and outsource everything in Queensland.

**Ms SIMPSON:** I rise to a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. I draw your attention to the ruling of the Speaker in respect to correctly naming members in this House. I understand that the member on his feet incorrectly did so. There has been a ruling in regard to that particular phrase. I ask that he withdraw or at least show deference to the ruling of the Speaker.

**Mr SAUNDERS:** I withdraw, Madam Deputy Speaker. We all know what happens when important contracts are not given to Queensland. Just look at what happened with the member for Clayfield's much lauded cut-price trains from India. Let us talk about those trains. The Deputy Premier has been left to fix their mistakes. They want to talk about these cut-price trains, and we heard the member for Burnett talking about lazy governments. Talk about a lazy government! They outsourced

the building of trains. What a great success! In a speech I called them Silly Solly's trains. I apologise to Solly Stanton because he would not have sold them. That is how bad they are. They are probably the worst trains ever, and that mob over there signed the contract. The fingerprints of the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Indooroopilly are all over that contract. They cannot deny it. They have given us the worst set of trains ever in this country.

Let us talk about trains. We just saw \$28 million spent at Downer, in Maryborough, on the upgrade of two tilt trains. I remind those opposite: five million kilometres without a spanner being put on those trains. Those trains never broke down in 20 years service. While they are all animated over there, I invite that mob—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Miss Barton): Order! As difficult as it might be to believe, I am struggling to hear the member for Maryborough.

**Mr SAUNDERS:** I personally invite the Leader of the Opposition to come up and talk to the men and women of Downer and tell them that this is a bad policy. Come up and meet the 242 workers there. That is a personal challenge to the Leader of the Opposition tonight. Come with me to that workforce, stand in front of those men and women and tell them that this Palaszczuk Labor government policy is bad. Let us see if he has the backbone to stand up to the workers of Maryborough, because they will never forget him and they will never forgive. They like this policy. When I walk down the streets of Maryborough they tell me this is a great policy.

When Labor is in government we look after regional Queensland, and that is something we are doing now. Let the opposition leader come up with me and address the men and women of Downer. I have asked him three times. Let us see if we hear crickets or if he has the backbone to stand with the workers and tell them that this policy is no good. This is a great policy.

Every party has a slogan. Ours is put Queensland first. In my case it is put Maryborough first, but their theme song is 'cut, sell and sack; cut, sell and sack'. You can see them dancing now. I have never seen people who smile and laugh when they sack people. We saw it when they sacked 14,000 public servants. It is absolutely disgraceful. You should all hang your heads in shame. Fourteen thousand workers were sacked and now you want to put more Queenslanders out of jobs. All you want to do is sack people.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Maryborough—

**Mr SAUNDERS:** Sorry, Madam Deputy Speaker, I am passionate about my city unlike—

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Maryborough, please direct your comments through the chair. If the Minister for Multicultural Affairs and the member for Chatsworth would like to have a conversation, perhaps they can take it outside rather than have it across the table.

**Mr SAUNDERS:** I am very passionate about my city even if that rabble over there are not. They drove it to its knees and Queenslanders will not forget what they did.

*(Time expired)*

 **Mrs STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (5.56 pm): I am losing my voice but I will try. I add my opposition to this motion and commend fellow LNP colleagues for exposing this policy for what it is. Scrape off the spin and there is very little—

**Ms Grace** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Minister for Industrial Relations, given that the member for Currumbin is clearly not well and she is not taking your interjections—

**Ms Grace:** I am not interjecting on her.

**Mrs Frecklington** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Nanango! Given the circumstances, I think if we can allow the member for Currumbin to be heard so that not only the House can hear it but so too can Hansard. The member for Currumbin has the call.

**Mrs STUCKEY:** Scrape off the spin and there is very little there—a tired old policy idea from the eighties. It is a policy that exposes Labor as not only inexperienced but also grossly incompetent and dangerous. We know that Labor are prepared to stoop to any level, to spend taxpayers' money like drunken sailors, to steal LNP policies and call them their own, and to say anything to dupe Queenslanders into voting for them. Bereft of direction or original ideas, they are little more than tools of the unions—marionettes whose strings are constantly pulled by their union puppet masters and they do not seem to care.

Let us look at their track record on supporting small business. Who can forget Bligh and Fraser's 'buy local' backfire with Bangladeshi T-shirts. Premier Palaszczuk and her comrades are no better, carrying the same DNA as their union-loving, small business-hating lefties that came before them.

Words are cheap—but for me tonight they are not. Small business want government to get out of their way. They have indicated that they do not want direct assistance unless they have suffered from a national disaster. They want government to get off their backs. They want a competitive business operating environment and to be rid of the 92,000 pages of red tape Labor lumbered them with during the Beattie and Bligh years.

When the member for Ashgrove got out of the way as minister, giving the small business portfolio the flick early in this term of government, it was met with a sigh of relief from many small businesses right across Queensland. Like so many of her Labor colleagues she does not have a clue what makes small business tick. She does not have a clue of the daily challenges they face. By contrast, many of us in the LNP have small business in our blood or I would not be bothered to get up and speak tonight. I have firsthand experience of the mountains of choking red tape created by successive Labor governments. The LNP in government made significant inroads by removing countless inhibiting pages of job-restricting red and green tape and increasing the payroll tax threshold. We put the responsibility on to individual departments to reduce regulatory burden.

Small Business Week was an initiative of the LNP government during my time as minister. Labor did not even bother having one in 2015, and I am told they outsourced the event in 2016. Our buy locally, buy Queensland campaign was designed to encourage people to buy from their local shops and support local jobs. Labor's Buy Queensland policy is irresponsible and is actually putting Queensland jobs at risk.

Listen to the sage advice from Nick Behrens, former policy and advocacy manager for CCIQ and now an in-demand consultant in his own business, QEAS. Nick, like many small and larger business advocates, asks why this Labor government would gamble almost \$41 billion in existing free trade agreements to win \$3 billion. Labor are putting this huge amount of money at risk. According to a Treasury document, there are nine countries with free trade agreements which spent \$40.7 billion on goods from Queensland suppliers in 2016-17. I table that document.

*Tabled paper:* Document depicting free trade agreement countries and the value of Queensland exports [1628].

What will happen to them when they hear that the Queensland Premier has declared war on them, saying she will no longer be bound by free trade agreements? We need look no further than the 2018 Commonwealth Games to see how serious this government is about buying local. The minister sat back silently while contracts and tenders were lost to Queenslanders. She did not flinch when they were given to offshore companies. How many jobs have been lost already? The opening and closing ceremonies were the first to go offshore. Now there is concern that our meter maids are being passed over for an imitation. Love them or loath them, they are synonymous with the Gold Coast. They are part of our colour and history.

I remember launching the procurement process as minister in 2013. Two briefings were held. About 1,100 people attended on the Gold Coast and some 700 attended in Brisbane. The government can carry on about their roadshow being a success, but 130 people a pop is not many at all. Just recently a Queensland company were told that they missed out on a contract for furniture and mattresses. Only the LNP has a plan to build a better Queensland. Labor thinks that a job is a public servant. Small businesses in Queensland are not fools. They know recklessness when they see it.

*(Time expired)*

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

**AYES, 44:**

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

**INDEPENDENT, 2**—Gordon, Pyne.

**NOES, 41:**

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

Resolved in the affirmative.

## MOTION

### Category H Firearms

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (6.07 pm): I move—

That this House supports primary producers' rights to own category H firearms by providing as-of-right access to category H firearms for primary producers.

This Labor government have taken it upon themselves to attack the rights of primary producers to own these firearms, and it has manifested itself with the category H weapons. This story started for me when some primary producers contacted my office to say that they had been using these firearms for years—because they are a handy tool that can be used around the paddock—but, suddenly, their applications for a category H firearm were being knocked back. The important thing to recognise in this debate is that these people are not getting knocked back for a licence; they are getting knocked back for a category of firearm within the licence. They have already gone through the checks and balances of whether there is any criminal history and the other checks that are there, but this is getting the category H licence to acquire a category H firearm. That difference is very important.

If a farmer is on a bike or a horse in remote areas, this is a practical tool that can be used in those circumstances. It is the same if they are walking in between cattle yards and going through the rails. The alternative is to carry a rifle and this is very awkward and completely impractical. That is the whole point of people using pistols. In other ordinary circumstances, rifles are very practical tools; they would not exist on stations if they were not of some use.

One gentleman who is a fine old fellow and cattle producer in the area lives about three hours from Mount Isa where the nearest pistol club is. He was walking back to his vehicle late one afternoon and there was a pack of wild dogs near him. He thought that if the dogs got between him and his car he would have been in big trouble because there were no trees around. He decided to go down to the police station and get his category H licence renewed but he could not get it. This is an older fellow with no history of anything. He can join a pistol club and drive three hours six times a year to that pistol club. He can still own that pistol, keep it on his station and drive across his station with it in his car to Mount Isa—and that is considered safe—but he cannot own it and take it out in this very remote area where it is of no harm to anyone while checking his bores or doing cattle work.

A lot of people who engage in this debate do not know what they are talking about. They think if they get more guns out of the market that is better for everyone, but this does not achieve that. I can still join a pistol club and do it, but it makes it impractical for me because I cannot use it on the farm. This is not about taking guns out of the market; all it does is prevent me from using it on the farm where it is safe. I can still use it in town where there are people. There is an anomaly and a silly decision has been made. Nothing has come before the parliament. I table this Queensland police document.

*Tabled paper:* Extract from Queensland Police Service web page titled 'Concealable Firearms Licence' [[1629](#)].

It states—

A Concealable Firearms Licence ...

This licence may only be issued for the following genuine reasons:

- a) Sports or Target Shooting
- b) Primary Production; or
- c) other occupational reasons.

It says it here, but no-one can get them, although the odd few are slipping through. Obviously there is a problem when I can drive to town and use it there, but I cannot use it out of town, four or five hours away, out in the bush where I actually need to use it. That is where it would be really handy to be able to use it. That is where I cannot use it. That is an anomaly. This decision has been made without the right information. The previous minister has made some adverse comments in this House towards our primary producers that they want to be lone cowboys. That is a real insult to these people who just want to go out and do their job because it is a safety issue. If they are out on the station by themselves, their wife is away, they are driving out the back to check the bores and it is not practical to carry a rifle, who is there to help them? They have to help themselves. It is a genuine tool for them. It does not make sense for them to not have access. We need to change this. It behoves this House to support these people and let them have access to these tools of their business.

 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services) (6.12 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate. From the outset I would like to reaffirm the Palaszczuk government's commitment to the safety and security of all Queenslanders. That means having a robust, safe, secure weapons regime here in Queensland.

It is important to note from the outset that the vast majority of firearm owners in our state are responsible individuals, and that very much includes our primary producers and farmers living right across Queensland. It is also important to note that there has been no change to the weapons regulation in respect of category H and there have always been conditions on the ownership, possession and use of firearms. Those conditions are in place for very good reasons, and that is for the safety of Queenslanders, the safety of all people.

The firearms policy set out in the 2017 National Firearms Agreement is crafted to achieve the best balance between the needs of people, such as sporting shooters and primary producers, to have genuine access to firearms and the interests of safety. We must always remember that as part of living in a safe community, we have to ensure that the rights that we enjoy are qualified to some extent, and we see that encapsulated in the weapons regulation. There are always conditions on the ownership of firearms for the safety of our community, the safety of Queenslanders. In fact, the recent review of the National Firearms Agreement arose from a very important recommendation of the Martin Place siege review, which was undertaken by the federal and New South Wales governments, again for community safety reasons—to ensure people are safe. Much of the public discussion around the 2017 National Firearms Agreement has been around the decision of COAG to reclassify the lever action shotgun, a decision that Queensland supports and a decision that Queensland will be implementing in due course.

Our government continues to engage and consult widely with all stakeholders and community to carefully balance the interests of those with a genuine need to access firearms with the safety and security of our community. Fundamentally, Queensland follows the national firearms framework, but there are some historic variations. One of those historic variations is the ownership of category H handguns for primary producers on a genuine needs basis. Historically in Queensland, handgun licences have been issued to primary producers on the basis of genuine reasons criteria for use on large properties to destroy sick or injured animals to prevent prolonged suffering for the animal if the owner was to return to their residence to gain access to a long arm.

Under our legislative safeguards and protections, there are currently over 2,100 concealable firearms licences in Queensland and over 2,500 concealable firearms issued for occupational rural purposes. Under Queensland legislation, applicants who wish to hold a category H firearm for occupational rural purposes must demonstrate a genuine reason for holding that weapon. That has to be supported by documentation to possess and use that particular class of firearm. This is particularly relevant because of the nature of handguns: they are concealable. That, of course, is accompanied by an additional awareness around safety of Queenslanders. This includes handguns that may be used for sports target shooting at approved pistol clubs or for occupational purposes including training, security guard employment and occupational rural purposes.

I must say—and it is important for us to note this—our government accepts and takes the expert advice on community safety from the Queensland Police Service. The Queensland Police Service is a professional and well informed service that is sworn to protect life. What do they say? The weapons regulations around category H are right because they are designed to protect community safety. There is a real test here today for those opposite. Are they going to support the fundamental basis of John Howard's 20-year bipartisan legacy around the National Firearms Agreement, which is about sensible gun control, or are they going to risk placing more concealable handguns out there in our community, which is a threat to the security of our community, a threat to safety? Those opposite have a decision. Are they going to support more concealable handguns out there in our community in Queensland, or are they going to stick to the bipartisan legacy of John Howard's National Firearms Agreement? We will always put the safety of Queenslanders front and centre, and the current weapons regulations around category H do just that.

*(Time expired)*

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (6.17 pm): I rise to support the KAP motion that this House supports the rights of primary producers to own category H firearms by providing as-of-right access to category H weapons for primary producers. I believe this is a good motion. It is very much supported and has been pushed by landowners over a number of years and particularly by AgForce. This has been a long time coming. Primary producers are the ones who put the food on the table. When we eat in restaurants or when we have a feed, it is due to them getting out amongst the flies, the crows, the heat and the dust to put that food on the table.

There is also the tyranny of distance. Every property is different. The properties in the Gulf of Carpentaria are different to the small properties around residential areas. Likewise, in places like Charters Towers there was talk that with 17,000 acres of land people could just make a living. The primary producers need the tools to carry out the job they do. When those primary producers see a heifer that has been mauled by wild dogs they need to finish it off, otherwise that heifer will go through a long period of suffering.

You have to understand that a primary producer can go to a pistol club and use a handgun. They have to attend that pistol club six times a year, and if they do not attend that pistol club they have to hand the pistol in. Primary producers have been complaining to us that, even though they have been trying to get a category H licence or renew one, they are continually being denied. Even though they are a primary producer and they have access to category B firearms, they are denied access to a handgun. When you look at the Gulf of Carpentaria, property owners sometimes have to travel over 1,400 kilometres on dirt roads through creeks and gullies—and blowouts—to attend a pistol shoot so they can keep their licence. In those areas you are not talking about travelling just a few kilometres. If you want to get from one end of your property to the other it could be a 1½ to two-hour ride on a horse, four-wheeler or a motorbike. If you are carrying a rifle it can become very heavy, particularly when you are mustering, but if you have access to a pistol it is very, very simple. It is one of the tools that is needed to do the job. I strongly support this motion.

There are continual problems with regard to the renewal of category H licences. Time and time again we have heard from primary producers that they cannot renew a category H licence and weapons licensing continually knocks them back. This is an issue that needs to be addressed, and this motion will address the issue. I believe that shooting is a great Australian pastime and something that culturally we have been brought up with, particularly in rural and regional Queensland where many landowners and property owners are trying to get access to a category H licence. I fully support the right to bear arms. When we have an issue with firearms or illegal firearms, the first thing governments do is attack law-abiding firearm owners. Governments need to support law-abiding firearm owners, not target them. This is a good motion. We want to ensure that primary producers do not have to travel 1,500 kilometres—which many do—to attend a pistol shoot just so they can keep a handgun when they need it, because it is a tool they need to carry to do their job. I commend the motion to the House.

 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (6.22 pm): I rise to oppose the motion before the House tonight. Back in April 1996 when I was a young fellow I remember hearing the news of a developing situation at Port Arthur in Tasmania. It was news of a mass shooting and I listened in disbelief. It was a massacre. Sadly, 35 people were murdered and 23 wounded on that day. This led then Prime Minister John Howard to overhaul weapon ownership and licensing nationwide in Australia. This courageous move resulted in the National Firearms Agreement, and the new laws which came into effect were passed by the states only 12 days after that massacre. Since then as a nation we again watched in disbelief as a siege which was motivated by terrorism occurred at Martin Place in Sydney. Following that Martin Place siege the Commonwealth, states and territories agreed through COAG to update the National Firearms Agreement. It was acknowledged there had been significant technological advancements and departures from the agreement since 1996 which should be addressed in that review. This has resulted in the 2017 National Firearms Agreement.

Under the Palaszczuk government, Queensland will always remain part of John Howard's National Firearms Agreement. We are proud to say that as a state government under Annastacia Palaszczuk. Although Queensland generally follows the National Firearms Agreement framework, there are some differences in recognition of the fact that Queensland is a geographically large state and there are historical variations in the Queensland legislation. The 2017 National Firearms Agreement specifically precludes the use of category H firearms for primary production purposes. Queensland currently issues category H weapons to primary producers—and will continue to—on a case-by-case basis, as they have done previously for many years. Historically, these types of licences have been issued to primary producers for use on large properties to destroy sick and injured animals and to prevent prolonged suffering of an animal if an owner has to return to their residence to obtain a long arm weapon.

Members in the House know that I have a twin brother who is a policeman in my electorate, and when I talk to him about category H firearms he explains to me that category H firearms are the most concealable weapon and the biggest threat to police in this state. Those weapons are a huge threat to those who protect us and a huge concern to everyone. There have been many arrests as recently as the last few weeks of individuals who have the capacity to cause serious injury or death with these

weapons. I understand that a number of these licences have recently been refused by QPS weapons licensing on the basis that applicants do not meet the 'genuine reason' requirement for the issue of a concealable firearm for a variety of reasons, including failing to meet occupational requirements.

I commend the QPS for their thorough scrutiny of applications for these types of weapons. Any application to possess a category H firearm undergoes vigorous scrutiny and a thorough vetting of the applicant by QPS weapons licensing. Applicants must demonstrate a genuine reason, which must be supported by documentation, to use a particular class of firearms. This includes handguns that are to be used for sport target shooting at an approved pistol club or for occupational purposes including training, security guard employment and occupational rural purposes. This side of the House supports access to firearms for primary producers. This side of the House also supports the use of handguns by primary producers; however, this is—and must be—assessed independently by QPS weapons licensing on a case-by-case basis.

The Palaszczuk government listens. That is why Minister Ryan has set up the Firearms Advisory Forum. This forum has representatives from peak bodies, including AgForce and victims' organisations, to ensure that we consult widely on this. Most of all, we receive and take advice from weapons licensing. They are the experts. It is for these reasons that I do not support the motion of the member for Mount Isa tonight.

 **Mr DICKSON** (Buderim—PHON) (6.27 pm): I wholeheartedly support the motion put forward tonight, and I hope that the LNP and other crossbenchers do too. I will read this again so it is easier for the Labor Party to understand. The motion states—

That this House supports primary producers' rights to own category H firearms by providing as-of-right access to category H weapons for primary producers.

We are not talking about giving firearms to bank robbers, criminals or anybody else, including the type of person who was involved in the Lindt Cafe siege. This is not about terrorism.

I know that the Labor Party wants to treat farmers like terrorists. That is what they have done ever since I have been in this House. They treat farmers very badly. This is an opportunity for the House to stand up for the farming industry tonight. That is what the Katters are doing. That is what One Nation is going to do. We have a policy document here. It is a 21-point plan to make it easier and better for legal firearm owners to get on in this state.

Let me touch on a couple of things that were said. The minister said that there has been no change to the Firearms Act. I think that is wrong. I think the Labor Party does demonise firearm owners in the state of Queensland. A 'genuine reason' to own a firearm needs to be made very clear. What more genuine reason does a farmer need than a truck driver does to drive a truck down the street? He could drive it onto the footpath and kill many people—we have seen it happen throughout the world—but truck drivers do not do that here because they have a licence, they are decent people and they do the right thing.

Let us talk about plumbers. The tools of their trade are power tools, oxyacetylene and cutting tools. Imagine what they could do with those destructive weapons! Plumbers have licences and we trust them. The Labor Party says, 'Don't trust farmers. They're going to go out and shoot everybody.' My God, what are they thinking? Tonight we want to see farmers treated fairly and equally. That is clearly what this motion is about.

I will give everybody in the House tonight a bit of a wake-up call. I am a firearm owner and a pistol shooter. I do IPSC. Members should be terrified! I have been coming into this chamber for 11 years and everybody has been safe because I abide by the law, as do farmers and other registered gun owners in this state. I again table One Nation's 21-point plan, available at [www.onenation.com.au](http://www.onenation.com.au).

*Tabled paper:* Pamphlet titled 'Queensland—It's in your hands' outlining One Nation policy [\[1630\]](#).

This is a real policy that looks after all firearm owners in Queensland. I know that Firearm Owners United will vote for Katter's Australian Party or One Nation and maybe even the LNP, if they support this motion tonight. They will not vote for the ALP because they know that the ALP demonises gun owners and farmers.

Tonight I would like to see people in this House come together and decide that we will allow farmers access to a tool of their trade, just like truck drivers and plumbers have, so that they can carry a handgun out into the paddock if they need to. The salient point is that this is optional. It would only be done if it was needed. Farmers will not just go out holding a gun in the air and shooting it all the time. They will have it handy in case there is a feral animal that they need to dispose of or a sick and injured animal that they need to put down for humane reasons.

Farmers are the greatest custodians of the land we have ever had. When we talk about environmentalists, it is not the greens but the farmers of Queensland who are the real environmentalists. They look after the land and get rid of feral animals that are destroying so many native species. We all know about feral cats. There are a couple of million of them in Queensland. What has Labor done about that? There were a couple of million feral cats when it came to government and there are probably four million feral cats now. Those opposite have done nothing about that. They are pretenders. They pretend to look after the environment but they are actually land destroyers. The farmers are the ones who look after the environment. They are the ones who protect our native species. They want Queensland to be a great state and they want to work within the environment.

Members should get behind the motion. I am going to support it, and I hope Bill does too. I hope that the LNP supports the motion also. They can buy a whole lot of votes here tonight by looking after rural industries, the gun lobby and the shooters organisation. These are real Queenslanders. LNP members should not demonise them like the Labor Party does. They should look after them and treat them like all Queenslanders. That is their opportunity tonight: let them down or vote for them.

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport and Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (6.32 pm): The member for Buderim talked about us coming together tonight over the issue of guns. I remind the member for Buderim that more than 20 years ago this nation came together over the issue of gun ownership in Australia. They came together after an horrific massacre in our nation. At that time, we as a nation made a decision that we would not be a nation that had a liberal attitude towards prolific gun ownership in this country because we acknowledge the massive and terrible damage caused by guns.

During the whole period of the Howard government there were not many times—in fact, there were no times—that I felt pride in my national government, apart from the time after the Port Arthur massacre, when John Howard showed leadership on this issue and took on the National Party element of his coalition to say that this is not the nation we want, that we want strict firearm regulations and controls in this nation because we never want to see a repeat of the Port Arthur massacre in Australia. I took great pride in that. I stand in this place as a Queensland parliamentarian and commit to upholding those principles and the regulations John Howard brought to this nation in a bipartisan way. We have heard from the police minister tonight that after the Martin Place siege we as a nation also took a decision to review the National Firearms Agreement and we again decided to maintain restrictive firearm regulations.

What this motion calls for and what the member for Dalrymple mentioned in his speech is essentially a right to bear arms—that there should be a category of Queenslanders that has an automatic right to hold a concealed firearm. I do not know whether the members for Dalrymple and Buderim understand whether they are in Australia or America. No-one should have an automatic right to bear arms in this state or in this nation. I have great respect for our primary producers—

**Opposition members:** No, you don't.

**Ms TRAD:** I do, but they should not be put in a different category from other Queenslanders and Australians on this issue.

When I engaged my community in a conversation about the 2017 National Firearms Agreement, there was a resounding response to including lever action shotguns in a higher restriction category in terms of gun ownership. The thing that really got to me was a phone call received by my office from a woman named Carolyn Loughton. Carolyn Loughton's daughter Sarah was shot at Port Arthur and died as her mother lay over her. She was quite distressed to think that there would be some people in this country arguing for more relaxation around the ownership of firearms in Australia. That is what this motion tonight seeks to do. We on this side of the House are absolutely opposed to that.

Will those opposite, who seek to cosy up to people like the member for Buderim, Senator Pauline Hanson and One Nation, support this motion? We will stick by John Howard's strong firearm regulations. Will Tim Nicholls? He has turned his back on so much that he has championed in the past, including stronger firearm regulation. Will he do it again tonight?

*(Time expired)*

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

Resolved in the negative under standing order 106.

Sitting suspended from 6.43 pm to 7.45 pm.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Queensland Exports

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (7.45 pm): I previously advised the House that over the 12 months to the end of June our exports were \$65.9 billion. This was an increase of 48 per cent over the last 12 months of the former LNP government. I can now update the House on further good news for Queensland exports. For the 12 months to the end of July Queensland exports increased to a record \$68.14 billion over the year ending July 2017. Exports over the last 12 months were 52.8 per cent higher than the last 12 months of the LNP government and its trade minister, the member for Clayfield. The increase in exports is good news for Queensland exporters and great news for Queensland jobs. Growth in exports was driven by coal, LNG, crops and mostly chickpeas. I can report that chickpea exports over the last 12 months increased by 113 per cent, from \$659 million to \$1.4 billion. Encouragingly, over the July 2017 quarter, beef exports have returned to positive territory—the first rise since the September quarter 2015. These results come as Queenslanders have worked to recover and rebuild following severe Tropical Cyclone Debbie. Queensland is achieving these record results because we are working with industry and our trading partners.

## PRIVILEGE

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

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (7.46 pm): During question time today the member for Mansfield asked me a question and referred to two letters. I took the question on notice so that I could look at the letters before responding. The member for Mansfield's question stated—

Why is the government hiding from answering the question about the so-called review of the decision to grant parole to the convicted killer of the Pullen's son, and doesn't the board's response indicate that no rigorous review was actually undertaken?

I believe that the member has deliberately misrepresented the intention of the board's letter. The letter from the independent Parole Board to the member for Mansfield said—

As you would be aware, the matter has now been referred to the Crime and Corruption Commission. As such it would be inappropriate for anyone from the Board to make any comment in respect to your correspondence of 25 August 2017.

I will be writing to the Speaker about this matter.

## ETHICS COMMITTEE

### Reports

 **Mr BROWN** (Capalaba—ALP) (7.48 pm), by leave: I table report No. 173, titled *Report on a right of reply No. 30*, and report No. 174, titled *Report on a right of reply No. 31*.

*Tabled paper:* Ethics Committee: Report No. 173—Report on a Right of Reply No. 30 [[1631](#)].

*Tabled paper:* Ethics Committee: Report No. 174—Report on a Right of Reply No. 31 [[1632](#)].

I advise the House that the Ethics Committee has attached extracts of the minutes relevant to the committee's consideration of these two matters to the reports to comply with the intent of standing order 211 as recommended by the House or by the CLA. I commend the reports and the committee's recommendations to the House.

## LAND ACCESS OMBUDSMAN BILL

## GASFIELDS COMMISSION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

### Second Reading (Cognate Debate)

Resumed from p. 2849, on motion of Dr Lynham—

That the bills be now read a second time.

 **Mr PEARCE** (Mirani—ALP) (7.48 pm), continuing: As the member for Mirani I bring with me years of living and working with livestock, working in the grain industry and generally working on the land. While I am known as a strong and powerful advocate for the mining industry, I also consider myself

up-front and honest when it comes to representing the rural industry. I am never afraid to take up the issues for them. I just wanted to make sure that people understood that. I refer to the functions and powers of the Land Access Ombudsman. I will quote the Ombudsman's functions from the explanatory notes because I think it is important to get it into *Hansard* for those people in Central Queensland who might want to read this speech to see the functions, powers and other important points of the bill. The functions of the Land Access Ombudsman are—

To investigate, and facilitate the timely resolution of, land access disputes.

Land owners will love that; it is going to happen more openly and quickly—

to refer or recommend to departments the investigation of possible offences under sections 53, 54 and 55; or possible breaches that relate to access to land;

This access to land can be quite time-consuming for land owners and sometimes they come up against a body, a government or a mining company that can be very hard to deal with. Anything we can do to help land owners in this process is good. It continues—

To identify, and advise government entities about systemic issues arising from land access disputes;

To promote public awareness of the ombudsman's functions ... other functions conferred on the ombudsman under this Act or another Act.

Clause 16 sets out the matters about which the Land Access Ombudsman cannot accept a dispute referral. The Land Access Ombudsman cannot investigate or continue to investigate any of the following matters—

A conduct and compensation agreement or make good agreement not yet entered into;

A conduct and compensation agreement that is subject to the minimum negotiation period as prescribed in section 87 of the Mineral and Energy Resources (Common Provisions) Act 2014;

A make good agreement the subject of a cooling-off period under the Water Act 2000, section 423A;

The content of legislation or government policies;

A decision made by Cabinet, a Minister or a chief executive.

That refers to integrity of process. It is an open process that is accountable and which is what land owners want, because one thing I do know about land owners is that, when we treat them up-front, get down, talk dirty with them and show them respect, they will work with us to get the best outcome.

In terms of what the Land Access Ombudsman can deal with—

A matter that is or has been the subject of a proceeding or arbitration. This includes if during the investigation a party lodges an application with a court or commences an arbitration of a matter that is or at least has been the subject of an investigation by the department.

I believe that this is good legislation. I believe that it is what we as a government are about: looking at the issues, working with landholders and their representative bodies and doing everything we can to come up with outcomes that are about reducing red tape, that are about ensuring that land owners are able to use legislation to get the best outcomes for themselves and their family. I support the bill before the House.

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (7.56 pm): I rise to contribute to the cognate debate on the Gasfields Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017 and the Land Access Ombudsman Bill 2017.

These bills are largely administrative. I note that the amendments basically relate to the operational structure of the GasFields Commission. However, there is some devil wrapped up in the detail and on that point I very much thank the member for Warrego, Ann Leahy, and the member for Gympie, Tony Perrett, for bringing those issues to our attention and holding that committee to account. I also thank the shadow minister for natural resources and mines, the member for Hinchinbrook, Andrew Cripps, who has taken carriage of this bill, particularly in relation to the Land Access Ombudsman Bill, whilst my shadow portfolio covers the Gasfields Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Bill.

The bill is largely informed by the independent review conducted by Professor Bob Scott who found the following—

Gasfield Commission functions should be maintained or enhanced in order that a harmonious relationship between the CSG industry and the agricultural land uses be created and maintained.

He goes on—

I have further concluded that the Gasfields Commission has contributed substantially to the improved coexistence of landholders, regional communities and the onshore gas industry in Queensland particularly by influencing the methods employed by CSG companies.

Lastly, Robert Scott found—

From the submissions I received, the Commission, through its functions, also enjoys good support from a number of other organisations including the LGAQ, the Centre for Coal Seam Gas, the Commonwealth Department of Industry, Innovation and Science and CSG companies and their peak organisations.

It is very important to set the scene about what Professor Scott said in relation to the workings of the GasFields Commission. The LNP created the GasFields Commission in 2012, because quite simply when the LNP came to government it had inherited a divided regional Queensland. Labor governments before us did nothing to quell the atmosphere of distrust and disharmony which had grown over the years between landholders and resource companies. Landholders, rightfully so, were crying out to be heard. For so many years the gas companies had been riding roughshod over them and there had simply been no adequate support at a government intervention level. We are talking about through the uptake of the coal seam gas industry in Queensland when we had a Labor government.

We know from history that when the LNP set up this GasFields Commission it helped create an even footing giving landholders access to information and assistance to help them through the negotiations required. The commission lifted the veil of secrecy. That is the point that I want to get to. The GasFields Commission enabled landholders across those gas fields to have a voice. They had someone to talk to. They had people on that commission who knew what they were going through.

Stories abound of those times before the GasFields Commission was set up. There were stories of landholders who had negotiated with coal seam gas companies to allow them on their place in good faith for a carton of beer a year, but then the neighbour had negotiated in good faith under the veil of secrecy for thousands of dollars. There was no even footing that put landholders on an even playing field when negotiating access rights between the companies and the landholder. That is why the LNP took that step.

I know that the shadow minister talked at length about this in his contribution. We need to give credit where credit should be given, that is, to the then deputy premier, the honourable Jeff Seeney the member for Callide, because he and the then cabinet put together the GasFields Commission under the chairmanship of John Cotter and the assistance of six commissioners. Given the work that those commissioners did on behalf of the state of Queensland, the landholders and the gas companies, they should be recognised in this House today.

I would like to recognise the contribution of John Cotter; Mr Don Stiller, a landholder and former mayor of Taroom shire; Mr Ian Hayllor, a cotton farmer and irrigator, who had a long involvement in managing the coexistence through his role as the chair of the Basin Sustainability Alliance—I had a lot to do with Ian Hayllor; Councillor Ray Brown, the then mayor of Western Downs; Mr Rick Wilkinson, the CEO of the Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association; Professor Steven Raine, a leading academic and soil scientist from USQ; and, lastly, Mr Shane Charles CEO of Toowoomba and Surat Basin Enterprise with over 20 years experience in the law.

I congratulate and thank those people who sat on that GasFields Commission and fought the good fight on this issue. Those commissioners brought the parties together to resolve the issues. It partnered with other bodies to undertake research and it convened advisory panels as needed. It also had the teeth to get the job done. The LNP gave the commission the powers to compel government agencies to provide information and advice. We cannot underestimate what those commissioners, with the assistance of the then LNP government, did for land access rights in regional Queensland. I note that the shadow minister, the member for Hinchinbrook, has said that the LNP will take a watching brief over this bill and the effects that it will have on those landholders and on the coexistence that is so vital for our agriculture and our resource industry in this state.

The Land Access Ombudsman Bill will establish an independent ombudsman with the powers to investigate and make recommendations to resolve disputes in relation to a conduct and compensation agreement or a make-good agreement. The creation of an ombudsman was not recommended by the Scott review. We are unsure why the government has chosen to go down this path. That is why a watching brief must be held on this issue. We note that Scott cited that other jurisdictions comparable to Queensland do not use an ombudsman for the purpose of land access disputes; therefore, we need to be rightfully slightly concerned that the introduction of this may not be the right way forward.

There is no doubt that there will be confusion between the ombudsman's role, that of the now new GasFields Commission and the other systems that are already in place under the Land Court. It must also be pointed out that while the Scott review considered matters around dispute resolution for the gas sector, the government has chosen to extend the scope of the bill to cover the coal and mineral sectors. There has been no consultation with these industries about how that will work with the sector. We need to be mindful that we have again seen the Palaszczuk government bring a bill into the House with no consultation.

I also note that landholders will be greatly disappointed that the GasFields Commission office will not be located in Toowoomba because it has been closed and moved to Brisbane. This is another example of how the city-centric Labor government does not get the bush. Of the 13 GasFields Commission staff members only three are employed as regional engagement officers. It is hard to picture how this will be enough people to offer effective services to those vast regional communities. That number will be very thin on the ground and totally impractical.

In relation to the major amendments to the GasFields Commission and the establishment of a Land Access Ombudsman, the LNP will be keeping a watching brief to ensure the original intent is complied with and our landholders in this great state are protected.

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (8.03 pm): I rise to contribute to the cognate debate in relation to the Gasfields Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and the Land Access Ombudsman Bill. I would like to thank the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee staff for their assistance with the inquiries into these bills and the professionalism in which they have produced both report No. 46 and report No. 50. I would also like to thank the members of the committee from both sides of the House for their participation in the committee process in the consideration of this bill. I would also like to thank the stakeholders for their patience with the state government, especially those who regularly made submissions and appeared before the parliamentary committee during the course of the examination of these bills. Perhaps the minister could advise why this legislation in response to Robert Scott's review has been delivered in such a piecemeal manner. Why not progress the review recommendations in one bill? As we have seen, we have review recommendations in two bills here, and I do not wish to pre-empt debate on the other piece of legislation that is on the *Notice Paper*, but we have a third bill that has come forward in response to Robert Scott's review recommendations.

The amendments to the Gasfields Commission Act and the Land Access Ombudsman Bill are, as we have heard earlier, as a result of the independent review undertaken by Professor Robert Scott. The amendments to the Gasfields Commission Act are envisaged to provide a clearer separation between the strategic and operational functions of the commission. The bill seeks to modify the membership requirements and clarify the responsibilities of the chief executive officer. There are also other amendments contained in the bill relevant to the Biodiscovery Act 2004 to expand the contractual framework available for biodiscovery and the Sustainable Ports Development Act 2015 to ensure that the port overlay provisions for the port master plans are applied consistently.

I will now turn to some of the detail in the Gasfields Commission amendments. During the public hearings on the bill it was confirmed that the GasFields Commission had closed its Toowoomba office on 30 June 2017 and the office will now be located in Brisbane. This closure, combined with only 23 per cent of the staff being tasked with regional engagement, is disappointing. As at 8 June 2017 there were only 13 staff engaged by the commission and only three identified as regional engagement officers. I feel for those three regional staff. They have massive distances to travel across the Surat Basin and right out to the Cooper Basin and they will feel some professional isolation. I think it is disappointing that those staff are placed in that position whilst the majority of the staff are actually located in Brisbane.

We heard earlier that one of the reasons why the office in Toowoomba was closed was because there was not a lot of walk-in foot traffic to that Toowoomba office. I can say that there is not going to be a huge lot more when it is located in Brisbane. They certainly will not be getting walk-ins about gas issues in Brisbane because they probably will not even be able to find it if they are from a regional area.

It is my view that the GasFields Commission should be located in a community and I am going to advocate very strongly for Dalby where there is an onshore gas industry, where there are landholders dealing daily with the industry, where there is local government, like the Western Downs Regional Council, that is dealing firsthand with industry issues, where there is a chamber of commerce that is working closely with the industry to make sure that there is business stimulus through their community and where the health and social services are trying to cope with the impacts they so often see from the sharp peaks and troughs of the resource development. As the member for Nanango pointed out earlier,

the Robert Scott review found the GasFields Commission functions should be maintained or enhanced in order that the harmonious relationship between the CSG industry and agricultural land uses can be created and maintained. I think it is particularly important to note that.

This government, behind the claims of structural and operational changes, has reduced a robust, standalone entity that could provide impartial direction, advice and recommendations to government and industry to a commission that is mainly a metro based entity that will be professionally isolated from the industry and the operations of the industry which they are to oversee and advise upon.

The explanatory notes state—

New subsections (ia) and (ib) are inserted into section 7 of the Gasfields Act and provide two new functions for facilitating the provision of information and community participation in health and well-being matters relating to onshore gas activities. These functions will be performed in conjunction with health specialists and service providers and are intended to be a coordination and communication role only.

This is an unusual amendment. Those who live in areas where there are onshore gas activities, as I do, do not want coordination or communication; they want a permanent doctor, they want a permanent dentist, they want a hospital that can do X-rays or a doctor who can set a child's broken arm rather than having to fly them out to Toowoomba or Brisbane, and they want a local hospital where women can birth locally.

Members opposite should not forget what some previous Labor governments did in relation to the onshore gas industry. Prior Labor governments set about shutting down birthing services in an area that was growing dramatically because of the onshore gas industry. They proposed shutting down the birthing services at Chinchilla, so women had to travel an hour to Dalby and run the risk of having their babies on the side of the road. When they came to government, the LNP not only implemented the GasFields Commission but also made sure that birthing services were returned to communities that had experienced significant growth, such as Chinchilla. When the former Labor government was in power, the community of Miles was also experiencing a lot of growth due to the onshore gas industry. However, they could not put dental services into Miles. They still cannot get a dentist to go to Miles. I hope that something is done about that in coordination with the GasFields Commission, because it is important that those people have access to basic services.

During the course of the hearing, committee members were advised of the remuneration package for the full-time chair of the commission, which is about \$200,000. For a part-time chair, the remuneration will be about \$6,000, plus reasonable out-of-pocket expenses. The part-time remuneration has been set under the remuneration procedures for part-time chairs and members of Queensland government bodies. For part-time commissioners, remuneration will be around \$4,500, plus reasonable out-of-pocket expenses. I take my hat off to the commissioners who have taken on those jobs, such as Ian Hayllor from Dalby and Commissioner Ruth Wade, with whom I am quite familiar. I question how future governments will continue to attract suitably qualified and experienced persons to undertake the roles of chair and commissioners when the total remuneration package is around \$6,000 for the chair and \$4,500 for commissioners. Although we have adequately qualified people at the present time, we should be looking to the future because the gas industry will be around for the next 30 to 40 years. It is no secret that in Queensland the onshore gas industry is a multibillion dollar industry. Therefore, there seems to be an imbalance in the remuneration for the chair and the commissioners, given the importance that the industry has in generating growth and jobs in Queensland.

I turn my comments to the Land Access Ombudsman Bill. The LNP committee members support a simple low-cost mechanism for landholders and resource authority holders to discuss alleged breaches of conduct and compensation agreements and make good agreements once dispute resolution provisions have been exhausted. However, we are concerned about what this bill actually does, the additional layer of complexity that it adds to the courts and alternative dispute resolution processes, and how those can be resolved. The government has landed on an ombudsman model, which is interesting as, in his report, retired Land Court judge Robert Scott did not recommend an ombudsman model. In fact, recommendation No. 10 of his review states—

That an Office of the Petroleum and Gas Moderator be established to assist parties to a dispute about alleged breaches of make good agreements and conduct and compensation agreements on the following basis ...

Further, he said—

As required by the Terms of Reference, this review had regard to what occurs in other jurisdictions (Australian states and Alberta, Canada). These jurisdictions are broadly similar to Queensland in that the State owns the mineral and energy resources and compensation is payable for impacts of resource development on the surface landholder, however the land access frameworks differ. None of these jurisdictions uses an ombudsman model for land access disputes. Arbitration and tribunals are variously used throughout Australia and in Alberta when there are disputes about compensation, and in some cases conduct.

Robert Scott's review report stated—

The term 'ombudsman' usually refers to an independent body that can investigate complaints made about government. Historically, an ombudsman represents the interests of the public by addressing complaints of maladministration or violation of rights.

Whilst Mr Scott recommended the creation of an independent body to assist in the resolution of these disputes between companies and landholders, he said that this body should not be called an 'ombudsman'. Part 7.5 of his report sets out his clear recommendation. The government's own review, undertaken by Mr Scott, did not recommend the establishment of an ombudsman. It cited other jurisdictions that are comparable to Queensland and said that they did not use an ombudsman for the purpose of land access disputes. Therefore, this government has ignored its own review. It is trying to implement a government complaints process in what are essentially commercial agreements.

There has been some earlier discussion in relation to consultation on this legislation. I point out that, in their submission to the committee, the Resources Council stated—

The Gasfields Commission review only investigated and made recommendations regarding the gas industry, however this Bill extends the Ombudsman role also to the coal and mineral industry. Even though on face value it seems reasonable to apply the same process broad brush across the entire industry, this approach, without further considered investigation, is cause for increasing concern for QRC's coal and mineral members.

Therefore, the government did not consult with the coal and mineral sectors in relation to the inclusion of their conduct and compensation agreements and make good agreements. That is disappointing. That is what the industry is saying about this bill and we heard about some of that earlier today.

The explanatory notes state, 'The main issues raised by external stakeholders included the lack of statutory timeframes for the land access ombudsman's processes, defining the necessary qualifications for the land access ombudsman and support staff ...'. It is quite interesting to look at that. Despite the matter being raised in the consultation done by the government, the government did not address the concerns raised in relation to the qualities and qualifications that a land access ombudsman should possess. It is entirely at the discretion of the government as to what characteristics and capabilities the ombudsman should possess. The reality is that the government could appoint a union member, a member of the Greens or, basically, anyone off the street, because the legislation does not prescribe what qualities or qualifications the ombudsman should have. It is bad enough that the government ignored their own review and its recommendations, but they are making a bit of a hash out of things by not prescribing qualifications. Basically, any Tom, Dick or Harry could be appointed as the ombudsman. That is a serious flaw that will not result in good outcomes for industry or landholders.

There is another issue in relation to clause 43 of the bill. It describes when a party may be represented at a meeting, which must be done with the leave of the Land Access Ombudsman. The ombudsman must not unreasonably withhold leave for a party to be represented at a meeting. This departs from the principle of other Queensland ombudsman services, which are intended to be free and informal. The Queensland Ombudsman, the Health Ombudsman and the Energy and Water Ombudsman have little or no reference to legal representation in their legislation or on their websites. The Land Access Ombudsman departs from those principles of a true ombudsman. This was not recommended by the review and the ombudsman model is not used in other similar jurisdictions. There is no question that, while it may appear on the surface to be a low-cost mechanism, we need to delve into what can occur with legal representation. If a company turns up and says, 'We want to be legally represented in a situation before the ombudsman', it would be really unfair if the ombudsman did not allow the landowner representation, as well. Therefore, it is not really a low-cost mechanism. The legislation is not written to deliver that outcome.

It is difficult to see how this bill will genuinely resolve some of the issues in relation to conduct and compensation agreements and make-good disputes. It is difficult to see how this will provide good outcomes. The LNP will be watching very closely. We will keep a watching brief on this legislation. I will be quite happy to report back to the House when we have issues that arise with this legislation. I commend the bills to the House.

 **Mr CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (8.19 pm): I rise very briefly to support the Gasfields Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017 and the Land Access Ombudsman Bill 2017. The GasFields Commission is an independent statutory body created to manage and improve sustainable coexistence between rural landholders, regional communities and the onshore gas industry.

Late in 2015 the Premier and Minister for the Arts committed to an independent review of the commission. I understand that extensive community consultation was undertaken during the review of the commission between March and July 2016. The independent reviewer, Professor Scott, considered 58 written submissions and undertook 82 individual interviews, including landholder visits. I take the opportunity to thank Professor Scott for his work on the review of the GasFields Commission.

I also understand that during the development of the bill, the government briefed key industry stakeholders and no concerns or issues were raised in relation to the proposed amendments. The commission was also extensively consulted throughout the preparation of the bill. There were 18 recommendations from the review on a range of matters. The government has supported or in principle supported the majority of the recommendations. This bill is an important step in delivering a number of those recommendations. With that, I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (8.21 pm): I rise to speak on the Land Access Ombudsman Bill and the Gasfields Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. While the committee has recommended that both bills be passed, there are some issues that the LNP has some reservations about.

The GasFields Commission bill aims to provide improvements to the operational structures of the GasFields Commission. It is intended to improve its operation and clearly distinguish between the roles of the commissioner and the commission. The changes aim to give effect to a new structure that separates the strategic and operational aspects of the commission and allow for a part-time chairperson.

The proposed new arrangements raise some serious concerns about the Labor government's default position to always be centralised, controlled and preference the Brisbane-centric bureaucracies. The LNP is concerned about the nuts and bolt measures of staffing and the location and remuneration of the part-time members.

A close analysis of this government's policies and decision shows that it only pays lip-service to supporting the regions. The arrangements proposed in this bill are a great example of arrogant and ignorant Brisbane-centric decision-making. The closure of the commission's head office two months ago and its relocation to Brisbane is a prime example of this narrow and arrogant treatment of the regions. The explanatory notes state that commission will—

... provide two new functions for facilitating the provision of information and community participation in health and well-being matters relating to onshore gas activities. These functions will be performed in conjunction with health specialists and service providers and are intended to be a coordination and communication role only.

The GasFields Commission employed 13 staff members in June this year, with only three of them identified as regional engagement officers. Some 23 per cent of total staffing is for engagement with communities and the regions. Given that onshore gas activities are located in the regions and not in Brisbane, just how does the government intend to actually undertake what it aims to, as outlined in its explanatory notes? Will the undertaking to communicate information and participation actually be meaningful or will it, once again, be lip-service or a tick-the-box exercise? The only way to ensure the coordination and communication of health and wellbeing matters related to onshore gas activities can be by the Labor government actually doing something positive—stopping the lip-service, stopping the window dressing, stopping the spin and ensuring that the commission has a staffing balance that is more regionally focused than it currently accepts.

While I am pleased when government goes out of its way to reduce expenses, the proposed remuneration for commissioners is puzzling. This government, which is controlled by overpaid unionists and thinks nothing of squandering millions of dollars on unproductive self-servicing causes, has proposed a remuneration package which is totally out of balance with the expectations and importance of the gas industry to this state. This is an industry that plays, and is expected to play, a pivotal role in our economic future.

The current full-time chair of the commission receives a total package of \$221,741. By transitioning to a part-time chair, the government is proposing a remuneration package of \$6,000 plus reasonable expenses. It is proposed part-time commissioners will receive \$4,500. That figure of \$6,000 is equivalent to 10 days pay for the current commissioner. Just how part-time is the government expecting the new chair to be? We are talking here about the chair of a commission for a multibillion dollar industry—an industry which is central to Queensland's growth, will reinvigorate the regions and generate employment.

Professor Robert Scott, in his independent review into the industry, said—

I have concluded that the Gasfields Commission has contributed substantially to the improved coexistence of landholders, regional communities and the onshore gas industry in Queensland particularly by influencing the methods employed by CSG companies.

He also said—

From the submissions I have received, the Commission, through its functions, also enjoys good support from a number of other organisations including the LGAQ, the Centre for Coal Seam Gas, (University of Queensland), the Commonwealth Department of Industry, Innovation and Science and CSG companies and their peak associations, APPEA, QRC and AMEC. Each of these organisations supports the continued operation of the Commission.

To recap, the Scott review found, from the submissions received and the findings of the review, that the commission still has a valuable role to play. However, the Scott review did not recommend the establishment of the Land Access Ombudsman. The Land Access Ombudsman Bill is about establishing an independent body to investigate and make recommendations about disputes relating to an alleged breach of a conduct and compensation agreement and a make-good agreement. It is also about ensuring continuity regarding the Minerals and Energy Resources (Common Provision) Transitional Regulation 2016 that would otherwise expire this month.

I have often raised my concerns that governments seem to think the only solution for any situation and policy is to introduce more unnecessary overregulation which impedes both the rights of citizens and the normal functioning of reasonable commercial activity. I am always wary of any mechanism we bring to this place which increases the regulatory burden on Queenslanders and their businesses.

The only way we can get this state moving is to slash the red tape which is choking our regions and investment, employment and business growth. We in the LNP support a simple, low-cost mechanism for landholders or resource authority holders to discuss alleged breaches of conduct and compensation agreements or make-good agreements. This should be after dispute resolution provisions have been fully exhausted.

The problem we have here is that this bill adds yet another layer of bureaucracy to an already complicated system—a system that already allows individuals to use the courts and alternative dispute resolution to resolve disputes. That includes the Land Court. This bill is the result of the government cherry-picking the independent review into the GasFields Commission. This is one of the government's more than 200 reviews conducted since it came to office.

The review by Professor Robert Scott recommended that an office of the petroleum and gas moderator be established to assist parties to a dispute about alleged breaches of make-good agreements and conduct and compensation agreements on the following basis—

To maintain the perception of independence, the Moderator should not be located in a government department. It could be co-located with an existing court or tribunal for ease of access to administrative and support services so as to lower costs.

The Moderator's recommendations would not be binding on the parties, but, in the event the parties cannot come to an agreement and the dispute proceeds to a court of competent jurisdiction, the recommendation may be tendered to the court.

The Moderator's recommendations will otherwise remain confidential to the parties.

Professor Scott did not recommend the establishment of an ombudsman. He even cited other jurisdictions similar to Queensland that do not use an ombudsman. As he said, the term 'ombudsman' usually refers to an independent body that can investigate complaints made about government.

Both conduct and compensation agreements and make-good agreements are commercial agreements. Stakeholders have raised a number of concerning issues including the inappropriate use of information, issues about the right to claim privilege against self-incrimination, the qualifications and capacities of the ombudsman who makes a determination about what is a reasonable attempt to resolve a dispute, and jurisdictional overlap. However, the central question remains: given that the independent review made no recommendations for a Land Access Ombudsman, why is the government introducing yet another legal or jurisdictional bureaucracy? I do not oppose the bills.

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (8.29 pm): I rise to address the Land Access Ombudsman Bill 2017 and the Gasfields Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017 cognate debate. I want to pick up from where the shadow minister left off. When I was the shadow minister for the environment in 2011, it is fair to say one of the things that was giving me a lot of sleepless nights was the coal seam gas industry. I honestly thought that on winning the 2012 election and becoming the minister for environment the industry would continue to cause me a lot of sleepless nights for the entire length of that term.

Whilst at that stage we had an extremely well-established industry, what we did not have was an industry that had a social licence to operate, an industry that understood the landowners' rights and requirements and expectations around basically being treated as human beings, an industry that did not quite yet have the support of the broader community. It was on a knife edge. It really was on a knife edge. Whilst we will hear the other side crow about how it was them who got the industry going, where they left it in 2012 was very concerning.

I want to pay particular credit to the then deputy premier, the member for Callide, for the role he played in developing policies that we as a team were able to implement from 2012 onwards. One of those key policies was the establishment of the GasFields Commission. As the then minister for environment, it was a great pleasure to be working alongside someone of the calibre of John Cotter in that role as he sought to work with the gas industry, work with the agricultural industries, work with the councils and work with individual landholders to get that social licence to operate, to get that balance right when it comes to dealing with individual farmers, individual property owners, and their expectations.

I can honestly say that it was not 12 months later that I quickly realised that an issue that I thought was going to be keeping me awake at night as the minister for environment was no longer keeping me awake. I must admit that I had far more sleepless nights worrying about crocodiles, flying foxes and koalas than I did about the coal seam gas industry. I want to pay respect to the member for Callide for the role he played.

I want to disagree a little with the member for Hinchinbrook because what he failed to do was acknowledge the role that he, too, played in establishing the GasFields Commission and ensuring that the coal seam gas industry rebalanced the work they were doing, particularly on the Darling Downs. They rebalanced their approach to landholders. They started investing in the communities in terms of that social licence to operate that they really needed. I acknowledge the extraordinary hard work of the member for Hinchinbrook in doing that.

He and I had a shared compliance role around the gas industry. I think that too demonstrated that, whilst we were here to assist a fledgling industry get on its feet, create jobs and export gas, we were also very serious about ensuring that not only the safety of their petroleum and gas operations but also their respect for the environment was paramount. Again, an issue that I thought would continue to percolate through our term in government quickly evaporated as we took that strong approach—one where we worked with the industry to ensure that they had the appropriate level of regulation. We also made it very clear that when they did not meet those expectations around that regulation they would be taken to task for it. Again, I give commendation to the member for Hinchinbrook for the extraordinary amount of work he did in those three years as the minister for natural resources and mines.

I want to conclude by suggesting to our southern colleagues, particularly those in New South Wales and Victoria, that they have really missed an opportunity. What we did in the LNP during those three years was give them a framework of how you can have responsible development of a gas industry alongside agricultural industries and alongside the environment. At the moment we hear this phrase that we have a gas shortage. We do not have a gas shortage. There is plenty of it in this nation.

**Mr Cripps:** Heaps of it.

**Mr POWELL:** Heaps of it—more than we need. There is so much more that we could export, but it is all locked up because our southern colleagues in New South Wales and Victoria have failed to learn from the lessons here in Queensland. They failed to take on board the incredibly sensible, pragmatic, community focused solutions like the GasFields Commission, replicate them and grow the gas industry in those jurisdictions. There could be gas coming out of those fields in New South Wales and Victoria right now. There could be more jobs—as much as I hate to say it—being created in New South Wales and Victoria right now. The pressure on our electricity market could be significantly less if those gas fields were being developed, but they did not have the courage and they did not have the intelligence to do what we had done and take sensible steps to establish a GasFields Commission that served as an interface between the resources industries and the landholders and the local communities.

Whilst I acknowledge that what we are debating tonight will see a gradual diminution in the responsibilities of that commission—because, let us face it, it has been a huge success; it has basically worked itself out of a job—I want to pay respect to the men, particularly the member for Callide and the member for Hinchinbrook, who were instrumental in its establishment and to the men and women who served on it and will continue to serve on it. I also acknowledge the role that the landholders, the primary producers, and the councils had in working with that commission for it to succeed so that we could demonstrate to the rest of the world that having resource industries alongside agricultural industries whilst protecting the environment is absolutely and utterly achievable.

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algera—ALP) (Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy and Minister for Small Business) (8.37 pm): I rise to speak to the Gasfields Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the hard work of the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee. For my contribution I will specifically speak to the amendments of the Biodiscovery Act 2004 contained within this bill.

The key objectives of these amendments are to encourage biodiscovery innovation and investment in Queensland by streamlining commercial dealings with entities undertaking biodiscovery. The Biodiscovery Act allows entities to collect and use native biological material from state land and waters for the purpose of biodiscovery. An example of biodiscovery is the collection of a native plant from state land to extract a compound to form the basis for development and commercialisation of a pharmaceutical product. One such biodiscovery project is the spinifex project.

The spinifex project is an innovative partnership between the Dugalunji Aboriginal Corporation, who represent the traditional owners of the upper Georgina River region near Camooweal, and the University of Queensland's Australian Institute for Bioengineering and Nanotechnology. Bringing together traditional knowledge, nanotechnology and spinifex—Australia's most extensive vegetation type—to create the products of the future, this project is designed to produce cellulose nanofibres for ongoing and future commercial trials.

Working together, Dugalunji Aboriginal Corporation and the University of Queensland are proposing to build a clean, green, Queensland based biorefining industry. Within five years, it is predicted that these nanofibres will have been transferred into dozens of applications and be manufactured on a commercial scale for a number of key markets.

This project has the potential to deliver huge benefits to the local economy and create a new industry that can deliver broader economic returns for our state. However, the pace at which this can be developed with associated partners can be hampered by the current structure of the Biodiscovery Act. Currently, the Biodiscovery Act is structured so that every entity that uses native biological material along a commercial chain is required to have a benefit-sharing agreement with the state. This was originally intended to ensure that any potential benefits of biodiscovery are shared in a fair and equitable way between the state and biodiscovery entities; however, this structure does not always suit commercial arrangements. There can be many entities involved in a commercial chain, and requiring each one to have a contract with the state may be a disincentive to realising commercial opportunities.

This amendment responds to stakeholder feedback from the 2016 statutory review of the Biodiscovery Act, including concerns raised by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders. It also responds to feedback obtained through the direct negotiation of benefit-sharing agreements with biodiscovery entities. As such, the bill amends the Biodiscovery Act to expand the contractual framework for biodiscovery by adding an alternative agreement option. The alternative agreement option is called a subsequent use agreement. Under this agreement, other biodiscovery entities would be able to enter into subsequent use agreements with a party to a benefit-sharing agreement. This agreement would be subject to prescribed minimum terms being met.

These changes ensure that all entities along a commercial chain can operate with reduced regulatory burden under the Biodiscovery Act. This means less red tape for entities involved in development of innovative products using native biological material collected in Queensland. This will encourage job creation and innovation in scientific discovery while protecting the state's interests in native biological material.

The benefits for biodiscovery projects that this amendment provides, such as the spinifex project, have the potential to help deliver the benefits I have just outlined in a shorter time frame. A range of consequential amendments are also proposed to the Biodiscovery Act to deliver this new subsequent use agreement option. Biodiscovery is an exciting and innovative area of research that is regulated by the Department of Science, Information Technology and Innovation. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (8.42 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the cognate debate on the Land Access Ombudsman Bill and the Gasfields Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I rise as probably one of the few people in this House, if not the only one, who has had to sit down and negotiate a conduct and compensation agreement with a gas company, so I know how this works firsthand. That was back in the very early days of gas. As we all know, it began under the Bligh era and it came at landholders at 100 miles an hour. They were not ready for it. I know the trauma that I went through in negotiating that contract. I had to seek legal advice. A code and conduct agreement is as important as a title on your property. It is that important.

In those early days it is fair to say that it became a lawyer's picnic because landowners did not know how to negotiate their way through, they did not know the roadblocks and the hurdles and all the difficulties that come when your property is turned into a gas field. We saw small legal firms in country towns bought out by very large multinational legal firms, and that continues today.

One of the greatest things that happened in the term of the LNP government—and the member for Hinchinbrook alluded to it earlier—was the GasFields Commission which the member for Callide was largely responsible for putting together under the stewardship of John Cotter. I had quite a bit to do with that commission one way or another. The area that I had my property on was rich agricultural land, and it was of great concern how the gas industry could cooperate and live with prime agricultural land. That still has not happened. They still have not come on to the central downs. There is an awful lot of gas there. There has been a lot of cooperation between landowners and gas companies over recent times to negotiate how that is going to happen, and that happened because of the role of the GasFields Commission. There is no doubt about that. Their work cannot be underestimated. I notice that they are going to drop from six to three, but the role of the GasFields Commission is still vitally important.

In turning to the Land Access Ombudsman Bill, I notice there are a few clauses where the ombudsman can refer breaches to the government department. I think that is very important. There must be a reasonable attempt made before there is a reference to the ombudsman. I think it is important as well that both resource companies and landowners negotiate in good faith. That was part of the problem in the early days. There were so many myths and so much hysteria around what was going to happen to the land. The member for Glass House alluded to that when he talked about what has happened in New South Wales and Victoria. We are still hearing it down there. There are no facts in the debate down there anymore.

Another good thing that happened during our term in government was the establishment of the Office of Groundwater Impact Assessment. We now have more knowledge and understanding of what is happening under the ground than we ever had before. That is to the benefit of not only gas companies but also irrigators, stock and domestic and everybody. There is so much work being done in that space. It is starting to answer some of those myths.

This state has stood up and the gas industry has developed in this state. In New South Wales and Victoria they have surrendered to the hysteria, and that is very unfortunate. We are hearing reports now that New South Wales and Victoria may be importing gas through their ports. What a nonsense! They are sitting on a wealth of gas and they do not have the courage to go forward.

The ombudsman has a right to refuse frivolous, vexatious or trivial complaints. That is relevant to what I just said about some of the myths and hysteria that we have seen over the years. If there is no agreement, they can proceed to the Land Court. That is important, because the Land Court has always been the last line of defence. It always needs to be maintained. We need the ability to refer matters to the Land Court.

I support this legislation. This is not the end of it. It never will be. This is such a complicated area. It will always be an evolving area, whether it be land access, water, compensation or make-good provisions. Make-good provisions are probably the one big issue that will continue to evolve for a long time as impacts either evolve or not evolve as badly as some people might determine. I support this legislation.

 **Mr DICKSON** (Buderim—PHON) (8.47 pm): I rise to speak to the Land Access Ombudsman Bill. The title of this bill is very interesting: the Land Access Ombudsman Bill. It gives an indication straightaway where this bill might be heading. The policy objective is to establish a Land Access Ombudsman with the aim of providing the owners and occupiers of land and the holders of a resource authority with an independent body to investigate and make recommendations to resolve a dispute of an alleged breach of a conduct or compensation agreement or a make-good agreement and facilitate the resolution of disputes between the parties to a CCA or an MGA and foster or preserve the relationships between the parties.

Recommendation 10 of the Scott report's independent review of the GasFields Commission recommended the establishment of an Office of the Petroleum and Gas Moderator, with the moderator available to mediate disputes between parties about alleged breaches of CCAs and MGAs. Stakeholders included representatives from the Queensland Farmers' Federation, AgForce, the Queensland Resources Council, the Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association, the Association of Mining and Exploration Companies, the Environmental Defenders Office, the Australian

and New Zealand Ombudsman Association, Lock the Gate Alliance, the Queensland Law Society, the Land Court of Queensland, the GasFields Commission Queensland and the Local Government Association. External stakeholders were generally supportive of the intent of this bill.

The main issues raised by external stakeholders included: the lack of statutory time frames for the Land Access Ombudsman's processes; defining the necessary qualifications for the Land Access Ombudsman and support staff; extending the Land Access Ombudsman's role to disputes arising during the negotiation stage; the inability of the Land Access Ombudsman to make binding decisions; and the perceived overlap between the Land Access Ombudsman's dispute resolution role and what is viewed as a regulatory oversight and compliance function.

I note from the committee report that several stakeholders representing landowners were concerned about the non-binding nature of investigation outcomes. Shine Lawyers argued that the bill had failed to address the power imbalance that exists between landholders and resource companies and that any decision made by the ombudsman should be binding on the resource authority holder. Property Rights Australia also argued that the non-binding nature of Land Access Ombudsman investigation outcomes may disadvantage landholders. They were concerned that resource companies may use the ombudsman as a strategy to deplete landowners' finances and limit further action. If legal advice is necessary, PRA argued that landholders may be better off in the Land Court where the decision is binding.

Lock the Gate were also concerned about the non-binding nature of investigations on resource companies. They argued that the bill should have binding outcomes imposed on the companies which would prevent landholders from being bullied or having to resort to expensive court processes. I would have to agree with the landholder stakeholders in that regard. Too many times in the past we have seen landholders done over by the might and financial resources of large companies. They just keep the matters in the courts as long as they can armed with an army of QCs and they win by attrition.

The ombudsman needs to be more than just a toothless tiger. I note from one submission that a major problem with the ombudsman proposal relates to the limitation it sets as to the types of matters that can be dealt with. Clause 7 defines a land access dispute and limits them to only matters that relate to conduct and compensation agreements and make-good agreements. Clause 18 carves out what cannot be dealt with, and the exclusions are so large that all that is left is an ability to decide disputes in relation to executed CCAs and MGAs whilst they are on foot, and not if they have been the subject of an investigation by a department.

Why is the proposed legislation so limited that it does not cover other types of agreements, such as an opt-out agreement? I agree that preventing the ombudsman from considering any matters where there has been any form of departmental investigation represents a potentially enormous carve out of disputes that can be considered. Surely, the intention of the bill is to address all forms of abuse of the power imbalance, not just executed CCAs and MGAs. Lock the Gate makes the point that—

It is during the negotiation that sharp practices and unconscionable conduct are most likely to occur on the part of companies, and it is during the negotiation that landholders most need protection. However, they have no access to the Ombudsman during that process.

Almost every landholder known to Lock the Gate that has problems with coal seam gas on their properties has made some form of complaint to departments and there has been some sort of cursory investigation. Similarly, limiting considerations to CCAs and MGAs that are on foot means that the ombudsman cannot consider any of these legacy issues either. Therefore, damage left behind for landholders to deal with and unrehabilitated sites are not referable to the ombudsman.

I am, as is evidenced as well by AgForce, particularly concerned about the issue of landholders who neighbour resource developments and are significantly impacted by the development being unable to access the ombudsman's dispute resolution mechanism. Many landholders, even though operations are not occurring on their land, are experiencing a direct or indirect impact from the activities of neighbouring resource companies. These impacts include light, dust, noise and/or weeds. AgForce advised that the only avenue available to neighbouring parties is to refer a complaint to the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection or to the Land Court. I agree with AgForce's proposal that—

... neighbouring landholders, not subject to a CCA but are experiencing a material impact, would benefit from access to the Ombudsman to hear disputes otherwise only resolved through departmental investigation or a Land Court hearing.

When the minister introduced this bill on 23 May, he stated—

The Land Access Ombudsman will be a first port of call option for a party provided they have already made some reasonable attempt to try to resolve the dispute. The idea is to have a relatively simple, cost-free process to nip the problem in the bud so that all parties can quickly resolve the dispute and get on with their lives and their jobs.

I am sure we will hear the words 'striking a balance' during this debate, as I have heard many times tonight. To me, the balance still seems to be weighed in favour of the resource companies with respect to this bill. There is lots of work to do. This will be ongoing and we will have to work with landholders to get it right because we do not want to see what has happened out at Chinchilla happen anywhere else. We know it is an absolute disaster.

 **Hon. AJ LYNHAM** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (8.55 pm), in reply: I thank the honourable members for their contributions to the debate today. I would particularly like to acknowledge the member for Mirani, who chaired the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee and its inquiry into both bills. I would also like to thank all members of the committee for their work in considering both bills and for their contributions to the debate.

I will begin my reply by talking to the provisions of the Land Access Ombudsman Bill 2017 and will then follow with the changes proposed by the Gasfields Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. The Land Access Ombudsman Bill 2017 creates a Land Access Ombudsman and the Office of the Land Access Ombudsman. The Land Access Ombudsman will provide a free and independent alternative to the potentially costly and time-consuming dispute resolution processes under existing conduct and compensation agreements and make-good agreements. As the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee found, it is clear that all parties support the establishment of the Land Access Ombudsman.

I will now address some of the issues that have been raised during the debate. I welcome that the member for Hinchinbrook supports the establishment of the Land Access Ombudsman, despite the confusing contribution of the member for Warrego. In his contribution, the member for Hinchinbrook raised concerns about a lack of consultation associated with the government's decision to apply the Land Access Ombudsman's jurisdiction to include coal and mineral explorers that are subject to a CCA or MGA. I note that the member for Hinchinbrook does not disagree with this approach.

While the focus of the *Independent review of the Gasfields Commission Queensland and associated matters* report was on the petroleum and gas industry, Queensland's land access laws also apply to the state's coal and minerals exploration sector. Likewise, the make-good obligations under the Water Act 2000 apply to both petroleum and mining tenure holders. It is more than reasonable to ensure that any party to a conduct and compensation agreement or a make-good agreement has access to the low-cost dispute resolution service of the Land Access Ombudsman. It would be unfair to exclude parties to these agreements because their CCA or MGA relates to a coal or mineral tenure.

As the member for Mirani stated, this is common-sense legislation. I reiterate that we have consulted with the Queensland Resources Council and the Association of Mining and Exploration Companies. We also consulted with the Queensland Farmers' Federation and AgForce Queensland in relation to these amendments. The Queensland Resources Council stated that it was—

... genuinely consulted on this Bill by the Department of Natural Resources and Mines, on all the amendments outlined in this Bill. Despite the short timeframes required, QRC is deeply appreciative of the Department's approach to working with stakeholders.

By contrast, I note the member for Hinchinbrook's approach to consultation on important legislation impacting on landholder rights. In 2014, at five minutes to midnight, the member for Hinchinbrook moved amendments during the consideration in detail phase of debate on the MER(CP) Bill—a bill that he takes so much credit for. These amendments, of course, outraged landholders and regional communities as a result of the removal of their rights to object on mining projects. What was the consultation process on those amendments that were moved at five minutes to midnight? We all know that there was absolutely none—no consultation at all.

With regard to the member for Hinchinbrook's further concerns about how we will communicate the effect of these changes and other reforms that will impact landholders and resource companies, we will be ensuring that appropriate communication materials will be produced as these new roles commence and future changes take effect. There will be a proactive engagement with all stakeholders to ensure that they are aware of the changes that are being made and the benefits of these changes.

In relation to the member for Hinchinbrook's rewrite of the land access history, I will simply put forward the facts. He claims that Labor allowed the issue of land access to fester during its time in

government and spoke to the LNP's contributions in providing reform and balance to the land access framework in Queensland. These are very peculiar claims as it was under a Labor government in 2010 that the land access framework was introduced, governing the manner in which resource companies were to conduct themselves on land. Not only that, the member for Hinchinbrook spoke extensively about the Land Access Implementation Committee recommendations that he implemented. Either the member has got some memory loss, or he deliberately avoided providing the House with all relevant information, as the Land Access Implementation Committee report stemmed from an independent review commissioned by the Bligh Labor government in 2011.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Dr LYNHAM:** In fact, one of my staff worked on it in 2011 and knows full well the history of this. However, I will give credit where credit is due—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Linard): Order! The minister is not taking your interjections.

**Dr LYNHAM:** I think I almost take this bit away. I will give credit where credit is due: I do sincerely thank the previous GasFields Commissioner, Mr John O'Connor. I thank him sincerely as well as the other GasFields Commissioners for the work they did, which was extremely valuable. Although it irks me, I do thank the previous deputy premier, the member for Callide, and I acknowledge the work that he did in this field as well.

The independent review of the GasFields Commission also made a range of recommendations in relation to the GasFields Commission Act 2013, including recommendations for administrative, strategic and operational changes. In their submission on the bill, the GasFields Commission indicated that there had been wide support from stakeholders on the new direction for the commission, which will be delivered through this bill.

I will now turn to issues raised during the debate in relation to the Gasfields Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. In my second reading speech I responded to the statement of reservation from the LNP members of the committee. The commission is an independent statutory authority and is not subject to outside direction, including by the government. I ask the member for Warrego: what does she want? She attacks us for interfering with the independence of the commission in one breath, and then in the next she criticises us for not interfering with the commission when it comes to a decision to close the office. I know those on the frontbench will be pleased that their future political stock looks so bright with the member for Warrego anywhere near it! If she has any concerns please discuss—

**Ms LEAHY:** I rise to a point of order. I find that personally offensive and I ask it to be withdrawn.

**Mr Cripps** interjected.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Hinchinbrook, I am hearing a point of order. Members, be quiet. I am hearing a point of order.

**Ms LEAHY:** I find what the honourable member said personally offensive and I ask it to be withdrawn.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Minister, do you withdraw?

**Dr LYNHAM:** I withdraw. I simply say that if the member for Warrego has any concerns she should discuss them with the independent GasFields Commissioner, or would she consider that undue political interference?

I am pleased to hear that the commission has recently appointed regional engagement officers in Dalby and Roma who will be part of the newly formed five-person engagement team led by a dedicated engagement and policy director. These appointments are part of the commission's establishment of a network of regionally based engagement officers, supported by a team of skilled professionals. The member for Warrego really has nothing to worry about. Stakeholders will be well responded to because the GasFields Commission is out in the regions.

I am confident that the commission is putting in place the structure and resources to ensure it continues to contribute to the unproved coexistence of landholders, regional communities and the onshore gas industry across Queensland. Concerns have been raised over the appointment of a part-time chair, the remuneration levels for commissioners and the impact they might have on the effectiveness of the commission. The option to appoint a part-time chair was recommended by

Professor Scott. The current remuneration levels for the part-time commissioners are set in accordance with the government policy, *Remuneration Procedures for Part-Time Chairs and Members of Queensland Government Bodies*. With a move to the new operating structure there may no longer be a need for a full-time chairperson. Subject to the passage of this bill, the option will be available to recommend appointment of either a part-time or full-time chairperson when the current term of appointment expires on 31 May 2018. I am confident that under these remuneration guidelines we will continue to be able to attract capable and qualified people who will make a significant contribution to the sustainable development of the onshore gas industry.

Professor Scott's report addresses these concerns about the roles and responsibilities of the administering entities, recommending that the commission publish and communicate its role with clarity. The commission is progressing this recommendation. I am confident the commission is playing, and will continue to play, a critical role in extension and communication of information to landholders to provide clarity around roles and responsibilities of respective bodies as these reforms progress.

I would like to commend the work undertaken by the departments of natural resources and mines; environment and heritage protection; state development; and science, information technology and innovation to bring this important package of legislative reforms before the House. I would also like to thank all stakeholders that have provided feedback into these two bill processes, from early policy development through to and including the inquiries ably managed by the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee.

Finally, I would like to thank Professor Robert Scott for the work undertaken in preparing the *Independent review of the GasFields Commission Queensland and associated matters* report. The legislation before the House today is also testament to the Palaszczuk government's commitment to the sustainable and responsible development of Queensland's valuable natural resources. I commend these bills to the House.

Question put—That the Land Access Ombudsman Bill be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Question put—That the Gasfields Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Bill be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

## Consideration in Detail

### Land Access Ombudsman Bill

Clauses 1 to 24, as read, agreed to.

Clause 25—

 **Mr CRIPPS** (9.07 pm): I will respond to that rather callow response by the Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines very briefly and say to the whole House that when the former LNP government arrived they were locking the gate. When we left office they were not locking the gate. The minister should have been a little bit more mature in the way that he summed up the second reading debate.

Clause 25 establishes that the Office of the Land Access Ombudsman is part of the administering department for the purpose of applying the Financial Accountability Act 2009. My simple question to the minister is: is he able to advise the House what the cost of establishing the Land Access Ombudsman will be? I could not identify any allocations in the departmental budget papers from June. That is fair enough given that the office was not already established. However, the bill was before the House and I cannot identify anything in the forward estimates accounting for either the establishment or the ongoing operational costs for the Office of the Land Access Ombudsman. Is the minister able to give the House an understanding of the allocation that will be provided to ensure that the Land Access Ombudsman has the resources required to deliver the scope of responsibilities as outlined in the bill?

**Dr LYNHAM:** In the 2017-18 year the government has allocated \$600,000 as part of the Department of Natural Resources and Mines' budget for the initial establishment and operation of the Land Access Ombudsman. For future years my department has estimated an operating budget of approximately \$1 million per annum will be required for the Land Access Ombudsman. The actual cost, as the member is aware, will depend on the course of demand for the ombudsman's services. I do hope

that most people will use this avenue of Land Access Ombudsman if they have a dispute regarding a conduct and compensation agreement or a make-good agreement.

Clause 25, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 26 to 90, as read, agreed to.

Schedule, as read, agreed to.

### **Gasfields Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Bill**

Clauses 1 to 18, as read, agreed to.

Clause 19—

 **Mr CRIPPS** (9.10 pm): In a similar vein to my question in relation to operating costs for the Office of the Land Access Ombudsman, clause 19 describes the new scope of responsibilities for the GasFields Commission following the passage of this bill. During the course of the second reading debate it was discussed how some responsibilities of the GasFields Commission will be removed from its scope of responsibilities and other responsibilities will be added under various clauses contained within the bill.

Given the new scope of responsibilities for the GasFields Commission, is the minister able to indicate to the House what the estimated annual budget for the GasFields Commission will be going forward and how this compares to the annual operating budget for the GasFields Commission, given its previous scope of responsibilities will no longer be as significant as they once were?

**Dr LYNHAM:** I thank the member for his question. The GasFields Commission structure has, as a result of the bill, changed to a normal government board where you have an executive structure plus a management body with a chief executive officer under it. In terms of the amount of resources, I would imagine there will be similar resources, and those resources will be dedicated specifically to regional areas as the GasFields Commissioner has indicated.

It has ongoing funding of \$2.5 million per annum, and that is administered by the Department of State Development. As the member is aware, the budget is adjusted as required through the normal budgetary processes. The current 2016-17 annual report is being finalised and will include audited financial statements that will be tabled in parliament in accordance with the requirements of the Gasfields Commission Act.

Clause 19, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 20 to 45, as read, agreed to.

### **Third Reading (Cognate Debate)**

 **Hon. AJ LYNHAM** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (9.12 pm): I move—

That the Land Access Ombudsman Bill be now read a third time.

Question put—That the Land Access Ombudsman Bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

**Hon. AJ LYNHAM** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (9.13 pm): I move—

That the Gasfields Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Bill be now read a third time.

Question put—That the Gasfields Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

### **Long Title (Cognate Debate)**

 **Hon. AJ LYNHAM** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (9.13 pm): I move—

That the long title of the Land Access Ombudsman Bill be agreed to.

Question put—That the long title of the Land Access Ombudsman Bill be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

**Hon. AJ LYNHAM** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (9.14 pm): I move—

That the long title of the Gasfields Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Bill be agreed to.

Question put—That the long title of the Gasfields Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Bill be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

## SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

**Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (9.14 pm): I move—

That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 9.30 am on Tuesday, 10 October 2017.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

## ADJOURNMENT

**Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (9.15 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

## Carseldine Urban Village Development

 **Ms DAVIS** (Aspley—LNP) (9.15 pm): The open and consultative mantra of this Labor government is nothing but hollow words—just ask the people of Carseldine. This October marks one year since the Deputy Premier and the member for Sandgate, without any warning to locals, stood on the former QUT Carseldine campus, held a press conference, showed off some pretty artist impression drawings and callously foisted this development on Carseldine residents. What is more, this is a Deputy Premier who comes into this chamber and spruiks her greenness at any opportunity, but the reality is that this is a Deputy Premier who is determined to ram through a plan that will turn playing fields, bushland and green space into a medium-density urban residential development with over 900 dwellings that will house 2,000 residents.

It is one year of the Palaszczuk Labor government treating the concerns of Carseldine locals with contempt. It is one year of ignoring the real concerns of local residents about their community and the impacts that this type of development brings. I recently met with Economic Development Queensland, and it is clear that the Deputy Premier—the worst infrastructure and planning minister this state has ever seen—is insistent on forging ahead with this project in its current form. I asked EDQ if the plan could at least be changed to have a green buffer along Beams Road to preserve some of the bushland. The response was no. That is because the consultation process was framed towards getting the outcome that the government want, not what the residents want.

When the government could not get support from the local community, they paid people in focus groups who lived outside the electorate in order to look like there was support for the project. What a sham! This is what local residents are saying to me. One resident wrote—

We are disappointed like the hundreds of Carseldine residents that oppose the planned Carseldine Urban Village. There seems to be no forward planning to cope with the increased traffic. Good playing fields are to be ripped up and replaced. This project is selling off a Government asset to housing developers.

Another has asked me, 'What more can we do to actually make sure our community's concerns are not just heard but considered?'

It is time for the Deputy Premier to jump off one of the few trains that she has running to come to the Aspley electorate and speak to the locals to hear their concerns firsthand, because to date she has not had the guts to accept our invitation. This just shows the arrogance of this government. Their lack of concern for our community has no bounds, and don't Carseldine residents know it. As much as this

government tries to spin it, the fact is that the land that the development will sit on will be sold. Let me be clear: this government is breaking their word not to sell assets. This is an asset sale.

This whole process has been insulting to residents living in Carseldine, but it has become characteristic of the Palaszczuk Labor government and the Deputy Premier not to listen and to say one thing and do another.

### **Burdekin Men's Shed**

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (9.18 pm): I want to take this opportunity to share with members a good news story from my electorate. The Burdekin Men's Shed was established in 2011 and fulfils an important role in the Burdekin community. I cannot speak highly enough of the 64 members and the work they undertake on behalf of that community. From humble beginnings the men's shed has grown to comprise five sheds which incorporate workshops and the sale of second-hand items. They have a veggie garden, and this year they added a number of chooks which has added a new dimension to the facility—and, of course, some much needed eggs.

The morning teas at the men's shed are legendary, and I have to say that it is a great way to spend a couple of hours in the company of members who have contributed so much to the community. Let us not forget the fellowship and support that the members provide to all members and visitors. I have absolutely no doubt that there are members of the Burdekin Men's Shed who owe their lives to the support and help they were given at this facility.

In collaboration with the men's shed, I have commissioned the members to construct a number of buddy benches that I intend to donate to high schools in the Burdekin electorate. These buddy benches will be rolled out over the coming weeks. I am sure that they will be well received by the school communities that have embraced the underlying message of antibullying. The quality of the furniture items turned out by the men's shed is extraordinary. I want to mention one item in particular that they are producing on an annual basis: a kids cubbyhouse. This particular item has become a major fundraiser for the men's shed. When you see the quality of the work that has gone into producing this cubbyhouse, you understand why.

Last year the Burdekin Men's Shed hosted the Queensland Men's Shed Association expo, and this year they are semifinalists in the 2017 Queensland Community Achievement Awards. This is just recognition for the excellent job they do in the community, focusing on men's health issues. I have the utmost respect and admiration for the men's shed members—in particular, members like Rob Ritchie, George Isaacs, Charles Ford, John Furnell and Noel Smart. Nothing is too much trouble for these gentlemen, and the work they do in the Burdekin community is certainly appreciated by all residents. I say to the Burdekin Men's Shed: well done and keep up the good work.

### **Bundaberg Electorate**

 **Ms DONALDSON** (Bundaberg—ALP) (9.20 pm): The Palaszczuk Labor government has a great track record of delivering for regional Queensland. Bundaberg is a community that has prospered under this government, with many examples of worthy recipients of government grants. Most often when I am out and about chatting to locals and hearing from our community and sporting groups, what I hear is how thankful they are for a government that is thinking of them and that acknowledges the great work they do in our midst—groups such as the Bundaberg table tennis club, which, thanks to this government, has been able to extend their premises so that when they host tournaments with competitors from around Queensland and Australia they have a great venue to play in. I would like to thank Phil Freeman, Dave Delpratt and Trevor Barrett for all they do for the local club and for Queensland table tennis. Without their support, the upcoming Bundaberg juniors would not have been able to come home from the recent Australian Junior Championships in Tasmania with medals and trophies.

Since coming to government we have funded and supported many smaller clubs which without assistance would simply not be able to raise funds to upgrade their facilities or provide their members with equipment. This government has also provided funding in my electorate for groups that are giving our young people opportunities to learn skills and to increase their chances of securing a job. In fact, when I have been along to the graduation ceremonies for many Skilling Queenslanders for Work programs, there have always been graduates absent because they are working.

We hear a lot from those opposite about how out of control our young people are, but I never see them at events such as these which show that young people are succeeding. They do not fit the populist

profiles that they try to paint of our younger residents. Who can forget the former government's actions in not only ignoring community organisations but also cutting vital programs with proven results such as Skilling Queenslanders for Work or youth justice conferencing? The ones that were left were just gagged. The treasurer of the former Newman LNP government, the current opposition leader, threw regional communities, including mine, on the scrap heap. Despite promising a lower unemployment rate, unemployment went up to well over six per cent.

We on this side of the House will never give up on our local communities. We know the depth of knowledge and skill that abounds in them and we will always stand up for them. I, for one, am very proud to showcase my wonderful community next week when the Premier and cabinet govern from Wide Bay. I know that my community is looking forward to having a government keen to visit and talk to real people, not hold closed meetings like those that were a signature of the Newman government and that showed exactly what sort of government it was.

### Hervey Bay Electorate

 **Mr SORENSEN** (Hervey Bay—LNP) (9.23 pm): I welcome government ministers to my electorate of Hervey Bay. While they are in Hervey Bay they can explain to Glen and Helen Harney of Good Look Garage Doors why they have never been paid for \$17,000 worth of garage doors. The Harneys will most likely never get paid for them as they were subcontracted to a company that went into receivership when they were doing work at the local school. The company, which tendered for the contracted work through Housing and Public Works, seemed to have no builder nominee associated with the ABN. I am still researching this matter but I can say that it is a mess.

People in my electorate deserve to know who is living next door to them, especially when it comes to young criminals. Labor's sneaky plan to build suburban detention centres in our community is simply not on. Dennis, a retired detective sergeant of the New South Wales police force, wrote to me. His letter states—

I assure you that these houses do not work, despite what governments might tell you. They are the breeding grounds for criminality, not to mention illicit drugs and local crime will rise. Can you imagine the poor person who has to live next door to one of these houses, even the same street would be distasteful.

Labor's sneaky plan is a knee-jerk reaction to their botched policy to move 17-year-olds out of adult jail and youth detention.

The Minister for Health underfunds, understaffs and underestimates what he is doing to the doctors, nursing staff and patients at Hervey Bay Hospital. This government has more front than Woolies, spruiking about how good it is, when I see the human face of its failures every day. A letter I received from a retired nurse in Hervey Bay states—

I have been nursing for 31 years and loved it. There were some days Ted that I would have done it for free. It is such a shame it has become about how much money can be saved and someone looking good for it. Hervey Bay is growing at a pace, our hospital is cracking under the pressure, we need new equipment—not old and second hand which have passed its use by date, we need more Dr's and nurses ... We need proactive people at the coalface of patient care, not more executive level 'yes' people—that walk around full of their own self importance.

That is one of the problems we have. While those opposite are flying into Hervey Bay I ask them to look at the airport and think about who delivered that. They should take a trip up to Hervey Bay State High School and look at the sports centre. Then they can go to the hospital precinct and look at the cancer care facilities and the dental clinic. Who achieved that?

### Toowoomba North Electorate

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (9.26 pm): I rise to update the House on a few different events that have been happening in Toowoomba North. I received an invitation from Stacey Trindall, the community education officer at Harristown State High School, to attend the flag-raising ceremony for NAIDOC Week. I have known Stacey for many years. She does a great job there. The education results of the kids in the Clontarf program at Harristown State High School are a real tribute to all of the people there working with the community.

I also went along to the Vinnies Community Sleepout, where I got to know Nick Barker from Hutchies a little better. He was dressed up as B1 and raised nearly \$6,000 that night. It was a great night that was well supported by many people from the corporate sector in Toowoomba. I had a quick trip to Harlaxton State High School to plant a tree on Schools Tree Day. I thank Maxine Lester for the invitation to come along and plant a tree with the kids.

Another celebrity sleepout was organised by The Base in Toowoomba, which is our soup kitchen. Nat and Tiff Spary do a fantastic job there and recently launched a new coffee van called Second Shot. They do a power of work for the homeless and the hungry in Toowoomba. The Great White Campaign in Toowoomba had a function to raise some money with the objective of eventually getting a neurosurgeon to Toowoomba. The Heads and Hearts Safety in Sports luncheon was held. Larry Pickering came up and drew some cartoons. It was just fabulous to have a bloke like him there.

Hang Your Boss Out to Dry was a fundraiser for the Toowoomba Hospice. Graham Barron needs to be congratulated for the work the hospice does in Toowoomba. Rob Weymouth and Nick Barker from Hutchies sponsored me to go up on to a crane in order to raise a few dollars.

I also attended the It's a Bloke Thing lunch, which was held to raise money for prostate cancer. In Toowoomba in one day they raised \$1.54 million. The committee consists of Liz Wagner, Maralyn Fitzgibbons, Hayley Hubbard, Kelli Russell, Melissa Templeman, John Wagner, John Fitzgibbons, Marcus Barnard, Michael Hubbard, David Russell and Gary Gardner. These people should be congratulated for the amount of awareness and money they have brought to the cause of prostate cancer.

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

 **Ms LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (9.29 pm): It is a pleasure to have this opportunity to rise and update the House about a Skilling Queenslanders for Work graduation ceremony I recently attended in my electorate. Last month I had the pleasure of attending the Hendra Pony Club to congratulate the latest graduates of the Re-Gen Project run by the very inspiring Community Living Association of Nundah. The project is aimed to assist people with intellectual disability and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds gain vital skills to assist in finding employment. The project is made possible by Skilling Queenslanders for Work funding. Graduates of the project have recently successfully completed a Certificate I in Conservation and Land Management, gaining on-the-job skills maintaining and restoring Hendra Pony Club, streetscaping at nearby Nundah Village and planting native shrubs around the Wavell Heights community centre. Participants also participated in job preparation activities including resume writing and job search assistance.

I took the opportunity to speak to each graduate and their families during the presentation not only to congratulate them but to ask what the program had meant to them. Had it been worthwhile? What had they gained from it? Would it make the difference in their journey to finding employment? Each of the graduates mentioned first and foremost that they had grown in confidence and, as a result, had now either gained employment, gained the confidence to pursue further study or felt that they now had job-ready skills to find employment.

The second thing each graduate raised was that the supportive learning environment they had experienced in a community setting where they felt that they were gaining real skills and making a real difference to the community had made all the difference and set them up for real outcomes. Eleven people from the two intakes have already found work. Two others are pursuing further training and I hope many more will similarly achieve their goals of employment and training. These are real people in our community achieving real outcomes from a program that makes an appreciable difference to those who need a leg-up to gain the skills they need to find work. They just need a go—an opportunity—and they need someone to believe in them, and we do.

I am proud to be a member of the Australian Labor Party—a party that has a proud tradition of giving people a go, that sees those that others might overlook and recognises that for some the barriers seem insurmountable and help is needed to traverse them and even the playing field. It is why I joined, it is why I ran for parliament and it is why I am so motivated to do what I do each and every day for my community. The \$240 million investment we are making in Skilling Queenslanders for Work is an investment in Queenslanders because we all deserve a fair go and a chance to gain the skills and training needed to get a job, to make a contribution, to be a part of Queensland's economy and to improve our and our family's quality of life.

### **Gympie Electorate**

 **Mr PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (9.32 pm): Queensland cabinet's roadshow heads to the Labor seats of Maryborough and Bundaberg next week. The spin says it is supposed to be governing from the Wide Bay. The Brisbane-centric government does not even acknowledge that Gympie is in the Wide Bay. Gympie has dropped off the map in a mountain of press releases and statements promoting the

roadshow. Even the Premier's ministerial statement today overlooked Gympie. Ministers are welcome in Gympie, but only if they deliver instead of conducting a travelling sideshow. Just saying it does not mean you are delivering. Their track record is abysmal. Last year's final revelation that Labor governments wasted more than half a billion dollars of taxpayers' money on the failed Traveston Dam fiasco still has locals reeling. That is \$500 million! Imagine what that could have done and delivered.

Next week ministers will fly over Gympie or spend an hour driving through my electorate. Instead of just looking through the car window, they are welcome to come and deliver. In the last three years only four ministers have visited and three visits were to open projects commenced under the LNP government. The local government minister sneaked in under the radar to talk to the council. I was not advised and there was no effort to speak to locals despite representations that stakeholders and local groups are eager to raise issues. I have raised Gympie's needs many times in this House and in correspondence with ministers. Ministers have delayed projects, refused to make decisions and redirected funds. They treat Gympie with contempt.

The training and skills minister refuses to let the USC lease an empty and unused TAFE building so it can increase enrolments and offer more courses. Last month the Premier had the opportunity to do something but refused. Given that only 13½ per cent of Gympie residents have a tertiary qualification, local unemployment is 2.4 per cent above the state average and Wide Bay's youth unemployment has risen in the last year by 2½ per cent to 23½ per cent, it is inexcusable. It proves that the government pays lip-service to supporting regional youth.

The health minister delayed releasing our hospital master plan by a year which then meant the CT scanner destined for our hospital only came in May. My requests in July for an update on the progress of local health projects remains unanswered. Three Labor budgets have equalled reannouncements, recycling and rebadging of previous commitments. This year we not only did not receive a crumb; money was taken away to prop up the member for Bundaberg. \$1 million scheduled for the new Rainbow Beach Auxiliary Fire and Rescue Station was redirected to the Bundaberg fire and rescue station. Gympie and the Wide Bay urgently need specific targeted programs and incentives to address systemic problems, not a Labor sideshow.

### **Sarina State High School, Pool Access**

 **Mr PEARCE** (Mirani—ALP) (9.35 pm): Tonight I rise to speak about an issue that is causing community concern in Sarina. The concern is around community access to a swimming pool situated on Education land in the grounds of Sarina State High School. Neither the school community nor Education Queensland have an agenda to lock out locals or organisations that require access to the pool for recreational activities or training purposes.

There are several points that I want to mention for the benefit of Sarina residents who really just want one thing: they want to know what is going on and as part of that they want to know that they have access to that pool. There is no doubt that the residents of Sarina can claim part ownership in the pool complex due to the fact that the people of Sarina and district contributed funding to the project. Education Queensland offered its land to allow for the construction of a pool. At the time the project was completed it was a community asset jointly owned in partnership. The school has as part of the partnership covered the cost of maintenance of the pool and surrounds. Mowing and general maintenance has been the responsibility of the school. Electricity costs, chemicals and, in recent times, the conversion to a salt pool have been the responsibility of the school. The Mackay Regional Council leases the pool for the community and pays a sum of money to have a pool manager who must have first-aid and lifesaving skills.

I am told that there has been no formal agreement since 2010 which means that the persons operating the pool, the Mackay council and Education Queensland have been left open to litigation. Duty of care principles are not being respected or adhered to. Duty of care is a moral or legal obligation to ensure the safety and wellbeing of others. Another definition could be that duty of care is an element of the tort of negligence in that a breach of a duty of care or failure to observe a reasonable standard of care means that this breach or failure may cause or contribute to an injury, loss or damage suffered. Failure to apply duty of care principles could mean litigation. Education has to meet its obligations and Mackay Regional Council has to meet its obligations through the appointment of a skilled pool manager and must set down conditions and requirements. The pool manager must have the appropriate first-aid and lifesaving skills. This is an issue that needs to be solved. People need to sit down around a table to talk it through and work it out to ensure that everyone has access to the pool.

### Leporati, Master J

 **Mr GORDON** (Cook—Ind) (9.38 pm): It gives me considerable pleasure to rise tonight to talk about how honoured I was earlier this year to make a financial contribution to Mareeba futsal sensation Josh Leporati. This year Josh travelled to Brazil to compete in the mini futsal world cup for boys under the age of 14. This tournament was played from 6 to 9 July this year. I also take this opportunity to thank the good folks of the Mareeba IGA and the Mareeba community who contributed to supporting Josh's amazing trip to Brazil. Upon meeting Josh in my Mareeba office in March this year, I was absolutely impressed with his character and great smile.

The significance of Josh's selection and participation in this tournament is not lost on the small regional town of Mareeba. Josh helped put Mareeba on the international map, for which we are extremely grateful. The town owes Josh a debt of gratitude and wishes him the very best in the future, especially in his future endeavours both on and off the futsal field.

On the first day of the last sitting week, Josh's father forwarded a number of photos of Josh's trip to Brazil to me while I was sitting in this chamber. It brought a tear to my eyes and a smile to face. As a local MP, it is this work that makes it all worth it. I am sure all my colleagues in this House have experienced this kind of special moment in their time as local members, but that does not take away from how wonderful these moments are. This is what I love about my job—helping young people achieve their dreams.

### Woodridge Electorate

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (9.42 pm): It is a very great honour and one of the privileges of my life to represent the people of Woodridge in this House. The Woodridge electorate is a rich and culturally diverse community, a place which celebrates difference and faces up to its challenges with an open hand, an open heart and a welcoming spirit of acceptance.

The broader Logan area is not so much a disadvantaged area as an area with disadvantage in it, hardly surprising given that it is home to 68 per cent of the refugees who settle in Queensland and is a community that possesses one of the highest rates of new residents from non-English speaking backgrounds in the country. Many of my friends and neighbours in the Woodridge electorate came to Australia from traumatic and desperate circumstances, but they have arrived in our country with a steely determination to make a better life for themselves and their families and are committed to making a positive contribution to their new home. How dispiriting it is then for the people of Logan to be singled out by the morally bankrupt Turnbull government to be drug tested before receiving income support, to have the indignity of unemployment compounded by the presumption of criminality. There is no greater distinction between the Labor Party and the LNP than this. When we declare war on poverty, they declare war on the poor.

Successive federal coalition governments have a long history of cutting the services that battlers rely on, particularly in areas such as health and education. The only cut the LNP has proposed to the big end of town, however, is a cut to the corporate tax rate. Mandatory drug testing has failed in the past to cure the problem that it seeks to address. The Turnbull government's proposal has been rightly condemned by leaders and commentators as disparate as the President of the Australian Medical Association, the President of the Law Council of Australia, leaders of drug and alcohol treatment and rehabilitation services and economists such as Ross Gittins and Peter Martin.

Labor rejects the LNP's wagging finger of admonition in favour of the open hand of assistance and a policy agenda to help all Australians wherever they live and regardless of their circumstances. Australia has a social safety net of which it can be justifiably proud, and there are citizens in every suburb in the country in receipt of a government benefit. Where is the drug testing proposed for Toorak, Point Piper, Clayfield or Canberra? Indeed the Commonwealth may find it more productive if they more regularly breath-tested the former prime minister and federal Liberal member for Warringah, Tony Abbott. Members of this House will recall, some with disgust, that when Australia faced its greatest economic crisis since the great depression, Tony Abbott was so drunk that he had passed out in his parliament office in the parliament of Australia and was unable to vote on, let alone debate, legislative measures of the Rudd Labor government that strengthened and saved the Australian economy.

On this side of the House we believe in an Australia for all Australians, a Queensland for all Queenslanders and in a society where our youth can look confidently to their government to offer support rather than punishment and sanction. To selectively target and stigmatise entire communities, as the Turnbull government seeks to do, is public policy at its worst. At a time when the nation is craving genuine leadership, once again Malcolm Turnbull has demonstrated he simply is not up to the job.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 9.45 pm.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Bailey, Barton, Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Byrne, Costigan, Cramp, Crandon, Crawford, Cripps, D'Ath, Davis, de Brenni, Dick, Dickson, Donaldson, Elmes, Emerson, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Frecklington, Furner, Gilbert, Gordon, Grace, Harper, Hart, Hinchliffe, Howard, Janetzki, Jones, Katter, Kelly, King, Knuth, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Lauga, Leahy, Linard, Lynham, Madden, Mander, McArdle, McEachan, Miles, Millar, Miller, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pease, Pegg, Perrett, Pitt, Powell, Power, Pyne, Rickuss, Robinson, Rowan, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Seeney, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Trad, Walker, Watts, Weir, Wellington, Whiting, Williams