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FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SIXTH PARLIAMENT

Tuesday, 15 May 2018

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TUESDAY, 15 MAY 2018

The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

Mr Speaker (Hon. Curtis Pitt, Mulgrave) read prayers and took the chair.

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I respectfully acknowledge that we are sitting today on the land of Aboriginal people and pay my respects to elders past and present. I thank them, as First Australians, for their careful custodianship of the land over countless generations. We are very fortunate in this country to have two of the world's oldest continuing living cultures in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples whose lands, winds and waters we all now share.

ASSENT TO BILLS

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

The Honourable C.W. Pitt MP

Speaker of the Legislative Assembly

Parliament House

George Street

BRISBANE QLD 4000

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

Date of Assent: 9 May 2018

A Bill for An Act to amend the Planning Act 2016, the Planning Regulation 2017, the Vegetation Management Act 1999 and the Water Act 2000 for particular purposes

This Bill is hereby transmitted to the Legislative Assembly, to be numbered and forwarded to the proper Officer for enrolment, in the manner required by law.

Yours sincerely

Governor

9 May 2018

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 9 May 2018, from His Excellency the Governor to the Speaker advising of assent to a certain bill on 9 May 2018 [\[637\]](#).

SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS

Question on Notice No. 39-2018

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, on 29 March 2018, the member for Caloundra wrote to me regarding the answer to question on notice No. 39-2018. I sought the minister's advice and received a response on 4 May 2018. In the correspondence to me, the minister provided an explanation as to how he had interpreted the question and, therefore, why he had answered the question in the way that he did. The minister also provided further information that more fully satisfied the question.

Accordingly, I have directed that the minister's latest response be included with his initial answer to question on notice No. 39. I table the relevant correspondence for the information of members.

Tabled paper: Correspondence regarding a matter of privilege in relation to the answer to Question on Notice No. 39-2018 [\[638\]](#).

Parliamentary Service Questionnaire

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, today the Clerk has sent to each member an email with a link to the annual members' questionnaire regarding the performance of the Parliamentary Service. Whilst I need to be a little careful not to be biased, I am sure you would all agree that all of the

parliamentary staff, in whatever capacity they serve, do a wonderful job here in the parliament. I do urge all members to take the five to 10 minutes required to complete the survey so that the service will understand how things may improve or what they are already doing well. I ask honourable members to take that time.

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Rowell, Mr MH



Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.32 am): I move—

1. That this House desires to place on record its appreciation of the services rendered to this state by the late Marcus Hosking Rowell, a former member of the Parliament of Queensland and minister of the state.
2. That Mr Speaker be requested to convey to the family of the deceased gentleman the above resolution, together with an expression of the sympathy and sorrow of the members of the Parliament of Queensland, in the loss they have sustained.

Marc Rowell was born in Beecroft, New South Wales on 5 April 1938 and educated at Pennant Hills Primary School and Hurlstone Agricultural High School, Sydney. After his schooling, Mr Rowell moved to Queensland to become a cane and tropical fruits farmer in Ingham. He became heavily involved with related industry groups, for instance, serving as chairman of the Herbert River Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association and on the committee of the Ingham branch of the Rare Fruit Association of Australia. In the 1980s he also became involved with the development bureau of the Hinchinbrook and Cardwell shires, serving at times as the bureau's chair or deputy chair.

During this time Mr Rowell also commenced a close involvement with the National Party, becoming chairman of the party's Ingham branch in 1986. In 1989, the then member for Hinchinbrook and National Party representative Ted Row decided not to contest the next election and Mr Rowell was selected by the National Party to contest the seat. Mr Rowell was successful at the election held in December of that year. He went on to represent the seat of Hinchinbrook for almost 17 years, until he decided to retire from the parliament at the state election of December 2006.

During his time in parliament, Mr Rowell served in many parliamentary party and executive government roles. For instance, for many years he was a member of the parliament's Public Accounts Committee and also served on the Public Works Committee and the parliamentary Electoral and Administrative Review Committee and was a member of numerous estimates committees. Over many years Mr Rowell was also a shadow minister in a number of portfolios, among them primary industries which, of course, he had a close interest in. Indeed, in February 1998, the then premier Rob Borbidge elevated Mr Rowell to his cabinet as minister for primary industries, fisheries and forestry. He continued in that role until June of that year, when the Borbidge government went out of office.

Marcus Hosking Rowell passed away on 13 April 2018, aged 80 years, and a service to commemorate his life was held in Ingham last Thursday, 26 April. I had met Mr Rowell on a couple of occasions and I always found him to be very pleasant and a gentleman. I know that all of the parliament will express their deep sorrow at his passing. In fact, it would be nice to have more Marc Rowells, because he was a man of distinction, highly regarded, very personable, loved by his community and served his state very well.

I place on record the government's thanks for the years of service Mr Rowell gave to the institutions of our democracy and to the Queensland community. On behalf of the government, I take this opportunity to extend my sympathy and that of this House to Mr Rowell's family and friends.



Mrs FRECKLINGTON (Nanango—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.36 am): It is an honour and a privilege to stand here today to honour a gentleman and a true champion of North Queensland. Marcus Rowell, the Nationals member for Hinchinbrook from 1989 to 2006, was a tireless advocate for his community and North Queensland. I acknowledge the family members of the late Mr Rowell who are here today: his wife, Sandra; his daughter, Andrea, and her husband, Todd; his three grandchildren, Ben, Eliza and Kate, who are enjoying a day off school; and Marc's sister Jane.

Marc was born in Beecroft, New South Wales on 5 April 1938. He was the first of five children born to Ralph and Jean Rowell and went to primary school at nearby Pennant Hills. His love of the land was kindled in 1951, when he started his secondary education at Hurlstone Agricultural High School in South-West Sydney. Marc's family moved to North Queensland in 1952, but Marc stayed in Sydney to complete his education. The family farm at Toobanna, just south of Ingham, produced sugar cane. In the early years, it also produced tobacco. When Marc finished school, he saw the light and moved to North Queensland.

The contribution that Marc and the Rowell family have brought to Queensland is immense. Well before politics, Marc worked as a labourer on the family farm. The early days of cutting cane leaf by hand would eventually lead him to fight for his fellow farmers and North Queensland's fair share in this very room. Marc's interest in all things agricultural led him to become involved in a number of producer groups, including the Queensland Canegrowers organisation and the Australian Lychee Growers Association.

Just like the LNP members in this room today, Marc was a fierce advocate for transparency, sensible policy and science when it came to vegetation management legislation. On 20 April 2004 in this House, whilst debating Beattie's Vegetation Management and Other Legislation Bill, he said—

The position taken by the government appears to be that of ignorance. There has been no attempt at transparency, nor has there been an adherence to the science whereby questions might be raised as a result of this Labor government's stance, indicating that the unsubstantiated policy perceptions possess more weight with this government than sound policy formulation and science. This is a far cry from the position of the Nationals whereby there is a belief that the state government has a responsibility to work with stakeholders and the wider community in general to develop a natural resources base for future generations in both practice and sustainability.

As a farmer, Mr Rowell personally understood that farmers were the true environmentalists. He believed the state government had a responsibility to work with stakeholders. From the first day that Marc stepped into this House he was a fierce advocate. He fought to put Hinchinbrook on the map and make it a much sought after tourism destination. In his maiden speech Marc said—

If our region is to develop a tourist industry, it will be necessary to foster major developments. A need exists for environmentally sound, sustainable developments that will act as a catalyst for entrepreneurial operations. There is scope for that type of development in the hinterland amid rainforest waterfalls with a diversity of flora and fauna and on the coast where marina and resort-type complexes would facilitate access to the numerous islands, reefs, river estuaries ...

Like those sitting on this side of the House, Marc was a fierce advocate for building dams because Marc knew that dams were the lifeblood of rural communities and created jobs. The people of North Queensland began to know Mr Rowell as an approachable and reliable local MP. He was down to earth and practical. When North Queensland industries like fishing and timber came under threat he was there to fight on their behalf. Colleagues watched in awe as Marc and former Mirani MP Ted Malone kept the debate on the sugar industry bill going in this parliament for two days and two nights. Marc took his responsibilities very seriously and was always speaking at length about issues concerning the sugar industry right here in this House.

Mr Rowell held numerous positions during his 17 years of parliamentary service, including minister for primary industries in the Borbidge coalition government in 1988. As a minister in the Borbidge government, Marc oversaw the transfer of the ownership to the industry of the sugar terminals located at several ports up and down the Queensland coast. These are still major assets of great value to the sugar industry.

Marc Rowell was also a strong advocate for vocational education and training. He had much to do with the establishment of the TAFE centres in both Ingham and Innisfail. He took an active interest in the accessibility and affordability of apprenticeships. He was also one of the driving forces behind the establishment of the Development Bureau of the Hinchinbrook and Cardwell Shires.

Outside of politics, Marc was a keen sportsman and was involved in a number of local associations. He was even selected as a torch relay bearer for the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games. In 1963 Marc met Sandra Morris in New Zealand on a holiday and years later became a loving father to three children. Andrea says her father was a great man who tried his absolute best for his family.

It was a mark of the respect the community had for Marc that he left parliament at the time of his choosing after serving as the member for Hinchinbrook for 17 years. He devoted himself to his family and increasing the productivity of both the lychee and sugarcane production on his farm. His love of the land and what it could produce never wavered. Marc was a farmer first and a politician second. Those two ways of life formed a powerful force for North Queensland. The LNP will continue the legacy of Marc Rowell by continuing to fight for regional North Queensland. On behalf of the state LNP opposition I place on record our condolences to the family of Marc Rowell.

 **Mr DAMETTO** (Hinchinbrook—KAP) (9.42 am): Community service, dedication and passion—these were the characteristics that defined the life of Marc Hosking Rowell. North Queensland has lost a pioneer—a man who spent his lifetime on the land. It was his connection to country Queensland and his drive for progression that saw Marc run for the seat of Hinchinbrook and be elected as the member for Hinchinbrook in December 1989. Marc held the seat up until his retirement from politics in 2006.

Growing up in Ingham, I always remember Marc Rowell being our local member. Although I never had the pleasure of personally knowing Marc, I knew him as a man who did not make a fuss, a man who got the job done, a proud family man, a visionary and someone who stood up for North Queensland. I have been told Marc was respected not only by his community but also by both sides of this House. That is a rare feat which requires leadership and strength of character.

As the current member for Hinchinbrook, the enormity of Marc's legacy is clear to me. He was a true North Queensland representative and a member of parliament who always stood up for his constituents. Marc's political career was backed by the undying support of the Hinchinbrook electorate. A highlight of Marc's time in this place was when he became the minister for primary industries, fisheries and forestry in 1988 as part of the Borbidge coalition government. Marc was known for his sensible, common-sense approach to policy that helped see growth in the agricultural industry in Queensland and my region.

Away from politics, Marc was a dedicated family man. Together with his loving wife, Sandra, they raised three children on their family's farm at Toobanna, just south of Ingham. Marc was a respected politician, but at his core Marc was a farmer. He produced crops including tobacco and sugar cane and later pioneered lychee farming in North Queensland.

He was selfless with his time in supporting local community organisations, and his passion for people who lived in Hinchinbrook and his ability to engage with all in his electorate gained him the support and respect of everybody in our community. Marc, as a leader, you have helped shape modern Hinchinbrook and our state. You will be dearly missed by all. Our sincere prayers go out to your family and friends. Your legacy will live on through your values and leadership and the way you demonstrated these as a pillar of our community. Marc, on behalf of the people of Hinchinbrook, I say—

May the road rise up to you.

May the wind be always at your back.

May the sun shine warm upon your face;

the rains fall soft upon your fields and until we meet again,

may God hold you in the palm of His hand.

Amen.

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (9.46 am): Serving with Marc Rowell in this parliament was certainly a privilege. These are sad but also sweet occasions. This is a man who deserves to be acknowledged fully for his contribution to this state and a man whom it was a pleasure to serve with in this parliament.

I heard the Leader of the Opposition say that Marc was a fierce advocate. I had also noted that to mention today. I want to tell a few stories about some of the other aspects of Marc's life as well as the advocacy that he brought to his role as the member for Hinchinbrook and as the minister for primary industries, fisheries and forestry. He was first elected as a National Party member in 1989.

Marc was a gentleman but he also had a wonderful, dry sense of humour. You did not always know whether he was pulling your leg. As a North Queenslander I think there is a particular aspect to that dry sense of humour. You had to wait for a while and then you would see the twinkle in his eye and the corner of his mouth start to twitch. That was when you realised he was pulling your leg.

I remember a story Marc telling about the lay of the land as a farmer in North Queensland. Marc's wife, Sandy, has been his life partner and business partner in every sense of the word—running their considerable holdings when Marc was away with work. It was not just when Marc was away with work. Sandy is quite a lady in her own right.

I remember Marc telling the story about the challenges crocodiles posed when they had to fix a water pump and get into the creek. What did they do? Marc dryly told the story: you have to shoot into the creek first and get rid of the crocodiles and then you jump in. Sandy would be on the bank with the gun waiting to shoot if the crocodile came back. I remember when he was telling this story waiting for the twitch at the corner of his mouth and his eyes to twinkle. Marc had a little smile. This was a real story and it happened more than once. I was recalling this story with Sandy earlier. Apparently, a bit of a family joke was what would happen if you missed the crocodile and hit Marc. We know that would never happen deliberately. They were a loving couple, but this was a family joke. So it is that Marc managed to continue his life in this parliament with all of his limbs intact and no crocodile attacks, but it was a real story.

I loved the way he would tell jokes and then the real stories, which were, in fact, part of everyday life of getting on with it. He also had other talents such as a beautiful singing voice. You would not pick it for his sometimes quiet demeanour. To be in a group with him and then there would be a reason for him to burst into song—he had the best French accent singing *La Marseillaise* I have ever heard and he would belt it out with passion and a lot of musicality. You just do not know, do you, the quiet ones—the stories they have and the gifts that they bring?

Marc was never quiet in regard to his advocacy for his electorate, for our state, for rural and regional Queenslanders. He brought not only a passion and that fierce advocacy we talked about but also a great intelligence to the role. He was a thinker. He understood his electorate and the people. I particularly remember the sugar debate with him, Ted Malone and other colleagues. Yes, it was a debate of passion but it was also a debate that really demonstrated his great knowledge of the industry. People who followed the intricacies of the sugar industry would fully appreciate in reading those debates just how Marc and, as has been mentioned, Ted Malone, but particularly Marc in taking up that fight, brought a reasoning and not only an understanding of the complexity of that industry and their desire to see a fair go but also an understanding that was extended to others who did not always understand what the industry was facing and the particular challenges to try to bring about that fair go. As primary industries minister, he was able to bring that knowledge in a very real and sensible way, advocating on behalf of the industries of Queensland.

There is much more that could be said about Marc. He was steady, consistent, capable and a gentleman. I first came to serve with him in this House in 1992; he was already here as he came in 1989. I loved to hear and learn about his electorate and Queensland through the eyes of a man who lived, walked and breathed his passion for his community and for his constituency.

Sandy, to you; to Andrea and your husband, Todd, and children; to sister, Jane; and to the rest of the family: today we remember with great pride a wonderful man who has served this parliament and served our state. His legacy lives on not only through you and the lives that you live but also in the community because it is a heart to help that makes a difference. He certainly left an impression and a legacy that we can be proud of. Vale, Marc Rowell.

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (9.52 am): I rise to speak on the condolence motion for Marc Hosking Rowell. I was very saddened to learn of his passing at age 80 years. I remember him well as a canefarmer and also a lychee fruit grower. I had a lot to do with him in his role as a member of parliament in the seat of Hinchinbrook for 17 years. Prior to his election, he held many National Party positions including those on the Hinchinbrook Electorate Council and the Herbert Divisional Council.

In the 1991 redistribution, it made the seat of Hinchinbrook notionally Labor and Marc was pitted against a popular Labor opponent, former minister Bill Eaton. However, Marc held the seat and he worked it up to a healthy 12 per cent margin in Hinchinbrook. I remember Marc and worked closely with him when he was appointed as the minister for primary industries and fisheries in 1998. When the coalition lost government following the election, he held many numerous shadow ministerial portfolios such as employment, training and industrial relations; emergency services; northern development; primary industries and forestry; mines and energy; economic and trade development; consumer affairs and communications; and family services, Aboriginal and Islander affairs and ethnic affairs, and he held many other committee positions.

He was a passionate farmer and he was a good farmer. He and his wife, Sandy, ran the farm and also the packing shed. When he was away on parliamentary duties, Sandy would run the packing shed and organise the staff because when the fruit was ready it had to be processed. He was always a passionate advocate and a champion for North Queensland. Even in opposition he was always fighting for the sugar industry, with a private member's bill aimed at halting the deregulation of the sugar industry. As the member for Maroochydore said, he did have a very dry sense of humour and he was well respected by all members of the House. He would sometimes bring lychees down to parliament to show the quality of the product he grew and how proud he was of the produce from North Queensland.

There must have been a few crocodiles up there because he had a resident freshwater crocodile living on the farm in a waterhole which he pumped water from. Everyone who went there hoped the foot valve did not fail and they did not have to go into the waterhole with the crocodile to fix it. I do recall one of his parliamentary colleagues asking Marc what he did when the foot valve fails. He said he would get someone to distract the croc and get in and get the job done quickly. It must have worked because there were no casualties that we heard about.

He was also passionate about North Queensland. While most of southern Queensland was often in drought, the big problem in the north—which he explained to every minister who visited and showed them—was drainage. I do recall a trip to North Queensland with Marc some 20 years ago when he

explained to the then minister for natural resources about the water and drainage issues in North Queensland. He said, 'I know your people in southern Queensland feel they don't get enough rain,' but he explained that it was exactly the opposite in North Queensland. He said, 'We have so much rain we constantly have drainage issues,' and he proceeded to explain how the system of drainage channels and gates worked to drain the water away from the cane fields and out to the oceans.

I extend my deepest sympathies to Sandy and to Marc's family. He will always be remembered in southern Queensland as a great man, a great member of parliament and a great friend to many.

 **Mrs STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (9.55 am): I rise to make a brief contribution to the condolence motion for Marcus Hosking Rowell, known to all as Marc, who passed away on Friday, 13 April this year, and I acknowledge his family in the gallery this morning.

As honourable members have heard, Marc was elected to the Queensland parliament in 1989 as the member for Hinchinbrook and held that position until his retirement in 2006. Like many National Party MPs, Marc came from a farming background, in his case sugar cane and rare fruits—those lychees. He might have been born in New South Wales but his heart was firmly in Queensland—North Queensland. In March 2006 the media reported 'Nats veteran to quit politics', citing a desire to spend more time with his family. After 17 years as the honourable member for Hinchinbrook, including a stint as minister for primary industries, Marc had decided it was time to pull up stumps and enjoy more time with his beloved wife, Sandy, and their family in North Queensland.

The leader of the opposition at the time, Lawrence Springborg, said, 'Mr Rowell would be a hard member for the party to replace.' He continued, 'Marc gained a reputation as a champion of North Queensland with his seat of Hinchinbrook stretching just north from Townsville to South Johnstone near Innisfail.' He said further, 'He has been passionate about development in the north and the need to support existing industry and the need to diversify industry. It's going to be a hard act for anyone to follow.'

I met Marc in 2004 when I was elected to the Legislative Assembly, although I hardly had any contact with him for some time as the Liberal and National parties were not in coalition and we operated in a singular fashion. It was not until September 2005 that a coalition was formed, and between that time and the 9 September state election of 2006 I was fortunate enough to get to know Marc and his knack of telling tales, as regaled by the honourable members for Maroochydore and Warrego.

I found him to be a calm, measured individual with a genuine interest in people—unpretentious, happy, eager to talk about his farming experience and keen interest in rare fruits and, of course, how to navigate the many facets of parliament. Marc's successor in the seat of Hinchinbrook, Andrew Cripps, spoke of the high regard that Marc was held in and of his desire to fill his shoes admirably and to advocate strongly for his region—which he did.

On the few occasions that our paths crossed since Marc retired, he was ever the gentleman. I remember him with fondness and respect, as my sympathies reach out to his family and friends. Rest in peace, old friend.

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

Whereupon honourable members stood in silence.

Mr SPEAKER: Question time will commence at 10.45 this morning.

PETITIONS

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

Prince Charles Hospital, Parking

Mr Mander, from 27 petitioners, requesting the House to evaluate the need for additional car and motorcycle parking requirements at the Prince Charles Hospital taking into account any planned development and to make the evaluation publicly available [639].

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

Jimna Fire Tower

From 167 petitioners, requesting the House to review the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries decision to deconstruct the Jimna Fire Tower [640].

Moreton Bay Islands, Bridge

From 16 petitioners, requesting the House to allow private enterprise to construct a bridge to the Moreton Bay Islands, including North Stradbroke Island [641].

Light Rail, Alternative Routes

From 357 petitioners, requesting the House to direct the feasibility study to investigate alternative routes for the Light Rail to head South and not the Gold Coast Highway route alone [\[642\]](#).

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

Toowoomba, New High School

From 1,018 petitioners, requesting the House to investigate a business model for a high school in the South West area of Toowoomba [\[643, 644\]](#).

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

Family Support Program, Maroochy Neighbourhood Centre

Ms Simpson, from 93 petitioners, requesting the House to provide additional support under the Local Area Priority Projects initiative to enable the Family Support Program at the Maroochy Neighbourhood Centre to continue beyond June 2018 [\[645\]](#).

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

Domestic and Family Violence Services and Alcohol Services, Funding

From 116 petitioners, requesting the House to prioritise funding for shared models of care between alcohol services and domestic and family violence services [\[646\]](#).

Rockhampton CBD, Level Crossing Safety Guards

From 46 petitioners, requesting the House to ensure that the safety guards at the level rail crossings located in the Rockhampton CBD, along Denison Street and the following cross streets of Cambridge, Archer, Fitzroy, Denham, William, Derby and Stanley are upgraded to include the installation of boom gates, flashing lights and better lighting [\[647\]](#).

Petitions received.

TABLED PAPERS

The Clerk informed the House that the following papers, received during the recess, were tabled on the dates indicated—

08 May 2018—

- [617](#) Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee: Report No. 5, 56th Parliament—Disability Services and Other Legislation (Worker Screening) Amendment Bill 2018
- [618](#) Education, Employment and Small Business Committee: Report No. 3, 56th Parliament—Mines Legislation (Resources Safety) Amendment Bill 2018

10 May 2018—

- [619](#) Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency—Annual Report 2016-17
- [620](#) National Health Practitioner Ombudsman and Privacy Commissioner—Annual Report 2016-17
- [621](#) Office of the Health Ombudsman—Annual Report 2016-17: Erratum
- [622](#) Townsville Hospital and Health Service—Annual Report 2016-17: Erratum
- [623](#) Commissioner for Mine Safety and Health Annual Performance Report 2016-17
- [624](#) Coal Mining Safety and Health Advisory Committee—Annual Report 2016-17
- [625](#) Mining Safety and Health Advisory Committee—Annual Report 2016-17

11 May 2018—

- [626](#) Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing—Final Report 1 July-12 December 2017

14 May 2018—

- [627](#) Innovation, Tourism Development and Environment Committee: Report No. 3, 56th Parliament—Subordinate legislation tabled between 11 October 2017 and 6 March 2018
- [628](#) Family Responsibilities Commission—Annual Report 2016-17

TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Statutory instruments

The following statutory instruments were tabled by the Clerk—

Drugs Misuse Act 1986—

- [629](#) Drugs Misuse Amendment Regulation 2018, No. 50
- [630](#) Drugs Misuse Amendment Regulation 2018, No. 50, explanatory notes

State Penalties Enforcement Amendment Act 2017—

[631](#) State Penalties Enforcement Amendment (Postponement) Regulation 2018, No. 51

[632](#) State Penalties Enforcement Amendment (Postponement) Regulation 2018, No. 51, explanatory notes

State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999—

[633](#) State Penalties Enforcement (Hardship and Safeguards) Amendment Regulation 2018, No. 52

[634](#) State Penalties Enforcement (Hardship and Safeguards) Amendment Regulation 2018, No. 52, explanatory notes

Penalties and Sentences Act 1992—

[635](#) Penalties and Sentences (Penalty Unit Value) Amendment Regulation 2018, No. 53

[636](#) Penalties and Sentences (Penalty Unit Value) Amendment Regulation 2018, No. 53, explanatory notes

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Infrastructure

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (10.02 am): My government is committed to delivering the infrastructure Queensland needs to drive our economy to even greater heights and support even more jobs growth. It is why we have committed to building Cross River Rail—the landmark piece of infrastructure that is projected to generate 7,700 jobs, cut travel times from Logan and the Gold Coast by up to 15 minutes, boost public transport use across the region by 29,000 trips per day in 2036 and ease congestion by taking 18,500 cars off the road a day. We are also committed to developing infrastructure through regional Queensland. That is why we have committed funding to ensure the long-term development of Queensland's primary traffic artery through the \$1 billion a year Bruce Highway Trust.

I always say that government works best when all levels of government work together. That is why my government is partnering with Rockhampton Regional Council to stump up our combined share of the funding needed to build a levee to protect the city from flooding. That is why my government is partnering with Townsville City Council to stump up our combined share of funding to widen the channel at the Port of Townsville, creating even more economic opportunities for the north of our state.

As I say, Queensland works best when all levels work together. To that end, I had been hoping for good news in last Tuesday's federal budget when it came to Cross River Rail, the Bruce Highway, the Rockhampton levee and the Port of Townsville channel widening. As we know, that good news was not forthcoming. On behalf of the people of Queensland, I express my dismay and disappointment at the Turnbull federal government for its failure to back Queensland, although, sadly, I cannot express my surprise.

Population Growth

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (10.04 am): Today is good news for Queensland. It is my happy duty to inform the House of a very special arrival. We often host heads of government and heads of state, but none of them hold the pride of place that belongs to this very special person. We are about to welcome our five millionth Queenslander.

There can be no greater display of confidence than people choosing a life in Queensland. Overseas and interstate migration is up by 50,000 people in the past year. Nineteen thousand came from interstate. Guess which state provided the greater influx? It was New South Wales. More than 12,000, or 230 a week, move from New South Wales to Queensland seeking a better life. Maybe it is just because they want to be on the winning side for State of Origin.

For the past 25 years Queensland has had the highest population growth of any state. Sixty thousand babies were born in Queensland last year. Queensland is, and always has been, the land of opportunity. In February 4,200 new jobs were created. Employment growth at 4.6 per cent is the highest in Australia, and that is not happening by accident.

Everything we do in this House is for that five millionth Queenslander. It is why we are hiring 3,500 more nurses and 100 more midwives; putting another 3,700 teachers in our classrooms; building 10 new schools; hiring an extra 535 front-line police to keep our communities safer; and delivering the roads and infrastructure that Queenslanders need. Somewhere today a brand-new mum and dad will be eager to meet their new arrival. The whole family will want to know: is it a boy or a girl? The doctor will say, 'Congratulations, it's a Queenslander! Welcome to the family, our five millionth little one.'

Crime and Corruption Commission, Funding

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (10.07 am): Integrity is the hallmark of the government I lead, and no-one plays a greater role in enforcing integrity and accountability than the CCC. In recent years Tony Fitzgerald's standing army against corruption has never been busier. The CCC needs backup and it is getting it. To ensure the CCC has the resources it needs to do the job, I am very pleased to announce today that the government will allocate \$7.4 million over the next four years, and we will allocate \$1.8 million immediately for the 2018-19 financial year.

In the past three years the CCC's workload in public sector corruption has increased by 57 per cent. Complaints have increased by 17 per cent. Local government sector complaints have increased by 41 per cent. We do not want to just talk about integrity; we want to back it up with full support and the tools the CCC needs to tackle corruption in this state.

Councils throughout Queensland are partnering with my government to create jobs and build regional economies. We will return integrity to local government, assisting mayors, councillors and councils to better serve their communities.

Myriad Festival

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (10.08 am): My government is proud of our over \$500 million Advance Queensland program. We are creating and sustaining jobs, harnessing Queenslanders' ideas for new products and services, and encouraging people from all walks of life to back themselves. Following our successful Advance Queensland Innovation and Investment Summit that we held in 2016, my government was able to secure Queensland as the host state for an innovation festival that will ensure Queensland is front and centre of the innovation sphere.

This week marks the start of the largest innovation festival Queensland has ever seen, the Myriad Festival. At last year's event, around 3,000 people attended and this year we expect as many as 4,000 people to attend Myriad. We have brought some of the world's leading innovators and venture capitalists here to Queensland to rub shoulders and do business with our best and brightest including 23 leading investors. Around 130 of our homegrown start-ups and small businesses are set to be part of Myriad, with more than 100 speakers at this year's event collaborating on answers to some of the big questions like the future of food, health, culture, play, work, cities and money.

My government will continue to support Queensland innovators and entrepreneurs to do great things, bringing them from Silicon Valley to Fortitude Valley. I cannot wait to see what they achieve now and into the future. I want to thank the Minister for Innovation for greeting that plane when it landed here yesterday. We are looking forward to a great event.

Federal Budget

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (10.09 am): We are a government that is getting on with the job of delivering on our commitments to the people of Queensland as our population continues to grow. Sadly, the same cannot be said of the Commonwealth. Last week's federal budget was more of what we have come to expect from Malcolm Turnbull and Scott Morrison. There were big promises for New South Wales and Victoria, but all that Queensland was guaranteed was another long wait for critical services and critical infrastructure. That is exactly what we have come to expect from the Turnbull government.

This is a budget that is fundamentally unfair for Queenslanders because Queensland is not getting its fair share. The Turnbull government says it is investing \$5.2 billion in Queensland infrastructure. That is as much as it is spending on a single rail line in Melbourne—without a business case and without an actual alignment.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members to my left. The House will come to order.

Ms TRAD: This is a government—

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, I have just called the House to order. You are warned under the standing orders.

Ms TRAD: The Turnbull government are raking in massive revenues from Queensland but they want to give it to big business and the big banks. Their promises are hollow. Queenslanders have either missed out or will be waiting years and years to see the Turnbull government actually deliver, with the bulk of new infrastructure funding pushed out beyond the forward estimates. This means the state is being forced to do the heavy lifting and stump up the money to get these crucial congestion-busting projects started when Queenslanders expect them to be started.

Industry can see through the Turnbull LNP government too. The RACQ has said that the Turnbull budget is all about smoke and mirrors and that the Commonwealth had 'underfunded and underdelivered' for Queensland. Analysis by Infrastructure Partnerships Australia revealed that infrastructure funding had actually been cut by \$2 billion over the forward estimates nationally.

This budget also fails the fairness test for some of our most disadvantaged communities. There was not a cent for Queensland in critical programs like the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing. Make no mistake—

Mr Hart interjected.

Ms TRAD: Make no mistake, the decision by the Commonwealth to walk away from a 50-year tradition of funding housing in remote Indigenous communities in Queensland also indicates the Commonwealth government's preparedness to walk away from our national ambition to close the gap.

Mr Mander interjected.

Mr Hart interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Deputy Leader of the Opposition and member for Burleigh, I am cautioning you. Please cease your interjections.

Ms TRAD: Mayors in these communities are absolutely devastated. Wayne Butcher from Lockhart River said—

If we don't get any outcome from this from the Federal Government the stats around health, the stats around education they're just going to get worse.

We have also seen the Commonwealth cut \$15 billion from social security and community services over the past four years. John Falzon from St Vincent de Paul described how fair the federal budget was when he said—

If you're locked out of a job, or locked into an insecure job, tonight's budget doesn't even bring home the two-minute noodles.

It does, however, bring home the caviar for the corporates.

We are also missing out on vital skills funding too, with an effective \$60 million cut from training here in Queensland. Our regions missed out too. There was no money, as the Premier has already advised the House, to match our commitment to the Rockhampton flood levee or the channel-widening project in Townsville.

Queensland needs a federal government that will actually deliver for our state, and Queenslanders need a state government that will stand up for them—not back down when the Prime Minister makes big promises but fails to deliver to the people of Queensland. The Palaszczuk Labor government will always stand up for our state. We will never take a backwards step in fighting for Queensland's fair share from Canberra.

Federal Budget

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning) (10.14 am): Today's news about Queensland's population approaching the five million mark illustrates how our great state continues to forge ahead. The Palaszczuk Labor government is working to support a growing Queensland—by building the industries for tomorrow, revitalising manufacturing, improving infrastructure and planning for the future. As well as those newly born here, more people are voting with their feet and choosing to live in Queensland—with our state shooting to the top destination for interstate migration. What this shows is that the Palaszczuk government is leading Queensland into a new decade of optimism and opportunity, with more jobs, better communities and a brighter future for all Queenslanders.

The government shares and supports Queenslanders' innate sense of optimism and opportunity. The people of Queensland are accustomed to their state achieving great things, but there is another thing Queenslanders have become accustomed to since 15 September 2015—that is, the sense of being let down by Malcolm Turnbull's Liberal National government. Nowhere in the Turnbull government's budget is the sense of feeling let down more apparent than when it comes to funding for

Queensland's infrastructure. Queenslanders should rightfully feel disappointed by another federal budget without a single dollar to support the transformative Cross River Rail project. Cross River Rail is ready and needed. The lack of funding comes as Malcolm Turnbull has committed \$5 billion to a railway in Victoria which has no route and no business case and is not needed before 2030.

As a proud Logan resident, I am pleased that the Turnbull government has finally provided some funding for the M1—something my colleague, the Minister for Transport and Main Roads, and Logan Labor MPs have been fighting for for many years. However, yet again the federal government has let Queenslanders down—offering to fund only 50 per cent funding for the Pacific Highway upgrades when it funds 80 per cent of upgrades to exactly the same highway in New South Wales.

Of greater concern, even when Queensland projects have been funded, is that funding will not flow to Queensland—or support necessary jobs in Queensland—until the 2023-24 financial year. Put simply, the Turnbull government's budget is a hoax. The business community knows it, and so do Queenslanders, but Queenslanders know something else. They know, whether it is funding for natural disaster recovery, improvements to the Bruce Highway or a levee to protect Rockhampton residents from a flood, that the Palaszczuk government will always stick up for Queensland. It is about time those opposite did a little bit of that also.

Myriad Festival

 **Hon. KJ JONES** (Cooper—ALP) (Minister for Innovation and Tourism Industry Development and Minister for the Commonwealth Games) (10.17 am): Today I can announce that the very first deal of Myriad 2018 has already been done. Three Queensland investors on the Myriad Air flight, 31,000 feet above ground, agreed to form a new venture capital company and now are on the hunt to invest in local start-ups at Myriad this week. This is exactly why we backed the Myriad Festival—to create opportunities for Queensland and to boost local jobs.

Having a special chartered flight from Silicon Valley to Brisbane was a groundbreaking way for Queenslanders to mix it with some of the world's greatest innovators, entrepreneurs and venture capitalists. This flight included chief entrepreneur Steve Baxter, Obama's tech adviser Tony Conrad, and Ian Thorpe. Former CIA analyst and Myriad speaker Yael Eisenstat has described the flight like this—

This is my first time coming to Australia and I'll never be able to go on a normal flight again. I've travelled the world and I've never seen anything like it.

We know many more deals will be done during the week at the Myriad Festival. Innovation is at the heart of our half a billion dollar Advance Queensland program, which is diversifying Queensland's economy and creating the jobs of the future. That is why at lunchtime today I will meet with high school students who will take part in Myriad High at QUT. This will give our Queensland students exposure to world-class innovation programs. We will continue to invest in innovation because we know it is the best way forward for Queensland, particularly for the babies who will be born here in the future.

Federal Budget, Hospitals

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (10.19 am): For five long years now Queensland's hospitals have suffered from the federal LNP government's hospital funding shortfall, and the latest federal budget is no different. In contrast, in his budget reply speech last week, Bill Shorten committed to invest an extra \$2.8 billion in Australia's public hospitals, which would fully reverse the LNP's current funding shortfall.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, apologies. Members to my left, I am having difficulty hearing the minister. I would like to hear his contribution. The House will come to order.

Dr MILES: Federal Labor's funding would make sure Queensland's doctors, nurses and hospital staff have the resources they need to deliver the best possible care for Queenslanders. Queensland has had to fight for every cent of our fair share of hospital funding from the LNP. The Turnbull LNP government spent 51 weeks arguing over undisputed health funding. They withheld payments from Queensland hospitals for procedures already delivered—as far back as 2014—and there is still millions missing. Queensland hospitals are still owed \$460 million from the federal government for the 2016-17 financial year. What patients, their families and Queensland's hardworking doctors and nurses need is for the Commonwealth to pay 100 per cent of what is owed and to pay it on time. A federal Labor government will honour their commitments and return hospital funding to a fifty-fifty split.

Last week, Scott Morrison handed down a budget that locked in less funding for Queensland hospitals. He did not even mention Queensland in his speech—not even once. He announced extra doctor training places for regional Victoria and regional New South Wales, but not for Central Queensland where they are needed. A Shorten Labor government will fully reverse the Turnbull government's shortfall by investing an extra \$2.8 billion. This investment would help reduce emergency department and elective surgery waiting times and give future certainty to our hospital and health boards, allowing them to plan for the future.

Speaking of the future, as the Premier has announced this morning, somewhere in our great state today in one of those hospitals we will welcome to the world our five millionth Queensland, no doubt with the help of one of our wonderful, hardworking midwives. It is for those newest and youngest Queenslanders that we invest in our public hospitals because they deserve the best possible health care throughout their lifetime.

The choice for Queenslanders at the next federal election is now very clear. Indeed, the choice for the people I represent in the seat of Longman is also very clear. They can choose Malcolm Turnbull, the LNP, Pauline Hanson and less funding for Queensland hospitals, or they can choose Labor and Bill Shorten who will restore hospital funding.

NAPLAN

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations) (10.22 am): More than 263,000 Queensland students in years 3, 5, 7 and 9 will sit the 2018 NAPLAN tests this week, starting today. This includes 15,000 students from more than 80 state and non-state schools who will be participating in NAPLAN online. I wish all students who are sitting this year's NAPLAN test the best of luck and only ask that they try their best.

I also want to thank parents and our hardworking teachers for their crucial role in preparing students for the test. Queensland has participated in the National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy testing for the past decade. During this time we have seen significant changes in Queensland's education systems and society more broadly. The Palaszczuk government is committed to ensuring we strike the right balance on national assessment requirements placed on students, parents and schools. Not a week goes by without principals, parents, teachers, academics, media and members of the public raising issues about NAPLAN. Recently, distinguished academic Dr Les Perelman labelled the NAPLAN writing tests as 'the most absurd and least valid' he had ever seen. Gonski 2.0, handed down two weeks ago, also raised concerns about the limitations of NAPLAN to inform teaching practices.

After a decade of NAPLAN, most stakeholders agree that the timing is right for a comprehensive review. It is time to take a fresh look at what is working and what could be improved. That is why I announced in February that my department would re-evaluate NAPLAN in the Queensland context. The Queensland evaluation will look into how NAPLAN is being used and reported and the value of the test in improving education outcomes and feed this information into the national review. I have also called on the Turnbull government to undertake a national review of NAPLAN.

At the Education Council meeting in April I advocated strongly for, and secured the scope of, the terms of reference for a national review to be drawn up and presented at the next meeting in June. The Palaszczuk government listens to the concerns of school communities. I am proud to be putting issues that affect Queensland students on the national agenda and I will continue to advocate for a comprehensive national NAPLAN review. I wish all students the best over the next few days.

Federal Budget, Transport

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (10.25 am): The Palaszczuk government is continuing to deliver new and upgraded infrastructure projects right across Queensland. From the Smithfield bypass in Cairns, two M1 upgrades between Mudgeeraba and Varsity Lakes and at the Gateway merge or the upgrade of the Warrego out at Dalby, this government is delivering for all Queenslanders.

On federal budget night the Turnbull government announced \$5.2 billion in new funding for transport infrastructure in Queensland. While I always welcome additional federal funding in Queensland, it is disappointing that the Turnbull government has committed almost the same amount to one project in Victoria at the Melbourne Airport, which does not have a business case; has once again not committed funding towards Cross River Rail, Queensland's No. 1 infrastructure priority; and continues to avoid contributing an appropriate share of funding towards nationally significant projects on the National Land Transport Network in Queensland.

When the National Land Transport Network was established in federal legislation, the federal government committed to funding projects on the network 80-20 with the states. Unfortunately, those goalposts keep shifting as we go. In this budget alone there are a number of projects on the National Land Transport Network which they are proposing to only fund at a 50 per cent rate—and these include the Beerburrum to Nambour rail upgrade, the Cunningham Highway and of course two M1 Pacific Motorway upgrades—while at the same time on the same M1 at Coffs Harbour, New South Wales gets 80 per cent funding.

Further, of the \$5.2 billion committed in this year's budget, \$4.6 billion is committed beyond the forward estimates—that is, from 2022-23. This means that insufficient federal funding has been provided in the forward estimates period to commence meaningful work on key priorities, particularly the two M1 Pacific Motorway projects, to support the timely delivery of transport infrastructure priorities. Only \$155 million of federal funding has been provided to the two projects on the M1 in the forward estimates, up to 2022. This means that we have less to spend on infrastructure essential to support our growth here in Queensland. That is why the Palaszczuk government will always continue to stand up to Canberra and demand a fair share for our state.

Small Business Week

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development) (10.28 am): Small Business Week kicks off on 28 May and it is a fantastic time to celebrate our diverse and growing small business community. The Palaszczuk government understands that supporting more small businesses creates more jobs for our growing population. Already with our support the number of Queensland small businesses has surged over the past financial year by more than 12,000, and the Palaszczuk government's small business strategy has been growing with them. Already more than 1,700 small businesses have been assisted under our strategy with more than \$6 million in grants to help get their services and products online or expanded into new markets.

Small businesses who have received these grants told us that this support is helping them to create more than 2,200 new jobs. This is on top of the more than 10,000 jobs supported in small businesses through our Back to Work program. Of course we want to continue to do more and help more small businesses create new job opportunities for a growing Queensland. That is why I recently expanded our strategy to include a new Business Growth Fund. The new fund provides up to \$50,000 for a small or medium sized business to help them expand. Support like this will supercharge the future of growing businesses in Queensland.

Already there are so many success stories to showcase during Small Business Week, and tonight I am pleased to join with the Premier and members of this House to welcome more than 100 small businesses to parliament to get an early head start on Small Business Week celebrations. This year we will showcase the stories and passions behind businesses through our new 100 Faces of Small Business campaign, and one of those businesses is She Flies.

She Flies is a Queensland based business which is going global. It supports more women and girls into STEM careers with their drone and STEM education. Last month I had the absolute pleasure to catch up with Dr Catherine Ball, the co-founder of She Flies, to discuss how they are helping empower the next generation of young Queensland girls. They are helping to ensure that, as Queensland's economy and population grow, we also have a growing and skilled workforce ready and able to not just fill but also create the jobs of tomorrow. The Palaszczuk government is unashamedly for small businesses because we know they are helping to power our nation-leading jobs growth. There is no better time to get behind your local small business community than during Small Business Week, and I urge all members of the House to take part.

Mr SPEAKER: I want to acknowledge that we have with us at parliament in the gallery today students from Mt Maria College in Mitchelton from the electorate of Everton. Welcome to the Queensland parliament.

Age-Friendly Projects

 **Hon. CJ O'ROURKE** (Mundingburra—ALP) (Minister for Communities and Minister for Disability Services and Seniors) (10.31 am): As we stand here today and think about how exciting it is to welcome the five millionth Queenslanders to our state, it is an important opportunity for us to also remember how important it is that we look after all Queenslanders, particularly our seniors. Today I am pleased to announce to the House the opening of our second round of Advancing Queensland: an age-friendly community grants program.

In this round we are offering \$1 million worth of funding for projects across Queensland to make our thriving communities more age friendly. It is a fantastic opportunity for councils, organisations and not-for-profit groups to receive a grant of between \$25,000 and \$100,000 towards age-friendly projects. This year we are looking for projects that will focus on the areas of civic participation and employment, community support and health services, and respect and social inclusion. These are important focus areas for our seniors, and making improvements in these areas is a vital part of our plan to create a thriving age-friendly Queensland.

Under the previous round we provided \$1 million in funding towards 12 age-friendly projects across Queensland. I was delighted to see firsthand how several of these projects are improving the lives of our seniors and their communities. On the Gold Coast, Village Community Services' We'll Get You There project is assisting seniors to access travel options, with volunteers helping seniors to become comfortable using public transport. In Far North Queensland the Tablelands Regional Council received a grant to create an age-friendly fitness area. Mayor Joe Paronella tells me that the grant has allowed council to meaningfully engage with, and learn from, seniors in their community.

These projects are great examples of our commitment to create an age-friendly Queensland where people of all ages can feel included in their communities. This government is committed to looking after our seniors. Our \$2 million worth of concessions in 2017-18 for electricity, rates, water and gas will help more than 500,000 eligible households. I am pleased that we have age-friendly grants to further enhance outcomes for our seniors. I am very excited to see the innovative ideas which will be put forward in this year's grants, and I look forward to sharing these projects with the House soon.

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, Capital Works Projects

 **Hon. CD CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (10.34 am): The Palaszczuk government is committed to ensuring that Fire and Emergency Services personnel have all the resources they need to continue their high standard of service to the Queensland community. Our emergency services are rightfully recognised as world leading, and I am determined to ensure that we remain at the forefront with management practices and skills. It was this government that allocated record funding of \$675 million for QFES in 2017-18, including budgeted staffing for 3,280 full-time-equivalent personnel. On top of this, we are investing \$29.5 million over the next four years to boost Queensland Fire and Emergency Services. This equates to an additional 100 firefighters and 12 fire communication officers statewide.

QFES has completed or currently has underway 26 Fire and Rescue and Rural Fire Service capital works projects this financial year. These works range from station refurbishments through to brand-new fire and rescue stations, including those already opened at Bundamba, Gordonvale and Bundaberg. Mr Speaker, I want to thank you for opening Gordonvale, as I know that is in your electorate and you championed that when you were in cabinet. This work is funded under QFES's capital works program, totalling nearly \$55 million for 2017-18 alone, with eight projects worth \$28 million delivered under the Palaszczuk government's Significant Regional Infrastructure Projects Program. The worth of these capital works to Queensland communities cannot be measured in financial terms. These projects are vitally important.

Last Thursday I had the pleasure of opening the new \$7.8 million QFES station in Bundaberg. The station is co-located with the new \$5 million Queensland Ambulance Service facility at a brand-new complex which will allow for combined training exercises. The new Bundaberg facility is world-class and can host multi-agency training for crews from the fire and rescue service, the Rural Fire Service, the State Emergency Service and the Queensland Ambulance Service. Having these state-of-the-art facilities means that the QFES workforce and other emergency services can respond to emergencies confidently and safely. The community can feel at ease knowing that their local emergency services are well equipped and ready to respond. The training amenities this complex provides will assist Bundaberg area personnel as well as those from Gayndah, Kingaroy, Hervey Bay and Maryborough.

Next week our government will open stations in Mackay and Proserpine when the Palaszczuk government governs from the region. The focus of next week will be on growing jobs, strengthening front-line services and diversifying the local economy. The facilities being built will equip our firefighters, both in urban and rural settings, with everything required for a modern fire and rescue response. It does not stop there. Last week I visited new station builds at Childers and Howard, with those stations coming on line in the second half of this year. This commitment and the improvement of QFES facilities will ensure that the Queensland public is well protected into the future.

Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs

 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services) (10.37 am): As our population continues to grow our government remains committed to taking action to keep our communities safe, both today and in the future. One way we are doing that is by having the strongest, toughest, most comprehensive organised crime legislation in the nation. Our government and the Queensland Police Service remain ever vigilant when it comes to criminal offending and preventing crime, particularly in relation to outlaw motorcycle gangs.

I am pleased to inform the House that last week officers from the Organised Crime Gangs Group's Taskforce Maxima wrapped up an operation targeting drugs and firearms on the Darling Downs. As part of that operation search warrants were executed at multiple addresses across southern Queensland, and police have charged 22 people with 104 offences. Those charged include a number of known bikie members and associates.

Taskforce Maxima and the entire Queensland Police Service will continue to target members and associates of gangs who are causing harm to our community through the distribution of drugs and the possession of firearms. I am also pleased to inform the House that the Queensland Police Service has informed us that our strong laws are working and having the desired effect of building a safer community here in Queensland.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (COUNCILLOR COMPLAINTS) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL (IMPLEMENTING STAGE 1 OF BELCARRA) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Cognate Debate

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.39 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That, in accordance with standing order 172, the Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill be treated as cognate bills for their remaining stages, with—

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

Mr Bleijie: Mr Speaker—

Mr SPEAKER: There is no debate on this motion before the House under standing orders.

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

AYES, 50:

ALP, 47—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Healy, Hinchliffe, Howard, Jones, Kelly, King, Lauga, Linard, Lui, Lynham, Madden, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, Miller, Mullen, B. O'Rourke, C. O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pease, Pegg, Power, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Stewart, Trad, Whiting.

Grn, 1—Berkman.

PHON, 1—Andrew.

Ind, 1—Bolton.

NOES, 39:

LNP, 39—Bates, Batt, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Boyce, Costigan, Crandon, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Hart, Hunt, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McArdle, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O'Connor, Perrett, Powell, Purdie, Robinson, Rowan, Simpson, Sorensen, Stevens, Stuckey, Watts, Weir, Wilson.

Resolved in the affirmative.

ETHICS COMMITTEE

Resolution, Cessation of Investigation

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (10.45 am): I rise to report on a matter referred to the Ethics Committee of the 55th Parliament. I refer to the matter of privilege referred by the Speaker of the 55th Parliament to the Ethics Committee of the 55th Parliament on 7 September 2017 in respect of a matter of privilege involving the former member for Cairns and others. On the dissolution of the 55th Parliament the Ethics Committee of that parliament was dissolved. The Ethics Committee of the 56th Parliament was constituted on 15 February 2018. Under section 105 of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001, the committee has resolved not to continue to investigate this matter and will therefore not be tabling a report.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr SPEAKER: Question time will conclude at 11.46 am.

Ipswich City Council, Complaints

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (10.46 am): My first question without notice is to the Premier. The member for Bundamba has said publicly that she repeatedly had conversations to warn the Premier about concerns in Ipswich and was ignored. Did the member for Bundamba speak to the Premier about corruption in the ranks of the Labor Party: true or false?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. I am aware that the member for Bundamba took some of those concerns to the CCC.

Ipswich City Council

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: My second question without notice is to the Premier. I table RTI documents showing that the Deputy Premier, while local government minister, received 326 complaints about concerns in Ipswich.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 15 May 2018, from the Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs to the Office of the Leader of the Opposition titled 'Application made under the Right to Information Act 2009—Charges estimate notice' [648].

Given the member for Bundamba's previous claims that her warnings were ignored, can the Premier guarantee that every one of these complaints was referred to the CCC for a thorough investigation at the time they were received?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. I understand that the Deputy Premier addressed this issue during the last parliament.

Infrastructure Investment

Mr STEWART: My question without notice is of the Premier. Will the Premier please update the House on the government's investment in critical infrastructure throughout Queensland and any alternative views?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Townsville—

Mr Powell interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Glass House, you have been interjecting all morning. I have tolerated it. I will no longer tolerate it. You are warned under the standing orders for repeated and persistent interjections.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for that question. Sadly, the federal budget did not deliver for the people of this state. As I announced earlier, the five millionth Queenslanders will be born today. Unfortunately, the federal colleagues of those opposite have basically ignored Queensland. I know how much the local members representing Townsville—the members for Mundingburra, Thuringowa and Townsville—fight for their community. It is my government that is delivering the water infrastructure that is needed by the people of Townsville.

I was the first person to come out advocating funding for the Townsville stadium. I understand that the federal Treasurer may be in Townsville at the moment. He is seeking to go on-site. There is an agreement that he put in place with the state government about access to that site, so I say to the federal Treasurer: please go onto that site. We will now go onto that site whenever we want to. If they

do not want to honour that commitment, we will now tear up the agreement we had about protocols. The member for Townsville will be there every week, with the member for Thuringowa and the minister, championing the Townsville stadium and our commitment to infrastructure in the great electorate of Townsville.

Also in relation to that, I am quite sure that the federal member for Herbert would love to go there every week as well. I do not think we will see any other senators there, but we are more than happy to allow that. One only has to look at the infrastructure funding that Queensland has not been given by this federal government. As we know, \$5 billion is it. That is its commitment. It has given that money to a project in Victoria, and earlier I heard the member for Everton backing Victoria and not backing Queensland. I would like to see how many times those opposite have written to Malcolm Turnbull, the Prime Minister, or the Treasurer advocating on behalf of Queensland, but I honestly do not think it would be many. I know what Queensland families want, and they want a government that will stand up for their communities and fight for their communities. That is exactly what this government is doing. Every single member of my team is fighting for Queensland. With five million Queenslanders being born—

(Time expired)

Ipswich City Council, Complaints

Mr MANDER: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Local Government. In light of the revelations this morning that the Deputy Premier received over 300 complaints about concerns in Ipswich during her time as local government minister, can the minister guarantee that all of these complaints and any other corruption complaints the minister has received have been referred to the Crime and Corruption Commission for a full investigation?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I thank the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for the question. I can assure him that all matters that have come to my attention that deserve to be referred to the CCC have been. I am happy to look back at other matters that have been before the department and ensure that any matters that are appropriate be referred on as well.

I can absolutely be very clear to the member opposite and to you, Mr Speaker, and indeed to the whole parliament that the Palaszczuk government stands squarely and firmly in favour of integrity at all levels of government and stands squarely and firmly in support of the actions of the CCC and its predecessors, as all Labor governments in this state have been as part of the great project of modernising Queensland. Labor governments have modernised Queensland over the past 25 or so years in order to raise the standards and raise the bar in this House and in local government right across the state and I see what is occurring at the moment as part of that further modernisation.

I do not want to encroach upon matters that are before the House, so I will not speak too much further about some of those particular matters. Rather, I want to reiterate that the Palaszczuk government is very much in the strong traditions of the Goss government, the Beattie government and the Bligh government before it in supporting and enhancing accountability and transparency at all levels of government. That is why we will be supporting the recommendations of the CCC. That is why we will be working very closely with and providing the financial support to the CCC in order that it can continue the investigations that it needs to do to raise the standards. We will not be nobbling the CCC; we will be supporting the CCC.

Political Donations

Ms PEASE: My question without notice is directed to the Premier. Will the Premier please update the House on the Palaszczuk government's reforms to electoral disclosure thresholds and is the Premier aware of any alternative views?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Lytton for that very important question. Members can imagine my surprise when I opened up the *Courier-Mail* today and read the article headlined 'Turnbull anger at donation cap ban'. I read that article thoroughly and I want to update the House in relation to that issue.

When it comes to thresholds of political donations, it has been this side of the House that has embarked on the integrity and transparency reforms of the thresholds where we have said that over \$1,000 needs to be declared. When those opposite were in government, the member for Kawana was the then attorney-general and he increased the \$1,000 at that time to over \$12,500, basing it on federal consistency. We believe in transparency and integrity and we made sure that our first piece of legislation that came into this House was making those thresholds \$1,000.

I am very surprised to now hear that the court case that found against the LNP in relation to its disclosure thresholds is now being appealed. It is being appealed not by the LNP but by the federal Attorney-General. Malcolm Turnbull and the federal government—the Attorney-General federally—are using taxpayers' money to fight the court case of those opposite. That is a waste of taxpayers' money. Today I want the Leader of the Opposition to come out and say whether she supports taxpayers' money being used in this way, because what do they have to hide?

Honourable members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: We also know that, when that cap went up to \$12,500, over 94 per cent of political donations were made to political parties and that was not being disclosed. We want transparency in this state. Those opposite are not just fighting it; they are getting their federal mates in to fight it and the taxpayers of Australia—the taxpayers of Queensland—are funding it. We have also seen the Greens do something similar at the federal level in terms of donations going federally and then being siphoned back to Queensland and, of course, One Nation did not declare its plane. There is only one side of the House that believes in integrity and transparency. When it comes to political donations, I say to the members opposite that they should stop using taxpayers' funding. Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition can stand up today and tell us what she believes.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Caloundra and member for Maryborough, I could hear you having a distinct conversation across the chamber while the Premier was giving her response. There were other interjections, but I would ask both of you to cease or you will be warned under standing orders.

Ipswich City Council, Complaints

Mr BLEIJIE: My question without notice is directed to the Premier. Given the revelations this morning that more than 300 corruption complaints were sent to the Deputy Premier while she was local government minister, the repeated warnings from the member for Bundamba and the Premier's last-minute announcement of CCC funding today, why has it taken the Premier so long to act on serious concerns about Labor figures in Ipswich?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am so glad that the member for Kawana wants to talk about the CCC, because I did my own research. I went back in time—I always like going back to the days of the Newman government when he was the then attorney-general—and I remember an estimates hearing where those opposite axed 30 positions from the CCC. Mr Martin answered me—

... 30 positions disestablished ... real losses of capacity as a result of losing 30 positions.

There is the *Hansard* and it is very clear about what you did.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Yes, I have it there.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Kawana, please cease your interjections. Premier, I advise again that comments should come through the chair.

Ms PALASZCZUK: We all know that the member for Kawana was part of the plan. He came in here and sacked the PCCC in the dead of night. He was always attacking the CCC.

I contrast the view of that former attorney-general with what we on this side of the House do and the faith that the public has in our Attorney-General, Yvette D'Ath, in giving the resources that the CCC needs to continue its investigation into councils across this state. I will give the CCC the resources that it needs—\$7.4 million over the next four years. As I said this morning, \$1.8 million will be made available immediately for the CCC to continue to carry out its investigations as a matter of priority.

I contrast that with the actions of those opposite, who cut 30 positions. That was their attitude towards the CCC. I say to the member for Kawana, I say to the Leader of the Opposition—I say to all of those opposite—to stop Malcolm Turnbull using taxpayers' money to appeal their appeal against the court ruling. They should accept the court ruling. They should reveal the donations because, at the end of the day, it is about integrity and accountability. Those opposite have absolutely no credibility, because their track record speaks for itself.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order before we hear the next question and the question will be heard in silence.

Mr Minnikin interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Chatsworth, you are warned under the standing orders.

Political Donations

Mrs McMAHON: My question is to the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice. Will the Attorney-General update the House regarding any noteworthy political donations cases in Queensland and the latest developments?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for Macalister for her question. She has spent most of her working life upholding the law and serving the community. I also wish the member a happy birthday.

This is a very important issue. As the public would know, in July 2017 the Electoral Commission felt obliged to take a matter to the Supreme Court to force the LNP to finally disclose its donations. On 1 July this year, we had a ruling that said that these laws are valid and that those donations should be disclosed.

On 2 March 2018, the day after the decision came down, the opposition leader was reported in an article as stating—

Opposition Leader Deb Frecklington says the Liberal-National Party will accept the umpire's decision after it failed in its bid to challenge Queensland's political donations laws.

She went on further to say—

I'm quite sure that the party will respect the decision of the court.

The members opposite have not only not respected that decision but also have appealed the decision. Now we see the Commonwealth intervening. Malcolm Turnbull might not be willing to spend money in Queensland on health, schools, roads and other major infrastructure, but he will spend money to help hide donations. He is happy to do that.

Mr Janetzki interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Toowoomba South will cease his interjections. He is warned under the standing orders.

Mrs D'ATH: It is reported that state and federal coalition MPs are ropeable—ropeable—with this decision. Now, we have the Commonwealth Attorney-General instructing the Commonwealth Solicitor-General to intervene and spend taxpayers' dollars fighting this case.

I have to acknowledge—and those on the other side might be surprised about this—the LNP's commitment and dedication, because I cannot think of any other party that has spent so many years and worked so hard to ensure that it hid its donations. It has been six years now—six years—of hiding these donations. I think I know why. An analysis of the ECQ website shows that, since April 2014 up to May 2018, the LNP has received \$6.2 million in donations that are valued between \$1,000 and \$13,500, which is the current threshold that would apply in Queensland if the LNP were still in government. The LNP has had to disclose \$6.2 million because of the Palaszczuk government and its integrity and transparency around political donations. That would be hidden if it were not for this government. Those opposite want to make sure that there are more donations hidden. They will be judged by the public of Queensland—

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The minister's time has expired.

Myriad Festival

Ms BATES: My question is to the Minister for Innovation and Tourism Industry Development. I refer to media reports that one of the people flown out for the Myriad Festival at the expense of Queensland taxpayers is facing a number of sexual harassment complaints. I ask the minister: is it appropriate that Queensland taxpayers have paid for a multimillionaire facing a number of sexual harassment complaints to fly on a special charter plane from the US to Queensland?

Ms JONES: In answering that question I would like to clarify a number of matters. The cost of Myriad Air was not funded by the taxpayers of Queensland; it was paid for by sponsors. That goes to show that the community and the business community is on side with Myriad Air.

In relation to the complaints about which the honourable member spoke, I am advised that no charges have been laid. This matter has been going on for months now. No charges have been laid. As we have been talking about, we will always stand by the law and the law is that you are innocent until proven guilty.

Federal Budget

Mr HARPER: My question is to the Deputy Premier. Will the Deputy Premier inform the House of the outcome of the federal budget for Townsville and for Queensland and what the reaction has been to that budget?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for Thuringowa for the question. I know that the member for Thuringowa is a passionate North Queenslander and he takes very seriously his role as a local representative, as does the member for Townsville and the member for Mundingburra, in ensuring that their areas get a fair deal out of not only the Queensland government but also the federal Turnbull LNP budget. That is why, last Tuesday, it was incredibly disappointing to see the federal budget deliver absolutely nothing for Townsville—absolutely nothing.

We have put \$75 million on the table for the channel widening project for the Port of Townsville. It is a critical project that will set up Townsville for its economic future and it is a project that the federal government has turned away from. There was not any money for the water pipeline. Of the \$225 million put on the table by the Palaszczuk Labor government, there was not a single cent to match that. Of course, the project that is dear to the heart of the member for Thuringowa is the Townsville ring-road stage 5. At the last state election we put \$40 million on the table, expecting to see some money in this year's budget from the federal government. There was not a single dollar. The same issue is prevalent throughout Queensland. We have seen no money for the Rockhampton flood levee. We have seen a lack of money generally for regional Queensland as there is a lack of money for Queensland.

The RACQ came out and called the budget for what it is—a budget of 'smoke and mirrors', a budget that duds Queenslanders. Infrastructure Partnerships Australia said that, over the forward estimates, this federal budget delivers \$2 billion less for Australians than the last budget. We know that, as a growing state with a growing population, we need critical infrastructure dollars so that we can make sure that we are delivering the infrastructure and the services that Queenslanders need and our growing communities need.

Apparently, the only Canberra cheer squad that is saying that this budget was a good deal for Queensland are those opposite. I think it is only the member for Nanango and the member for Everton who have drunk the Turnbull Kool-Aid and have rejoiced in the fact that, for a lot of critical projects that the Turnbull government has advocated and has said that we will get funding for, we will not see that unless Malcolm Turnbull is re-elected another two times. They think that is a fair deal for Queensland.

I have to say that not everyone opposite has drunk the Kool-Aid. The member for Whitsunday was very disappointed with the federal budget. He said, 'When will the feds actually deliver?' For the benefit of the House, I table a copy of what he said. The member went on to say further, 'No sign of funding from Canberra here this arvo.'

Tabled paper: Social media post, dated 9 May 2018, by the member for Whitsunday, Mr Jason Costigan MP, titled 'Budget 2018' [649].

Tabled paper: Social media post, dated 9 May 2018, by the member for Whitsunday, Mr Jason Costigan MP, titled 'No sign of funding from Canberra here this arvo' [650].

It is clear that it is only those opposite who will not stand up for Queensland.

Algie, Mr M

Mr JANETZKI: My question without notice is to the Premier. The head of Queensland's corruption watchdog, Mr Alan MacSporran QC, recently said that the Crime and Corruption Commission has asked the Palaszczuk government to hand over documents about the appointment of Mr Algie to the board of Energy Queensland. Has the Premier complied with the Crime and Corruption Commission's request?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I heard those comments and I am quite sure that the government is complying with any request that is made by the CCC—as we would.

Federal Budget, Infrastructure

Ms HOWARD: My question is to the Minister for State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning. Will the minister advise what the federal budget shows for investment in Queensland's infrastructure and advise of any other priorities the federal government has for the expenditure of taxpayers' money?

Mr DICK: I thank the member for Ipswich for her question and acknowledge her support for infrastructure in her community and across Queensland. The federal budget was a major disappointment for Queenslanders who support infrastructure in our state: not one dollar for Cross River Rail; not one dollar for the South Rockhampton flood levee; no clarity around NDRRA funding

guidelines; and for the majority of the remaining projects the promise is on the never-never with major funding not coming through from the federal Turnbull government for four years.

I can tell members one thing the federal government is interested in funding, one thing it is happy to fund right away, and that is investing Commonwealth taxpayers' funds into a High Court challenge to hide state LNP donors. It is willing to put more money on the federal deficit immediately to hide LNP donors. One has to ask: what is the LNP hiding that the Commonwealth Attorney-General and the Commonwealth Solicitor-General, funded by the Commonwealth taxpayer, are willing to intervene in a High Court case to protect LNP donors? This is a protection racket for the LNP of the highest order. There is no constitutional principle at stake. There is no interest in protecting our Federation in this matter. They are hiding LNP donors.

It is no accident that Jane Prentice was knocked over by the chair of the Brisbane City Council Planning Committee. We know that planning is where local LNP politicians bring home the bacon when it comes to donors. It is no surprise that Jane Prentice was knocked over for an LNP staff member. What does this say about the state LNP? The Leader of the Opposition said she would accept the Supreme Court's decision. She has been defied by her own Prime Minister. He does not listen to the member for Nanango. He does not care what the member for Nanango thinks. He keeps dudding Queenslanders as a consequence.

This is not the only time that the Leader of the Opposition has been knocked over by the LNP boys' club. She said she wanted more women preselected and a federal LNP woman member of parliament is knocked over right under the nose of the deputy leader who was there. One can only imagine, if the member for Broadwater was there, the contest between the member for Everton and the member for Broadwater to see who could knock over a state or federal woman member of parliament first.

This shows that while Queenslanders are turning away from the Leader of the Opposition so is her own party and so is her own Prime Minister. The Prime Minister and the federal LNP do not support the Leader of the Opposition. They do not take her seriously. The clock is now ticking on her leadership.

Mr Mander interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Deputy Leader of the Opposition, you will refer to members of this House by their proper title. Minister for State Development, I listened very carefully to your answer. I give forewarning to all ministers that they must be relevant to the question asked. It appeared towards the back end of that question it was veering quite a way offcourse. I acknowledge in the gallery students from St Philomena School in the electorate of Logan.

Algie, Mr M

Mr WATTS: My question without notice is to the Premier. Will the Premier waive cabinet confidentiality protection over the documents relating to Mark Algie's appointment to the board of Energy Queensland and hand over any evidence to the Crime and Corruption Commission as requested?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for the question. Of course, the CCC is allowed to get any documents it wants. What we have not seen from those opposite are the cabinet documents relating to the NGR. I would really like to see those cabinet documents about the cost blowouts, disability compliance, who signed those contracts and how much taxpayers' money has been wasted on the signing of those contracts. We would like to see those contracts as well. Perhaps the member opposite can talk to Leader of the Opposition about that.

Federal Budget, Innovation

Ms PUGH: My question is to the Minister for Innovation and Tourism Industry Development and Minister for the Commonwealth Games. Will the minister please update the House on the impact of the federal budget on Queensland's innovation sector?

Ms JONES: I thank the honourable member for the question. I know how passionate the member for Mount Ommaney is about ensuring that our children and the students that they go to school with have the best job opportunities here in Queensland. That is why at a state level we are investing heavily in ensuring that we are providing opportunities for innovation and entrepreneurship for our youngest Queenslanders and for business. This stands in stark contrast to what we saw most recently in the federal budget. What we saw was a federal budget removing R&D tax incentive schemes from Australia. In the budget papers that the federal government released it expects to save \$2.4 billion. That is

\$2.4 billion ripped out of the hands of businesses in Australia, businesses that want to make a difference and grow jobs in Queensland and across our country.

Do members know which industries are going to be hit the hardest? I know those opposite will not take my word for it, but maybe they will take the word of Ernst & Young. Ernst & Young is saying that the industries that will be hit hardest by this decision to rip \$2.4 billion out of research and development in this country are agriculture and mining. The LNP members stand in this parliament and howl down at us across the chamber that they are the only side of parliament that cares about them.

If they care about agriculture and the future of agritech in this state, I call on the Leader of the Opposition to stand up against the \$2.4 billion cuts to innovation that will hurt, by the analysis of Ernst & Young and PwC, agriculture and mining the hardest. Now is the chance for the Leader of the Opposition to stand up for the constituency that she says she represents. We know she will not. We know the Leader of the Opposition will not stand up to try to stop these cuts because she never does. The only thing those opposite stand up against is disclosing the donors to their party that they have now hidden for six years.

I have only done a journalism degree—I am not a practising journalist—but one has to wonder why they would go to the High Court to hide donations for six years. One has to wonder what it is that those opposite are so at pains to keep secret that they will use the taxpayer dollars of Australians. They are using Australian taxpayers' dollars to keep secret the donations to the LNP. On what planet do those opposite think it is okay to use taxpayers' dollars to fight the transparency laws of Queensland? The LNP has a lot to answer for today. Why is it they will not fund infrastructure but will fund a court case in the High Court to hide their donors?

Suicide Prevention

Ms BOLTON: My question without notice is to the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services. Last week Noosa hosted a very well attended forum on suicide prevention and looking at ways to address the issue more holistically. Could the minister outline what efforts are being made both within the health system and in community and workplace responses?

Dr MILES: I thank the member for Noosa for that very important question. I do not think that there would be anyone in this House, and certainly not any community represented in this House, who has not felt the tragic effects of suicide. I am heartened to hear that the member attended that forum. I would love to hear more about the outcomes of that forum down the track.

To the specific question of what initiatives we have underway, all of our hospital and health services view every interaction with a Queenslanders as an opportunity to identify mental health issues and to respond effectively to people who might be at risk of suicide. That is why we have focused a lot on building the capacity of staff within hospital and health services to identify the signs of risk and also to strengthen partnerships with primary healthcare providers who often are the first line of response—the first person to identify a risk.

The Queensland government is investing \$9.6 million over four years in a suicide prevention health service initiative. The initiative includes actions to enhance the knowledge and skills of primary mental health care providers such as emergency department staff, general practitioners and first responders such as the QAS and school based nurses. After people at risk of suicide are identified, we are ensuring they have access to high-quality evidence based treatments specifically targeting suicidal behaviour by investing \$2.5 million over 18 months across 10 HHSs in a zero suicide in healthcare multisite collaborative project. We are also investing half a million dollars to trial a lived experience peer support service to enhance continuing care options for people following an acute crisis. We find that oftentimes those who have experienced depression or attempted suicide can be the best supporters of others.

We know that suicide is not only a problem for our health system; it is a problem for our society and we need efforts from across the community. The Queensland Mental Health Commissioner has an important role to play in driving reform towards integrated and recovery oriented mental health and drug and alcohol systems, which includes work towards suicide prevention. I understand the commissioner has been running forums for members of parliament at parliament. I urge members of parliament to participate in those forums. These reforms were commenced with the development of the Suicide Prevention Action Plan that is currently in place. That action plan includes 42 actions delivered by more than eight government agencies with the aim of reducing suicide and its impact on Queenslanders. There is much underway, but if new ideas or enhancements came from the forum that the member for Noosa attended, I would love to hear about them.

Federal Budget, Early Childhood Sector

Ms McMILLAN: My question is to the Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations. Will the minister please update the House on any outcomes for Queensland's early childhood sector in relation to the federal budget?

Ms GRACE: I thank the member for Mansfield for her question. She knows firsthand how important early childhood education is to the development of students in our education system. I can respond to her question by saying that there is no joy in the federal budget for long-term funding for early childhood education.

The Palaszczuk government is committed to giving all Queensland children the best start. We know that investing in high-quality early education and care is one of the best things we can do for our children's future. We know children who engage in quality early learning do better at school, are more likely to complete year 12 and have greater health and employment prospects. That is why we have been calling on the Turnbull government to please provide a long-term funding commitment to early childhood in this country. Unfortunately, Queensland children and our early childhood sector have been left worse off under the federal budget. Not only did we not get any long-term funding; this is the fifth short-term funding extension since 2009 that we have seen in this very important sector.

Not only did last week's federal budget fail to provide any long-term commitment to early childhood education; it also showed complete disregard for the continued safety of children in these centres. Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and Senator Birmingham have turned their backs on the national quality agenda for early childhood. They have slashed \$3.8 million in national partnership funding that should come to Queensland to support the regulation of early childhood services. Without notice and without consultation, they have slashed money to Queensland and, in our view, that is no way to run a sector that is so critical to giving our children a great start in life.

The \$3.8 million would support 23 authorised officers to assess, rate and regulate Queensland's 2,900 early childhood services. What have they done? They have turned their backs! They have walked away. They have said, 'Even though they are national regulations and it is part of a national agreement, we are turning our back. Now Queensland, you pick up the bill.' I am proud to say that this government will do that, because we know the importance of having to regulate this sector. That means that we have to foot the bill and is just another example of the Turnbull government cost shifting to Queensland and disregarding the benefits of early childhood education to our children in this state.

I challenge the opposition leader in this state to stand up for children. You will not stand up for infrastructure, you will not stand up for health—

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, direct your comments through the chair.

Ms GRACE: Stand up for early childhood education.

Goldoc, Wages

Mr LANGBROEK: My question without notice is to the Premier. What is the Premier doing about claims that security guards for the Commonwealth Games are owed thousands of dollars in pay and overtime by Goldoc? Doesn't this make a mockery of her Labour Day announcement of a wage theft inquiry, given that wage concerns highlighted in the media are governed by Julia Gillard's Fair Work Act?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for the question. I am advised by the Minister for the Commonwealth Games that Goldoc is, indeed, chasing that up as a matter of priority. I am glad that the leader of the opposition—sorry; he was the leader of the opposition. He might be again soon, although we want to keep the current Leader of the Opposition. No more changes, please. My apologies. We want the Leader of the Opposition to stay.

Mr Mander: Love the arrogance. We love that.

Mr SPEAKER: Deputy Leader of the Opposition, cease your interjections.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am glad the Deputy Leader of the Opposition interjected, because earlier today, during ministerial statements, it was the Deputy Leader of the Opposition who was sticking up for Malcolm Turnbull's funding of Victoria. He was backing in the Turnbull government's support for Victoria. He was sticking up for Victoria over Queensland. That is what we get.

Ms Jones: And he's doing his whispering behind Deb's back.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I take that interjection. We are hearing whispers from the other side. I am told that some on the other side are not too happy with the question time strategy. There is a little bit of talking happening.

In all seriousness, this year I was very proud to attend Labour Day, which we once again celebrated in May. I announced that, later on this week, we will be referring to a parliamentary committee an inquiry into wage theft in this state, which those opposite ridiculed. I say this: wage theft is real and we want to get to the bottom of it. I want to hear from employees. I want this inquiry to be conducted throughout Queensland, including regional Queensland.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am sorry, Premier. Pause the clock. Member for Kawana, you will refer to people by their correct titles. You have already been warned this morning. You are now officially warned under standing orders.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is not a good start for the leader of opposition business.

A government member interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I take that interjection. In all seriousness, wage theft is a big issue. I remember many years ago working at Expo at a stage when employers were not paying staff who had worked for them for up to 10 years and were owed large amounts in back pay. I am shocked that that is still happening in this day and age. We will get to the bottom of it. We will go around Queensland and we will listen to workers, because that is what we do. It will be referred to a committee. I look forward to making that referral later on this week. It is a big issue for Queenslanders and it is about time that those opposite supported it, rather than ridiculed it.

Federal Budget, Training

Mrs GILBERT: My question is to the Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development. Will the minister please advise what last week's federal budget delivered for training in Queensland and update the House about what reasons the federal government has for providing this funding decision?

Ms FENTIMAN: I thank the member for the question. I know how passionate she is about ensuring that particularly young people in Mackay get the opportunity to have an affordable apprenticeship or traineeship. Mr Speaker, in this House you have heard me talk about how appalling it is that the federal government was planning to rip \$40 million from Queensland's training budget under the national partnership on the Skilling Australians Fund. Last week, in the federal budget, it was revealed that it is not a \$40 million cut; it is now a \$60 million cut to training in Queensland.

What that means is that 6,000 apprenticeships and traineeships in Queensland are now at risk. That means that 6,000 young Queenslanders will not get the skilling they need to fill the jobs of the future. The federal government's own agency reports that 78 per cent of VET graduates gain employment on either a part-time or full-time basis six months after they have completed their training. When it comes to apprenticeships and traineeships, 82 per cent of people go on to gain employment and build a successful career.

With such great employment outcomes, what have we heard from that those opposite? What have we heard from the Leader of the Opposition about standing up for apprentices and trainees in Queensland? We have heard nothing. We have heard from the federal Minister for Education and Training, Simon Birmingham, perhaps why they are not funding training. It is appalling that he thinks that a TAFE education is worthless, saying that subsidising TAFE is akin to subsidising basket weaving. How out of touch are Malcolm Turnbull and Simon Birmingham if they think that kids go to TAFE to learn basket weaving. It is appalling.

What will Simon Birmingham do when he needs new lights installed in his house? Will he call a basketweaver? Who will be cooking Simon Birmingham's food at his next fundraiser?

Ms Jones: We know who's going to the fundraiser.

Ms FENTIMAN: That is right. Who cuts his hair? Who fixes his car? Who built his house? TAFE graduates did all that.

In this House we have proud TAFE graduates. We have former TAFE teachers. At least on this side of the House we are passionate, proud supporters of TAFE. It is time that those opposite stood up for young apprentices and trainees in their communities and stood up for the training budget in Queensland to ensure that we are skilling Queenslanders for the jobs of the future. It is appalling that those opposite have said nothing while the federal training minister compares TAFE to basket weaving. They are not standing up for young people getting a fair go here in Queensland.

Child Protection

Mr BENNETT: My question without notice is to the Attorney-General. In October last year the Queensland Family and Child Commission reported to the Premier about the tragic deaths of dozens of children known to the child safety system. Why did the Attorney wait six months under the cover of the Commonwealth Games to come clean on these alarming statistics?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. I can advise that the QFCC moved over to my portfolio under administrative arrangements with the re-election of the Palaszczuk government. Upon receiving that report in my office I very quickly tabled that report in the parliament, as I am required to do, and within the time frame I am required to do it.

These allegations of a cover-up are once again slanderous statements by the LNP. Talk about cover-ups, my God we can talk about \$6.2 million of political donations that no-one would know about if it were not for the Palaszczuk government introducing a \$1,000 threshold and real-time disclosure. They have the nerve to stand up and talk about cover-ups and secrecy.

The report was received and the report was tabled within the required time. It is open to public scrutiny by this parliament and the public, which is more than I can say about the LNP and its political donations. Do not come in here asking about reports and talking about secrecy and transparency. The report has been tabled. The only reason they are able to read that report is that it was tabled. We tabled it on time as we are required to do.

LNP members should start having a conversation in their caucus room and with their federal parliamentary colleagues about being transparent around political donations. It is one thing for Malcolm Turnbull to not be willing to change the federal laws around their donation threshold, but it is another thing to try to hide Queensland donations.

An opposition member interjected.

Mrs D'ATH: I take that interjection. We are still waiting for their report from 2013-14.

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Pause the clock. Minister for skills development, you will refer to members by their correct titles. You are warned under the standing orders. Members, I am having difficulty hearing the Attorney-General. I appreciate the subject matter being discussed, but I would like to hear the answer.

Mrs D'ATH: I do not think they want us to start bringing in the lists of all the reports that were not disclosed. I can tell members that in my portfolio there were plenty of reports that were never publicly released, including around tackling alcohol fuelled violence. We would have loved to have seen that report released. There were reports on incidents in youth detention that were never publicly released. There were crime statistics that were never publicly released. Those on the other side have no credibility when they talk about releasing reports and transparency. If they want to talk about transparency, they should look in their own backyard and start declaring donations.

Government Boards, Gender Parity

Ms BOYD: My question is to the Minister for Child Safety, Youth and Women. Will the minister update the House on the Palaszczuk government's commitment towards gender parity on Queensland government boards and how this progress compares with other areas of society?

Ms FARMER: I thank the member for her question and for her longstanding commitment to supporting women into leadership roles. Last term the Palaszczuk government set a bold target of achieving 50 per cent representation on government boards by 2020. We set the scene in politics with a female Premier and a female Deputy Premier, and a cabinet of 50 per cent women. I am very pleased to say that two years from our goal we are setting the scene on our government boards as well with female representation at 45 per cent.

We know that having gender parity on our boards is not just about doing the right thing. As Barack Obama said when he was in Australia recently, 'When I say that companies need women on boards, it is not for charity—those companies run better.' We know that there are many private sector organisations that are also working towards gender parity. Organisations like Suncorp and the Property Council Queensland and a number of traditionally male dominated organisations like Aurizon, the civic construction and engineering industries and the Queensland Resources Council all have proactive policies in place. The Office of Women in my department does as much as it can to support them through mentoring, to help women put their hands up and to change culture. We are always ensuring we support those organisations.

When looking at traditionally male dominated industries it is probably hard to go past the LNP as a good example. We all know that when the LNP is in charge female numbers go backwards. In the three years that they were in government female representation on government boards went right back to just over 30 per cent. In the state parliament their numbers went from eight to six. That means they went from just over 19 per cent to 15 per cent this term. After the Ryan preselection debacle last weekend they went from three to just two. That will be just over 11 per cent.

In the Iraqi and Afghanistan parliaments they even do better than the LNP in terms of female representation. In Iraq female representation is at 25 per cent. In Afghanistan it is 28 per cent. The LNP should go over there and take some tips. If one is a female in the LNP they are an endangered species because the blokes are after their job.

(Time expired)

Rail, Livestock Crates

Mr MILLAR: My question without notice is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Will the minister explain why Queensland graziers are still having to live through the bush rail fail after seven months of waiting for the government to repair its faulty Chinese built livestock rail crates, even after local Central Queensland businesses offered to fix this mess months ago?

Mr BAILEY: I thank the honourable member for his question. This matter is being looked at. There has been a redesign. There are a range of standards that are required. We are the only state that does subsidise and provide regional rail for the beef sector. This matter is being resolved, but it does need to meet all the standards and we expect that to be done quite soon.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Members, the contribution has finished. The next questioner is on his feet. He will be heard in silence.

Federal Budget, Hospital and Healthcare Funding

Mr WHITING: My question is to the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services. Will the minister update the House on hospital and healthcare funding announced in last week's federal budget?

Dr MILES: I thank the member for Bancroft for his question and for his ongoing advocacy for healthcare services in his community. We have heard across a wide range of portfolios today just how the federal LNP budget has failed Queensland, but nowhere has it failed more than in the area of hospital and healthcare services. There was so little in this budget for hospital and healthcare services. It was terribly disappointing.

What was the Leader of the Opposition's response? What did she say? She said Queenslanders should 'welcome' this budget. She said they should welcome it. She is so beholden to her masters in Canberra. No wonder Queenslanders are turning their backs on her, because all she is interested in doing is defending Malcolm Turnbull and his disappointing budget. The member for Burnett even lashed Mayor Jack Dempsey for speaking the truth, for saying that there was nothing in this budget for his region—and that is true.

The budget included a regional medical workforce initiative. You would think Queensland, being quite regional, would benefit from that—this budget that the Leader of the Opposition wants us to welcome. The regional medical workforce initiative goes to Wagga Wagga, Dubbo, Bendigo, Mildura and Orange. They are the places that got mentions. They are the focus of the regional initiative. They are places that benefit from the budget initiatives that the member for Nanango says we should welcome. There was nothing in there for Gladstone; nothing for Bundaberg, as we heard earlier; nothing for Maryborough; nothing for Rockhampton; nothing for Mackay.

The member for Nanango also says we should welcome the extra home-care places. In that announcement the number of places for the entire country for four years is less than the number of Queenslanders currently assessed and sitting on the waiting list. That is the initiative she says we should welcome. We should also welcome the fact that it is being funded by cutting residential places. That is how they are paying for it. We have 250 Queenslanders in our hospitals today waiting for an aged-care place.

Mr Mander interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Everton, cease your interjections. You are warned under standing orders.

Dr MILES: While those opposite continue to worship at the feet of their masters in Canberra, those on this side will put our hospital and healthcare services first.

Vegetation Management Laws

Mr PERRETT: My question without notice is to the Minister for Agriculture. I table this letter from the member for Mansfield to the people of Mount Gravatt.

Tabled paper: Document, undated, titled 'Re: Mansfield Electorate Environmental Forum' from the member for Mansfield, Ms Corrine McMillan MP, to the residents of Mansfield electorate [658].

Why is the Palaszczuk Labor government willing to talk to inner-city Brisbane and let them 'make suggestions about new vegetation management laws' but will not sit down and talk with Queensland farmers and producers about laws that directly affect them?

Mr Butcher interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Gladstone, you are warned under standing orders. The minister has two minutes to answer the question.

Mr FURNER: I thank the member for finally having the intestinal fortitude to ask me a question. It has only taken him six months. Maybe he has been obsessed with reading the *Hansard* when I was a senator for Queensland. That is what he has been doing because he has not been getting around the regions like I have on a fortnightly basis with the backing of the Premier, who has a strong following in agriculture and whose father was an excellent agriculture minister. I have been fortunate to travel the regions on a fortnightly base.

Mr Dick: What did you think of Rockhampton?

Mr FURNER: Just last week we were in Rockhampton, along with the member for Rockhampton, the member for Keppel and the Premier, who turned up to spend some time at Beef Australia 2018. It was probably the first time I think a premier has had an opportunity and the will to come along to Beef Australia. She was greeted unfortunately by a small group of individuals who used disgusting language, shameful language—words beginning with 'f' and ending in 'uck'.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr FURNER: I am not talking about 'fire truck'. I am talking about disgusting language directed at a lady, directed at a woman, directed at the Premier of Queensland.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Members, I am having a very difficult time hearing the minister. Member for Everton, you are skating on thin ice. You have already been warned under standing orders.

Ms Palaszczuk interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, I am speaking.

Mr FURNER: Those opposite should hang their heads in shame. I wear this White Ribbon Ambassador badge today, proud to stand up against violence against women, proud to respect women!

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Members to my left particularly but all members of this House, the House is in disorder. It is not appropriate to try to out shout another member of this House. I give you fair warning.

Mr FURNER: Those opposite should stand up and condemn that language and condemn the actions of those responsible at Beef Australia.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr FURNER: Until they do that, the standard they walk past is the standard they accept.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, the time has expired.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I rise on a matter of privilege suddenly arising. The Leader of the Opposition is saying that this is all spin. I ask her to withdraw, Mr Speaker. I was verbally abused. I ask her to withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, there is no point of order.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I do not need any assistance from those members on my left either.

Ms Palaszczuk: Mate, you should apologise.

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, I have just given a ruling that there is no point of order. You will not continue that across the chamber.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (COUNCILLOR COMPLAINTS) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL (IMPLEMENTING STAGE 1 OF BELCARRA) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill resumed from 15 February (see p. 150) and Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill resumed from 6 March (see p. 192).

Second Reading (Cognate Debate)

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (11.48 am): I move—

That the bills be now read a second time.

Queenslanders expect and deserve good government—government that is transparent and accountable. It is on these very foundations that all good governments are built. For reasons of integrity, transparency and accountability, in 2017 we enacted laws introducing real-time donation disclosure for state and local government elections to ensure Queenslanders are better informed when they go to the polls.

This government's comprehensive reforms will give Queenslanders greater faith in their elected officials. The bills are not designed to catch those who make genuine mistakes but rather to deal with those few councillors not living up to their communities' expectations. The legislation will face ongoing review to identify more opportunities for reform and ensure the public can have ongoing confidence in councillors upholding the highest ethical standards.

I will discuss the councillor complaints bill first. I thank the Economics and Governance Committee for its thorough examination of the complaints bill. After careful consideration of the committee's report, I am pleased to table the government's response.

Tabled paper: Economics and Governance Committee: Report No. 5—56th Parliament: Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018, government response [\[651\]](#).

The committee recommended that the complaints bill be passed. I will address one further recommendation and other issues raised by the committee as I outline the policy objectives and key elements of the complaints bill. The bill's policy objective is to provide a simpler, streamlined system for councillor complaints. The bill represents the implementation of the government's response to the independent Councillor Complaints Review Panel's report titled *Councillor complaints review: a fair, effective and efficient framework*.

The report contained 60 recommendations for change. In its July 2017 response, the government supported, partially supported, or supported in principle 50 of the recommendations. The bill establishes clear standards of behaviour for councillors. It provides for the minister to make a uniform and mandatory code of conduct to set appropriate standards for councillors. The introduction of a code of conduct will bring councillors in line with members of parliament, local government employees and state government employees, all of whom operate under a code of conduct.

The complaints bill establishes the new Councillor Conduct Tribunal to hear and determine alleged misconduct; to decide what, if any, disciplinary action to take; and, at the request of a local government, to investigate the suspected inappropriate conduct of a councillor. It establishes the new Local Government Remuneration Commission to establish categories of local governments; decide the category to which each local government belongs; and decide the maximum remuneration payable to councillors.

The committee noted that requiring hearings to be conducted by a panel of at least two members while allowing other administrative functions to be performed by individual members may more appropriately balance efficiency considerations with the importance of maintaining public and council confidence in the decisions of the Councillor Conduct Tribunal. In relation to the constitution of the Local

Government Remuneration Commission, the committee had similar views. The government agrees and therefore supports recommendation 2 and will amend the complaints bill accordingly during consideration in detail.

The complaints bill establishes the Office of the Independent Assessor to investigate and deal with councillors' conduct where it is alleged, or suspected, to be inappropriate conduct, misconduct or, when referred to the Independent Assessor by the Crime and Corruption Commission, a complaint about corruption. Local government chief executive officers will no longer be in the invidious position of undertaking preliminary assessments of complaints. The Independent Assessor will investigate all complaints and information about councillor conduct before deciding how it should be dealt with.

Recommendation 5.15 of the independent review panel's report was that the Local Government Liaison Group review the proposed system 12 months after it commences and review the way councils have been adjudicating inappropriate conduct matters with a view to determining whether it is necessary and desirable to introduce an appeal system as described in the report. The government supported a review after 12 months. The Economics and Governance Committee has suggested that the scope of this review be expanded in certain respects. The government supports the majority of these matters being referred to the Local Government Liaison Group for consideration during its review.

The functions of the Independent Assessor include providing advice, training and information to councillors, local government employees and other persons about dealing with alleged or suspected inappropriate conduct, misconduct or corrupt conduct. The Independent Assessor is required to prepare an annual report prepared in a way that does not disclose the identity of any councillor investigated. The committee suggested that the relevant section be clarified to prevent disclosure of a complainant's identity. The government supports this suggestion and proposes to amend the bill during consideration in detail.

The bill provides for local governments to investigate and deal with suspected inappropriate conduct of councillors in accordance with an adopted investigations policy. I would like to highlight that, under the proposed new framework, it is not intended that councillors who are party to a complaint be allowed to participate in the investigation or decision-making.

The committee noted that the bill imposed requirements on members of the Councillor Conduct Tribunal in relation to interests that may conflict with the fair and impartial hearing of a councillor's conduct. The government notes the committee's comments. We propose to amend the bill during consideration in detail to impose requirements on members of the Councillor Conduct Tribunal in relation to interests that may conflict with the fair and impartial investigation of suspected inappropriate conduct of a councillor.

The bill provides that a councillor and chief executive officer must notify the Independent Assessor if they 'become aware of' information indicating that a councillor may have engaged in inappropriate conduct or misconduct. The committee noted stakeholder concerns regarding the threshold for when a councillor or chief executive officer has a duty to notify the Independent Assessor about a councillor's conduct. The committee noted that the proposed threshold for a councillor to report another councillor's conflict of interest under the Belcarra bill is that the councillor 'believes, or suspects, on reasonable grounds'. The committee believed there may be benefits in aligning the thresholds for when a councillor—and CEO—has a duty to report the conduct of another councillor and when a councillor has a duty to report a conflict of interest of another councillor. This would ensure the same threshold is applied to obligations to report matters about councillors.

The different thresholds are considered appropriate because the Belcarra bill applies to a specific matter to be discussed at a meeting of the council, or any of its committees, and requires that the councillor with the belief or suspicion of another councillor's conflict of interest must, as soon as practicable, inform the person presiding at the meeting. A failure to do so is misconduct that may result in disciplinary action. Whereas the bill provides that, if a local government official—that is, a mayor, councillor or chief executive officer of the council—becomes aware of information indicating a councillor may have engaged in conduct that would be inappropriate conduct or misconduct, the local government official must give the Independent Assessor notice about the councillor's conduct. The Independent Assessor must investigate the councillor's conduct.

I turn now to the bill's appeal and review rights. Currently, decisions of the regional conduct review panels and the Local Government Remuneration and Discipline Tribunal cannot be appealed by a councillor. The complaints bill introduces a right for the councillor or the Independent Assessor to apply to the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal for a review of a decision of the Councillor Conduct Tribunal, other than a decision recommending a councillor's suspension or dismissal.

I turn now to potential breaches of the fundamental legislative principle that legislation is to have sufficient regard to the rights and liberties of individuals. The bill strengthens offences to support the new councillor complaints system including providing protection from reprisal for local government employees and councillors who make complaints against councillors; discouraging frivolous and improper complaints; and ensuring the confidentiality of investigations. The committee suggested that I review the maximum penalties for offences proposed in the complaints bill to ensure that penalties are proportionate. The new offences in the bill for frivolous and other improper complaints are modelled on equivalent provisions in the Crime and Corruption Act 2001 and have equivalent monetary penalties. The penalties in the complaints bill are considered proportionate to the equivalent offences under the Crime and Corruption Act 2001.

The government proposes to monitor the new councillor complaints system including whether penalties for offences are appropriate. In its consideration of fundamental legislative principles, the committee further noted that the legislation should be unambiguous and drafted in a sufficiently clear and precise way. The government supports the committee's four suggestions for amendments to clarify certain provisions and proposes to amend the bill during consideration in detail to clarify the relevant provisions in the following way. The bill provides for arrangements necessary for transition to the new councillor complaints system. It will commence on a day fixed by proclamation to allow for the development of the code of conduct, model procedures and other standards; the training of councillors and local governments on the new complaints system; the appointment of the Independent Assessor; and the development of necessary regulation amendments.

In turning to the Belcarra bill, we not only support or support in principle all 31 CCC recommendations but also undertake further measures aimed at reinforcing integrity and minimising the risk of corruption. This government believes that property developers should not be able to buy political influence simply because they can. The CCC chair identified developer donations—and only developer donations—as a clear and genuine risk. The bill aims to reinforce integrity and minimise corruption risk that political donations from property developers have the potential to cause at both a state and local government level; improve transparency and accountability in state and local government; and strengthen the legislative requirements that regulate how a councillor must deal with a real or perceived conflict of interest or a material personal interest.

The Belcarra bill implements the government's response to recommendations 20 and 23 to 26 of the Belcarra report. To implement the government's response to recommendation 20 of the Belcarra report, the Belcarra bill amends the Electoral Act 1992 and the Local Government Electoral Act 2011. This bill makes the making and acceptance of political donations made by, or on behalf of, prohibited donors unlawful. It makes it unlawful for prohibited donors, or others on their behalf, to solicit other persons to make political donations.

The Belcarra bill includes a range of new offences with strong penalties. The transitional provisions apply from the date of introduction of the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017—that is, 12 October 2017. Any payments that would be unlawful under the property developer donation prohibition made on or after 12 October 2017 will, on commencement, need to be repaid to the donor within 30 days after commencement. No offence is committed in respect of donations made or received between 12 October and commencement. However, it will be an offence to fail to repay the donation.

To implement the government's response to recommendation 23 of the Belcarra report, the Belcarra bill amends the City of Brisbane Act 2010 and the Local Government Act 2009 to ensure councillors are not voting on matters where they have personal interests. The bill requires other councillors to decide on two issues: first, whether the councillor has a real or perceived conflict of interest; and, second, if they decide the councillor does have a real or perceived conflict of interest, whether the councillor must leave the meeting while the matter is discussed and voted on or whether the councillor may participate in the meeting, including by voting on the matter.

Community concern surrounds councillors making rudimentary declarations that do not provide sufficient information for a reasonable person to understand the nature of the interest or the potential conflict. To address these concerns and to implement recommendation 23 of the Belcarra report, the Belcarra bill requires councillors to provide additional specific information about their conflicts of interest and material personal interests. These amendments are designed to better accord with community expectations.

To implement the government's response to recommendation 24, amendments in this bill apply if a matter, other than an ordinary business matter, is to be discussed at a meeting of the council or any of its committees and a councillor at the meeting believes, or suspects, on reasonable grounds that another councillor at the meeting has a material personal interest, a real conflict of interest or a perceived conflict of interest. If the other councillor has not informed the meeting about the interest, the councillor who has the belief or suspicion must, as soon as practicable, inform the person presiding at the meeting of the belief or suspicion and the facts and circumstances that form the basis of the belief or suspicion. Failing to raise another councillor's conflict of interest or material personal interest may be misconduct that could result in disciplinary action being taken.

To implement the government's response to recommendation 25, the Belcarra bill inserts a number of penalties for councillors failing to comply with legislative requirements. These offences are prescribed as 'integrity offences'. A person who is convicted of an integrity offence cannot be a councillor for four years after the conviction. A sitting councillor who is convicted of an integrity offence automatically stops being a councillor on conviction.

To implement the government's response to recommendation 26, the Belcarra bill provides for offences where a councillor with a conflict of interest or material personal interest influences or attempts to influence another councillor's vote. The maximum penalty that will apply for each of these offences is 200 penalty units or two years imprisonment. These offences will also be prescribed as 'integrity offences'. The amendments to implement the government's response to recommendations 23 to 26 of the Belcarra report will commence on assent.

I turn now to the Economics and Governance Committee's report on the Belcarra bill, tabled on 23 April 2018. My thanks go to the committee for its thorough consideration of the Belcarra bill and to those stakeholders who made submissions and appeared as witnesses as part of the committee's examination of the Belcarra bill. After careful consideration, I am pleased to table the government's response.

Tabled paper: Economics and Governance Committee: Report No. 7—56th Parliament: Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018, government response [\[652\]](#).

In addition to recommending that the bill be passed, the committee made two further recommendations. Recommendation 2 was that the Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs and the Department of Justice and Attorney-General work with the Electoral Commission Queensland to develop examples of what is a property developer and a close associate, and what constitutes 'regularly' in the context of making relevant planning applications, to assist affected parties and the Electoral Commission Queensland and the courts in determining the application of the proposed legislation. The government does not support this recommendation. The Electoral Commission is established under the Electoral Act 1992 as an independent statutory authority responsible for administering the act. The proposed provisions in the Belcarra bill are modelled on the Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Act 1981 of New South Wales. It would be a matter for the ECQ to decide what information is published to provide guidance in these matters.

Recommendation 3 was that the bill be amended to insert a purpose statement in the Electoral Act 1992, similar to the proposed purpose statement in the Local Government Electoral Act 2011. The government does not support this recommendation. As the Electoral Act 1992 does not presently include a purpose provision, no amendment is being made in this regard in this bill. The explanatory notes, parliamentary speeches and other extrinsic material may be used as an aid to assist in the interpretation and understanding of the purpose of the proposed amendments.

The amendments to the Electoral Act 1992 and the Local Government Electoral Act 2011, in parts 3 and 5 of the Belcarra bill respectively, are due to commence by proclamation. The ECQ in its submission to the committee indicated that a lead time of up to six months would be required to develop the administrative and compliance and enforcement policies, procedures and processes to support the implementation of the ban on political donations from property developers. The ECQ will be consulted on a suitable commencement date.

Although the provisions commence by proclamation, proposed clause 20 inserts a transitional provision that imposes an obligation on a recipient of a donation from a property developer made during the period on or after 12 October 2017 up to the date of commencement of part 3 of the Belcarra bill to repay the donation within 30 days. The government proposes to monitor the new provisions for managing councillor material personal interests and conflicts of interest for continual improvement, including whether penalties for offences are appropriate.

I now turn to the statement of reservation from the non-government members of the committee. Since the release of the Belcarra report on 4 October 2017, the government's intention has been clear. The Premier said that the ban would apply at both local and state government levels. Consistent with the New South Wales approach, and to address the risk of corruption and undue influence that political donations from property developers can cause, the bill applies to both levels of government. The government's decision to extend the ban to the state level also acknowledges the state's significant role in the state's planning framework. In relation to the non-government members' concerns about retrospectivity, if this bill is passed, a lead-in time between passage and commencement will not only ensure the Electoral Commission will have necessary administrative arrangements in place but also ensure that any person or entity potentially affected by the provisions can obtain any necessary advice.

The statement of reservation queries the definition of 'property developer' in the Belcarra bill and the use of the word 'regularly'. The definition of 'property developer', as recommended by the Crime and Corruption Commission in recommendation 20, has been modelled on the New South Wales definition. As the bill does not include a definition of 'regularly', it is to be given its ordinary meaning.

The government proposes to move amendments to the bills during consideration in detail. Minor amendments are considered necessary to ensure consistency between the complaints bill and the Belcarra bill. In addition to these minor amendments, it is proposed to amend the Local Government Act 2009 and the City of Brisbane Act 2010 to provide for councillors charged with certain offences, including serious integrity offences, to be automatically suspended from office, pending the determination of the charges by the courts.

The Local Government Act 2009 and the City of Brisbane Act 2010 currently provide that a person is disqualified from being a councillor in particular circumstances, including on conviction for a prescribed 'treason offence', 'bribery offence', 'electoral offence' or 'integrity offence' and while the person is serving or is liable to serve a period of imprisonment, including a suspended sentence. However, the range of offences is narrow. There are also no provisions in the Local Government Act 2009 or the City of Brisbane Act 2010 that provide for the automatic suspension of a councillor charged with serious offences.

The amendments provide the automatic suspension of a councillor when a councillor is charged with the following: the existing section 153 automatic disqualification offences; new section 153 automatic disqualification offences to be inserted by the Belcarra bill and the councillor complaints bill; specific criminal offences which may constitute corrupt conduct, that is, serious integrity offences; specific criminal offences under the Local Government Electoral Act; and the proposed new offences to be inserted by this bill in the Local Government Electoral Act and the state Electoral Act relating to the prohibition of election donations from property developers.

The amendments refer to these three categories collectively as 'disqualifying offences'. While suspended, a councillor will be entitled to their base remuneration but no additional remuneration or allowances. The amendments outline the circumstances for when the suspension of a councillor ends, including when the councillor's term ends and if the councillor is convicted of the offence and appeals the conviction and the conviction is set aside or quashed on appeal. If a councillor is convicted of a disqualifying offence, the councillor's office becomes vacant and therefore the suspension ends.

It is proposed to amend section 153 of the Local Government Act 2009 and section 153 of the City of Brisbane Act 2010 to provide that, if a councillor is convicted of a serious integrity offence or an integrity offence, the councillor will automatically stop being a councillor and will be disqualified from being a councillor for the following periods: for an integrity offence, for four years after the conviction; and for a serious integrity offence, for seven years after the conviction.

A councillor convicted of a suspension or disqualification offence must, if without reasonable excuse, immediately notify the minister, the chief executive officer and, if the councillor is not the mayor, the mayor of the charge. Failure to notify will attract a maximum penalty of 100 penalty units. These amendments will commence on assent.

The Local Government Act 2009 provides the state with several intervention options when there are concerns regarding the performance of councillors or a council as a whole, including the power to dismiss a local government. These powers rely on a minister's reasonable belief that the council or councillor is either not complying with the local government principles or not capable of performing their responsibilities. However, there may be occasions where a local government or a councillor is not living up to community expectations for its elected representatives. Accordingly, the amendments will allow for dissolution of a local government or the suspension or dismissal of a councillor where it is in the public interest to do so.

What is in the public interest will depend upon individual circumstances. However, it may include considerations such as: complying with the law; carrying out functions reasonably, fairly and impartially; ensuring accountability and transparency; exposing corruption or serious maladministration; community confidence in a local government and/or its councillors; avoiding or properly managing private interests conflicting with official duties; and complying with the principles of procedural fairness and natural justice.

I acknowledge the work of the CCC, whose recommendations have informed the development of this critical legislation. There will be further reforms to increase transparency and accountability at both levels of government. As the chair of the Economics and Governance Committee has observed, perceptions of our democratic system are vitally important. The community expects and deserves to have confidence in the integrity of their elected officials.

Our record on integrity, transparency and accountability is evident. We have never shied away from our commitment to ensure elected officials are held accountable. The bills before the House are critical components of a suite of measures that we as the Palaszczuk government are progressing. I am working closely with councils, the LGAQ and the community to ensure Queensland has a legislative framework with very clear standards. I can give an ironclad commitment today that the local government legislation will be continually reviewed to ensure it meets community expectations for our elected representatives. In particular, I give my commitment to review today's urgent amendments that give me the power to dismiss or suspend councillors or councils in consultation with the Local Government Association of Queensland. The amendment to enable automatic stand-aside provisions will also be reviewed, and this review will take place within two years.

My department will prepare a range of materials and training courses to assist councils to prepare for the new councillor complaints system and the new requirements for dealing with conflicts of interest and material personal interests. The department will develop best practice guidelines to assist councils in establishing their own complaints processes, including a sample investigations policy and sample standing orders for the conduct of council meetings. The department will provide fact sheets and guidance notes for all councils on new requirements for dealing with material personal interests and conflicts of interest so that local governments can conduct meetings in accordance with the new requirements. The government will work in partnership with councils. We will ensure councils merit the trust that the Queensland community places in them.

I know that so many people in the community do place trust in their councils right across the length and breadth of the state because so many people in councils right across the length and breadth of the state do great work, do very good work on behalf of their communities and in delivering good governance. The matters that are before the House today are, sadly, to deal with the minority. However, those standards must be high and they must be maintained. I commend the bills to the House.

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (12.12 pm): I rise to speak on the Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, which is being debated in cognate with the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I understand from the minister's second reading speech that a number of amendments will be brought forward during the consideration in detail. I understand he has flagged those amendments.

There are two core matters for all councils in Queensland: one is sustainability in all of its forms and the other, of course, is integrity. The cognate bills deal with a range of matters including councillor complaints, conflict of interest provisions and circumstances where elected members of council are required to stand down or be removed from office. However, all the council legislation in the world will not stop the systemic corruption issues in the Labor Party that we have seen recently spilling into the public arena and that members on the government side of the House have been complaining about for years. These bills do actually move in the right direction. However, there is still some room for improvements.

I thank the Economics and Governance Committee members from both sides of the House for their consideration of the bills and the recommendations which they have put forward. I note that the government has made responses to those recommendations. From the outset I think it is important in the current climate to stress that the local government (councillor complaints) bill has not arisen because of a large number of complaints; in fact, it is the opposite. At the public committee hearing the LGAQ summed it up fairly well. I will read a comment from Sarah Buckler from the LGAQ. She said—

The Councillor Complaints Review Panel found that only 30 of a total of 245 complaints received by the then department of infrastructure, local government and planning over two years were ultimately upheld. This is only about 12 per cent.

Although this legislation will affect all elected members of local government, it has not come about because of a high number of complaints—and let us be very clear about that fact. In fact, it is the opposite: the number of upheld complaints is small in percentage. The LGAQ went on to say—

The LGAQ believes the introduction of an independent assessor into the system and the removal of the role of the council CEO in undertaking preliminary assessments of complaints will lead to a better system for all involved. The current system is too complex and lacks an effective front-end triage process. This means that it often gets overloaded with unsubstantiated complaints and logjams occur.

There has been significant consultation in the lead-up to this bill. This bill is in the interests of achieving better outcomes for local government. Therefore, the LNP will not be opposing this legislation in relation to the Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill.

I would like to acknowledge the work that is performed every day across Queensland, from Currumbin to the Torres Strait, by the elected mayors and councillors. Those elected members work very hard every day to improve their communities and the livability of their communities. There are also thousands of staff working for local government—some 40,000—who make sure that community essential services like drinking water, sewerage, libraries, roads, street sweepers and local events like Anzac Day and Australia Day all operate and occur as the community expects that they should.

The Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill seeks to implement the government's response to the independent Councillor Complaints Review Panel report, titled *Councillor complaints review: a fair, effective and efficient framework*—the councillor complaints report—to provide for a simpler, more streamlined system for making, investigating and determining those complaints about councillor conduct in Queensland.

The review was initiated in response to the concerns raised by the Local Government Managers Australia in Queensland and the Local Government Association about the effectiveness of the current framework. Concerns included the role of local government chief executive officers in assessing complaints, the inability to seek review of decisions and the need for a better system to ensure natural justice for all parties. I do wish to thank the members of the LGMA and the LGAQ for this very professional review. What they have undertaken is in the best interests of local government and with a view to finding good, workable outcomes for local government, noting that not all local governments across Queensland have the same population, area or demographics.

The councillor complaints report made some 60 recommendations for change, and I understand the government has responded to the vast majority of those recommendations. I note the proposed legislation does not apply to the Brisbane City Council as the City of Brisbane Act 2010 continues to provide for a way complaints about councillors of Brisbane City Council are dealt with. I do ask the government that, should Brisbane City Council eventually come under the jurisdiction of this legislation, there is full, open and transparent consultation with the city council so that they can be assured that it will deal with their particular situations.

The bill establishes a position of Independent Assessor and the Office of the Independent Assessor to investigate all complaints and information about councillor conduct and provides sufficient powers for that office to undertake investigations. Importantly, it removes the role of the council CEO in undertaking the preliminary assessment of councillor complaints. The assessor would do the preliminary assessment, not the CEO. This does seem to be a more transparent way of handling complaints. It certainly makes for a better situation for the CEO, who is often subject to performance review by the councillors about whom a complaint may be made. The assessor can assess the complaint and, if required, he can refer it back to council to decide the outcome. However, this would be difficult in some of the more factional councils. Some have suggested that perhaps the mayor should have this responsibility. I would be interested if the minister could perhaps highlight how this might operate in those councils that are far more factional in their operation, and there are quite a number of those across Queensland. I would be very interested in the minister's comments as to how he would see that provision actually operating in future.

The bill strengthens offences to support new councillor complaints systems such as providing protection from reprisal for local government employees who make complaints against councillors. That too is a particularly important provision to have in this legislation. The bill provides for the minister to make a uniform code of conduct to set appropriate standards of behaviour for councillors. Given that there has been such extensive consultation in the preparation of this bill, it would seem a sensible step for a similar level of consultation to occur with the development of the regulation that will form the code of conduct. I believe that interest groups and councils would be interested to hear how the government

intends to consult on the development of that code of conduct. A lot of time and effort has gone into these reforms, and it would be disappointing if that consultation and goodwill did not continue with the development of the code of conduct. I look forward to hearing from the government and the minister in his summing-up how this code might be progressed and the time frames involved.

I note that in the departmental briefing it is proposed to amend Local Government Regulation 2012 at an appropriate time to require councillors to declare that they will uphold the code of conduct as part of their declaration of office. I would be interested to know whether the government has any time frames, because we are already halfway through the current council term. It would seem a little bit strange to ask all councillors to take another declaration of office, but perhaps the minister in his summing-up can provide some clarification because I am sure councillors across Queensland are interested.

The bill reallocates the functions of the current Local Government Remuneration and Discipline Tribunal and the regional conduct review panels by establishing a new Councillor Conduct Tribunal to hear and determine complaints of councillor misconduct. The bill details the qualifications for membership of the Councillor Conduct Tribunal, and members of political parties are excluded; however, given the involvement of unions with the local government workforce I ask why union members are not excluded as well. I note the explanatory notes detail that the costs of conducting the tribunal are to be met by individual local governments. Recommendation 5.14 of the councillor complaints report states—

Where councils elect to use a Tribunal member to investigate and make recommendations about a complaint of inappropriate conduct, the council should pay the member's costs.

As stated in the explanatory notes—

The Government's response to recommendation 5.14 at page 9 "... supports that council pays the costs of using the services of a CCT member in investigating and considering inappropriate conduct."

I am sure that councils would be interested to know if they can seek an early indication of costs prior to any referral to the tribunal, as we know that issues have arisen in the past with the Electoral Commission and the costs associated with conducting council elections. Perhaps in his summing-up the minister can explain how councils would be informed of any future potential costs they may bear when they choose to make referrals to the tribunal. The bill also establishes the new Local Government Remuneration Commission to decide the maximum remuneration payable to councillors.

I will now turn to the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. The objectives of the terms of reference for the Operation Belcarra inquiry included examining the practices associated with a number of related matters, including the management of councillor conflicts of interest. I will address the matters relevant to local government and my parliamentary colleague, the member for Toowoomba South, will speak on the matters relevant to the amendments in the Electoral Act that are contained in this legislation.

There were some particularly interesting comments raised by the Noosa Shire Council in relation to the Belcarra bill. If the intent of the proposed amendments is to stop some of the scenarios that were identified in the Belcarra report, where councillors choose to stay in a meeting despite receiving an electoral donation from the applicant, it has been suggested by the Noosa Shire Council that a better option would be to tighten the definition of a real conflict of interest to identify the circumstances that require a councillor to declare the real conflict and leave the meeting. I have no doubt that the Noosa Shire Council would be interested in a response to their suggestion, and perhaps the minister would be so kind as to outline that in his summing-up.

The bill also provides that if a majority of councillors at a meeting of council inform the meeting about material personal interest in a matter or a real or perceived conflict of interest on a matter, under section 257 of the Local Government Act and section 238 of the City of Brisbane Act the council must delegate deciding the matter unless the matter cannot be delegated under those sections. On the surface that would seem like quite a reasonable way to deal with some of those issues; however, it can get particularly complicated. It could be the case—and this has been raised with me by a CEO—that if the CEO or staff to which the matter is delegated have also declared a conflict of interest, this could be a very difficult situation for the council. It is one that does concern council staff, because quite often CEOs declare to council that they too have conflicts of interest. The LGAQ remains strongly opposed to empowering councils to force councillors to leave a meeting over a conflict of interest they may not even have.

It is worth noting that this power used to be in the Local Government Act 2009, but in 2011 it was removed by a previous Labor government upon advice from the then Crime and Misconduct Commission, the Ombudsman and the Integrity Commissioner because it was proven not to work. This is an ironic set of circumstances. In 2018 the Labor government, upon advice from the Crime and Corruption Commission, is now reinstating these provisions which were removed just seven years ago. Unfortunately, it has been used by some councillors to gag minority councillors.

The LGAQ questioned the merit of the proposed section 175G, which introduces the requirement on the councillor to inform the person presiding at a meeting if the councillor reasonably believes that another councillor has a material personal interest or a conflict of interest which that other councillor has failed to declare. Contravention of that section would be an act of misconduct. Again this is the return of a provision which was removed in 2011.

Perhaps during his summing-up the minister can advise the House why Labor governments and the integrity bodies of this state seem to be on a merry-go-round with these provisions. We seem to take them in and put them out, take them in and put them out. What are we achieving by doing that? It is not just the government of the day: integrity bodies are also doing that and making those recommendations. I think they need to look a lot more closely at what they are trying to achieve and whether they are getting an outcome.

I draw the attention of the House to the LGAQ's submission, which includes a proposal that goes beyond the recommendations made by the CCC in Operation Belcarra. This proposal would require a councillor with a conflict of interest arising from a gift or a donation above \$500 on their register of interests to treat it in the same way as a material personal interest and remove themselves from the decision-making meeting. This would remove any discretion for the councillor as to whether they may participate in deciding a matter. Under section 172 of the Local Government Act 2009, a councillor with a material personal interest must leave the meeting when the matter is being debated.

The LGAQ sees this as an alternative and superior proposal to those contained in the Belcarra recommendations dealing with conflict of interest provisions, which were proven in the past not to work. There is a very clear recommendation from the LGAQ which does seem to pass the pub test: councillors with a gift or donation above \$500 on their register of interests treat that conflict of interest in the same way as a material personal interest and remove themselves from the decision-making meeting. The question for the government and the minister is why not take on board the recommendation of the LGAQ, as this proposal is seen to be workable and a very transparent alternative for local government. I would appreciate it if the minister could outline why he did not take on board that suggestion of the LGAQ.

The government has signalled its intention to move some quite significant amendments to the Belcarra bill during consideration in detail. I think we should be particularly careful about those proposals the government has put forward. The parliament needs to be advised that those amendments have not gone through the committee system. The bills being debated cognately have been through the parliamentary committee system but the foreshadowed amendments—there are around 40 pages, which is around the same size as the councillor complaints bill—have not received the normal scrutiny of the parliamentary committee or the scrutiny of legislation secretariat. In relation to the extenuating powers to suspend or dismiss elected officials, the parliament is not able to see the relevant stakeholder feedback from mayors and councillors that it would normally be privy to. I think it is important that the parliament is aware that those foreshadowed amendments have not received that scrutiny.

I note from the explanatory notes that the LGAQ and the Queensland Law Society were consulted; however, we cannot see what they said about those amendments. Unfortunately, the parliament does not have the benefit of the comments of those two industry bodies that were consulted. That is disappointing. Perhaps there would have been a far better outcome for local government and also for integrity if those amendments had gone through the parliamentary committee system. Rushed law is not always good law.

I note that no other Australian jurisdiction requires mayors or councillors to stand down if they are charged with a criminal offence. I think that is something we should bear in mind. Members of this House are not required to stand aside from their position if they are charged with a criminal offence. Ministers may be required to stand down as a minister if they are charged with a criminal offence. Let us understand the powers that are being conferred on the minister and the government by the proposed amendments.

The amendment that gives effect to the automatic suspension of any mayor or councillor charged with one of a series of integrity offences may seem to be similar to that which currently applies to public servants; however, there is a major distinction. Public servants are not elected every four years as mayors and councillors are, and mayors and councillors are subject to far more community scrutiny than public servants. I think we should keep that in mind. We should not dumb down our elected officials to a situation whereby they are treated the same as public servants.

The other amendment that has been proposed expands the powers of the local government minister to dismiss or suspend a council, a councillor or a mayor in the public interest. This is not the first time a public interest test has been used in legislation. There was a public interest test contained in legislation relating to paedophiles. That was seriously criticised by the then leader of the opposition, Anastacia Palaszczuk, in 2013. She said—

Wide consultation is the hallmark of good legislation and it is the hallmark of good government. This bill should have been referred to the committee to allow stakeholders to provide their input.

That is what was said by the then opposition leader specifically in relation to legislation that contained a public interest test. If wide consultation is a hallmark of good legislation and it was good enough then for the Labor opposition leader to demand that in relation to paedophiles, it stands to reason that it should be good enough for this government to allow the scrutiny of amendments that directly impact on mayors and councillors when it comes to a public interest test.

These amendments should have been referred to the committee due to the powers they confer on the minister. They are particularly wideranging powers. It is disappointing that the public interest test has not been defined in the bill. We are only given information in the explanatory notes. The powers outlined in the explanatory notes are quite broad. Such extraordinary powers should be clearly articulated in the bill and they should be given appropriate scrutiny.

 **Mr RUSSO** (Toohey—ALP) (12.34 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. What is clear from the CCC Belcarra report is that the regime of disclosure applying to local government elections did not go far enough. The CCC recommended that parliament go one step further and impose a ban on developer donations in local government. The thought that the Premier and this parliament would ban developer donations for local government while, at the same time, sanctioning the same donations to candidates for state parliament is ridiculous, but that is what the LNP is suggesting.

I am concerned that there is a significant deficiency in this legislation which I ask the Attorney-General to consider resolving as the government's integrity reform plan is implemented. I am concerned that the capacity remains for some political parties to use interstate entities or federal branches to launder developer donations or donations that they do not want to disclose. When a similar ban on developer donations was implemented in New South Wales we saw the New South Wales branch of the Liberal Party launder hundreds of thousands of dollars of donations through the Liberal Party of Australia, the Millennium Forum, the Free Enterprise Foundation or shelf companies run by Liberal ministerial staffers. Who could forget \$400,000 of donations, including developer donations, through Five By Eight Pty Ltd?

This does not apply to the Labor Party. The ALP has always disclosed donations of \$1,000 or more, regardless of legislative requirements. The Liberals are not the only ones engaged in this practice. The Australian Greens and the Queensland Greens have also been caught using the lax federal rules to avoid Queensland disclosure laws. In 2016, in the heat of a federal election, the Queensland Greens accepted four donations over three days—all from entities associated with Ian Melrose and the Optical Superstore group, all corporate entities with the same address and directors. I table an extract from the ECQ disclosure for the period 23 to 26 June 2016.

Tabled paper: Extract from Electoral Commission of Queensland website, report showing donations to Queensland Greens in 2016 [653].

It is pretty clear that the Queensland Greens were confecting an arrangement to receive \$40,000 from Ian Melrose and the Optical Superstore group, a disgruntled tenderer for the Defence optometry contract, by ensuring each of the donations was less than the \$13,500 disclosure limit. I table the 2015-16 Australian Electoral Commission disclosure of the Queensland Greens which does not disclose any of these four donations.

Tabled paper: Document, dated 20 October 2016, Political party Disclosure Return to AEC from Queensland Greens [654].

In the tabled ECQ extract members can see these donors clearly attempting to use the lax AEC laws to hide corporate donations. The hypocrisy of this is that, at the very same time, the Queensland Greens were campaigning for a state election on the basis of banning all corporate donations. When

these donations were uncovered by the *Courier-Mail* in November 2017, Greens lead candidate Amy MacMahon was unable to explain these tricky practices. I table a copy of the *Courier-Mail* article of 23 November 2017 titled 'Greens caught accepting corporate donations'.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Courier-Mail*, dated 23 November 2017, titled 'Queensland election 2017: Greens caught accepting corporate donations' [\[655\]](#).

The real question for the Greens, and the deficiency in this legislation, is the way the Queensland Greens launder donations through the Australian Greens. I table a report from the ECQ disclosure portal showing donations made by the Australian Greens to the Queensland Greens.

Tabled paper: Extract from Electoral Commission of Queensland website, report showing donations to Queensland Greens from Australian Greens in 2016, 2017 and 2018 [\[656\]](#).

Since the commencement of real-time disclosure the Queensland Greens have taken \$180,902 in donations from the Australian Greens. As members can see from the tabled 2015-16 disclosure, the Australian Greens do not disclose donations of \$1,000 or more as required by the Queensland legislation but only donations that exceed the federal legislative threshold of \$13,500.

These donations from the Australian Greens to the Queensland Greens do not require any disclosure of the donor sources unless they exceed \$13,500. This means that we have no idea if there is more money from the Optical Superstore, corporate donations or other special interests in these donations. Who knows, and that is the point? The Greens do not disclose those donations and these questions remain unanswered. The Australian Greens also receive significant donations from gambling operator Duncan Turpie and the Optical Superstore. Were these donations on top of the \$50,000 in donations the Greens have already taken from the super-rich gambler Duncan Turpie despite his history of being pursued for tax evasion by the ATO?

I know that the member for Maiwar will be making a contribution to this debate, and when he does so he has some questions to answer. First, why would the Queensland Greens take four donations of \$10,000 over three days during the 2016 election from corporate entities related to the Optical Superstore group? Second, why does he accept donations from the Australian Greens which do not meet the \$1,000 disclosure limit of the Queensland law and do not accept his policies on corporate donations? Is this not the Greens political party exploiting this legislative loophole? Third, for all of the donations he has received from the Queensland Greens, who are the donors? Why does he not require the Australian Greens to disclose all of their donations to the standard that exists in Queensland legislation? If not, will he return the \$180,000 in donations received that do not comply with Queensland electoral legislation? Fourth, if he says all corporate donations should be banned, why does he accept donations from multimillionaires like Duncan Turpie and Graeme Wood? I look forward to the member for Maiwar's response and I commend the bills to the House.

 **Mr JANETZKI** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (12.41 pm): What a truly bizarre contribution to this debate from the member for Toohey. Seven minutes and all of it was about the Greens. Bizarre! It was nearly as bizarre as the minister, whom I listened to very intently, and his failure to address the one big question that has to be answered by the Premier throughout this entire debate, and that question is: does the property developer donation prohibition's extension to the state arena have any foundation in the evidence? It is a question that this House and the people of Queensland deserve answered. Will the Premier follow the advice of the CCC chairman, Alan MacSporran QC, or will she ignore the CCC's advice and push through this property developer donation prohibition to the state jurisdiction without any evidence or any justification on the facts? I quote from the CCC's submission for the benefit of members opposite and for those who have not read it. Mr MacSporran said—

The Inquiry terms of reference did not include state elections. Consequently the Belcarra Report recommendations did not involve any detailed specific consideration of corruption risks in state elections and decision-making. Accordingly, the reforms depart from the scope of the Belcarra Report ...

The chairman of the CCC went on to say—

... the CCC did not contemplate that the proposed reforms would be introduced without preliminary review to identify and mitigate corruption risks in state elections and decision-making. A proper public consultation process is highly desirable.

They are the words of the CCC chairman, and we heard the Premier wax lyrical about the CCC today. My question to her is this: will she come into this House and confirm that she will follow the advice of the CCC chairman? This government has a shocking record on openness and integrity and today I expect we will see the Premier thumb her nose at the CCC's recommendation. Let us be clear: the CCC's Operation Belcarra looked only at issues pertaining to local government elections—in fact, only elections in the Gold Coast, Ipswich and Moreton Bay areas. The CCC has made it clear that this government has overstepped the mark. It never made any recommendations about state elections or

donations and, as the CCC has said, it 'departs significantly' from the report. Not only is this arrogant behaviour from a government with a new-found majority; it is sloppy legislating. Mr MacSporran has noted that these laws may have constitutional issues, telling the committee—

... there is a potential successful challenge to the constitutional validity of the measure. That is the concern we simply had, that you cannot simply automatically translate it without giving it due consideration.

I call on the Premier and the minister: if they have legal advice concerning the constitutional validity of this ban to the state arena, release it so that Queenslanders have a skerrick of faith in what Labor is proposing today, or will these laws be subjected to challenge and uncertainty because of this government's failure to govern wisely and fairly for all Queenslanders?

It should go without saying that good law making requires evidence based decision-making. By extending the property developer donation ban to the state arena, it does not just ignore the direction of the CCC. The government has done so without identifying what social ill and what mischief it is seeking to remedy. It ignores the High Court's direction that there must be a rational connection between prohibiting donations and the legitimate end of prevention of corruption and undue influence and that any burden on the implied freedom of political communication must be reasonably appropriate and adapted. Here that obligation has not been discharged. No findings were presented in relation to property developer donations influencing state government decisions. There has been no legitimate process to determine any corruption risks and, accordingly, the Labor government has failed to establish the basis for the extension of the property developer donation prohibition to the state arena.

It goes further with the definitions that have been flagged. The property developer donation definition is that a corporation which is engaged in a business regularly involved in the making of relevant planning applications is considered a property developer under the bill. Mr Potts from the QLS expanded on these definitional issues in his appearance before the public hearing. He noted—

... we are concerned that there be some certainty around definitions with respect to the legislation.

He went on to say—

... what indeed is a property developer? For example, if I have a block of land, which I break into three pieces—subdivide effectively—and start building houses, which I then sell, I am told that I may be, under the bill, a regular applicant, with 'regular' holding its ordinary meaning of effectively more than once.

The flow-on from these questions is as clear as mud. It is not as simple as copying the New South Wales legislation and applying it to Queensland. There are fundamental differences completely overlooked by the Labor government between the way local and state governments operate in the two jurisdictions. It ignores the fact that in most respects state politicians are removed from any consideration of planning matters. Furthermore, there has been no guidance as to how the definition of 'regular' or 'regularly' will be judged. Again, Mr Potts from the QLS in noting that 'regular' in its ordinary definition means more than once asked, appropriately—

Do you stop it at three? Do you start it at two? Do you make it to be 50 or 100?

He goes on—

What is a close associate?

...

Does the definition of 'close associate' include a lawyer? A financial adviser? An accountant? An employee? Or a series of employees?

The deliberately vague drafting of the bill has resulted in a raft of definitions that will create unknown practical evidentiary and legal uncertainties.

Throughout the public hearing the Department of Justice and Attorney-General and the Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs were unable to tell the committee in detail about the definition of a property developer. Under scrutiny, again and again the department referred all matters of interpretation to the ECQ, which did not even attend a public hearing. However, I note the minister's comments in relation to the additional time that is proposed to give the ECQ the necessary allowance to make those policies, procedures and processes to make this law workable— or at least to be understood.

I note the intention of the shadow minister for local government to introduce an amendment in relation to certain issues relating to local government during consideration in detail. I, too, will be moving amendments. Mr Potts from the Queensland Law Society referred to the government's approach as the 'thin end of the wedge'. He posed whether it was appropriate or proper for governments, in the absence of a smoking gun, to effectively preclude people or organisations from political discourse. He added—

... do we then, for example, start to legislate that unions may not donate at the state level?

That will be the nature of the amendments that I will move and speak to during consideration in detail. The evidence is clear. In return for their support for the Premier and the Labor Party in Queensland, the union movement in Queensland has enjoyed more power and control—the opposition would say more undue influence—than it has over any other government in Queensland's history. This is all after the Premier promised in 2015, in a deal struck to have a minority government propped up by the former member for Nicklin, an inquiry into political donations. That is right: in 2015, the Premier promised no deals. The government of the member for Inala was propped up by the former member for Nicklin on the promise of an inquiry into political donations. For the benefit of the House, I table that promise.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 5 February 2015, from the then Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk, to the then member for Nicklin, Mr Wellington MP, providing information about Queensland Labor's position on various issues [\[657\]](#).

Did that inquiry ever happen? No. That was a broken promise. It was the Premier's broken promise to Queenslanders. Instead of that inquiry, what did we get? With 18 minutes notice we got remarkable changes to the electoral laws of this state. The ABC's Antony Green called it the 'political equivalent of bulldozing the Bellevue'. Today, we have this bill that extends the law into the state arena. It is the ultimate triumph of political expediency over good government.

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (12.51 pm): I will get to the member for Toowoomba South. As the chair of the committee, I rise to speak in this cognate debate on the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 and the Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. Both of these bills are about the need for this place to build confidence in the institutions of government at a state level but, especially, at the local government level.

As the chair of the committee, I wish to report that the committee received written briefings and public briefings as well as submissions and it also conducted a public hearing. The minister has previously outlined to the House that the Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill was drafted after an independent review of the statutory provisions of the Local Government Act and the City of Brisbane Act made 60 recommendations for change. I am pleased to say that this bill was recommended to be passed and that there were no dissenting reports. The committee's more detailed report is available on the committee's website.

The Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill establishes an Independent Assessor of the Office of the Independent Assessor, which is the first port of call to investigate the conduct of councillors when someone has made a complaint about the conduct of a councillor. This process gives those who have concerns about the conduct of councillors greater confidence that their concerns are dealt with in an independent, professional, thorough and consistent way. I am pleased that the committee supports the councillor complaints section of this bill.

However, I am really disappointed that, although the committee recommended that the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill be passed, the LNP members of the committee prepared a dissenting report. We in this House know that, after the local government elections in March 2016, the CCC started what it called Operation Belcarra to investigate concerns that candidates had committed offences under the Local Government Act and, importantly, to identify any strategies or reforms to help prevent or decrease corruption risks and increase the confidence of the public in our governments.

It is true that, throughout the Belcarra report, the CCC looked at the risk of corruption at the local government level. However, it is essential that this House not think that this place is immune from similar risks. We can sensibly and carefully apply the recommendations of the Belcarra report on local government to the state level of government. In fact, I think the public in Queensland would demand that we do that.

An important recommendation of the Belcarra bill was the banning of developer donations at the level of government that the CCC chairman, Alan MacSporran, examined. As the minister said, Mr MacSporran did not undertake an examination of the risk of corruption at a state level. However, this House should take into account the scandals that have occurred in New South Wales at both the state and local government level and follow the lead the New South Wales government took to ban developer donations at a local and state government level. It is for that reason that this government, led by the Premier, undertook to mirror the actions of the New South Wales government and introduce legislation that reduces the risk of corruption at both a local and state level.

Local governments make decisions about planning that developers can get significant gains from. Mr MacSporran found that that created a clear and significant risk of corruption and, importantly, a reduction in confidence in local government. It is clear that the state government, which has a significant role in Queensland's planning framework, faces a similar problem and, as we heard in the submissions, a similar erosion of confidence because of the perception of corruption risks.

In answering a question asked by the member for Toowoomba South on this issue—I notice that the member for Toowoomba South failed to refer to this comment when he made his contribution—Mr MacSporran said—

... there is no reason in principle why there will not be similar areas of concern—
at a state level.

Today we have the opportunity to work together to build integrity and confidence in this institution. To vote for this bill is to restore confidence in government in Queensland. To vote against this bill is to further erode the confidence that Queenslanders have in government.

During the public hearing Mr MacSporran made it clear that he felt that more risks of corruption could be eliminated. However, he did not find that there were other groups that would not meet the test set out in the Constitution. I notice that the amendment that the member for Toowoomba South will move makes the allegation that the union has been found to not be declaring donations. That is not correct. During the public hearing, when talking about union donations, Mr MacSporran said, in direct answer to questions asked by the member for Mermaid Beach and the member for Toowoomba South—

The union had done nothing wrong other than to—and this is not wrong; it had donated and disclosed it.

Mr MacSporran went on to say—

The unions have been forever, as you know, public supporters of the Labor Party openly. Their funds are routinely disclosed. We found, as part of our investigation, no evidence that they were improperly influencing the process.

Today we will hear the opposite from those opposite. They are completely fact-free. They will completely ignore the advice of the CCC. That is their style of debate. We heard it when we were debating the vegetation management legislation and we will hear it today. Their contributions to the debate today will be completely fact-free.

Mr MacSporran made it clear that, whatever preference he might have for further bans on donations, he had to take the High Court's recent decision to limit the banning of donations by particular groups to where there is evidence of a risk of corruption. As he said during the hearing—

As we said in our report, we were constrained to recommend reform where the evidence justified it so there was really no realistic prospect of a successful challenge to the legislation. That is the last thing that we wanted—to recommend something that was going to be knocked over in the High Court. That is just a waste of everyone's time. You could not ignore those High Court cases.

It seems ignoring the High Court, it seems that wasting everyone's time, is exactly what the opposition members want to do. The member for Toowoomba South has put forward an amendment that is a total waste of time. His amendment No. 1 seeks to add an association of employees to the list of prohibited donors. That amendment is exactly the amendment that the Liberals and the Nationals put forward in New South Wales and that amendment was rejected by the High Court.

I have read the decision of the High Court in the case of Unions NSW and Ors v State of New South Wales. It states—

Today the High Court unanimously held that ss 96D and 95G(6)—

which are reflected in the amendment to be moved by the Toowoomba South—

of the Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Act 1981 ... are invalid because they impermissibly burden the implied freedom of communication on governmental and political matters, contrary to the Commonwealth Constitution.

That is why Mr MacSporran described it as a waste of time. I could understand that perhaps some of those opposite might not have read the transcript of the public hearing, but the member for Toowoomba South has no such excuse. On the day of the public hearing, he was a substitute member of the committee. In fact, in his answer Mr MacSporran referenced the member by saying, 'As I said before to Mr Janetzki.' In fact, the member for Toowoomba South even asked a question that referenced the limitation on donor bans. He stated that the High Court found it—

... was a justified curtailment of that particular freedom. In respect of the proposed changes to the state arena in Queensland, what is your opinion on particularly that implied freedom and any potential curtailment of that?

The member makes it clear that he knows that the amendment that he will move is unconstitutional. With that knowledge, it is a gross failing of his responsibility as a member of this House to move such an amendment. The member for Toowoomba South and the member for Mermaid Beach have heard directly that this amendment has already been tested by the High Court. They waste the time of this House and would, once again, pass on the waste of money to the state by, once again, losing in a case before the High Court.

The member for Toowoomba South also misleads this House in tabling his explanatory documents. In them it is asserted that the CCC's Belcarra operation uncovered undeclared union donations to a Gold Coast mayoral candidate. Of course, that is not true. How do we know that? Mr MacSporran addressed the issue directly. When questioned about the issue, Mr MacSporran made it clear—

The union, as required as a third-party donor, had filled out the declaration form and disclosed their donations to various candidates.

Mr LANGBROEK: I rise to a point of order. Can I draw your attention to the clock, please.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Pugh): Yes. It is one o'clock. It is not 1.01.

Mr LANGBROEK: Can you rule on my point of order? I think it is lunchtime.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Let me get advice from the Assistant Clerk as to whether it is lunchtime or not, member for Surfers Paradise.

Mr BROWN: I rise to a point of order. We canvassed this last week in regard to timing and the discretion of the Speaker to allow the House to go over time. The member for Logan was in the middle of quoting. I think he should have been given the freedom to complete that process and then we could go to lunch.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Capalaba. For the information of the House, I was advised by the clerk at the table about 10 minutes ago that I should allow the member to finish as it was only going to be about a minute, but now we have wasted an extra minute on hearing points of order. I am sure that the member for Logan is just about to finish.

Mr POWER: I am happy to move that the debate be now adjourned and I will continue this excoriation of the member for Toowoomba South after lunch.

Debate, on motion of Mr Power, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 1.01 pm to 2.00 pm.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stewart): Before I call matters of public interest, we have in the gallery students from Mt Maria College in Mitchelton which is in the electorate of Everton.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Beef Australia; Federal Budget

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.00 pm): Last week in Rockhampton I, along with many members on this side of the House, had the pleasure of attending beef week. Beef week is an institution, not only in Queensland but right around the world. People travelled across the globe to Australia—to Rocky, the beef capital—to meet with our farmers, our landholders, to showcase their cattle, promote their businesses, agricultural interests and swap trade stories about the beef industry here in Queensland. One thing was abundantly clear: Queensland farmers had a beef with the Queensland Premier.

According to the Premier, the reason farmers had a beef with her was they could not understand the new vegetation management laws. I have a news flash for the Premier: they do understand them. They understand that the Premier has destroyed their livelihoods. They understand that this government has put their futures on the line. They understand that generations of farming families are now in jeopardy because of these laws. It is clear that those sitting opposite on the Labor side of this House have blatantly misunderstood and misread the hurt and frustration that Queensland farmers are feeling. The farmers are the real victims, not the Premier.

It is unfortunate that Labor does not understand the bush. It is certainly unfortunate it does not understand farmers. Its only focus is winning back green votes. To add further insult to our farmers, those opposite have decided to run a taxpayer funded advertising campaign to educate farmers on

vegetation management laws. In case no-one has told the Premier, our farmers are not fools. They do not need education around what they already know—that the laws are intended to hurt farming because that is what the green activists want. We do not need the slick propaganda campaign, we just need common sense and compromise. The Labor Party needs to go back to the drawing board instead of wasting taxpayers' money on propaganda. There is no justifying these vindictive vegetation laws.

I was grateful, and I know my team was, to receive such a warm welcome from the people who travelled to Rocky. The reason we received such a warm welcome was we stood with our landholders, agriculturalists and our farmers against the job-destroying vegetation management laws. I want to personally thank all of the graziers and farmers for that welcome and for standing up against these laws. It was truly inspiring to hear directly from people within the Queensland beef industry committed to growing and progressing their industry despite the barriers the Labor government has brought in.

They breed them tough in the bush. Our Queensland farmers will not go down without a fight. The LNP will always protect farmers' rights to run sustainable, successful businesses that support their families. The LNP will always respect and support the industry that is the economic backbone of so many of our rural and regional communities. Sadly, but not surprisingly, none of these proud principles matter to the Labor Party. The LNP will always back Queenslanders. Be it at a local, state or federal government level, the LNP is focused on job creation, cutting taxes and building infrastructure. As we saw last week in the federal budget, the federal government is investing billions of dollars to kickstart Queensland's economy and build the infrastructure our state needs.

Disappointingly, the Queensland economy is underperforming. We used to be the No. 1 state for economic growth and employment but now we are at the bottom of almost every economic table. How did that happen? It is not too hard to work out. Queenslanders are working hard and it is not their fault that they have a government that has simply lost its way. Those opposite in the Labor Party quite simply have no economic plan at all. All they have in their locker is five new taxes. They announced four new taxes before the state election and now we have a fifth tax which was supposedly to stop the trucks but then it was to be brought in earlier to save Ipswich because they decided to dump recycling. We do not know how much the tax is or when it is going to be brought in. The Treasurer of Queensland clearly has no idea. She is from the school of Laboromics. It is frightening that all those opposite have in their economic plan is five new taxes.

Let us compare Labor's Treasurer Jackie Trad with the federal Treasurer. The contrast could not be larger. Queensland's Treasurer cannot see beyond South Brisbane. The federal Treasurer clearly understands there is more to Queensland than just inner-city Brisbane. The federal Treasurer also sees the huge potential in the bush. That is clear because Queensland was a big winner in the federal budget.

I can list the \$5.2 billion worth of projects: a \$3.3 billion investment in the Bruce Highway; \$390 million on the Sunshine Coast rail duplication; \$1 billion extra for the M1; \$1.5 billion for Northern Australia under the Roads of Strategic Importance program—bush roads; \$95.4 million for increases in specialist medical training services for students so that doctors can be in rural and regional Queensland; and \$1.6 billion towards providing an extra 14,000 high-level home care packages for our seniors. The money is on the table and there is plenty of it, but there is a roadblock and that roadblock is opposite with the Treasurer, Jackie Trad.

The Premier and her government will not commit to coughing up its fair share of funding for the M1 and it will not commit to coughing up its fair share for the Sunshine Coast rail line. If the Premier does not commit to jointly funding these projects in the state budget it will be the biggest dummy spit the state of Queensland has ever seen. Queenslanders cannot afford to miss out on this investment. Millions of people in this state are struggling to make ends meet. We have endured record high electricity prices and now rising water prices. Car registration is increasing at twice the rate of inflation and we have the most expensive petrol in the nation. That is why the Turnbull government's tax cuts are so important. The Turnbull government's tax cuts will make it easier for Queensland families to get ahead. With the state budget coming up in a matter of weeks, I urge those on the other side of the chamber to get on board with the federal government.

I urge those opposite to encourage their Treasurer to help fund the M1 and to help build the Sunshine Coast rail line, to make it easier for Queensland families to get ahead. We need to see a state budget that delivers for all of Queensland and not just for the member for South Brisbane's pet tunnel project in Brisbane, Cross River Rail. We need to see a budget that builds dams in Queensland. We need to see a budget that builds roads in Queensland. We need to see regional roads funded. We need to see a state budget that delivers cheaper electricity for Queenslanders. We need a state budget that delivers for our doctors and our nurses in rural and regional Queensland. We need to see a budget that

bridges the divide between the south-east corner and the rest of Queensland, because if those opposite took a moment to look outside they would realise that there is a beautiful big world out there that is full of opportunity.

There are many in this state who want to contribute to the state coffers, but cannot when they are continually shut out by this incompetent Labor government. I ask: what will it take for this Premier to deliver a budget for the whole of Queensland and not just for Jackie Trad's seat?

Federal Budget

 **Ms BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (2.10 pm): Last week's federal budget was hyped to be Christmas, but the reality is that, far from being Santa, the federal Treasurer has instead cast himself as the Grinch. Far from new commitments to vital infrastructure and job creation projects, what we got was second-hand reannouncements of old infrastructure projects, repackaged, rewrapped and passed off as new. What we got was a \$10 smoke and mirrors tax cut designed to divert attention from the \$40-plus many workers are losing through wage stagnation and penalty rate cuts. In short, what we got was more of the same, but with a serving of election time rhetoric.

I can tell it is election time because my local federal member, Peter Dutton, has finally found the time to stop by the electorate he was elected to represent. I can tell that it is election time because every three years he pops up in Brendale or Murrumba Downs with his creepy caravan parked by the side of the road to reannounce the onramp upgrade that he reannounced in 2016. He has even rolled out a petition. Peter Dutton and his federal marginal colleague Luke Howarth MP are asking for signatures to get the state government to upgrade the Linkfield Road overpass at the Bruce Highway without committing a single cent of federal funding, let alone the 80 per cent of federal funding that the project requires.

Mr Mickelberg interjected.

Ms BOYD: I take the interjection from the member for Buderim. No, it is not my job, as that 80 per cent funding actually comes from the federal government. Peter Dutton says the state should drop Cross River Rail and pay for the overpass upgrade, which shows just how shallow is the federal government's commitment to public transport. They are happy to get a selfie on a train, but they are not happy to build vital rail infrastructure. If we had genuine partners in government in Canberra, electors in my community of Pine Rivers would not have to choose between Cross River Rail and arterial road upgrades; we could do both.

I admit that I am an optimist, so on budget night I was waiting eagerly to see what moneys were committed by our federal government to Pine Rivers. Surely our overpass would receive the much needed federal co-contribution as, after all, our local member of parliament petitioned for such an upgrade. However, it turns out that when you pull the wrapping off this budget you find only an empty box. True to Turnbull's and Dutton's form, there was nothing. There was no money for Linkfield Road, zero funding for the vitally important congestion-busting project that is Cross River Rail and nothing for the Bruce Highway for at least four years. The hyped \$1 billion Urban Infrastructure Fund is a dud for Queensland, with zero dollars this year and only \$40 million over the forward estimates. Where did all the money go?

At a time when state governments are doing everything they can to manage population growth and invest in new and replacement infrastructure, the government of our nation has decided to splash \$80 billion on corporate tax cuts to banks and big business. The federal Liberal government has looked at the state of our nation and decided that it is the wealthy who need the most help. Turnbull's tax cuts put people who are on a full-time minimum wage of \$37,000 per year in the same bracket as people earning \$200,000 a year. In seven years time, people on 37 grand per year will get a tax cut of only \$3.76 per week and those earning \$200,000 a year will get a tax cut of \$137.60 per week. The federal Liberal government budget will lock in inequality for years to come.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stewart): Order! Pause the clock. Those on my left, you have had a pretty good go. Please listen to the member for Pine Rivers with the same respect that was given to the Leader of the Opposition.

Ms BOYD: Obviously they are more vocal as my cheer squad than they were for the Leader of the Opposition. This federal Liberal government will lock in inequality for years to come. It is an indictment that wage stagnation will continue and come 1 July there will be another penalty rates cut. Turnbull and his government will not even support increasing the minimum wage and we will see 40 per

cent of the workforce in insecure work. Families are operating under a cloud of uncertainty as household expenses increase dramatically, putting them further and further behind. In Canberra we have a government that will not stand up for working people, will not invest in infrastructure and will not support job-creating projects.

(Time expired)

Federal Budget

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (2.16 pm): I am really pleased that Queensland received some good economic news last week, but it came from Canberra; it did not come from William Street. The 2018 federal budget was a great win for Queenslanders. The coalition government handed down what we would have to say is a very nice set of figures. The national economy is about to grow by three per cent next year and wages are set to grow by 2.75 per cent. Workers, whom the other side of the House claim they stand up for, will get an extra \$530 per year because of tax cuts. It is great to see money going back to Queensland taxpayers. It is their money, they have earned it and they deserve to be able to spend it.

The contrast with the Palaszczuk government could not be any starker. This government does not know how to cut taxes; this government knows how to increase taxes. That is the stark difference between Labor governments and LNP and coalition governments. We believe in small government, not interfering government. We believe in responsible economic management, not wasteful spending of taxpayers' money. That is what this Labor government gives.

In the first five months of this government's term in office, the only thing we have heard about is five new taxes. Those taxes will affect Queenslanders right across the state and impact on confidence for those who want to invest in the state. In contrast, the federal budget contained much more than tax cuts; it also spoke about record infrastructure spending. The Leader of the Opposition has already detailed some of those great projects.

As the Treasurer continues to bag this great budget, she compares us to other states. She compares the investment in Victoria with what is happening here, but fails to mention that the federal government's infrastructure investment in Queensland is three times that of New South Wales.

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Mr MANDER: I take the interjection of the member for Broadwater: members opposite also fail to mention that the federal government does not discriminate based on who is running a state. It is rewarding good government in Victoria. Even though Victoria has a Labor government, occasionally they do a couple of good things. One thing they are good at is cooperating with the federal government.

That side of parliament in this state cannot cooperate with the federal government. All they do is bag, bag, bag and bag. We on this side of the House play a little game. We have side bets on how long it will take one of the ministers to bag the federal government in their ministerial statements. The Minister for Health has the record. There is conjecture whether it was four seconds or eight seconds, but it did not take long. It did not take long to bag the federal government. That is the only thing they know how to do.

The Treasurer complained this morning that the M1 funding was not coming next year. At the state election Labor promised \$231 million for the M1. No-one has a clue where that money is coming from. Their election costings showed that we will only see \$55 million of that \$231 million before 2022. These people have the hide to talk about money being in the forward estimates when their federal counterparts have in the past had monopoly money estimates with regard to health and education.

Mr Krause: Ten years on.

Mr MANDER: Ten years on they continue to try to fool the public. They are doing the same thing at the state level as well.

The federal government has put money on the table. This Labor government needs to match that and stop the petty politics. Let us get the infrastructure built in this state that Queenslanders deserve and are demanding.

Federal Budget

 **Mr PEGG** (Stretton—ALP) (2.21 pm): The audacity of the LNP leadership team continues to amaze me. I have heard some of those opposite call the LNP leadership team the dream team. I do not know what kind of dream they were having to call them the dream team. We firstly had the member for

Nanango, the failed Newman government finance minister, get up in this place. She had the audacity to say that she always backed Queenslanders and in the same breath say how great the Turnbull government's federal budget is. That is not backing Queenslanders.

Then we had the member for Everton, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, stand up. He always takes it a step too far. He always overextends himself. He actually had the audacity to say that he endorsed and agreed with all of Scott Morrison's budget projections. I can tell members that there are not too many people willing to sign up to the budget projections of 'ScoMo'. Lock, stock and barrel, the member for Everton has endorsed them all. We will see how well he goes.

I will give some advice to the member for Everton. ScoMo's track record is not that good. You have signed up to his projections holus-bolus. I will be holding you and ScoMo to account for those projections and all your promises.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stewart): Address your comments through the chair.

Mr PEGG: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. The truth is that this budget is fundamentally unfair for Queenslanders. It is a dud budget and Queenslanders are missing out. The member for Nanango talked about the billions in infrastructure spend in her speech.

Mrs Frecklington: Five point two billion.

Mr PEGG: That is exactly right. I take that interjection from the member for Nanango. She is spot on. There is \$5.2 billion for infrastructure which is about as much as they are spending on a single new rail line in Melbourne. They are basically spending as much on infrastructure for the whole of our great state as they are spending in Melbourne.

The member for Nanango thinks that that is a fantastic result. I do not think it is a great result at all. The track record of the Turnbull government is that their big promises are hollow. Queenslanders have either missed out or will be waiting years to see the Turnbull government actually deliver. The reality is, and none of those opposite will ever mention this, that the federal government is raking in massive amounts of revenue from this state—they are taking lots in taxes and charges from this state—but when it comes to giving money back they want to give it to big business and the big banks. What we say is that they should be putting Queenslanders first. I say to the member for Nanango, 'Live up to your word; put Queenslanders first and oppose this unfair federal budget.'

Whether it is skills, education, Indigenous housing, health, infrastructure or regional issues—and I know many of the regional members on this side of the House have expressed in very strong terms how unfair this federal budget is—Queenslanders have missed out. In my local area, one of the most egregious injustices of this federal budget is the Turnbull government once again ignoring Cross River Rail, which I know those opposite oppose. This is in contrast to their big spending promises in other states, like the \$5 billion in Melbourne for a new rail line to the airport.

What people in my local area know, what everybody on this side of the House knows and what Queenslanders know is that Cross River Rail will help people get to where they need to go faster. In addition, it will also deliver thousands of jobs. I think that is a great outcome for this state. The Turnbull government should get on board the train and those opposite should get on board the train and support this important infrastructure project.

It gets even worse. The bad news continues in this federal budget. Queensland is missing out on skills funding. We learnt from the budget that Turnbull's \$40 million cut to training in last year's budget will grow to approximately \$50 million. This will have a severe impact on our local TAFEs. When we look at education we are also yet to see long-term funding certainty for the early childhood sector which is a very unfortunate result.

In conclusion, I say to those opposite that it is not too late to stand up for Queensland. It is not too late to call this federal budget out for what it is. Instead of engaging in callow and craven support for the federal budget, call this federal budget out for what it really is. What it really is is a dud budget that fails Queenslanders.

(Time expired)

Infrastructure

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (2.26 pm): I do not know what it is about this chamber, but I always seem to have the pleasure and honour of following the member for Stretton. Every time I feel as though I have been struck by a wet lettuce leaf—a full blown slap with a wet lettuce leaf. I do not know how I can just pick myself up and recover—

Mr Bleijie: I will get you the tea towel.

Mr POWELL: Thank you, member for Kawana. I will try to do it for the people of Glass House. As I travel around Queensland I hear two things. The first is, 'No way Palaszczuk.' As the Leader of the Opposition said, it is quite clear that our farmers from rural and regional Queensland are sending that message. The other thing I hear is, 'Just build it.' Of course they are referring to the Palaszczuk Labor government's infrastructure go-slow.

In next month's budget Queenslanders want to see infrastructure getting built right across the state not just in inner-city Brisbane. The Labor government over the course of four budgets has slashed infrastructure spending by \$3 billion a year. That has cost Queenslanders 30,000 jobs over those three years. The infrastructure cuts in regional Queensland have been particularly savage with \$2 billion worth of cuts each year. The state's roads budget has been cut by more than \$400 million in one fell swoop.

The message to the Deputy Premier is very clear: stop using Cross River Rail as an excuse not to build anything else. The Deputy Premier threw her toys out of the cot when it comes to Cross River Rail and sent the \$10 million back to Prime Minister Turnbull and said, 'We will go it alone.' Go-ahead and do it. Go-ahead and build Cross River Rail using state funds as was promised. Stop using it as an excuse for building nothing else in this state. On the other hand, the federal coalition budget gave a much needed boost. The question now is whether the Premier is capable of putting politics aside, like they have in Victoria under a Labor government, to benefit all of Queensland.

Stop the petty politics. Quite frankly, Queenslanders do not want to hear about who is funding what and by how much. For those opposite, here is a case study from history. When a federal Labor treasurer came to the LNP in government and said, 'I have 50 per cent funding for Cooroy to Curra stage A,' we did not quibble over the amount; we matched them and we delivered that infrastructure. Those opposite can do the same. They can work with the Turnbull government, which is injecting \$3.3 billion in upgrades for the Bruce Highway, including \$800 million in new upgrades from Pine Rivers to Caloundra; \$800 million to upgrade between Cooroy and Curra, bypassing Gympie; \$150 million to upgrade the Bruce Highway at the Dohles Rocks Road interchange—

Ms Boyd: Nothing new.

Mr POWELL: I hear the member for Pine Rivers. Clearly she does not want the necessary infrastructure that will assist her residents—Dohles Rocks Road.

Ms Boyd: It's outside my electorate.

Mr POWELL: 'It's not in my electorate. It won't help my constituents.'

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stewart): Order, member for Pine Rivers!

Mr POWELL: I take that interjection from the member for Pine Rivers. It is not in her electorate so she really could not care about the fact that all of her constituents are going to benefit from an improved Dohles Rocks Road interchange. There is also another \$1.6 billion funding boost up and down the coast. This means that since 2013, when we signed up to the Bruce Highway Action Plan, \$10 billion will have been spent on the Bruce Highway.

We are seeing \$300 million for the Brisbane Metro to bust congestion in Brisbane and provide better public transport; \$170 million for the Cunningham Highway, linking Southern Downs and Ipswich; a share of \$160 million for the Outback Way, which stretches between Winton and Laverton in Western Australia; \$1.5 billion for northern Australian strategic roads; and \$1 billion for the M1 Pacific Highway. I am also very glad to see a project close to my heart receiving \$390 million to duplicate the north coast line between Beerburrum and Landsborough. The transport minister has already turned down \$150 million from the federal government for a rail link to the Townsville port. Do not let that happen with these projects across the length and breadth of the state.

Will the Premier and the Treasurer put their fair share of matching funding on the table in next month's budget to get this infrastructure built in Queensland? I know it is a hard thing for this Palaszczuk Labor government but, when it comes to the infrastructure Queenslanders are crying out for, the message in next month's budget is simple—just build it.

Keppel Electorate, Infrastructure

 **Mrs LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (2.31 pm): I grew up in Central Queensland and I love living there. They say home is where your heart is and last weekend my heart burst with pride as my home, Keppel, took a giant leap forward as we officially opened the \$53 million Yeppoon Lagoon project. I joined Mayor

of Livingstone Shire Bill Ludwig, the member for Capricornia and thousands of local people and children to open the highly anticipated new world-class community space for locals and visitors. It was fantastic to celebrate a significant milestone in Livingstone's history.

This is a landmark project for Yeppoon and the surrounding area that will boost tourism and the local economy whilst supporting local jobs. The Palaszczuk government invested \$29 million into this once-in-a-lifetime development in another huge vote of confidence in the Yeppoon community. It was fitting that this opening was celebrated together with Yeppoon's 150-year anniversary.

The Yeppoon Lagoon precinct is loaded with family-friendly activities such as water play areas, a beach amphitheatre, playgrounds and better access for all. It will be a magnet for visitors and a must-see attraction for anyone in the region. I would like to invite all members of this parliament to visit Yeppoon's new lagoon: bring your friends and bring your family up for a holiday and enjoy our beautiful weather, friendly hospitality, relaxing atmosphere and now this exciting Yeppoon Lagoon.

As we have seen stages 3, 4 and now 5 of the Yeppoon Town Centre and Foreshore Revitalisation Project unfold in just over 2½ years, this world-class facility aptly completes this fantastic and major infrastructure development, dramatically improving Yeppoon's foreshore. I am proud that the Palaszczuk government contributed \$29 million towards the project. Livingstone Shire also contributed \$14 million to the project and the Australian government contributed \$10 million. The Yeppoon Lagoon is part of the community infrastructure needed to further drive local job creation and enhance livability for local residents. I am passionate about growing jobs in our local economy. There is nothing more important to economic confidence than employment. The availability of secure, fairly paid jobs is central to the wellbeing and future of every Central Queenslander.

I am proud that the Palaszczuk government is growing jobs in Keppel by investing in job-generating infrastructure. As well as delivering \$29 million for the Yeppoon Lagoon, we are growing jobs and tourism by delivering on our \$25 million commitment to infrastructure on Great Keppel Island. We have contributed \$1.5 million to the Emu Park multisport precinct, which will be opened this weekend. Labor is delivering \$400,000 for a new open-air amphitheatre at Mount Archer, in addition to \$1.9 million for the newly opened Mount Archer Nurim Circuit walk.

We are delivering \$1.8 million on upgrades to the Emu Park Main Beach foreshore; \$3.4 million for Rockhampton Hockey to replace its artificial turf; \$3 million for the Yeppoon Homemaker Centre; half a million dollars for rural floodway upgrades; \$1.3 million for the new North Rocky waterslides; and \$5 million to upgrade the Yeppoon sewerage treatment plant. Labor has delivered \$1.3 million to construct a local disaster coordination centre and community resilience engagement hub in Yeppoon, over \$7 million to upgrade the North Rocky nursing home and work is also about to start on the \$4.1 million upgrade of the Yeppoon rail line to service JBS abattoir, not to mention Labor's commitment to improving local schools, with millions of dollars in upgrades to local schools including Frenchville, Parkhurst, Taranganba and Farnborough state schools and Yeppoon State High School.

The Palaszczuk Labor government is driving vital infrastructure projects to boost economic growth in Central Queensland. We are continuing to work closely with business and industry to create jobs across Central Queensland. We are working diligently to continue generating more jobs and providing sustained stability for investment. Across Queensland our \$5 billion annual regional infrastructure investment, our Back to Work program, the Works for Queensland program and the Jobs and Regional Growth Fund are all creating jobs beyond the south-east corner. The Palaszczuk Labor government is committed to delivering a growing economy that delivers a better quality of living for all Central Queenslanders.

Australian Medical Association Queensland



Dr ROWAN (Moggill—LNP) (2.36 pm): I acknowledge the many hardworking doctors, the very many good and loyal members of the Australian Medical Association Queensland, as well as many current and former staff in the AMAQ secretariat and a number of former presidents and others I have served with. I would like to thank AMA Queensland President, Dr Bill Boyd, for awarding me the president's award during his current 2017-18 AMA Queensland presidential term. I thank Bill for recognising me for my over 10 years of service to AMA Queensland in various professional capacities including as a former president, former branch councillor and former board member. I table some articles and a copy of the award certificate and photo for the benefit of the House.

Tabled paper: Bundle of photographs, documents and articles regarding the presentation of a President's award to the member for Moggill, Dr Christian Rowan MP, by the Australian Medical Association [\[661\]](#).

This brave and loyal presidential decision is not without controversy given the public hospital doctors dispute of 2014 and the inaccurate perception, or view by some, that I, as the then AMA Queensland president in 2013-14, had a conflict of interest in industrial negotiations given my involvement with the Liberal National Party. However, importantly, it must be remembered that this had been a declared and known conflict of interest when becoming president-elect and also president of the association. In fact, I had formally written to the then president of the LNP, Mr Bruce McIver, prior to taking up the president's role requesting that my LNP membership be suspended for the duration of my term as AMA president. I table correspondence with respect to this.

Tabled paper: Correspondence, dated 18 March 2013, from Dr Christian Rowan to Mr Bruce McIver seeking to suspend his LNP membership for 12 months from 1 June 2013 to 25 June 2014 [662].

I also table copies of emails and documents when I first became president-elect with respect to declaring a potential conflict of interest to the CEO, Jane Schmitt, and the organisation prior to becoming president the following year.

Tabled paper: Emails, dated 24 May and 20 June 2012, from Dr Christian Rowan and conflict of interest disclosure forms dated 20 June 2012 [663].

What I have to bring to the attention of the House today, our great democratic institution here in Queensland, is the ongoing extraordinary organisational attacks on the democratic powers and decision-making ability of another democratically elected AMA Queensland president. In fact, the current CEO, Jane Schmitt, and others have a track record of attacking and undermining the authority of a number of AMA Queensland presidents and duly elected other officials. I table correspondence.

Tabled paper: Bundle of correspondence regarding Dr Christian Rowan in his capacity as President of the Australian Medical Association [666].

The recent conduct of Labor apparatchik AMA Queensland CEO, Jane Schmitt, will go down in the history of the organisation as one of the greatest displays and acts of vitriol, bile, ostensible bias, vendetta and political payback. On learning of the current president's intent to award me the president's award and on my receipt of this award from the current and well-respected AMA Queensland President, Dr Bill Boyd, the current Chief Executive Officer of AMA Queensland, Jane Schmitt, then took extraordinary unprecedented steps to try to prevent the award being given because of her own conflicted political ideology, union links, distorted philosophical views and corrupted conflict in not being able to deliver balanced public policy with respect to industrial matters—important balanced public policy for the benefit of both doctors and, even more importantly, patients and their clinical outcomes. However, the president's award had already been awarded prior to her actions.

Recent actions of the CEO, following a briefing to the also conflicted board chair, then led to the ramming through of board resolutions without all of the required information, denying natural justice, denying procedural fairness and excluding the current president from written communications by him to me with respect to abolishing a longstanding organisational award, of which many AMA members have been a recipient, including former AMA Queensland president and former VMO Committee chair, Dr Ross Cartmill, who has been a recipient of this award. I acknowledge Ross in the gallery today. The CEO and board chair allegedly undertook this action under the biased and inaccurate 'guise' of organisational risk.

In part this saga also stems from the historical actions and duplicity of Labor's Dr Chris Davis, including Dr Davis's undermining of his then colleague the former health minister, the Hon. Lawrence Springborg. I table articles.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Courier-Mail*, dated 30 July 2014, titled 'What political turncoat really thinks of his part, Dishonest, Shameful, Self-serving, Incompetent, Sign me up' [665].

This undermining was done as a part of an unholy alliance with AMA Queensland's CEO and representatives of the ASMOF union as well as others, including a number of Labor members and now Palaszczuk Labor ministers who sit in this chamber today. Dr Davis's breach of cabinet solidarity and his subsequent sacking—and also Dr Davis's previous attack and ambush with other cronies—on well-respected former CEO Kerry Gallagher has not been forgotten.

Politics has a long memory. Given that Dr Davis, the AMA's CEO, the Together union and ASMOF collectively have all elected the socialist Palaszczuk Labor government, it can be said that all have contributed to untold misery for patients, health professionals, farmers, families, businesses as well as community and faith based organisations at large. I note that Dr Davis was awarded the Dr Bruce Shepherd Medal for his contribution as an elected representative to undermining his own then health

minister for breaching cabinet solidarity, resigning from the LNP, resigning from parliament and for joining the Labor Party.

In concluding, I thank President Bill Boyd for the award, particularly given the annual award has now been reportedly abolished into the future, despite it having a long history within the organisation. I also take the opportunity to acknowledge the many professional colleagues who have supported me, and I table some examples.

Tabled paper: Correspondence and a media article regarding decisions and actions of the Australian Medical Association [\[664\]](#).

Unfortunately, I choose not to name many others, particularly given a number serve in elected AMA positions, as I have real concerns for reprisals against them with respect to AMA organisational, political and/or professional bullying, harassment and intimidation.

Finally, any potential organisational risk with respect to this matter has been created by the CEO and chair by not handling a sensitive and complex matter with greater due diligence, natural justice, procedural fairness, independence and acknowledgement by both of them of their own conflict of interest on the matter. In my maiden speech I referenced hoping not to have to take such action. It provides me no joy, solace or comfort in having to make this speech, although the irony of being able to exercise freedom of speech as a democratically elected representative in this great democratic institution is not lost on me. I hear the CEO's contract will not be renewed but her immediate position and that of others is untenable.

(Time expired)

Gold Coast, Federal Budget

 **Ms SCANLON** (Gaven—ALP) (2.41 pm): Last Tuesday night I rushed home from the Nerang Community Association meeting to see what was in the federal budget for the Gold Coast. I was bitterly disappointed, because this federal budget is fundamentally unfair for Gold Coasters who time and time again are taken for granted by the wall-to-wall federal LNP MPs in our city.

The Gold Coast has been duded when it comes to roads funding. The Turnbull government promised to make a contribution towards projects like the Varsity Lakes to Tugun and Eight Mile Plains to Daisy Hill upgrades. However, most of that money for these projects does not show up in this budget. It will not be allocated until 2022-23. To put that into perspective, a child starting year 1 this year will likely not see the full billion dollars that the Turnbull government promised until that child graduates primary school. That is an absolute joke.

To add insult to injury, we have again been short-changed when it comes to the Turnbull government's contribution. For the same road just over the border in New South Wales they get 80 per cent of the funding from the federal government. However, on the Gold Coast where every single federal member of parliament is an LNP member we get 30 per cent less. What that means is that the Palaszczuk government is going to have to stump up extra cash on top of what we have already committed to pay for these upgrades before we see any substantial money from the Turnbull government.

I know that Gold Coasters are sick of sitting in traffic and want work to begin on the third and fourth upgrades of the M1 as soon as possible. They want governments to invest in infrastructure for our growing population. Over the Commonwealth Games we saw how successful public transport can be if you provide a quality service for commuters. Infrastructure projects like Cross River Rail will mean fewer cars on the Pacific Motorway, as 47,000 people in South-East Queensland are projected to travel by rail instead. We know that Cross River Rail will reduce travel time for Gold Coast commuters travelling to Brisbane by 15 minutes and will see a train leaving every five minutes on average and an extra 3,150 seats during peak times. Despite all of those benefits for the Gold Coast and South-East Queensland, the Turnbull government is not contributing a single dollar to this congestion-busting project.

It does not end there. One of my previous jobs was working as an educator in the outside school hours care sector. Many of my colleagues worked within the early childhood sector, so I was extremely disappointed to see that we still have no long-term funding certainty. This budget delivered another short-term, 12-month extension of the national partnership agreement on universal access to kindergarten for children in the year before school and no new funding after 2019. The budget also fails to provide any further funding commitment beyond 2018 for the national partnership agreement that covers the regulation of early childhood services.

The practical implications of this mean that the sector cannot plan ahead and retain qualified and experienced staff without funding certainty in an industry that we know has a profound impact on our little ones and their future. Labor believes in the value of investing in TAFE skills and training so that Queenslanders can find meaningful work and career pathways. We know that our Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative has reaped rewards for those in our community, with more than 1,380 Gold Coasters participating in this valuable program.

Only last month we announced more than \$1 million in funding for Ashmore TAFE to upgrade facilities to ensure that students receive the most up-to-date training to equip them for long-term and secure jobs, but unfortunately the federal government does not value this sector as highly as we do. Malcolm Turnbull has cut \$270 million from the National Partnership on the Skilling Australians Fund, which is the equivalent of a \$60 million cut to funding in Queensland. This means that 6,000 people from across the state are at risk of missing out on the opportunity to access vocational education and training. It is absolutely outrageous that the Turnbull government collects 80 per cent of the taxation revenue in this nation and yet it seriously expects the Palaszczuk government to fill in the funding black hole for skills training, infrastructure projects and front-line services after they have taken a razor to these sectors.

Queensland hospitals are still owed \$460 million for services already provided in 2016-17. While the Turnbull government had to be shamed into coughing up some of that money, we will still have a shortfall of nearly \$100 million. We have also seen an extraordinary cut of \$184 million from the AFP budget over the next four years resulting in the loss of 151 Australian Federal Police personnel this year alone. Let us be clear: instead of giving Queensland its fair share, the Turnbull government has chosen to give big business and banks a corporate tax cut. My question is to the federal MPs on the Gold Coast: who is it that they claim to be standing up for—Canberra or the Gold Coast?

Development

 **Mr BERKMAN** (Maiwar—Grn) (2.46 pm): Brisbane and Queensland are growing, and development—be it residential, commercial or state driven infrastructure—is inevitable. Nobody disputes this, and the Greens are certainly not anti-development as some might have misapprehended. Densification of inner urban areas like my electorate of Maiwar is not only inevitable but also necessary to prevent the endless urban sprawl from Brisbane's outer suburbs.

It is in this context that governments regulate development through urban planning regulation with the primary goals of balancing inevitable growth with community expectation and to maintain neighbourhoods that meet our needs, offer amenity and improve quality of life. Success or failure in striking the right balance is evident not just in how many people we live near and call our neighbours or what their houses look like but also in the adequacy of transport infrastructure—for example, how much time we spend in traffic as opposed to walking, riding or using public transport.

It is reflected in the availability and accessibility of vital community services and support facilities such as education and child care, aged care, green space and the list goes on. It has been made abundantly clear in my time campaigning as an MP and as a resident of Taringa that our current system does not adequately strike this balance. This issue, more than any other, is the one that Maiwar locals bring to me in meetings, phone calls and emails, and I am receiving these daily.

The pervasive sentiment is not simply that development is not meeting community expectation. The community sees that corporate interests, particularly the profits of property developers, are what our current planning system values above all else. The buck-passing on this issue between state and local governments is almost unrivalled by any other policy issue. The state can, quite correctly, point to virtually any planning decision and say that is a council decision. I have heard from countless local residents that when they take their concerns to our local councillor, currently Councillor Julian Simmonds—at least for the time being—his response is that these decisions are not made by him. They are delegated to council officers and made in accordance with the state Planning Act, which is also true. There is an inevitability about state and local governments each playing a role on these issues, but local government is fundamentally a creature of state government legislation, so ultimately the buck stops with this parliament.

In the time I was working as a planning and environment lawyer, the planning legislation changed names three times at the hands of governments of both persuasions, but the effect of each major change in the law was to weaken the rights of the community in the planning decisions that affect them and strip away protections against inappropriate development. Corporate profits won out every time.

Now development at a ludicrous scale can be allowed in suburban streets with no more than code assessment, giving communities no formal opportunity to have a say. Even where communities are successful in lobbying council to refuse inappropriate development, developers almost always get their way in court. That is not to disparage in any way the independent decisions made by our judges, but it reinforces that state planning law, even when applied in the absence of any political considerations, works for developers at the expense of communities.

I have also spoken to a number of experts on this issue—professors in planning, lawyers and academics, council officers, even representatives of the LGAQ. Everyone working in this space recognises that the planning system is inherently permissive, and we are expected to simply continue to accept this.

We are told that the housing market will work best if left unencumbered by so-called red tape, but it is clearly not working for most of us. We are supposed to believe that lax planning regulation is necessary to improve housing affordability, yet housing is less affordable than ever before. We are increasingly unable to afford a house in suburbs where our quality of life is declining and developers are the ultimate winners. This is the outcome of so-called planning reform, where the reform has been bought by property developer donations.

Government now accepts that a legislative response is required to prevent actual or perceived risks of corruption at the local and state level. The necessary next step is to undertake a root-and-branch reform of the Planning Act once developer donations are taken out of the picture. There can be little doubt that the balance should, and will, be reset in favour of the community.

The Greens were the only party that brought a policy of planning reform to the 2017 election, and it remains the highest priority for an enormous number of Queenslanders. We brought a proposal to better fund public infrastructure by making developers pay their fair share out of windfall profits they get as a consequence of council rezoning decisions. If the government is interested in the concerns of the community in Maiwar and elsewhere across the state, it should adopt these policies as its own and ensure planning is for people, not profit.

Federal Budget, Growth Areas

 **Mrs MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (2.50 pm): Like many within my community, I eagerly tuned in last Tuesday evening for Scott Morrison's budget speech. I had the popcorn, I had the enthusiasm. Like many within my community, I was left wanting more. My electorate represents a key growth corridor. In the next 25 years, South-East Queensland is expected to grow by close to two million people, and my electorate will take its fair share of these new residents. It would seem that this widely known and understood fact is not actually understood by the LNP federal government at all.

At the outset, I was quite excited, given Mr Morrison's claims that they had 'invested at record levels to build the roads, railways, airports and energy infrastructure Australia needs for the future'. I thought, 'Here we go. There'll be something in this budget for growth south-west of Brisbane.' I even had my fingers crossed for improvements to some of our major highways in this area and maybe even a little bit of rail thrown in for good measure, but as the night wore on and as the budget 2018 documents were released and scrutinised, it would seem that there would be very little for my communities.

I start with the obvious elephant in the room. Why will the federal government not help fund Cross River Rail? I am so tired of those opposite who disparage Cross River Rail as some inner-city, lefty vehicle that only Labor members and the member for Maiwar will use. Sadly, some of this rhetoric has stuck. For my electorate of Jordan, Cross River Rail has never been more necessary.

Anyone can see that Cross River Rail will more than double the capacity across the river and will allow for the expansion of our rail network. For my electorate of Jordan, this will mean not only higher frequency services—like a train from Springfield Central station every five minutes—but so much more. The additional capacity will also allow us to expand our rail network further into the key growth areas like Ripley and Flagstone. The extension of the current Springfield rail line through to Ripley and looping back to Ipswich will relieve the pressure currently being felt at the terminus at Springfield Central station. The Salisbury to Beaudesert passenger line—with stations at Flagstone Central, New Beith and Greenbank—is absolutely vital if we see the greater Flagstone region as a priority growth area.

Clearly, the federal government does not care about the outer metropolitan areas that are desperately seeking relief through public transport provision. Instead, Scott Morrison has decided in his infinite wisdom that \$300 million for the Brisbane Metro—a busway extension with some bendy buses,

lauded by his LNP mate, Mayor Graham Quirk of Brisbane—is much more important. A project that two years later still does not even have a reference design for the bus is laughable, as exposed by council's deputy opposition leader, Councillor Jared Cassidy, in the *Sunday Mail* this week.

Federal Labor, on the other hand, have come to the show, pledging a commitment of \$2.24 billion to help fund Cross River Rail, because they know the importance of this project for the outer metropolitan growth seats like Jordan. The savings that our government can make with that support—including over \$800 million in construction costs alone—could be well utilised for critical road projects. I can think of a few in my electorate—the Centenary Highway and the Mount Lindesay Highway. Again, these are two highways that saw nothing, nada, from the federal government, except for a reannouncement of \$12.8 million for Mount Lindesay North Maclean works, which is not much compared to what the state Labor government has put in to date.

In fact, only in the last two weeks, the Palaszczuk government has announced an additional \$14 million for the Mount Lindesay Highway for South Maclean improvements. This funding has been made available through the Targeted Road Safety Program, where revenue raised from camera detected offences goes back into programs that make our roads safer through major infrastructure. Sadly, there was no such commitment or concerns from the federal government.

At the end of the night, I was left with a distinct feeling that those of us who live in the south-west growth corridors are the forgotten cousins. We are being punished for choosing to live out of the city centre. It left a bad taste in my mouth, and it was not from the burnt popcorn.

MINISTERIAL AND OTHER OFFICE HOLDER STAFF AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (2.55 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Ministerial and Other Office Holder Staff Act 2010, the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 and the Parliamentary Service Act 1988 for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Economics and Governance Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Ministerial and Other Office Holder Staff and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 [\[659\]](#).

Tabled paper: Ministerial and Other Office Holder Staff and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018, explanatory notes [\[660\]](#).

I am pleased to introduce the Ministerial and Other Office Holder Staff and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. The bill has four purposes, being to: amend the Ministerial and Other Office Holder Staff Act 2010 to provide the director-general of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet with explicit power to conduct criminal history checks to assess the suitability of a person to be engaged in a ministerial office, the Office of the Leader of the Opposition or the office of other non-government members; amend the Parliamentary Service Act 1988 to provide the Clerk of the Parliament with explicit power to conduct criminal history checks to assess the suitability of a person to be engaged in the Parliamentary Service, including in an electorate office; amend the plan details of the parliamentary precinct outlined in the Parliamentary Service Act 1988 following the parliament's agreement in 2017 to relinquish a small parcel of land which relates to the Queen's Wharf Brisbane project; and make minor amendments to the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 to correct and update certain references.

Late last year, the Clerk of the Parliament was made aware that a person with previous convictions had been employed by the Parliamentary Service. Following this incident, the Clerk instituted administrative procedures to provide for criminal history checking for Parliamentary Service staff, which includes electorate office staff. Given the serious nature of this incident, in December last year I asked the director-general of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet to implement similar procedures to enable criminal history checking for ministerial office staff.

Currently, neither piece of legislation under which ministerial staff and Parliamentary Service staff are employed provides the director-general or the Clerk with explicit power to conduct criminal history checks on potential employees. As such, the administrative procedures that have been put in place by the director-general and the Clerk have been considered as interim measures pending legislative changes. These amendments will provide the director-general and the Clerk with the same legislative power to conduct criminal history checks as is currently provided under the Public Service Act 2008 to chief executive officers for Queensland government departmental employees.

The Ministerial and Other Office Holder Staff Act 2010 provides for the employment of staff in the Office of the Leader of the Opposition and the employment of staff of a non-government member other than the Leader of the Opposition. It is proposed that the power of the director-general to seek a person's criminal history for the purpose of assessing their suitability for employment also covers opposition staff and staff of non-government members.

The bill provides safeguards for how a person's criminal history is sought, how the information can be used, who it can be shared with and how it is to be destroyed after use. All requests to obtain criminal history checks will require written consent from the person. With ministerial and opposition staff, it will be necessary for the director-general to be able to disclose criminal history information received from the Police Commissioner about a person to the Premier or the Leader of the Opposition. This will ensure that they can make an informed decision as to whether they should recommend the person to the director-general for employment.

Similarly with staff in the Office of the Speaker or in electorate offices, it will be necessary for the Clerk to be able to disclose criminal history information received with the Speaker or the member of the Legislative Assembly concerned so that the Speaker or the member can make an informed decision as to whether they should recommend the person to the Clerk for appointment. The bill, therefore, provides permission for such disclosures with strict confidentiality requirements. The amendments in the bill will enable the Clerk to continue to obtain a person's criminal history information from a private sector entity or from the Police Commissioner. The director-general has sought, and will continue to seek, criminal history information from the Police Commissioner.

There are a number of fairly procedural provisions contained in the bill. The bill amends the definition of 'parliamentary precinct' in the Parliamentary Service Act 1988 to include a new plan number. The new plan number results from a resurvey of the land following the former Speaker's agreement to realign boundaries around the Bicentennial Bikeway under the freeway, down near the Brisbane River. The former Speaker agreed to relinquish a small parcel of land in return for another small area of land to facilitate development of the Queen's Wharf project in Brisbane.

The bill also amends section 93 of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 to rectify an oversight from 2013 when the parliament transferred the provisions for the notification and availability of forms from the Statutory Instruments Act 1992 to the Acts Interpretation Act 1954. This bill provides an opportunity to correct this drafting oversight.

This bill also amends section 107 of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 to update a reference to 'Votes and Proceedings' with 'Record of Proceedings' in its stead, an amendment that was overlooked in 2006 when the parliament initiated the *Record of Proceedings* and ceased the production of *Votes and Proceedings*. For accuracy, the act is being amended to reflect current practice.

In closing, it gives me pleasure to introduce a bill that, in particular, strengthens the processes for assessing the suitability of persons to be employed under the Ministerial and Other Office Holder Staff Act 2010 and the Parliamentary Service Act 1988. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (3.01 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 Economics and Governance Committee

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stewart): In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Economics and Governance Committee.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (COUNCILLOR COMPLAINTS) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL (IMPLEMENTING STAGE 1 OF BELCARRA) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading (Cognate Debate)

Resumed from p. 1116, on motion of Mr Hinchliffe—

That the bills be now read a second time.

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (3.01 pm), continuing: Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank you and, of course, the member for Surfers Paradise for the chance to continue my speech. The LNP then questioned the validity of a ban on developers, the very same ban that the High Court affirmed as valid in *McCloy v New South Wales*, and I table the summary judgement for the members of the committee opposite.

Tabled paper: Statements from the High Court regarding *McCloy and Ors v State of New South Wales & Anor* [2015] HCA 34, dated 7 October 2015, and *Unions NSW and Ors v State of New South Wales* [2013] HCA 58, dated 18 December 2013 [\[667\]](#).

Then, ridiculously, in the same breath they put forward amendments to include a new class of donors that the High Court had rejected in *Unions New South Wales v New South Wales*. It is a farce that the LNP could seriously put forward to this House exactly what Mr MacSporran considered and rejected. In explaining his decision, he said—

That is the last thing that we wanted—to recommend something that was going to be knocked over in the High Court. That is just a waste of everyone's time. You could not ignore those High Court cases.

It seems the LNP is quite happy to ignore the High Court.

The member for Toowoomba South also misled the House in tabling the explanatory documents. In them he asserted, 'The CCC's Belcarra uncovered undeclared union donations to a Gold Coast mayoral candidate.' This is not true. How do we know this? Because Mr MacSporran addressed this issue directly by saying—

The union, as required as a third-party donor, had filled out the declaration form and disclosed their donations to various candidates quite properly, accurately and in a timely way.

Mr MacSporran went on to make the point 100 per cent, which seems to have been missed by committee members on the other side—

The union had done nothing wrong other than to ... it had donated and disclosed it.

Who asked that question? It was none other than the member for Toowoomba South. He should apologise for misleading the House. These bills, which have been cognated, further account for transparency and confidence in the democracy of Queensland. I commend the bills to the House.

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (3.03 pm): The first thing I would like to say is that I am disappointed that two important bills have been cognated for today's debate. Under our new standing orders, that means members have only five minutes per bill in which to speak. The committee has spent a lot over time and effort on these bills and a lot of people have had input into the matter, but now I only get five minutes to talk on each bill. Unfortunately, I will have to concentrate on the Belcarra bill because that is the one I have had quite a bit of experience with through my local government career. A lot of history comes through there.

We should not have had to cognate these bills. At the last sitting these bills were ready. They came to the House on 9 and 23 April respectively with report-back dates of 6 March for one and 15 February for the other. In other words, they were pushed through at the report stage, yet now we have to push them through today because last week's debate on vegetation management went on and on, with Labor Party speakers repeating exactly the same thing over and over again. They repeated exactly what they had been told to parrot as per the printed speeches they had in the House. Most of them would not have even seen places where vegetation clearing will affect the property owners concerned.

I return to the bill that has resulted from Mr MacSporran's inquisition into concerns, as was reported in this House, about the local government elections of 2016. There was no corruption found in that inquiry by Mr MacSporran into the 2016 elections. It was yet another inquiry, and the Gold Coast city featured prominently in the matter. As per usual, they always run down to the poor old Gold Coast city for an inquiry. I think this is the third one that I have been witness to and, again, no corruption was found. However, Mr MacSporran said there is a perception out there that there might be corruption.

I can assure members in this House that the perception of corruption at the moment in the courts and the media—and I will not be talking about individual cases—is all about corrupt activity. It was corrupt when Gordon Nuttall was working here for the Labor Party—and Russ Hinze and George Herscu—and it is corrupt now. We did not need this Belcarra legislation to entrap those people who behaved badly in local government. What we do need is an efficient and effective investigative group

to actually catch them and bring them to justice, as is currently happening. That corrupt conduct that was happening is being dealt with at this moment. We do not need this bill, which is basically another political ploy by the Labor Party to attack the group that support, in the main, the LNP because of our philosophies—and some of them are my good friends.

Basically this legislation says to me—and I see the member for Maryborough laughing. He does not have any friends. The bottom line is that he should not be laughing at anything. The donations made by my good friends, who have donated to the LNP and to my mayoralty campaigns in the past, are all out there and have been accounted for. The fact is they donated to the Labor Party as well. I can name them if you want, Mr Deputy Speaker, but I will not for the sake of brevity. The fact is they were major donors to the Labor Party. What this legislation and the Labor Party are doing is saying they were corrupt; they were only donating to the Labor Party to get special favours. That is what this legislation says. That is what the Labor Party is saying here in this House today: developers are corrupt. That is not the case. The corruption that we are seeing, that has been found and that is being dealt with in the courts now is corrupt activity. It is not through political donations; it is for matters being kept quiet.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr McArdle): Member, please just be careful of the sub judice rule.

Mr STEVENS: I know you are a lawyer, Mr Deputy Speaker, but I am being very careful.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Just be careful, thank you.

Mr STEVENS: I have not mentioned anyone in particular or any case in particular or anything whatsoever. In general, it is well known that there have been alleged corrupt practices and they are being addressed by the courts at this time. Those practices would be picked up anyway without this legislation. This is purely a political ploy.

'The Fox', the good Terry Mackenroth, would be proud of this legislation. He had very similar legislation brought into the House in terms of local government members not being able to stand for state parliament for the very purpose that this side of the House has a lot of its members gleaned from local government. Obviously they are business community members in local government and they step from there to our side of politics. There are one or two over there. Most of the ones on the other side of the House come through the union movement or ministerial offices and have no real experience in terms of local government matters. What Terry did for political advantage was try to ban those people from running for state parliament. The bills before the House today are clearly aimed at the Brisbane City Council, but an add-on—not by Mr MacSporran but by the Palaszczuk Labor government—is the state government.

To be honest, this legislation would not have been before the House while Jim Soorley was the Labor Lord Mayor collecting bucketloads of money from developers. I did not hear cries of corrupt activity or perceptions of wrongdoing when Jim Soorley was Lord Mayor collecting millions of dollars from the development community around Brisbane for the Labor campaign, so there is a track record. Unfortunately for them, Labor has not been in power in Brisbane City Council for a long, long time.

This legislation quite clearly is aimed at hobbling the LNP and its major supporters who have helped the LNP in local government elections. It is wrong, wrong, wrong to say that just because developers want to donate to a particular party with a particular philosophy they are doing so for a corrupt purpose or to gain favour. This could be easily solved. If the government had come in here and said, 'Any councillor who receives a developer's donation cannot vote on any of the developer's applications before a council,' that would have been the answer to the problem and it would have been finished, full stop. You could not argue with that.

The LNP has always supported openness and accountability. I have developer friends who have been happy to donate to me and my campaign because of my philosophy on go-forward communities. I was a pro-developer councillor, and that was well known. I am not ashamed of any of those people. There was no corrupt activity. I could give you many instances where I was happy to say no to any proposed development that was not in the interests of our community—which we were there to serve—and I did. I have a classic example, but I cannot tell you about that in 10 minutes. It is a bit too short.

The inquiry that we had was an absolute farce in terms of Mr MacSporran telling us that it was all about perception. It did not find any corruption. Basically, the only thing it found was the matter of a perjury case that is now before the courts. We cannot talk about that, but I did raise this matter in the House. It is on the parliamentary record, so people can just check my speeches—they are really good reading—and see what brought the matter of the mayoral campaign on the Gold Coast to the attention of the CCC. That person is now dealing with the CCC.

During the inquiry the department of local government officers could not tell us what constituted a developer. This legislation is so wishy-washy and oblique that it has no support from departmental officers. They said, 'Just go and ask the ECQ what a developer is.' I saw one wandering around the streets the other day. He had feathers on! They had no clue whatsoever how this matter was going to be determined. They were asked, 'Are consultants developers?' They said, 'No, they are not developers, but go and ask the ECQ.' This legislation is a sham. It is an embarrassment to the government. It was brought in for one reason only: to try to stop support from one particular section of the community that knows the LNP does a better job for the growth and development of Queensland than the Labor Party can ever do. They are hobbling one side of politics, and I will not even speak about union donations. Hopefully with a new government we will have a look at this in a different light.

(Time expired)

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning) (3.13 pm): I rise to support the bills before the House today. I am also very pleased to follow the member for Mermaid Beach in this debate.

A government member: Why?

Mr DICK: I am pleased to follow him because this is the same member who, when he was an assistant minister in the Newman government, had a material interest in the Skyrail development on the Gold Coast and sought to advocate for that project when he was an assistant minister in a Queensland state government. Can I begin my contribution—

Mr STEVENS: I rise to a point of order. I find those comments offensive and I ask the member to withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr McArdle): Minister, the member has found your comments offensive; will you please withdraw them?

Mr DICK: I withdraw. After 10 minutes of unremitting lecture on the ethical nature of government from the member for Mermaid Beach, I can assure the people of Queensland that members on this side of the House will not be lectured to on integrity and ethical standards by the member for Mermaid Beach. There is no more essential or fragile component of our political process than the trust of the public in that system. Members of the Queensland community have an expectation that those they elect to represent them will govern solely in their interest. There is nothing more corrosive of that trust than the taint of corruption. Democracy is founded on government by, for and of the people. Queenslanders, quite rightly, are very intolerant of those who misuse the office with which they have been entrusted for personal gain.

A world where the democratic project is in retreat in a number of countries, polls reflecting falling levels of public confidence in our system of government—even in our own country—should be a great cause of concern. Those of us who hold public office must answer to the highest standards of probity and integrity. It is not just about accountability, but the weight that is attached to the privilege of public service. Despite the cynicism that is so often associated with it, public life is driven by a moral imperative. Unfortunately, those members of the LNP opposite continue to chug along in the ethical slow lane. They still cling, as we have seen in the press today, to the hope of a return to the days when a lazy \$10,000 could be dropped into an MP's account with no questions asked. There is no ideal to which they are more committed, no purpose about which they are more passionate, no cause for which they will fight harder, than what they regard as the central tenet of politics as they see it: the politician's right to secrecy.

What a shabby contrast the LNP make to the Palaszczuk government. It was this government under this Premier who reduced the level at which political donations must be declared from the \$12,500 limit instituted by Campbell Newman back to \$1,000. It was this government under this Premier who introduced the real-time declarations of donations made to political parties and their candidates. It was this government under this Premier who banned political donations from property developers. That is what genuine accountability looks like: laws that make a difference; laws that work to restore public confidence in the process; laws like the ones we are debating today, which yet again carry the signature of the party with a history of defending the public interest and fighting for the public good—the Australian Labor Party.

Corruption is to be deplored wherever it exists, but its impact is most sharply felt in those communities most reliant on the delivery of government services. I have the very great privilege of representing the people of Woodridge in this House. Woodridge is home to a vibrant and diverse community and it is among the most multicultural in the country. It also suffers more than its fair share

of social and economic disadvantage, and I am passionate about ensuring that the public money expended on behalf of the people of my electorate goes to delivering the services they deserve. Corruption and the misuse of public money is more than just a criminal failure of character: it is a profound betrayal of public trust because it depletes the government's capacity to fairly deliver the services the public depends upon.

I conclude my contribution by commending the minister for bringing these bills to the House. These bills continue a long tradition of Labor governments in this state that deliver reform, which in turn delivers real improvements to our political process and genuine accountability for those who serve in it.

 **Mr O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (3.19 pm): I am proud to have been a member of the committee that looked into both of these pieces of legislation. I thank the committee staff, especially Trudy, and my fellow committee members. In response to the comments by the Minister for State Development I highlight our deputy chair, who brought a great deal of local government experience as the first, last and, I think therefore, best mayor of the Albert shire.

The Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill stems from the report of the independent Councillor Complaints Review Panel. The panel should be acknowledged for its role in guiding these reforms. The LNP's position is to not oppose the bill. It is clear that, after an independent review, an overhaul of the existing legislative and policy framework applicable to councillor complaints is required.

Two sensible amendments were proposed by the committee. The first was that the Councillor Conduct Tribunal must include at least two members in the process of conducting a hearing to determine whether a councillor has engaged in misconduct. This is important to give the public confidence in the deliberations of and decisions made by the CCT. For this to be achieved there needs to be a panel when there is a hearing about a councillor's conduct. The second proposed amendment was that the Local Government Remuneration Commission must also be constituted by at least two commissioners when making decisions on the establishment of the categories of councils, which category each council belongs to and the pay of each councillor in that category.

All members of this House have looked on with disappointment at some of the recent events concerning the conduct of some within local government. Although they are certainly in the minority, they have created a situation whereby the community rightfully feels concerned about those responsible for their roads, rates and rubbish.

The bill provides transitional arrangements for the commencement of the new councillor complaints system. Rather than using heavy-handed tactics, we will stress the importance of the Labor government working in close cooperation with local councils and the LGAQ to ensure the successful rollout and implementation of the new framework.

We support the proposed amendments and recognise the need for changes to the legislative and policy framework for councillor complaints to achieve the objective of a simpler, more streamlined system for investigating these issues. In particular, it will address the difficult role CEOs have when they receive a complaint against one of their own councillors. It also allows a councillor who experiences bullying or harassment by another councillor to complain to the Independent Assessor. Politics can be tough and there are often spurious complaints raised, especially when personalities are involved. It is a positive step, though, to allow genuine concerns to be raised by councillors.

The LNP has a lot of respect for councillors. Broadly, so do communities. It is important for us to deal with any conduct issues that may diminish the level of trust people have in them. This bill proposes amendments to primarily the Local Government Act 2009 to provide a simpler, more streamlined system for making, investigating and determining complaints about councillor conduct. The IA will investigate and deal with any allegations of inappropriate conduct as well as corruption matters referred to it by the CCC. It will provide advice, training and information to councillors and staff about dealing with allegations, prosecute conduct offences and investigate other matters referred to it by the minister.

An important transparency measure is the annual report prepared by the Office of the Independent Assessor describing the complaints made or referred, any investigations that have been conducted, complaints that have been dismissed, any decisions made, referrals made to the CCC and decisions made by the CCT. We will be monitoring the progress of this new system as it will likely require further refinement once it is introduced to gauge its effectiveness. We support the establishment of the position of the Independent Assessor and the office to investigate all complaints and information about councillor conduct. We stress the importance of ensuring that appointments to these positions

are based on merit and that positions go to those who are well qualified and have an understanding of local government transparency.

There is no prescribed time within which a complaint must be dealt with. Especially when media coverage of the fact that a complaint has been made is exactly what a complainant is looking for—often they do not have any regard for the outcome; they just want to put a cloud over their target—having an open investigation time frame could exacerbate issues. I do note that the assessor can dismiss a frivolous or vexatious complaint. I certainly hope they keep this ability in mind.

I turn to the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The opposition will be opposing the prohibited donation provisions at a state level but supporting the CCC's recommendations for local government electoral reform. I wholeheartedly support the amendments we have foreshadowed to extend this concept to union donations for local and state government elections. The committee heard the Queensland Law Society raise concerns about the frankly vague definitions around a property developer and, in particular, the definition of 'regular'. Does this simply mean more than once? I do not believe that is a fair or reasonable way to define this.

The laws are designed to deal with the perception of corruption rather than actual corruption. To extend these laws to the state level and make them retrospective is a blatant misuse of power, particularly given the concerns raised by the Electoral Commission about how long it would take to develop guidelines for these laws—some three to six months.

Elections cost money. Donating to someone's campaign is taking part in the political process. The ability to be involved in that discourse is a fundamental part of democracy. Is it right for a government to preclude a certain segment of society from doing that—especially when we are talking about the state level, which has next to no involvement with the approval of development applications?

Having an evidence base to guide the formulation of legislation is a pretty simple concept. We saw quite clearly from the Crime and Corruption Commission, in both its submission and its appearance at a committee hearing, that there has been no inquiry of any sort into the requirement for these laws at a state level. The CCC's report found little evidence of donations leading to special treatment for property developers. In its submission the CCC noted its recommendations did not involve any detailed, specific consideration of corruption risk in state elections and state decision-making. Furthermore, the Belcarra investigation was conducted before real-time disclosure came into effect. This was significant to the integrity and accountability of elections. That should surely provide the transparency we need in our electoral system without this overreach by the government.

 **Ms BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (3.26 pm): I rise to speak in support of the bills and the minister's associated foreshadowed amendments. Our democracy is a healthy one, I believe in part due to the devolution of power from a group of people into a set of rules. Our democracy thrives when people hold faith in the system, when people can confidently and actively participate in a robust process based on the principles of fairness. I am proud of these bills and the objectives they seek to achieve through a multifaceted approach to develop a streamlined, simpler system for the making of a complaint, investigating said complaint and determining an outcome. They will reform the political donations system, reinforce integrity, minimise corruption risk in relation to political donations from property developers, improve transparency and accountability in state and local government, provide for the ability to have an automatic suspension of councillors, and expand automatic disqualification offences for the minister's use if it is in the public interest.

I was four years old when, off the back of media reports, then acting premier Bill Gunn ordered a commission of inquiry into possible police corruption, headed up by Tony Fitzgerald, commonly known as the Fitzgerald inquiry. Midway through the investigation the terms of reference were broadened and Fitzgerald was also able to investigate evidence of political corruption. After more than 300 witnesses, more than 200 sitting days and nationwide attention, this inquiry lasted longer than 17 times the original intention. The outcomes drove a complete overhaul of the integrity and accountability mechanisms found in public office throughout Queensland. Born of this process was the Criminal Justice Commission, now the Crime and Corruption Commission. It makes me immensely proud that, almost 30 years on, this critical body, derived from the Fitzgerald report tabled here in this place, has gone on to self-initiate a body of work into local government—Operation Belcarra—that has flung open the doors to local governments, following on from the most recent council elections.

I am confident that these bills will create an environment that is fairer, more effective and more efficient. It is clear that we need a system that is more responsive and more accountable. These

proposals enact substantial changes to the way complaints are processed and investigated and how alleged infractions are addressed. In terms of local government, the standards of conduct—the expectations—are set out in the act and range from local government principles to councillor responsibilities, councillor obligations, and councillor conduct and performance. There are currently three categories of conduct that may result in disciplinary action for councillors: inappropriate conduct, misconduct and corrupt conduct. These reforms propose to introduce a fourth category of conduct—unsuitable meeting conduct—and also amend the definitions of ‘inappropriate conduct’ and ‘misconduct’.

The minister will establish a code of conduct outlining the standards of behaviour for councillors performing their functions and include anything the minister considers necessary for, or incidental to, the standards of behaviour. Declarations of councillors will be required before assuming office. Any person may lodge a complaint about councillor conduct to the council, the department or the Crime and Corruption Commission. The legislation does not prescribe a particular format for complaints or require the provision of supporting evidence. Complaints can be made anonymously.

Importantly, this bill moves to establish an Independent Assessor for a term of five years. Some of the functions of the assessor include investigating and dealing with alleged inappropriate conduct, misconduct and corrupt conduct matters referred by the CCC; providing advice, training and information for councillors, council employees and others about dealing with alleged inappropriate conduct, misconduct or corrupt conduct; and prosecuting conduct offences. The assessor will independently exercise their powers to conduct an investigation or determine the priority given to those investigations. Further, this bill establishes the Office of the Independent Assessor to assist the assessor to perform their functions.

An independent councillor complaints tribunal will be established as a body that has powers to conduct hearings about whether a councillor has engaged in misconduct; to investigate, at the request of a council, the suspected inappropriate conduct of a councillor and make recommendations about dealing with that conduct; and to perform other functions under the act. The Local Government Remuneration Commission will be established for a term of four years. The functions of the independent commission are to establish categories for councils and decide where each council fits and decide the maximum amount of remuneration payable. The chief executive must make model procedures in councils for the conduct of council meetings, including how the chairperson may deal with unsuitable meeting conduct and how suspected inappropriate conduct of a councillor referred to the council by the assessor must be dealt with at a council meeting.

Councils will be required to adopt an investigations policy about how they deal with suspected inappropriate conduct of a councillor referred to the council by the assessor. The fourth new category of conduct, unsuitable meeting conduct, is defined as a councillor’s conduct during a meeting that contravenes a behavioural standard in the code of conduct. Details regarding unsuitable meeting conduct must be recorded into the meeting minutes. Orders may be made of reprimand, requiring the councillor to leave the meeting or removing a councillor.

As I mentioned earlier, these reforms amend the definition of ‘inappropriate conduct’. Inappropriate conduct is redefined as a councillor’s conduct that contravenes the standard of behaviour in the code of conduct or a policy procedure or resolution of that council. Conduct that is unsuitable meeting conduct, misconduct or corrupt conduct does not fall within the definition of ‘inappropriate conduct’. In addition, there is amendment to redefine what actions constitute misconduct. These reforms introduce limited appeal processes in misconduct matters regarding the conduct of councillors, including mayors. This process is not about the decisions of councils such as planning decisions that may be reviewed under other legislation or the activity of council employees. When it comes to making a complaint, a person may make a complaint about a councillor’s conduct to the assessor orally or in written form and complaints may be made anonymously. A councillor and CEO must notify the assessor if they become aware of information indicating a councillor may have engaged in inappropriate conduct or misconduct. This bill provides that councils must keep an up-to-date councillor conduct register.

Lastly, and essentially, is the adoption of the implementation of recommendation 20 of the Belcarra report making it unlawful for a prohibited donor, a property developer or industry representative organisation to make a political donation or solicit other persons to make a donation to candidates, groups of candidates, third parties, political parties and councillors. The Belcarra report noted that a keen concern regarding political donations is that they increase the risk of corruption and are seen as being motivated by a desire to purchase influence in government decision-making. Modelled off the

New South Wales legislation, the Palaszczuk government is extending the ban to the state jurisdiction—an important step for the purposes of perceived conflict as the state government has an important role to play in Queensland's planning framework. Any person can make application to the ECQ to seek a determination for a person or an entity. Donations received on or after 12 October 2017 from a prohibited donor would need to be paid back to the person who made it within 30 days of implementation. These bills provide for good, much needed reforms in the local government space—reforms that create an accountable, responsive system, one that is fair, efficient and effective; moreover, a system that can rebuild and restore the faith of the Queensland public. I commend these bills to the House.

 **Mr PURDIE** (Ninderry—LNP) (3.34 pm): I rise to make a contribution on the Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 and the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. I support the sensible amendments put forward by the member for Toowoomba South and I support the submission put forward by the member for Warrego. I agree with my colleagues particularly relating to recommendation 20 of the Crime and Corruption Commission Belcarra report as it relates to property developer donation bans and the government overreach by extending it to include state government elections.

In a written submission to the Economics and Governance Committee during our examination of this legislation, the Chairman of the CCC, Mr Alan MacSporran QC, stated—

The Belcarra Report is the result of an exhaustive consideration of evidence gathered by the CCC's Operation Belcarra Inquiry concerning particular local government elections ...

He goes on to say that the current reforms as they related to recommendation 20 depart significantly from the intended function of that recommendation.

The government significantly departed from the CCC's recommendation for the purpose of blatant political manoeuvring to give itself an unfair advantage at the then imminent and pending state government election. This is evident by the bill being introduced on 12 October 2017 and then flagging that the legislation would be retrospective to that date. Even the CCC noted that on this date there was no local government election on the horizon. In fact, the next local government elections are not planned until March 2020, but history shows a state government election was called 17 days later. I think it is clear for all to see that this legislation was hastily written and introduced on 12 October for the sole purpose of assisting the Labor government at the imminent state election.

During the recent committee examination of this legislation a number of issues were identified, particularly information provided to the committee from CCC Chairman, Mr MacSporran QC. Further to what we heard earlier from the member for Toowoomba South and as I touched on a second ago, in Mr MacSporran's submission to the committee he also raised serious concerns relating to the constitutional validity of this legislation being extended to the state and cited High Court precedence, stating that the Belcarra investigation's terms of reference did not include state elections. Mr MacSporran went on to say—

... the Belcarra Report recommendations did not involve any detailed specific consideration of corruption risks in state elections and decision-making. Accordingly, the reforms depart from the scope of the Belcarra Report recommendations ...

He went on to say—

... the CCC did not contemplate that the proposed reforms would be introduced without preliminary review to identify and mitigate corruption risks in state elections and decision-making. A proper public consultation process is highly desirable.

The High Court has said—and the law is—that there needs to be an evidence based response which is proportional to the identified threat.

I submit that there has been no threat identified at the state level that relates to property developer donations.

Another issue that became clear during the committee process that also gives weight to the argument that this legislation was hastily written and introduced into parliament before the then imminent state election is that the Queensland Law Society, represented by Mr Bill Potts, was struggling to understand the definition of a property developer and the inclusion of the word 'regular'. Mr Potts said—

... what indeed is a property developer? For example, if I have a block of land, which I break into three pieces—subdivide effectively—and start building houses, which I then sell, I am told that I may be, under the bill, a regular applicant, with 'regular' holding its ordinary meaning of effectively more than once.

Like many Queenslanders, I have bought, renovated and sold a number of properties. Am I now banned from contributing to my own campaign, or buying a table at a political function? Even the Queensland Electoral Commission admitted that it has no guidelines to help interpret and enforce this legislation. The Property Council of Australia, the peak body representing the Queensland property industry, which employs 331,400 Queenslanders—Queensland's largest non-government employer—raised concerns about its industry being unfairly targeted and the subsequent reputational damage. The property industry pays \$11.2 billion in taxes, which is 53.7 per cent of all Queensland taxes, but now a lot of people who work in or who are associated with this industry can no longer have equal involvement in the state political arena.

Many industries stand to benefit from state government decisions, not just the property and development industry—mining, aged care, health, energy and, importantly, the unions. The CFMEU has a long history of operating outside the law. Currently, a number of its officials are before the court. The High Court has said that there needs to be an evidence based response that is proportional to the identified threat. I suggest that the CFMEU is the only group that would hold up in the High Court as a reason to ban state government donations. A headline on the *Courier-Mail* website right now, after doing exclusive polling on this issue, is that the legislation should be withdrawn immediately.

Mr Madden: You read the *Courier-Mail*?

Mr PURDIE: I just did at lunchtime. I think the government needs to stop listening to its masters at the CFMEU and start listening to the people of Queensland.

 **Ms RICHARDS** (Redlands—ALP) (3.41 pm): I rise proudly in this House to speak in this cognate debate to the Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 and the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018, which were introduced into the Legislative Assembly and referred to the Economics and Governance Committee. It was an honour to be appointed to the Economics and Governance Committee, which has considered this legislation. We know how important the workings of the parliamentary committees are in ensuring that legislation is taken to the people of Queensland and to aid in that democratic process.

We have heard from the other side some really interesting facts. The member for Mermaid Beach talked about the need for the CCC to have more troops on the ground. I remind the other side that they sacked 30 people within the CCC.

Government members: Shame!

Ms RICHARDS: Shame! In recent years, we have seen what some would say are the darkest days in the history of local government—a never-ending procession of newspaper headlines highlighting the significant issues that exist within local government authorities. I also note that the issues are caused generally by the minority and that, by and large, we have some excellent councillors and council staff in Queensland who deliver an exemplary service. We have seen bad behaviour from that minority within councils—threats, poor governance, alleged bribery and corruption—culminating in what can only be described as a system that is broken and a system in which the community has lost faith. These systemic issues impact all levels of government. They reflect on us all as leaders in our communities. These issues have touched every part of this great state—from the Far North in Cairns to the Gold Coast in the south, out to Ipswich in the west and then some more. That speaks absolutely to the need for the state government, and in particular the Minister for Local Government, to have the necessary powers to ensure that the public's best interests are appropriately served by its elected representatives in local government.

In 2012, under the LNP government and the stewardship of the then local government minister, David Crisafulli, yet again we saw another example of legislation being watered down, diminished. That has most certainly been a contributing factor to some of the issues that we see making the headlines today. At the heart of these reforms is the important value of integrity. Integrity underpins these reforms. These reforms that are before the House deliver greater transparency, accountability and effectiveness in our local government and its elected representatives. These reforms will provide our communities with the confidence that they rightly deserve to have in their system of government and their elected representatives. There will be a streamlined system for making, investigating and determining complaints about councillors in Queensland. That will provide people with confidence in knowing that vital decisions are made about how their communities grow and develop and that they are not driven by people seeking favour as a result of political donations. During the 2016 local government elections,

issues relating to our system of governance were brought to the fore. Over the past two years, these issues have been ongoing. The mayor of the Redland City Council said to me that these are really some of the darkest days in local government.

The bill delivers on the government's commitment to introduce the lapsed 2017 legislation to establish the new Independent Assessor to deal with councillor complaints more effectively. This legislation will see Queensland's councillors subject to a compulsory code of conduct. The head of the Queensland Electoral Commission at the time the lapsed legislation was introduced, Walter van der Merwe, told the Crime and Corruption Commission hearing into the 2016 local government elections that he had received significantly more complaints during the 2016 election than he had done in previous local government elections. It is interesting for me to note that 40 per cent of the submissions that were made to the lapsed inquiry undertaken by the then Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee came from the Redland City local government jurisdiction.

This bill is important because it will deliver a strengthened and improved councillor complaints process that ensures the integrity of the system whilst providing our communities with confidence in both the process and the people elected to represent them. The bill absolutely delivers on the government's agenda of ensuring transparency and accountability. That is important to Queenslanders. It is what the people want. It is an agenda that the people of Queensland so clearly endorsed in 2015 with the election of the Palaszczuk government, which ran on an agenda that was in stark contrast to that of the dark days of the Newman era.

In the Redlands, I have received feedback from my community that suggests that they have lost faith in the local government system. They have seen repeat offenders—frequent flyers, some might say—who continue to bring the important role played by local councillors into disrepute. Members need only to see the councillor complaints register from my region to see what I am talking about. That area has experienced a gamut of issues—constituents threatened, disruption of the council meetings and alleged inappropriate conduct. Questions have been raised over the protocols followed in the decision-making process. That demonstrates that the system is broken. That the system is broken is further highlighted in the report titled *Councillor complaints review: a fair, effective and efficient framework* prepared by a panel of which Dr David Solomon, a former integrity commissioner, was a member. That independent panel was established in April 2016. The review was initiated in response to concerns raised by the LGAQ and the LGMAQ in regard to the effectiveness of the existing councillor complaints framework.

The report found that the legislative and policy framework currently in place for dealing with councillor complaints was overly confusing and difficult to navigate. The report made 60 recommendations, of which 50 have been given effect to in principle. A key component of this bill is the establishment of the Independent Assessor and an Office of the Independent Assessor. The Independent Assessor will be responsible for investigating all complaints and relevant information about councillor conduct before deciding how complaints should be dealt with. Importantly, local government CEOs will no longer be placed in the difficult position of undertaking preliminary assessments of complaints about councillors. The Office of the Independent Assessor will provide independence from local government, creating a new front door that will deliver for our communities greater confidence in the integrity of complaints management.

During the committee's public hearings we heard from many stakeholders. The CCC was generally supportive of the bill's proposed model for dealing with councillor complaints, including the establishment of the Independent Assessor. At the hearing Kelvin Chin Fat, who represented the Moreton Bay Regional Council, stated—

You will see from our submission that we are broadly in support of the bill, particularly the role of the Independent Assessor.

The proposal in the bill to deliver a uniform compulsory code of conduct for councillors to be approved by regulation will provide a consistent level of behaviour of councillors across our state. That gives certainty to constituents on what they should expect from their elected representatives. It is another excellent mechanism that drives integrity and provides clarity on what is acceptable behaviour and what is not. The code of conduct, along with the definitions of 'inappropriate conduct' and 'misconduct' in the bill, provide consistent and clear standards of behaviour for all councillors. They make crystal clear the conduct that our communities expect from their local elected representatives.

We know that there are times when complaints are frivolous and vexatious in nature and that the current system does not deal with that effectively. The reforms contained in this bill provide for increased

penalties that will apply to discourage frivolous and other improper complaints. They provide a genuine filter for both the councils and the community. The bill also strengthens offences and, notably, provides new offences to provide protection from reprisals for local government employees and councillors who make complaints about a councillor's conduct and ensures that the confidentiality of investigations is maintained.

The Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill is the first step in implementing the recommendations from the Belcarra report. What is important about this legislation is that it holds to account not only candidates in local government elections but also candidates in state government elections. We are not a government that says do as I say but not as I do. We know that we must hold ourselves accountable to the very same set of integrity standards that we expect our local government candidates to adhere to when it comes to banning property developer donations.

During the public inquiry process it must be noted that the Queensland executive director of the Property Council of Australia advised that their policy was not to donate to political parties and candidates and that it was for the very same reasons identified by the CCC as to the issues that arise when property developers donate to political parties and candidates. In fact, he went further to suggest that many of the members had the same policy to not donate to political parties.

It is important to note that the New South Wales government has successfully implemented the same legislation which provides us with an enormous advantage in terms of modelling policy and procedures and for lessons learnt. We have heard from the other side that there is confusion. What we know is that there is absolutely a very solid foundation for us to take this legislation forward in its implementation.

In closing, I remind those on the other side of the House about integrity standards and suggest that they tell Malcolm Turnbull that it is unacceptable to waste taxpayers' money on a High Court challenge to avoid donation disclosure. It is just not on. This is great Labor policy that ensures we continue to deliver transparency, accountability and integrity in all of our systems of government that provides confidence to all Queenslanders in their elected representatives. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (3.51 pm): I rise to speak on the Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. These bills aim to make a simpler system to deal with complaints about the conduct of councillors, about donations and about transparency and accountability. It is disappointing that the recent events involving the conduct of a few councillors has contributed to a situation which has eroded Queenslanders' confidence in their local representatives and councils.

I doubt there is a member in this House who has not dealt with council complaints. Because local government is at the coalface of the delivery of services it means it also unfortunately attracts much criticism. This is why councillor conduct has to be beyond reproach. The key components of the complaints bill involves establishing an office to investigate complaints with sufficient powers to undertake investigations; strengthening offences; making a uniform code of conduct; reallocating functions of current tribunals and panels; establishing a new remuneration commission; and allowing certain review rights.

As a former councillor and deputy mayor I understand the role councils have in providing essential services to communities across the state. They are naturally close to the eye of the action and often the first point of call. Many LNP members have cut their teeth in local government politics. We value this third tier of government. We support the changes regarding councillor complaints, which will streamline the system. This bill will also help with the potentially conflicted role of chief executive officers in assessing complaints against their own councillors.

How we deal with complaints is at the heart of maintaining confidence in local government and its processes. The public needs to trust that decisions are made without prejudice and that their concerns are treated seriously. Community outrage is justifiable when it thinks it is being conned. This government is no friend of free speech. Last year the Gympie Regional Council proposed an outrageous policy to have ratepayers fund legal action for councillors and council staff against community groups

and ratepayers. The policy smacked of overreach and Big Brother tactics designed to silence the majority of citizens.

When I tried to find out if the policy was a state government directive, the minister would not clarify whether the Gympie Regional Council was directed to impose the policy. In fact, responses were more about sidestepping responsibility. The minister first said that it was a directive of the Queensland Ombudsman, yet the Ombudsman does not have the power to direct councils. We were then told the Ombudsman requested that advice be provided about the need for a specific policy. The Ombudsman's report actually says that he wrote to inquire whether the department would provide advice. It did not say he requested that advice be given to councils.

Mr Power: Is this relevant to the bill?

Mr PERRETT: It certainly is relevant. I will take that interjection. This goes to the heart of transparency and accountability and the process and is a real-life example of the problems that we encounter in local government. I will continue. As I said, how we deal with complaints is at the heart of maintaining confidence in local government. The minister also said that a Western Australian government model policy was a guide to those councils considering adopting a policy. As I understand, considering adopting a policy does not impose an obligation to adopt one. In fact, the Western Australian model was heavily rewritten to the effect of providing the mayor and CEO with significant powers and oversight.

Most disturbingly, the minister said that if constituents feel that the council's policy for the provision of legal assistance is being used inappropriately they may wish to lodge a formal written complaint directly to the council's CEO. As the new policy would have granted the CEO or mayor power to refuse or grant an application, this advice effectively gave the CEO the power to adjudicate his own decision. If the government believed the policy was good for democracy it should have directed specific point-by-point guidelines instead of relying on another jurisdiction.

This policy was about dealing with councillor complaints and the government's response gave no confidence in transparency, good governance and robust public discourse. It gave tacit approval to undermining free speech. It gave tacit approval to a policy that could undermine trust in local government and potentially restrict public involvement, interest and comment on their local government and elected representatives.

I will now go to the Belcarra bill, which one would think is simply about the government's objections to donations from property developers, a group which the Labor Party finds so reprehensible that it cannot make political donations. The double standard is staggering when one considers that the Labor Party eagerly puts its hand out to accept millions in donations from unions, even when the leaders of these unions are regularly before the courts for criminal, threatening and intimidating behaviour. These militant union donors have shredded incriminating documents and hidden them in horse floats.

This bill is motivated by blatant politics. Back channels have shown that policy demands and board recommendations are made under pressure from union donors. We have seen how union donors dictate cabinet positions and portfolios, gain access to public sector workers, secure protections against militant unions, are given veto rights against independent schools and secure changes so that they can unfairly compete against mum-and-dad electrical contractors. The test is whether the Premier will keep a 2015 promise and follow the advice of the CCC chair to undertake an inquiry into political donations before introducing bans at a state level.

The bills' objectives are to reinforce integrity and minimise corruption risk in relation to political donations from property developers; strengthen the legislative requirements regulating how councillors must deal with material personal interests and real or perceived conflicts of interest; and improve transparency and accountability in state and local government. Transparency and accountability and calling out mismanagement ensures confidence in local governments.

There is a growing concern in Gympie with the level of confidence in the transparency and accountability in the management of the revitalisation of the Mary Valley Rattler. The mayor has objected to calls for an audit and probity checks on the spending of Queensland taxpayers' money on the project. The project's costs have ballooned from an initial \$7.25 million in 2014 to \$10.8 million last year and now a staggering \$17.5 million. Completion dates keep changing from November last year to Easter and now to June. There is a disturbing lack of transparency and accountability in the project's history. When it was proposed in 2014 it was at a cost of \$7.25 million. There were no suggestions that the costs could blow out to almost \$20 million or that ratepayers would be slugged a levy.

The state government helped prepare the business case which had to be reworked two years ago. While it was being reworked, ratepayers were slugged with a compulsory \$65 levy before the Gympie Regional Council had even secured any additional state government funding. It was even reported that councillors were not shown the business case when they committed to the levy. Then, even after state government helped prepare a new business case, funding was still knocked back under the Building our Regions program with sources telling me that the project did not stack up.

As the explanatory notes state, the Belcarra bill is about transparency and accountability in state and local government. In this case, there is very little transparency. Last year, the Deputy Premier committed \$4.7 million of taxpayers' money to a \$10.8 million project that did not have a viable business case. It was provided with only a three-day turnaround from application under the Works for Queensland program. The commitment was clearly a crass and blatant exercise in using taxpayers' dollars to manufacture a ribbon-cutting exercise scheduled for last November. There are serious doubts about whether the project has met the funding requirements under the Works for Queensland guidelines and whether the government has been misled. I have asked the minister a number of questions about this project and whether an audit and probity checks will be made. It needs rigorous oversight to ensure that any mismanagement is identified.

Council management, behaviour and processes need to be transparent and accountable so that the community has faith in their valuable and critical role in delivering essential services to the communities they serve. I support the opposition's amendments.

 **Mr SAUNDERS** (Maryborough—ALP) (4.00 pm): I rise to speak on the bills before the House. I take this opportunity to congratulate the new mayor of the Fraser Coast, George Seymour. What a difference it is going to make to have a man of the quality and calibre of George Seymour as mayor of the Fraser Coast. The election result from two Saturdays ago was George Seymour, daylight, daylight and then the next candidate. The people of the Fraser Coast have voted to put the Fraser Coast back on the map. They have voted to make sure that we have seen the last of the disgraceful episode of the past two years. As I said, I congratulate George. Let us hope that, with all of that out of the road, we can proceed with a united council that puts first the residents and ratepayers of the Fraser Coast, not its own personal agendas.

I have been listening to the debate, which has covered donations and property developers. I have no problem with property developers. They are a part of the system. However, I do have a problem when they start influencing the decisions of councils. When we look at the matters of interest that are raised during council elections, it is eye-opening to see, for example, what property developers have donated to various mayors and councillors. It is time that we had a level playing field. Developments should be passed on their merit, rather than through the process of who the developers know.

The opposition will say that councillors can step aside and not vote on or talk about a development. Don't they think the councillors will have discussions in the tearoom or on the telephone? Don't they think they will have discussions down at the pub while having a beer? Don't they think those discussions go on? From the Fraser Coast experience, we know that bullying goes on in councils around this state. I can tell the House now that wafts are starting to head towards William Street from various councils where councillors are being bullied by mayors, CEOs and developers who talk to those mayors and CEOs. We have not yet heard the end of this story.

I commend the minister, who has done a marvellous job with this legislation and also with what happened on the Fraser Coast. I can speak with authority on this. Had these powers been in place when we started to have trouble on the Fraser Coast, it would not have taken so long for the mayor to be dismissed under the act. It could have been done quicker, which would have returned the confidence of business and of the ratepayers of the Fraser Coast. That in itself says to me that this legislation is a must. The minister has stood firm and he has stood tall, in typical Labor fashion, and he has backed this legislation through the House. On the Fraser Coast a lot of people are very grateful that the minister and member for Sandgate is standing up for ratepayers across Queensland.

The complaints process worried me, because with the Fraser Coast council we saw complaints sit on desks for months and months. We had councillors going through the mail of other councillors—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr McArdle): Order! Member for Maryborough, I understand that this may be in part sub judice, in regard to the former mayor. I caution you about the comments that you make in those circumstances.

Mr SAUNDERS: Mr Deputy Speaker, I have not mentioned the former mayor. I am talking about the conduct of councillors on the Fraser Coast, specifically from July last year when a councillor went through another councillor's mail, which was in a private tray. It took 12 months to get a decision through the tribunal about that councillor's behaviour. That was outrageous.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member, you have raised the issue in relation to the former mayor of the Fraser Coast. I caution you to please be careful as it may well breach the sub judice rule if that is raised again.

Mr SAUNDERS: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I will take your guidance on that. When we see instances such as that, the voters lose faith in the process and they lose faith in their local council. We have to remember that councils are no longer just about roads, rates and rubbish. In my area, the council is the largest employer on the Fraser Coast. There is a lot of development happening, so the council has a lot of control over who gets what, where and when. That is why we need this legislation. We need powers to ensure that the ratepayers are not disadvantaged and that everything is done correctly. We need the ratepayers to have faith in their government.

Since being elected, I have been championing closer scrutiny of candidates for local government. We have heard those opposite say that a lot of their candidates come through the local government process. You can have a great bloke from the local football club, who sells tickets at the pub and so on, who is elected to council. As I said, in my region the council is the largest employer. Suddenly, you have a councillor—and we have experienced this with councillors on the Fraser Coast Regional Council—who thinks they are the god of the region. They pull up workers to tell them what to do and how to do it, but they do not go into governance. That is why we need legislation such as this.

I also believe that we need much more training for candidates for local government positions, to ensure that they understand their responsibilities as a councillor and that they understand the Local Government Act. That is where we do get into trouble with a lot of councils. We need legislation like this to make sure that councillors understand fully the Local Government Act, that they are compliant with it at all times and that they ensure that the ratepayers are looked after at all times. That is why I have been saying that we need better training, although the department is doing a great job. However, I will give the House an example.

Prior to the mayoral election just held, the department put on training nights for candidates and only two of the candidates turned up. That was very disappointing, because we had candidates running in the election who talked about adhering to the Local Government Act and the importance of understanding that act, yet when the department sent officers from Brisbane to run training nights for the mayoral candidates only two people turned up. We have to make sure that into the future councillors are well trained and that they understand the act and their responsibilities for setting policies, which the CEO and the executive of the council implement without interference from any councillor.

If councillors understood the act, we would not have to have legislation such as this. If they knew how to behave as councillors, we would not have to come into this place to debate this legislation. I commend the minister for this legislation, because through it he is cleaning up local government right around Queensland. We know that some people have been unhappy with local government in Queensland. Through legislation such as this, local government will improve immensely throughout the state. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (4.09 pm): I too rise to speak in the cognate debate on the Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 and the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. I must start where a number of my colleagues have also started, including the member for Mermaid Beach, and that is by expressing my disappointment that this has been made a cognate debate—that is, these two bills are being debated together. In effect, the debate has been guillotined. These are two very important bills that deserve separate contributions by all members of the House rather than members trying to squeeze the contributions into one.

I am also disappointed that whilst there is much good in these bills, Labor has again, for no other reason than base politics, overreached. I, like all Queenslanders and many in this chamber today, have expressed bitter disappointment with the actions of a small but significant number of local government elected officials and staff who have brought this upon the state of Queensland. They have done much to damage the reputation of elected officials not only at the local government level but also across all three tiers of government in this state.

No-one will defend fraudulent, corrupt or dishonest behaviour, except perhaps the Labor Party when it involves one of their own ministers such as Gordon Nuttall. No-one else will defend fraudulent, corrupt or dishonest behaviour in any profession, but especially not when it comes to our community's elected representatives. What is more, all Queenslanders rightly question, as they should, political donations that pose a corruption risk.

Interestingly, in results of a poll reported in the *Courier-Mail* today the majority of Queenslanders can distinguish between what does and does not constitute a corruption risk. Indeed, Queenslanders want authorities to track down and ban wrongdoers rather than ban whole industries from donating outright. Interestingly, Queenslanders perceive that risks come not only from industries such as the property industry but also from the gaming and alcohol industries and the unions. The risk is not just with the property industry.

That brings me to the legislation at hand. Let me go back to why this has come about. Following the Queensland local government elections on 19 March 2016, the Crime and Corruption Commission received numerous complaints about the conduct of candidates in several councils, including Gold Coast, Ipswich, Moreton Bay and Logan. Consistent with the CCC's responsibilities to investigate and prevent corruption and promote integrity, the CCC commenced Operation Belcarra.

The CCC tabled its report on 4 October 2017. It made 31 recommendations, including: a parliamentary committee review introducing expenditure caps for local government elections; require real-time disclosure of electoral expenditure; prohibit candidates from receiving gifts, including donations from property developers; and require changes so that after a councillor declares a conflict of interest other persons entitled to vote at the meeting are required to decide whether the councillor has a real or perceived conflict of interest in the matter and whether the councillor should leave the meeting room.

What is interesting is that this all relates to local government. As I have said, Queenslanders do not have a problem with that. I do not have a problem with that. There is a very clear linkage between donations and potential outcomes, particularly when it comes to property and development applications. What we have here is overreach. In its submissions on these bills, the CCC stated—

The inquiry terms of reference did not include state elections. Consequently the Belcarra Report recommendations did not involve any detailed specific consideration of corruption risks in state elections and decision-making. Accordingly, the reforms depart from the scope of the Belcarra Report recommendations.

The chair of the CCC, Mr Alan MacSporran QC, stated—

In an ideal world, and my personal view would be, you would ban all donations, but the High Court has said, and the law is, that there needs to be an evidence based response which is proportional to the threat identified.

He went on to state—

... we said in one line in the early part of our report that the government may wish to consider translating or expanding it to the state sector. We did not mean by that that it is an automatic translation, what we meant is that it needs to be considered in that sector, which should be an evidence gathering exercise, public consultation, sufficient to get a sense of what is really happening in that area. There is no reason in principle why the measures should not translate to the state, but that needs to be considered because absent consideration of it there is a potential successful challenge to the constitutional validity of the measure. That is the concern we simply had, that you cannot simply automatically translate it without giving it due consideration.

Yet here we are not only giving it due consideration but actually turning it into law. That is a complete and utter overreach from what the CCC actually intended.

I would like to use a local example to demonstrate the risk of influence and corruption around property donations and development applications. The Sunshine Coast Regional Council has recently received a development application to build a petrol station directly opposite the Maleny State School at the entrance to Maleny. I and the residents of Maleny do not necessarily have anything against petrol stations, but this is simply the wrong spot. Not only is it on a main road directly opposite a school, it is directly in the line of sight as people enter Maleny. It is not the kind of statement that the community wants to be sending, particularly to the tourism and the drive tourism market.

Let me be clear. The assessor of the development application is the Sunshine Coast Regional Council and not the state government. The state government does have an assessment role because the development is on a main road and opposite an Education Queensland facility. As such and rightly so, some 600 residents of the Maleny community have now written to Minister Bailey about this. I will take the rulings of the Speaker and not table these letters for posterity because I understand Minister Bailey has a copy of them. However, I will table a copy of the submission made to the Sunshine Coast Regional Council by the group No Fuel Opposite Our School Ever led by Angie Kelly.

Tabled paper: Submission to Sunshine Coast Regional Council opposing Development Application MCU18/0111 [668].

These residents have written to Minister Bailey. I have written to Minister Dick, Minister Bailey and Minister Grace. As I have explained to the residents and as these ministers will attest, only in the rarest of exceptions will a state agency refuse a development application of this nature. It is more likely to condition the consideration by the council. Even more rarely would a minister, let alone any other politician, become involved in that decision.

The community and I will fight this development application, but ultimately the decision as to whether it is approved or not rests with the Sunshine Coast Regional Council. I ask that ministers Dick, Bailey and Grace give consideration to the concerns raised by the community and give that advice back to the Sunshine Coast Regional Council in helping them make their decision. The decision ultimately rests with the Sunshine Coast Regional Council not the state government.

This example demonstrates that, as the CCC rightly identified, there is potentially the risk of corruption at the local level but none at the state level. Why are those opposite undertaking this overreach in the bill before the House today? As others have said, it is for no other reason than politics. They know it has and will continue to cruel other political parties other than their own which relies on significant donations from the unions.

Let us take the politics out of it and we can all agree on the legislation before the House. Let us either remove the overreach to the state realm that is included in the bill that we are debating this afternoon or do what Queenslanders want and include other industries, specifically trade unions, into those industries banned from donating to political parties.

Other members have already pointed out the level of influence that the unions have had over this government. It is quite staggering, to be blunt, to see the level of influence over appointments to boards, appointments to roles, the protection of militant unions and their actions, changes so that people have access to union workforces and the changing of the trading law. All of this can be directly linked back to requests made by the unions and linked therefore to the support that the Labor government is receiving from those unions. Let us take the politics out of it. We should either remove the overreach that includes the state government in these laws or even this up and accept the amendments to be moved by the member for Toowoomba South.

 **Mrs MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (4.19 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. I will also make a short contribution to the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. At the outset, I strongly believe that the majority of local government councillors within Queensland operate professionally and with due regard to the requirements of the law. Equally, ratepayers have a right to ensure that this is indeed the case and to be confident that any claims of misconduct or bad behaviour are properly conducted.

The changes proposed within this legislation are significant. They are major and welcome changes to the way the current system operates. They are changes that will improve the fairness, effectiveness and efficiency of the system, while also making it more responsive and accountable. The starting point of these reforms is obviously with the creation of the Office of the Independent Assessor. Presently, the initial assessment of councillor complaints falls mainly to council CEOs. This can be particularly fraught for many CEOs giving rise to issues of conflict of interest as CEOs are effectively assessing complaints against one of their employers which can also lead to general conflict in terms of favourable or unfavourable determinations.

Assessment from the local government department is equally difficult given the other oversight roles the department has in dealing with offences under the Local Government Act. It is clear that the idea of an Independent Assessor has broad support with stakeholders. It is important and addressed through this bill that the functions of the Independent Assessor are clearly set.

Section 150CU of the bill provides the functions of the Independent Assessor which includes investigating and dealing with the conduct of councillors where it is alleged or suspected to be inappropriate conduct, misconduct or, when referred to the Independent Assessor by the CCC, corrupt conduct. The Independent Assessor will also provide advice, training and information about dealing with alleged or suspected inappropriate conduct, misconduct or corrupt conduct.

Importantly, the Independent Assessor will be able to prosecute offences against the conduct provisions under section 150AY, making this a very serious role with clear obligations to ensure investigations are thorough, fair and consistent. The report submitted by the independent Councillor

Complaints Review Panel went to great lengths to reiterate the need for the Independent Assessor to have strong investigative powers and to use them.

The bill provides these full inquisitorial powers which, whilst previously available to bodies investigating complaints, were rarely, if ever, used. The powers of an investigator will include: the power to enter places by consent or under a warrant; general powers to search, inspect, examine or film; the power to seize evidence under prescribed conditions; and the power to require a person to give the investigator information or require a person to attend a meeting and answer questions. By providing these powers to the Office of the Independent Assessor, it will also ensure that complaints are dealt with thoroughly and fairly, but it is not the lengthy process that currently exists which can be concerning for both the complainant and the councillor accused.

I am particularly pleased to see that the legislation at section 150AV also deals with complaints that are vexatious or not in good faith. It is all too easy these days for people to be politically motivated to make complaints that have no substance or are simply mistruths. These complaints or issues are sometimes even shared on social media without recourse. The legislation is clear that a person must not make a complaint about the conduct of a councillor to the Independent Assessor vexatiously or not in good faith or counsel or, importantly, procure another person to make a complaint about the conduct of a councillor vexatiously or not in good faith. Penalties have been set for dealing with those complainants found to be vexatious.

Another area that will be improved through this legislation is the reallocation of the functions of the current bodies currently dealing with complaints. Under the current councillor complaints system, the Local Government Remuneration and Discipline Tribunal hears and decides the most serious complaints of misconduct by a councillor. Other misconduct complaints are heard and decided by a regional conduct review panel which is established by the department's chief executive for different regions of the state. As the councillor complaints review report noted, 'The present system of having two bodies to adjudicate on complaints against councillors adds unnecessary complexity to the system.'

The legislation will seek to reallocate those two bodies into one Councillor Conduct Tribunal, which will have the power to hear on a councillor's alleged misconduct, to make a determination and to decide what, if any, disciplinary action to take. Having one body responsible for determining and penalising misconduct will also assist to ensure that there is consistency in the application of the law, making the system fairer.

In terms of consistency, a key recommendation from the review report was the recommendation that a councillor code of conduct be introduced. This has been an issue of some contention in the past, but I understand there is broad agreement from stakeholders for the code of conduct to be introduced. This is particularly important given the high turnover we are seeing in local government these days. The report points to the fact that 'at each of the last two elections about half of those elected had no previous experience on a council'. Whilst a code of conduct is important for serving councillors, I believe it is just as important for those who may be contemplating standing for councils and as part of a thorough induction process for those elected.

Whilst most political parties put their candidates through a fairly sophisticated vetting process prior to nomination—some more so than others, may I add—the independent nature of local government means that prospective councillors do not undergo any significant scrutiny prior to being elected. The code of conduct will at least ensure that those prospective councillors have some understanding of what is required of them, once elected.

The bill via a new section 150D provides that the minister must make a code of conduct that sets out the standards of behaviour for councillors in performing their functions under the Local Government Act. Given the importance of the minister's power in implementing a uniform code of conduct, it is pleasing to see the legislation makes provision for this code to be approved by a regulation and tabled in the Legislative Assembly for the scrutiny of these delegated powers by the parliament.

An additional level of scrutiny will also be provided through the establishment of the Local Government Liaison Group. Whilst this group is not enshrined in law, it will be an important body in providing advice and recommendations on not only the code of conduct but also the implementation and ongoing operation of the new councillor complaints system. Comprising of senior representatives of the department of local government, the Crime and Corruption Commission, the Office of the Queensland Ombudsman, the Queensland Audit Office, the Local Government Association of

Queensland and the Local Government Managers Association, as well as the Independent Assessor, once appointed, this will be a critical and weighty body dealing with the system going forward.

I am also pleased to see the issue of conflicts of interest addressed within the local government electoral bill as it implements some of the recommendations of the Belcarra report. Issues of real or perceived conflicts of interest are of great concern for many ratepayers within our communities—it is considered the slippery slope of potential misconduct or corrupt behaviour. It is important that, for the integrity of the local government system, we strengthen the requirements of how a councillor must deal with a real or perceived conflict of interest or a material personal interest. This is particularly in the interests of those councillors who wish to do the right thing, who may be concerned about their own or another councillor's conflict of interest, and there will be greater transparency around these decisions.

In conclusion, it is unfortunate that local government is currently under such intense scrutiny. Councillors are elected to represent and to work for their local communities. I reiterate the point that I believe most councillors elected in this state do operate professionally, understand their obligations and work in the best interests of their communities, not themselves. This legislation will ensure that where this may sadly not be the case a complaint against a councillor will be treated fairly, effectively and more efficiently, whilst ensuring that the system will be more responsive and accountable. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (4.27 pm): I would like to make a short contribution on the Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 first. With your indulgence, Mr Deputy Speaker, if there are any mayors or councillors, certainly Western Queensland councillors, who are listening to this debate this afternoon, please be assured that you are well liked and well needed. Local councils have a pivotal role in our community. They are at the grassroots. They are on the ground. They are the first ones that many people, certainly in Western Queensland and regional Queensland, go to when it comes to any issue, whether it is roads, rates or rubbish. It could be even health issues. It could be anything. They are the people on the ground who people see first.

I would like to put on the record my absolute admiration for anybody who stands for local council or anybody who works for local council because they have an important role. I am looking around this House now and I see the member for Lockyer and the member for Gympie. I can only imagine how hard it must have been to be a councillor and hold down a full-time job as a police officer or run a cattle operation. I also acknowledge councillors on the other side of the chamber such as Jim Madden and others.

Government members interjected.

Mr MILLAR: Sorry, and Mark Bailey, the Minister for Transport and Main Roads and state member for Miller. What I am trying to say is that councillors in Western Queensland play a significant role. We find it hard for them to take the positions. The deputy mayor in Longreach, Leonie Nunn, lives in Stonehenge and it takes her two hours to get to a meeting or a planning meeting. It takes councillors in the Diamantina shire out near Birdsville over three hours to get to a meeting. I would like to acknowledge those councillors, mayors and staff who work for the regional councils in the Central Highlands, Barcaldine, Blackall-Tambo, Longreach, Winton, Boulia, Diamantina and Barcoo in my electorate. I pay tribute to them because I think they do a wonderful job.

There is support for the amendments contained in the Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. We acknowledge that these proposed changes to the existing legislative and policy framework applicable for councillor complaints will make addressing this problematic area less challenging. It will also help in dealing with the concerns over the potentially conflicted role of chief executive officers in assessing complaints against their own councillors—one of their employers.

The LNP has always been a strong supporter of the work that councils—mayors and councillors—do for the betterment of Queenslanders. We know that local governments share many of the same goals of the LNP—to create jobs, to provide safe and livable communities, and to build the roads and bridges needed for the future. They are also taking on other roles and being asked to take on more responsibilities—whether it is providing health options or education in regional areas or, more importantly, taking on a higher role with tourism and also innovation and business growth.

Mr Costigan: Economic development.

Mr MILLAR: I take that interjection from the member for Whitsunday—economic development. There is a lot of pressure not only on councillors but also on council staff. Councils have generally been well respected by their local communities. I do note from the conversations and the debate today that obviously there have been some issues around some councils over the last six months, but I think they have been very isolated. The majority of councillors, mayors and council staff are well meaning and committed to their communities.

In Western Queensland and regional Queensland, these councillors do not take on this role for a career. They are not there for a career move; they are there for a service. In fact, we are finding it harder and harder to get people to nominate for councils in those far western shires because they are running operations or they are small business people in town trying to keep afloat themselves. They are going through drought and obviously there are issues with commodity prices. For them to put their hand up for council, it means they have an absolute desire to serve their community.

Both of my great-grandfathers were councillors in the Goondiwindi and Waggamba shires. From reading their histories, I can see that it was about service. It was not about anything else. It was about making sure they had a butcher shop in Goondiwindi. It was about making sure they had the provisions so they could continue to have a well-maintained butcher shop. That is what they do out in Western Queensland. To this end, we look forward to working closely with all councils and the LGAQ on the proposed reforms to ensure transparency and accountability remains the foundation upon which public confidence is built.

I move to the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. The Labor government's proposed expansion of the property developer donation prohibition to the state arena begs one simple question, and it is a question that this House and Queenslanders need to answer in relation to the bill. Will the government follow the advice of the CCC chairman, Alan MacSporran, or will it ignore the CCC and push through donation restrictions at a state level with no evidence and no justification?

Mr Power interjected.

Mr MILLAR: If the member for Logan would listen, he might learn something. I want to quote from the CCC's submission for the benefit of the member for Logan, who may not have read it or listened to Mr MacSporran's evidence. The submission stated—

The Inquiry terms of reference did not include state elections. Consequently the Belcarra Report recommendations did not involve any detailed specific consideration of corruption risks in state elections and decision-making. Accordingly, the reforms depart from the scope of the Belcarra Report ...

It continued—

... the CCC did not contemplate that the proposed reforms would be introduced without preliminary review to identify and mitigate corruption risks in state elections and decision-making. A proper public consultation process is highly desirable.

Haven't we heard that before? It is highly desirable. The CCC made it clear that this government has overstepped the mark. The CCC never made any recommendations about state elections or donations and, as the CCC says, it 'departs significantly' from the report. It should go without saying that good lawmaking requires evidence based decisions when making them. By extending the property developer donation ban to the state arena, the government does not just ignore the direction of the CCC; the government does so without identifying what social ill it seeks to remedy.

I move to the area of definitions. A corporation which is engaged in a business regularly involved in the making of relevant planning applications is considered a 'property developer' under the bill. Mr Potts, from the Queensland Law Society, expanded on these definitional issues in his appearance before the public hearing. He noted—

... we are concerned that there be some certainty around definitions with respect to the legislation.

He went on to say—

... what indeed is a property developer? For example, if I have a block of land, which I break into three pieces—subdivide effectively—and start building houses, which I then sell, I am told that I may be, under the bill, a regular applicant, with 'regular' holding its ordinary meaning of effectively more than once.

Furthermore, there has been no advice given as to how 'regular' will be judged. Mr Potts, from the Queensland Law Society, in noting that 'regular' in the ordinary English definitions means more than once, asked appropriately—

Do you stop it at three? Do you start it at two? Do you make it to be 50 or 100?

He also asked—

What is a close associate? ... Does the definition of 'close associate' include a lawyer? A financial adviser? An accountant? An employee? Or a series of employees?

In the public briefing, representatives from Justice and Attorney-General and Local Government were unable to outline guidelines by which a property developer would be defined, instead referring that to interpretation by the ECQ. Our shadow Attorney-General, Mr Janetzki, questioned Mrs Robertson, from the Department of Justice and Attorney-General, at the committee meeting. The transcript states—

Mr JANETZKI: In terms of funding for the enforcement of this piece of legislation, has the department contemplated any particular guidelines to assist potential donors in the political process as to their ability to donate or not to donate? Have any guidelines been considered at this stage?

Mrs Robertson: No, the department has not. We have suggested that, given that the ECQ has the power under the bill to give advice to entities as to whether or not they are a property developer or other persons—for example, as to whether they are a close associate—as the legislation is implemented the ECQ may give consideration to that. I do not want to speak for the ECQ in this space.

Mr JANETZKI: There was no departmental policy consideration of any potential guidelines?

Mrs Robertson: No, that is right.

The ECQ was unable to be questioned by the committee in a public hearing and I think that is important. We need to be able to find the definition. Who is a property developer? Who will be categorised as a property developer? I call on the House to support the opposition amendments to be moved by the member for Warrego and the member for Toowoomba South. They are sensible amendments. Please listen to these amendments.

(Time expired)

 **Mr BROWN** (Capalaba—ALP) (4.37 pm): I rise to support the cognate bills before the parliament. I would, firstly, like to thank the minister for bringing these two bills before the parliament and also for the sensible amendments he has introduced in these trying times. This is in contrast to those on the other side who bring in frivolous, political amendments. I also thank the committee for their report and their work on this.

The majority of councillors and council employees do the right thing. In my area of Redland city, we have four councillors and the mayor. Councillor Murray Elliott has had over 20 years with the Redland City Council. He is a wealth of knowledge and a great worker. I pride myself on the working relationship I have with Murray Elliott. Councillor Tracey Hughes is a first-term councillor. I think she has doorknocked the local area twice already. She is at everything and she is into everything. She is happy to work and I have a good working relationship with her.

I have had some great wins with Councillor Paul Bishop—including cleaning up Tingalpa Creek and putting pressure on the Brisbane City Council to fix Rickertt Road, just to name a couple of things. I do have some differences with Mayor Karen Williams sometimes, but we do get together and work together for the best interests of our community. There are a couple of things that we are working on at the moment in regard to the federal government selling off Birkdale bushland for residential development. There is a petition in relation to that with Mayor Karen Williams, as well as a petition before this parliament around the business case for the Eastern Busway. Again, we are working together to ensure we are delivering for Redlands.

Unfortunately, there is one—there is always one—and that is the failed LNP state candidate Paul Gleeson, who is the councillor for division 9. It was most timely that last week it was reported in the news that he was again reprimanded by the regional conduct review panel for misconduct. With regard to Paul Gleeson, the laws in this bill before parliament cannot come quick enough for the people of division 9 and Capalaba. During his term he has had four substantiated inappropriate conduct allegations.

On 8 January 2016 there was an allegation of inappropriate conduct against Councillor Gleeson regarding him posting material on social media that was offensive, threatening or bullying and was disrespectful to members of the community. That was substantiated and an order reprimanding the councillor for inappropriate conduct was handed down on 22 January 2016. I have spoken before in this parliament about Councillor Gleeson's conduct. He attacked a local domestic violence service in Redlands and I have also spoken about his appalling, abusive behaviour online regarding his ex-wife, joking about running her over with a bus and also calling her an 'incubator'.

Ms Pease: Shocking!

Mr BROWN: This is the quality of the man. It gets better. On 20 February 2017 there was an allegation of inappropriate conduct against Councillor Gleeson. This time it was referred to the DILGP and the regional conduct review panel. This was regarding an alleged altercation on a social media page that was offensive and threatening. That was substantiated. On 2 August 2017 there was an allegation of inappropriate conduct during a visit to a private resident's house and invited Facebook comment on a council Facebook page following an online story in the *Redland City Bulletin*. This was partly substantiated. To that point, he went to the house of a constituent of mine and threatened to bash him. This was recorded.

The police said to me that the only reason this councillor was not charged with assault was that the front door was locked and so he could not carry out his threat. Unfortunately, this constituent of mine had to move out of the electorate and has gone to the extent of keeping the address of his new residence a secret—keeping it off the electoral roll. However, this has not stopped Councillor Gleeson. There is now another complaint by this former constituent of mine in which it is alleged Councillor Gleeson tried to find out through the real estate agent this person's new address. It is very shameful that I have lost a constituent of mine from my electorate due to this councillor but also this councillor is going to the extent of trying to find out his new address.

On 22 August 2017 there were allegations of inappropriate conduct, again, referred to the regional conduct review panel. This was regarding allegations of inappropriate social media comments made by Councillor Gleeson to a local sporting club. He goes over to constituents' houses—and he has been to my house before—he makes inappropriate comments about DV services and about local sporting clubs. He knows no bounds. This legislation cannot come quick enough for the people of division 9 and the Capalaba electorate.

Unfortunately, there is that conflict. More probably would have come out if there was an independent assessor. We need to ensure that complainants feel comfortable and safe enough to bring these matters forward and also that CEOs and mayors, who have probably used their running ticket to support previous councillors, are not conflicted in this way. For the people of Redlands and, in particular, the people of division 9 at Capalaba, these bills cannot come quick enough. I commend the minister for bringing them to the House and also the amendments around them.

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (4.44 pm): I rise to make a contribution. I will start by pointing out the hypocrisy that when talking about a bill that deals with transparency it has to be done in a cognate fashion. I think it is an indication of just how absurd the new rules are. Unlike every other workplace in the Western World, we are dictated to by a set of rules and a time line that have been put in place previously and I do not believe it is leading to good, efficient parliament. That said, we are discussing very important changes to two pieces of legislation and clearly changes are needed. What we do have, though, is a situation where, in rushing to put in place some changes, I think some things could have been done better. I will use my contribution today to highlight those to the minister with a view to maybe implementing some of those changes.

In this chamber there are over a dozen people from both sides of the House and from the crossbench with experience in local government. There are people in this room with whom I have served on council such as the member for Burdekin and people whom I have visited regarding recovery efforts relating to bridges such as the member for Ipswich West—all people who at their core might have different beliefs when they walk into a council chamber. For the vast majority of people, when they sign up for local government it is about serving the community; that is what they are there for. Whether that is a small western shire like Boulia of a few hundred or a council right throughout this state ranging all the way up to the largest local government in the land, people who sign up for local government are decent people at their core. Whilst many of these changes are good changes, we will never stop bad apples. We will never stop people doing the wrong thing. That is why we have to ensure we put in place a system in which those doing the wrong thing are penalised.

I want to talk about one of the changes that I believe the minister is making in good faith but is wrong. I believe in the fullness of time we will see it to be wrong if we do not make this amendment that I am proposing today. That is the change to section 177G, which puts an onus on a councillor to report if they believe another councillor has a conflict of interest. I understand the intent behind it, but I do not think it leads to good government. Let me explain why—on two fronts. Putting the onus of determining whether or not somebody else has a conflict of interest can never be the best form of accountability. It is the individual who must determine if they have a conflict. The debate as to whether or not the

individual should stay in the room is a worthy debate. What is not is asking the rest of the council to determine that. I will tell honourable members why.

There could be a scenario where one person on that council is a bit of a thorn in the side of the other elected officials, of the body that have the numbers on that council. That group can then, by its numbers, determine that that person has a conflict, which may not be a genuine conflict, and ask that person to leave the room. Even worse, when there is a debate that is tight, if the numbers are split in the chamber, the deal could be done where one person is asked to leave due to a conflict that they do not believe is a conflict. They may well have rightly stayed in the room—and justifiably so. That person may be made to leave and the entire numbers of the debate would change. It is for that reason that I think in that section we would have been better off putting the onus on the individual and maybe ensuring that individual does not take part in the debate, whereas now they have the option to determine if the conflict is large enough or not. To ask others to judge a conflict goes against all good governance principles. I would not be able to tell honourable members of another board which would operate in that fashion.

I also want to talk about the public interest amendments, which is chapter 5 of the act, dismissal of a council or councillor where the minister reasonably believes it is in the public interest to do so. I know that this is in response to some actions where people have done the wrong thing.

When I read statements like, 'The term public interest is not defined. This is intentional to permit the phrase to evolve over time to reflect community expectations over time. Relevant factors in determining public interest may include, but are not limited to'—there are two things in particular that are listed that I am not comfortable with—'acting reasonably and community confidence in local government and/or its councillors.' That is a bridge too far, and to give those powers to a body at another level is too much.

What determines community confidence? If there is an uproar on Facebook because people do not like the level of their rate rise, does that mean that that council should be dismissed? If a member does not like his local alderman, should that mean the minister can dismiss that person? That is too far; that is too wideranging. If the minister were to outline what is defined as public interest or come up with a better term, as has been done in the other section where the suspension has been outlined, that is a different kettle of fish. This is too broad and whilst this minister may have good intentions, others may not. I think this really runs the risk of local government becoming nothing more than a creature of the state. You may even get the situation where a councillor does not want to speak out for fear that he or she may not be around the week after because the minister has said, 'See you later. I found that offensive under the section that says community confidence in the local government was eroded and you did not act reasonably, so I got you twice.' That is too much.

In my remaining time I want to talk about the section that bans property developer donations at state elections. It does go beyond what was raised by the CCC. Many people have made that submission in their contribution, but let me again focus on the definition of property developer. The problem is that when things are rushed you can get to a situation where you make changes which do not stand the test of time. If the definition of a property developer is 'someone who is engaged in a business regularly involved in the making of relevant planning applications', I would say to you that that is a very subjective set of terms. No matter how we attempt to define that, the word 'regularly' in that scenario cannot possibly be used.

To then draw that bow and transfer it to the state arena I do not think anyone in good conscience can say is fair and reasonable based on what came out of the CCC's recommendations, hence the reason the member for Toowoomba South is proposing what he is proposing, because by doing that I think he exposes the hypocrisy of what we have before us. If it is really about accountability would you not run the test as the CCC said? Or is it being used as a stalking horse to nobble political free speech? The link with local government is because it is the body tasked with making planning application decisions, so that is why the CCC has put that recommendation forward. There is not the same correlation at a state level, so I ask: what could the reasoning be behind it? Could it be that the Labor Party, in a debate about transparency, openness and accountability, is seeking to reduce free speech in the political process?

I will conclude by saying that local government is a very special level of government. The community deserves to know that each and every one of those councillors who walks into a building does so for the right reasons, and that is why we support the vast majority of the changes. I do ask the

minister to look at those areas of overreach and make what could be very good legislation with some of those changes.

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (4.54 pm): I rise today to speak in support of the two bills that are before us, and I do so because I also care very much about the health of local government in Queensland. I will deal with a number of the issues we have dealt with in these bills. I was pleased to see the changes we put forward with regard to conflict of interest. We have proposed that councillors have to decide, one, to vote on whether there is a real or perceived conflict of interest and, two, vote on whether that person should actually leave. I very much feel this is better than the system that has existed for many years. Previously it was up to the councillor. The councillor decided, and in my experience I think that was deficient. I have heard councillors say, 'Yes, there is a bit of a conflict of interest, but because it is in the interests of the community I will decide to stay in the room.' It was then incumbent on the other councillors there to say, 'Let's vote that this person leaves the room.' That is a very brave thing to do for councillors who need to work with that person every day. I believe that not once in my 12 years as a councillor did I see them vote that someone with a conflict should leave the room.

We have a system where councillors could ignore the decision-making process in relation to declaring a conflict of interest. They could sit there and hope it goes away, but what we have proposed forces them to stand up and make a decision. I think the one-year jail penalty sends a very strong signal about how importantly we regard this. I served under Rob Noble, the CEO of the Caboolture council, who said to me, 'If in doubt, walk out.' I think that is definitely the safer thing for councillors to do. Unfortunately, I did not see that often enough during my term in council.

The issue of sending councillor complaints outside the council to the Office of the Independent Assessor is very welcome, and I am pleased to see they have real powers to investigate. Previously the panels would ask people questions, and that would be about as far as their powers went. They often had to make decisions in he-said, she-said scenarios, and they did not usually have sufficient information to make strong determinations. I do acknowledge all of the people who have served on those panels such as the former mayor of Caboolture, Joy Leishman.

Obviously if there is a complaint about corruption it goes to the CCC or the CJC as it then was. That has always been the case and it will always be the case, but other complaints have often had to go through the CEO of the council. The CEO may decide that it is a vexatious or frivolous complaint and not refer it through to the panel, and I am aware of people who were worried about being labelled vexatious and frivolous. That could be a reason to send the person lodging the complaint to the panel, and I do not think that is a very good outcome either. We do know that in these cases it would be a very brave CEO who referred their mayor to one of these tribunals, or the panel previously, because the mayor is the person who most determines their employment. Going through the CEO has been a deficiency in the system, but if a CEO decides to refer a complaint to the tribunal there is very little recourse.

I also welcome the changes we are proposing in the area of donations. I believe that the current system does have some potential to be open to corruption, but I think the real-time donation reforms we brought through have been one of the greatest reforms of donation laws for many years in this state. The very thing that makes local government such an effective level of government—that it is small, flexible and can make decisions quickly—is also the thing that makes it most vulnerable to corruption, because when something comes through quickly there are fewer sets of eyes on them, they can make a decision quickly and they can be flexible about it. I believe that that in strange ways does make them more open to localised instances of corruption.

I think this is a time of greater corruption risk for councils. There is now a lot more outsourcing of activities—for example, parks being maintained by local gardening companies. If there is a relationship between councillors and local business owners—do not get me wrong: I think contracts should go to local businesses—there is a greater risk of corruption.

I foresee some advantageous outcomes of these bills. One of the best outcomes I foresee is that Queenslanders will talk and think differently about local government. When there is a controversial issue relating to local government, often people's first response is cynicism. When a decision is made, people will always put it down to personal gain. If an approved development is outside a zone, outside the box or outside the urban footprint or if it is different, it should be good enough to stand on its merit and there should be confidence in that application approval. If a development assessment is faulty or there is no net benefit to the local community, we really do not want people to say that the reason

behind that decision or that vote was a relationship between the proponent and councillors. We want them to say that best quality planning was behind that decision, not any shadow of personal gain.

We do not want local residents to say that a decision they do not like was made because of the personal gain of councillors. Too often those comments are thrown around when decisions are made. We do not want people to keep saying such things in a cynical way. I know that it is not true, but we cannot help that a lot of people are thinking this about local government at this time.

We want Queenslanders to think differently and talk differently about what local councils do. These bills will help that. I think these bills go a long way towards breaking the nexus between political donations and local developers. That is a good thing for the overall health of local government in Queensland. I commend the bills to the House.

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (5.02 pm): The LNP has been consistent in supporting the findings of the CCC's Operation Belcarra. We support the changes in the bill which implement its recommendations. These were recommendations for changing the local government electoral system, as Belcarra was an inquiry into local government. We need to be clear about that: the inquiry was into local government, not state government.

In my contribution to the debate I will focus on the Premier's extraordinary overreach and disregard for proper process when it comes to these laws. There is a pretty clear question for the Premier, who likes to say that she acts with integrity and accountability. Will the Premier accept the advice of the independent chair of the CCC, Alan MacSporran, or will the Premier ignore the CCC and ram through these laws which will fundamentally change our electoral system? Of course, this government has form when it comes to sneakily changing electoral laws. Who can forget that last term, with 18 minutes notice from the Premier—

Mrs D'Ath interjected.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Is that a point of order?

Mrs D'Ath interjected.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: No, just rumblings from those opposite.

Mr Minnikin: No, just inane rumblings, really.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I take that interjection. Of course, this government has form when it comes to sneakily changing electoral laws. Who can forget that last term, with 18 minutes notice, the Premier, the Deputy Premier and the Attorney-General took our voting system back to the pre Fitzgerald inquiry era. In the public—

Mrs D'Ath interjected.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Eighteen minutes. I know that those opposite do not like to remember that. They do not like to be open and accountable. This is a government that has fundamentally changed the electoral system.

Mr Janetzki interjected.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I take that interjection from the shadow Attorney-General. In the public hearings for this bill Mr MacSporran was very clear on the property developer ban at the state level. He said—

... in one line in the early part of our report that the government may wish to consider translating or expanding it to the state sector. We did not mean by that that it is an automatic translation. What we meant is that it needs to be considered in that sector, which should be an evidence-gathering exercise, public consultation, sufficient to get a sense of what is really happening in that area.

He went on to say—

... you cannot simply automatically translate it without giving it due consideration.

I want to remind the House of a key promise the Premier broke last term. When she struck a minority government deal with the former member for Nicklin, the Premier promised an inquiry into state political donations. That has never happened. Despite reassuring Queenslanders that it was going to happen, it has never happened. That is a promise that was broken. Now we hear the independent chair of the CCC say that he does not think this donation ban should be transferred to the state without a proper investigation—in other words, the inquiry that the Premier squibbed on.

The question must be asked: why are the unions not considered to have undue influence over the Palaszczuk Labor government as a result of their donations and political support? We have had example after example of union heavies weighing in on how Queensland should be run under the Palaszczuk Labor government—from the reintroduction of the union encouragement policy, which gave unions carte blanche access to the personal details of public servants, to the direct contacts to not just the transport minister's mangocube email but also the private ministerial email of the Premier. I doubt Labor backbenchers even get that much access to their Premier! These examples—from handing over wish lists of how government policy should be changed to giving 'nudge-nudge, wink-wink' recommendations for board appointments—are completely unacceptable and expose the Labor Party's risk when it comes to good governance versus union donations.

I turn to the serious concerns we have with the implementation of these proposed laws. Through the committee public hearing process we heard a number of times from the department that it had no idea who would be included in the definitions of property developer in the bill. Instead, it referred all interpretation to the Electoral Commission. The ECQ made a written submission to the committee in which it raised very serious concerns that this government has simply not addressed. The ECQ said when it comes to implementing the procedures and policies associated with these proposed laws 'that 3-6 months would be suitable in this regard, with the preference for 6 months'.

We then saw the ECQ refuse to turn up to the committee's public hearing. It is quite extraordinary for the taxpayer funded agency that is implementing these laws to not front a public committee to explain how it intends to do it. The ECQ then agreed to attend a private hearing. That is not good enough. Queenslanders have the right to hear from the government about how these laws will work, how the ECQ intends to implement them and what processes are being developed to deal with these fundamental changes to our electoral laws.

Indeed, Bill Potts from the Queensland Law Society was of the view that it is unsatisfactory for an organisation such as the ECQ to be making these kinds of decisions without some form of guidance from parliament. The shadow minister for local government, the honourable member for Warrego, will be speaking in more detail about the changes to councillor complaints and conflict of interest procedures. With regard to the amendments this government is introducing regarding the powers of the minister to stand aside or dismiss councillors, we support any move to increase integrity in local government. We do have concerns about their execution and what is considered in the public interest. The shadow minister will speak further to our concerns during the consideration in detail stage.

As I conclude I want to state the question which goes to the heart of good governance in this state and the integrity of the Palaszczuk Labor government: will Anastacia Palaszczuk reject the advice of the head of Queensland's independent anti-corruption agency? If the Premier pushes ahead with these laws it will be an extraordinary move for a Labor government to ignore the CCC. That is something that all members in this House and this place should reflect on as we vote on these bills.

 **Mr MADDEN** (Ipswich West—ALP) (5.10 pm): I proudly served as a local government councillor with the Somerset Regional Council from 28 April 2012 to 31 January 2015, so I know firsthand what governance issues local government councillors face on a day-to-day basis in Queensland. Local governments are responsible for the good governance of both local and regional communities in Queensland. In performing this role, local governments execute a range of functions including planning and monitoring, service delivery, and law making and enforcement. They also play an important role with regard to advocacy, representing the interests of their community in negotiations with the state and federal governments and non-government sector. Tonight I am proud to rise to speak in support of the Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 and the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018.

Both bills were reviewed by the Economics and Governance Committee chaired by Linus Power, the member for Logan. I want to thank the members of the Economics and Governance Committee, the committee secretariat, the Hansard reporters and the submitters. With regard to the Belcarra report, in its report to the 56th Parliament the committee made three recommendations. Firstly, it recommended the bill be passed. The committee also recommended that the Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs and the Department of Justice and Attorney-General work with the Electoral Commission to develop examples of what is a property developer and a close associate and what constitutes 'regularly' in the context of making relevant planning applications to assist affected parties and the Electoral Commission and the courts in determining the application of the proposed legislation. As well, the committee recommended the bill be amended to insert a purpose

statement in the Electoral Act 1992, similar to the proposed purpose statement in the Local Government Electoral Act 2011.

The Belcarra bill implements the recommendations of the Crime and Corruption Commission's report from Operation Belcarra. This report provides the Queensland parliament with a blueprint for instilling integrity and addressing corruption risk in local government in Queensland. Specifically, the bill aims to ban donations from property developers to reinforce integrity and minimise corruption risk caused by political donations from property developers at both a state and local government level, strengthen and clarify how a councillor must deal with a real or perceived conflict of interest or a material personal interest, and improve transparency and accountability at both state and local government levels. As the Minister for Local Government, Stirling Hinchliffe, said in his introduction speech on 6 May 2018—

The Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 contains provisions for a ban on political donations by property developers, a ban which will be applied at both the state and local levels ... Following the Queensland local government elections on 19 March 2016, the Crime and Corruption Commission, the CCC, received numerous complaints about the conduct of candidates for the Gold Coast City Council, Moreton Bay Regional Council, Ipswich City Council and Logan City Council.

In response to these allegations, the CCC initiated Operation Belcarra with two main aims: firstly, a determination as to whether candidates had committed offences under the Local Government Electoral Act 2011 that could constitute corrupt conduct; and, secondly, the examination of practices that may give rise to actual or perceived corruption or otherwise undermine public confidence in the integrity of local government with a view to identifying strategies or reforms to help prevent or decrease corruption risks and increase public confidence.

I will now address the councillor complaints bill. In its report to the 56th Parliament, the Economics and Governance Committee recommended the bill be passed. The committee further recommended the bill be amended to provide that the Councillor Conduct Tribunal must be constituted by at least two members for the purpose of conducting a hearing about whether a councillor has engaged in misconduct. The committee also recommended the Local Government Remuneration Commission must be constituted by at least two commissioners for the purpose of making decisions establishing the categories of councils, determining which category each council belongs to and the maximum amount of remuneration payable to councillors in each category. The aim of the councillor complaints bill is to implement the government's response to the independent Councillor Complaints Review Panel's report, *Councillor complaints review: a fair, effective and efficient framework*, to provide a simpler and more streamlined system for making, investigating and determining complaints about councillor conduct in Queensland.

The purpose of this independent review was to, firstly, examine the statutory provisions relating to complaints to assess the effectiveness of current legislative and policy frameworks and, secondly, to make recommendations about policy, legislative and operational changes required to improve the system of dealing with complaints about councillors' conduct. The bill establishes the Independent Assessor as well as the Office of the Independent Assessor to investigate and deal with conduct of councillors where it is alleged or suspected to be inappropriate conduct, misconduct or, when referred to the Independent Assessor by the Crime and Corruption Commission, corrupt conduct.

The Independent Assessor may initiate an investigation based on a complaint made or referred to the assessor's office by a member of the public, an organisation, a local government official or a local government. The Independent Assessor will be empowered to initiate an investigation if they become aware of information indicating that a councillor may have engaged in inappropriate conduct or misconduct and they reasonably believe that it is in the public interest to investigate such information. The Independent Assessor will also investigate suspected corrupt conduct when referred to the Independent Assessor by the CCC.

The bill will also allow for the establishment of a code of conduct to set appropriate standards of behaviour for Queensland local government councillors in performing their functions. The code of conduct will set out the standards of behaviour for councillors. With a code of conduct, councillors will know the standards to which they will be held and will bring councillors in line with members of parliament, local government employees and state government employees, all of whom currently operate under a code of conduct. The bill will also provide definitions of 'inappropriate conduct' and 'misconduct' as well as providing consistent and clear standards of behaviour for all councillors.

The Palaszczuk government continues to do its utmost to increase integrity, transparency and accountability in local government across our great state of Queensland. I have been disappointed to

hear members of the opposition consistently make statements to the effect that we should not ban donations from developers. This is the core finding of the Belcarra report. Even though they have made that statement I fully expect that, when it comes to voting, they will support the bill. They will say they supported the bill, even though consistently members on the other side have said that bans on donations from property developers should not proceed. I must say that that disappoints me greatly. I know that there are members with integrity on the other side who have made those statements. I can only presume that they have been told to do so. I am pleased to commend both the Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 and the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 to the House.

 **Mr McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (5.20 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the cognate debate on the bills before the House. I start by making the obvious observation that the Belcarra report derived from very clear terms of reference provided to the CCC by which it was to investigate developer donations in relation to local government elections. In fact, that is the comment made in the submission by the CCC. At no point did the terms of reference touch upon donations by developers in relation to state government elections. There is nothing in the terms of reference or, indeed, the report by the CCC that relates to or justifies the bill banning such donations from October 2017.

In relation to banning donations during state elections, Mr MacSporran QC in his submission to the committee stated, 'This may be sound policy.' He then proceeds to make a statement as to why he believes and the CCC believes that is the case, but he does not present any evidence in his submission, or in his report, or point to the terms of reference that allow the conclusion to be made as he has made in the submission. At best, it may be classed as a personal observation by either he or the CCC but, again, it is not based on evidence before this House. In fact, Mr MacSporran acknowledges that and gives the following warning in his submission—

... the Committee would be mindful that the Belcarra Report recommendations arise out of a detailed consideration of facts and matters relevant to the specific local government context and purpose of the Inquiry.

Mr MacSporran is warning the committee and, via that channel, this House that the CCC has not undertaken an investigation that can justify it making a conclusion that the bill before the House is justified upon evidence. In fact, in his submission to the committee he makes that comment in three different ways. There is nothing before the House to indicate that the government has complied with the basic test of evidence to substantiate the claim that the amendments impacting upon state elections should be put forward. There is nothing before the House today that the government relies on as the basis to even introduce this aspect of the bill.

The High Court in *McCloy v New South Wales* 2015 addressed the New South Wales legislation. Certainly, the principles of the High Court decision may well apply generally across all cases, but without a shadow of a doubt the facts of each matter must be considered against those principles. I make the point that, at page 19 of its decision, the High Court pointed to eight adverse reports since 1990 in New South Wales concerning land development. It relied on eight reports as part of the factual basis to indicate that it found the rules valid and justified. There is nothing before this House that lays bare the facts justifying this course of action being undertaken.

In fact, in relation to this bill, there is no reliance by the government on any facts at all. Today, there has been no comment that I have heard by any government member that ties developers directly in this state to corruption or potential corruption other than a bald statement in relation to state elections. No evidence exists before this House. If there is a legal opinion, I ask the members opposite to table the legal opinion. I have not heard a member of the government refer to a legal opinion. I have not heard a member of the government refer to a submission or oral evidence or testimony before the committee that justifies the inclusion of state election campaigns in the banning of developer donations. The fact that no mention has been made indicates that that evidence does not exist. Government members would be relying upon that to substantiate the existence of the bill in relation to donations during state elections.

This bill is politics, pure and simple. There is no analysis of Queensland's position at a state level as occurred in the High Court determination in relation to New South Wales. There is no evidence before this House of grounds for state elections to apply. There is no legal opinion to sustain the clauses in the bill as they exist currently.

The amendments to be moved by the shadow Attorney-General will, in essence, include organisations such as the CFMEU being unable to make donations. The government may argue, 'How are they corrupt in any way, shape or form?' My point is: where is the evidence that, in this state, donations by developers are corrupt warranting this bill? There is no evidence.

I remember that the member for Logan in his contribution ruled out the amendment proposed by the shadow Attorney-General as being 'unconstitutional'. Let us forget the High Court. The member for Logan has now given an edict that the amendment is unconstitutional. I can remember a similar argument being put when the member for Kawana, as the then attorney-general, introduced into this House the anti-bikie laws. There was uproar that those laws would be held to be invalid by the High Court. I ask members to read the determination of the High Court. The High Court ruled that, on the basis of what was challenged, those laws were valid. I compare that to Bill Shorten's rolled gold guarantee that Josh Wilson, Justine Keay, Susan Lamb and Katy Gallagher were as safe as houses. The High Court ruled them out.

Mrs D'ATH: I rise to a point of order. This has been a broad debate but I think talking about those federal by-elections has no relevance whatsoever.

Mr McARDLE: On the point of order, I was not talking about by-elections; I was talking about the High Court which was, in fact, raised by the member for Logan in the debate. I am responding to a comment made by a member of this chamber.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stewart): Thank you, member for Caloundra. Before I invite you to get back on your feet I guide you to speak to the long title of the bill.

Mr McARDLE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I am always guided by your wisdom and knowledge. I am sincerely touched by your sentiment. The amendment proposed by the shadow Attorney-General will touch upon organisations such as the CFMEU. We have to look at the recent history of that body. We have to look at what the court has said about that body.

We have to look at the actions of that body. If one refers to past actions justifying the inclusion of a body being banned from donations, the CFMEU fits nice and neatly within the confines of that definition. As the High Court ruled, there is evidence, on the history of the action and inactions of that body, that justifies them being banned.

What really worries me is that the ECQ did not come to a public hearing. That is a concern because it is the body charged with ensuring the law is upheld. They have snubbed their nose at a request of a committee of this House to explain to committee members exactly how the bill is going to work and, more importantly, what action they will take. It weakens the committee system when people of that stature do that.

The proposal by the government lacks any evidence whatsoever. It has no credence and is based upon a political desire to meet a commitment made in October 2017. I support the amendments proposed by the shadow Attorney-General because a level playing field is what is required. If any body fits the criteria of potential corruption, it is the CFMEU.

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (5.30 pm): It is with pleasure that I rise to speak in support of the cognate debate on the Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and the Minister for Local Government's subsequent amendments.

I begin by acknowledging the important work of the Minister for Local Government and thank him for his leadership and determination in this area. We know that he, along with the whole of the Palaszczuk government, wants to restore faith in our system of local government because honest councillors, decent hardworking council staff and the ratepayers of every council demand it.

The bill in relation to councillor complaints is in direct response to the independent Councillor Complaints Review Panel's report, *Councillor complaints review: a fair, effective and efficient framework*, and amends the Local Government Act 2009 and the Public Service Act 2008 to provide for a simpler, more streamlined system for making, investigating and determining complaints about councillor conduct in Queensland. Most importantly, it is about providing a councillor complaint framework that gives the community confidence in the way that complaints are dealt with and ensures a fair process for those councillors themselves.

From time to time there will be complaints made about councillors that are legitimate complaints that must be acted on and, from time to time, there will be frivolous and vexatious complaints made. It is important to have a process that is transparent and fair and for all individuals involved to have confidence in the system. In the current environment it is absolutely critical to ensure the integrity of the local government system and ensure public confidence in that system.

In relation to the stage 1 of Belcarra bill, the primary purpose is to implement the recommendations in the report of the Crime and Corruption Commission. We have heard tonight comments that we are ramming or rushing this legislation through. The CCC commenced Operation Belcarra in September 2016 following complaints regarding the conduct of candidates from several local governments in the 2016 election. In conducting Operation Belcarra the CCC found widespread noncompliance of legislative obligations relating to local government elections and political donations largely caused by a deficient legislative and regulatory framework. The Belcarra report made 31 recommendations to improve equity, transparency, integrity and accountability in Queensland local government elections and decision-making. The government's response supports, or supports in principle, all 31 recommendations.

This bill before the parliament today gives effect to the recommendations from the Belcarra report in relation to the banning of donations from property developers for candidates, third parties, political parties and councillors and strengthening the process associated with the declaration of councillor conflicts of interest and the management of conflicts of interest and material personal conflicts and penalties for noncompliance. Additionally, the bill extends the recommendation regarding banning donations from property developers in relation to local government elections to also apply to members of state parliament.

I welcome the comments of those on the other side who say they support the recommendations of the Crime and Corruption Commission and the Belcarra report. However, some of the speeches we have heard so far in this debate seem to trivialise the complaints and the issues that have come out of that investigation and the report. They argue that there is no link whatsoever between decisions made by council in the planning space and political donations from developers and decisions made by the state government. That is just not true. The state government has a significant role to play when it comes to planning in this state and working hand in hand with local government.

Mr Minnikin: You have been in for 25 years in the last 30! Next point?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): Order! Those on my left will cease interjecting.

Mrs D'ATH: The state government has significant powers in relation to the planning area. I find it extraordinary that those on the other side would say that there can be no influence, no perception of influence or no need to extend the recommendation of the CCC to ban developer donations at a local government level to the state level. That is a very convenient argument to be run by the opposition at this time. The opposition, when it suits them, have on occasions made accusations against ministers in relation to planning decisions. Even today in question time there were inferences made in relation to complaints made and acting on complaints from councils to state ministers. Those on the other side cannot come in here from time to time and throw around accusations about decisions of state ministers in relation to local government matters and then come in here today in this debate and say there is no correlation, no link whatsoever, around decisions by state ministers of any persuasion with local government. The fact is we need to restore confidence in the community around donations and around influence. The CCC has specifically identified a key area as being developer donations.

Mr Bleijie: Not to the state.

Mrs D'ATH: The CCC has specifically identified this as an area. The Palaszczuk government made the decision to extend this to the state on the basis—

Mr Minnikin interjected.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Manager of Opposition Business is regularly interjecting after being asked to cease. I will have to start warning soon.

Mrs D'ATH: These amendments are about the integrity and accountability of this state. It is about political donations.

Mr Watts interjected.

Mrs D'ATH: Those on the other side can interject as much as they want when talking about donations, but the fact is it is Labor governments—I heard the interjection earlier about how long Labor governments have been in power—that ensure transparency and accountability in this state. It was this Palaszczuk government that introduced legislation to bring political donation thresholds down. It was this state government that brought in real-time disclosure that is leading this country and is being considered internationally as well.

I thank the minister and I am very proud to be part of a government that is introducing these amendments. If the LNP was in government and had this report in front of it, it would not extend it to the state. Those opposite would do everything possible to ensure that they kept getting donations and did not have to disclose them.

Those on the other side believe in getting as many donations as possible and declaring as little as possible. These amendments are extremely important. In the time I have left, I acknowledge the amendments that will be moved in consideration in detail that go to a broader set of automatic disqualifications and automatic suspensions. If a councillor is charged with a serious offence that would lead to an automatic disqualification if convicted, it makes sense that once charged they should be automatically suspended while that matter is being considered. However, as a matter of procedural fairness and natural justice, they would continue to be paid while on that suspension.

It is also important that the minister has greater powers to suspend or dismiss councillors or dissolve a local government where needed. There is no question that these are broad powers, but they are important initiatives that the community expects us to act on. Lastly, I go back to the accusation made by the Leader of the Opposition in her contribution to the debate that these amendments, specifically about the developer donations, are being rushed through. They had gone to a committee before the election. They were reintroduced. They have gone back to a committee for the full period.

Mr Hinchliffe interjected.

Mrs D'ATH: They were endorsed by a general election; I take that interjection from the Minister for Local Government. Now they are before this parliament. That is the proper process—

(Time expired)

 **Mr MICKELBERG** (Buderim—LNP) (5.41 pm): Today I rise to speak in support of the amendments of the member for Toowoomba South and to call out the Palaszczuk government on its double standards relating to political donations. All political parties receive donations, as shown on the ECQ website. We can see clearly that the majority of LNP donors are individuals while the majority of Labor donors are unions. Therefore, I find it hard to accept that the objective of this legislation is to improve transparency when this legislation is targeted at only one section of the community and when it ignores the influence that unions and other sectors of the community have on the political process.

If we are to believe that the intent of this legislation is to increase transparency, integrity and accountability, then why wouldn't unions be listed as prohibited donors, just as developers would be under this rushed and politically motivated legislation? The answer is quite simple: such a course of action does not suit this government. Time and time again we have seen that this government will do whatever suits its interests, rather than putting the interests of the people Queensland ahead of its own.

Following the Belcarra review, the focus of which was local government only, the CCC concluded that the risk of actual or perceived corruption relating to developer donations to local councillors was real and the intent of this legislation as it relates to developer donation bans is to stop developers bribing their way through the developmental approval process, which is the jurisdiction of local government and not the state. In its submission to the Economics and Governance Committee, the CCC made it clear that the inquiry's terms of reference did not include state elections and, consequently, the Belcarra report recommendations did not involve any detailed consideration of corruption risks at state elections and decision-making. Therefore, rather than act in the best interests of Queenslanders, this government decided to use the Belcarra report as a political tool to further entrench and protect the unions in the political process, while demonising developers.

The Premier has decided to target one section of society by randomly coming up with ways of criminalising their participation in democracy. Corrupt politicians and councils were the real focus of the Belcarra review and it is of no surprise that, as a result, allegedly corrupt Labor politicians have been flushed out of local governments throughout Queensland. This is good news for democracy and for the people of the communities that those allegedly corrupt politicians should have been representing.

The High Court has said that there needs to be an evidence based response that is proportional to the threat identified. How can the unions be exempt from this assessment of threat to political corruption? Unions control who gets into a Labor government cabinet and which portfolios ministers get. They have been proven to directly and overtly influence legislation in areas such as penalty rates and trading hours. They were behind the creation of anticompetitive government owned EnergyAustralia so that the ETU could expand its membership base and undermine mum-and-dad businesses. We have seen ministers taking their riding orders from union bosses through improper means such as their mangocube6 personal email account.

Mr Costigan interjected.

Mr MICKELBERG: Thank you, member for Whitsunday; I take that interjection. Unions bankroll Labor election campaigns, so how on earth can they be excluded from policies and processes that are designed to improve political transparency and avoid the perception of influence?

The independent chair of the CCC, Mr Alan MacSporran, even raised concerns regarding the application of the ban on property developer donations at the state level when he said—

... we said in one line in the early part of our report that the government may wish to consider translating or expanding it to the state sector. We did not mean by that that it is an automatic translation, what we meant is that it needs to be considered in that sector, which should be an evidence gathering exercise, public consultation, sufficient to get a sense of what is really happening in that area. There is no reason in principle why the measures should not translate to the state, but that needs to be considered because absent consideration of it there is a potential successful challenge to the constitutional validity of the measure. That is the concern we simply had, that you cannot simply automatically translate it without giving it due consideration.

Through its actions, this government has shown that it could not care less about due consideration and investigation. The rushed inquiry process into this bill has been a farce, with even the ECQ failing to answer questions publicly.

Put simply, the aspects of this bill that seek to target property developers are politically motivated, which is evidenced by the fact that this bill was introduced two weeks before a state election and more than two years before the next local government election. If the Premier wants to demonstrate that the ban on developer donations at a state level is not politically motivated, she should accept the advice of the independent CCC chair and undertake an inquiry into state political donations before introducing bans at a state level. After all, the Premier did promise such an inquiry in 2015 and still she has not upheld that promise.

In terms of the information contained within the Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, I support the amendments contained in the bill as clearly the proposed changes seek to make a complex area less problematic. Like most of those who sit in this chamber, most councillors nominate for election because they seek to conscientiously and honestly serve their communities. In my own electorate, the work of Councillor Hungerford and Councillor Dickson is a testament to their dedication to the community in which they live and work.

Any conduct by elected representatives that diminishes trust and confidence in our local representatives should be dealt with swiftly and harshly; however, such an approach must be tempered to ensure that transparency and accountability remain the bedrock under which such behaviour is judged. Local governments share many of the same goals as the LNP. We both want to create jobs, build safe and livable communities, and protect our way of life. The LNP has always been a strong supporter of local government and we have always sought to work in partnership with councils and the LGAQ to deliver for our respective constituencies. We will continue to do so.

The people of Queensland deserve transparency and it is imperative that we build confidence in the electoral process. That is why I am supportive of those aspects of the proposed bills that address legitimate concerns. Earlier, the minister for state development mentioned the real issue of declining public confidence in the electoral process. I agree. It is a real issue that must be addressed; however, the abuse of process that has been exhibited in using this legislation for pure political advantage is the very reason that people have lost confidence. For that reason, I support the amendments moved by the member for Toowoomba South and I implore those opposite to put themselves above this dismal attempt to garner political advantage.

 **Ms SCANLON** (Gaven—ALP) (5.49 pm): I rise to speak in favour of the Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Prior to the 2017 state election the Palaszczuk government was working through a number of reforms to provide increased

transparency, integrity and accountability in local government. I know that a lot of Gold Coasters have been keenly awaiting the introduction of these reforms.

As a state member on the Gold Coast, I want to make sure that all families in my community are supported by their local government and that ratepayers' money is being spent wisely and free from corrupt conduct. I know that the vast majority of councillors, mayors and local government employees are good people who work in the best interests of our community; however, the conduct of a minority has diminished the public perception and trust of local government which has prompted these reforms.

We have seen the risks associated with councillors accepting donations from property developers and then voting on development applications from the same donors. In light of the potential for conflicts of interest to arise in these situations, we are reintroducing these bills to prohibit property developer donations at both a local government and state government level. In 2012, under the Newman government and the stewardship of then local government minister, David Crisafulli, we saw yet again another example of legislation being watered down. This has been a contributing factor to some of the issues that we see today in the headlines.

The Palaszczuk government has a proud history of improving integrity within the political system. Last term we introduced Australia's first real-time electronic donation disclosure system to provide more transparency for Queenslanders. I am pleased to speak in favour of these integrity reforms to implement the government's response to the recommendations of the Crime and Corruption Commission's Belcarra report. These two bills were an election commitment that we are delivering on and something that I know many members of my community support.

The first bill I will speak in favour of is the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. As well as prohibiting donations from property developers, this bill also amends the Local Government Act and the City of Brisbane Act to implement the government's response to recommendations 23 and 26 of the Belcarra report to strengthen requirements in relation to how a councillor must deal with a real or perceived conflict of interest or a material personal interest.

This bill requires that after a councillor has informed a meeting of their conflict of interest other councillors must vote at the meeting to determine whether the councillor has a real or perceived conflict and whether the councillor should leave or stay and participate in the meeting. Failure to comply with the decision to leave or stay will be an offence. This bill also requires any councillor at a meeting who believes or suspects on reasonable grounds that another councillor at the meeting has a conflict of interest or a material personal interest to inform the person who is presiding at the meeting of the councillor's belief or suspicion. Further, it will be an offence to take reprisal against a councillor or another person because the councillor complied with their duty to report.

Gold Coasters and Queenslanders need to know that there is integrity and transparency in all levels of government. That is why we have strengthened penalties to make a failure to declare a conflict of interest an offence. This bill also makes it an offence for a councillor who has a material personal interest or a conflict of interest in a matter to influence or attempt to influence any vote by another councillor or any decision by a council employee or contractor in relation to the matter. The committee also proposed amendments that follow a series of Crime and Corruption Commission investigations that provide the powers for automatic suspension of councillors charged with a range of specific integrity related offences and an additional power for the local government minister to dismiss a council when in the public interest.

The second bill that I will speak in support of aims to establish a new Independent Assessor to deal with councillor complaints more effectively and to enact a compulsory code of conduct for Queensland councillors. In July last year the *Councillor complaints review: a fair, effective and efficient framework* report was tabled alongside the government's response. This report was the result of an independent review commissioned by the Palaszczuk government.

One of the central components of this bill is to establish the position of an Independent Assessor and the Office of the Independent Assessor. The role of the Independent Assessor will be to investigate the complaint and relevant information about a councillor's conduct prior to determining how the complaint should be dealt with.

As the law currently stands, complaints in most cases are first considered by the local government CEO who makes a preliminary determination in relation to whether the complaint has

substance and amounts to inappropriate conduct, misconduct or corrupt conduct. If the complaint is deemed to be inappropriate conduct then the matter will be referred to the mayor or deputy mayor for further action. For allegations of misconduct the matter will be referred to the department's chief executive or delegate, who must consider whether the complaint should be dismissed or investigated further with a view to referring it either to the regional conduct review panel or the Local Government Remuneration and Discipline Tribunal to conduct a hearing, make a determination and impose any disciplinary action.

One of the key objectives of this bill is to simplify the current process, reduce duplication and red tape, and increase objectivity and transparency. The bill gives the Independent Assessor the power to initiate an investigation based on a complaint made or referred to the assessor's office by a member of the public, an organisation, a local government official or a local government.

The Independent Assessor will be empowered to start an investigation if they are made aware of information indicating that a councillor may have engaged in inappropriate conduct or misconduct and that the assessor reasonably believes it is in the public interest to investigate. The Independent Assessor will also investigate suspected corrupt conduct when referred to by the Crime and Corruption Commission. These investigative powers include the power to enter a place, seize evidence and require a person to provide information or to attend a place to answer questions. In order to carry out these investigative duties, the assessor will have the ability to appoint appropriately qualified individuals as investigators to assist.

Another key component of this bill is the development of a uniform and compulsory code of conduct for councillors to be approved by regulation. This code is important because it will clearly set out the standards of behaviour for councillors. The code of conduct, along with the definitions of inappropriate conduct and misconduct, are clarified in this bill and will provide expectations of councillors and clearly defined standards that the public can expect from its elected representatives.

This bill removes the confusing two-tier disciplinary hearing process, replacing it with a single Councillor Conduct Tribunal which will determine matters of councillor misconduct and what disciplinary action should be taken. I am particularly supportive of the establishment of review rights for decisions relating to misconduct made by the Councillor Conduct Tribunal. An application for review may be made to QCAT which creates a fairer system for those individuals who do not agree with the initial determination made.

This bill also provides strengthened offences to provide protection from reprisal for local government employees and councillors who make complaints about a councillor's conduct and to ensure confidentiality of investigations is maintained. This bill also provides increased penalties to discourage frivolous and vexatious complaints.

Both of these bills hold members of local government and state government to the standard that the public expects and provides integrity in a system that is clearly broken. I know that my community support reforms that aim to provide increased transparency, integrity and accountability. I have no hesitation in commending these bills to the House.

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (5.57 pm): It gives me great pleasure to rise this evening to speak in the cognate debate on the Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. It has been a very interesting debate this evening and the later part of this afternoon. It is almost like a little bit of tit for tat here. If you put on the table Don Lane, then I will raise you with a Gordon Nuttall or a Brian Austin. Then we will talk about Keith Wright or Leisha Harvey. We will talk about the phantom, the original Bill D'Arcy. I think it is fair to say that there is not one of the two mainstream parties in this chamber that can claim any moral high ground.

Secondly, I will centre my contribution around the local government councillor complaints bill. I reaffirm my absolute commitment to local government. I will quote from a book from the Parliamentary Library that I recently read written by Roberta Ryan and titled *A People's Federation*. Under the heading 'Local governance and efficiency' it reads—

A key justification for central governments establishing systems of local government is to promote efficiency. Two senses of efficiency are relevant here. The first has to do with economies and diseconomies of scale in the provision of services. Local governments can be more efficient in delivering certain services than provincial/state level governments. The second relates to allocative efficiency which involves ensuring that the bundle of government services and taxes matches as closely as possible to what people actually want.

I could not agree with those words and that sentiment more if I tried.

We on this side of the chamber have a strong history of support for robust local government. As has been said on both sides of the chamber, sadly we have seen some recent examples—in terms of sub judice I will not go into specifics, but it is all right to highlight that there have been issues in the local authorities of Ipswich, Logan and also the Fraser Coast.

In relation to the councillor complaints bill, the LNP do not oppose the bill as it is clear that, after an independent review, an overhaul of the existing legislative policy framework applicable for councillor complaints was absolutely required. We have absolutely no problem with that sentiment at all. We express our regret that the recent disappointing events involving the conduct of certain councillors—that is the key point here: like anything in life, we are talking about a small minority of councillors amongst the vast pool of councillors who go to their particular local authorities and do a great job every single week—whilst small in number, have nevertheless contributed to a situation where the community's confidence in their local governments and their local government representatives has been eroded at the very least.

This bill provides transitional arrangements for the commencement of the new councillor complaints system and, rather than using heavy-handed tactics, we stress the importance of the Labor government working in close cooperation with local councils and the Local Government Association of Queensland to ensure the successful rollout and implementation of the new framework. The primary objective of the bill—specifically the councillor complaints bill of the two bills we are debating here tonight—is to implement the government's response to the independent Councillor Complaints Review Panel's report *Councillor complaints review: a fair, effective and efficient framework* by amending primarily the Local Government Act 2009 to provide for a simpler, more streamlined system for making, investigating and determining complaints about councillor conduct in Queensland.

I note with interest that the key components of the bill involve establishing the position of the Independent Assessor and the Office of the Independent Assessor to investigate all complaints and information about councillor conduct and provide sufficient powers to undertake investigations where need be; strengthening offences to support the new councillor complaints system, such as providing protection from reprisal for local government employees who make complaints against councillors; providing for the minister to make a uniform code of conduct to set appropriate standards of behaviour for councillors; reallocating the functions of the current Local Government Remuneration and Discipline Tribunal and the regional conduct review panel by establishing the new Councillor Conduct Tribunal. That has been done so that it can hear and determine complaints of councillor misconduct. The last couple of key components are very important: establishing the new Local Government Remuneration Commission to decide the maximum remuneration payable to councillors throughout the state; and allowing certain review rights for decisions about councillor conduct, including review rights to the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal for decisions of the Councillor Conduct Tribunal.

Very simply put, we support the amendments contained in the bill and acknowledge that these proposed changes to the existing legislative framework applicable for councillor complaints will make addressing this problematic area far less challenging. Importantly, it will also help in dealing with concerns over the potentially conflicted role of chief executive officers, the CEOs, of council in assessing complaints against their own councillors in their own particular jurisdiction—in other words, one of their employees.

Many, many years ago, when I had a fine head of hair, I was the executive officer at the Redland shire council, as it was then known. It was a particularly interesting role because my role sat between that of the office of mayor and the office of CEO. I know that when conflicts arose from time to time between the elected arm and the organisational arm it was extremely testy at times for certain senior officers in relation to the way those conflicts and that complaint-handling mechanism was dealt with. To be very clear, the LNP has always been a strong supporter of the work that mayors and councillors do for the betterment of all Queenslanders. We know that local governments share many of the same goals as we do—that is, to provide jobs and to give their local areas the best quality of life.

What I would like to talk about in the remaining few minutes of my contribution are a couple of points in relation to the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. There is no other way to say this: this is simply political opportunism taken to a new level. We have seen a litany of bad behaviour from certain areas in the community—in other words, some of the puppetmasters that control the destiny and the decision-making power of those opposite. To quote the Deputy Premier—she always likes to look at factual based evidence—where has it been presented tonight by members of the government in their contribution to the debate? It has been zero, scant, nil, naught. Let us just roll the tape and have a look at union influence.

We know that they have control over who gets into cabinet and specifically which portfolio certain ministers get. We know that. They reintroduced the union encouragement policy, selling out the privacy rights of public sector workers. It is very simple: after maybe a couple of days or a couple of weeks, having been appointed an AO4 or whatever, you are at the water cooler and who do you get a visit from? You get a visit from your local union representative from whichever union they represent. It would probably go something like this: 'Hello, Cheryl. Hello, John. Welcome to the state Public Service. We are going to give you a little career tip. If you don't want to be encouraged to join up, not a problem. Enjoy your grey cubicle. Enjoy your potential view of the corner window one day because you won't be getting very far.' That comes with absolutely no influence whatsoever, does it! You might be better off though because, when it comes to the health minister, you could at least try to get PIN code access.

We move on to the CFMEU. We know the stories where they literally had to get in trucks to bury the evidence. This is simply political opportunism at its worst. I support the amendments introduced by the member for Toowoomba South.

(Time expired)

 **Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (6.07 pm): Mr Deputy Speaker, at the outset I would like to say to you and to the member for Chatsworth that I am a member of the CFMEU Mining and Energy Division and I did not hide anything. I was one of the people instrumental in outing the alleged corruption in Ipswich.

I rise in support of these bills today and I acknowledge the rules of the parliament in relation to sub judice. I would also like to say that I stand by my comments made in this House on 22 August 2017. The Premier was told by me that I believed the former mayor of Ipswich was allegedly corrupt. The Deputy Premier and then minister for local government also knew due to her role as minister for local government and her previous role as a member of the PCCC. Today we learn that hundreds of complaints were, in fact, sent to the then minister for local government in relation to Ipswich City Council. I want to know, given these revelations and the obvious lack of action, whether this amounts to official misconduct or maladministration or worse, given that very little appears to have been done, even though there is a duty to get on with the job and look at these matters and also a duty to notify the CCC of alleged corrupt conduct.

It is a disgraceful situation that complainants were treated in such an offhanded manner, and the people of Ipswich deserved better than this treatment. In fact, I believe such behaviour constitutes continuous reckless decision-making, reckless judgement and perhaps even reckless political favouritism, bearing in mind that many of the councillors in Ipswich were elected one way or another as Labor councillors or perceived to be elected in that way.

Due to this behaviour, we have had one officer of local government in the Ipswich City Council commit suicide. Many have been hospitalised due to stress, anxiety and depression. Many have resigned over the years in disgust. Many have been sacked. Many others have been paid out and forced to sign confidentiality agreements and pressured into not going to the CCC—not if they wanted to keep on living in Ipswich, that is.

This is not how Queensland local government should be run. To those many officers in Ipswich and all around Queensland, I want you to know that there are some members in this chamber who understand your plight. No-one else in this parliament will say it—although the member for Chatsworth came close—but I am going to. To you and your families, we say sorry. To your workmates, we are sorry. To your friends and neighbours, residents and ratepayers who know of your suffering, we are sorry.

It is time to close the door on this bad behaviour and wicked culture within some councils in Queensland. It is time for the people in the various regions to reclaim their councils. It is time for councillors to be put under the spotlight for their alleged unlawful behaviour and to face justice and for us to never allow or accept such poor oversight of their behaviour, including by ministers for local government and their departments.

It is time that residents stood up to bullying and intimidating behaviour—like in Ipswich where, if you wrote a letter to the editor and it was printed in the *Queensland Times*, the mayor or councillors would knock on your front door early in the morning or they would ring you and abuse you. It is time to stop the bashings in Ipswich, where two men were beaten—one was beaten to a pulp and hospitalised—to send a message to 'shut up' about council and other matters. It is time to rid Ipswich and other councils in Queensland of alleged corruption.

I will not go over the points made by other speakers, but the system of local government in Queensland has morphed from a service level of government to a big billion dollar industry and it is clearly overgoverned. Here are the facts. There are about 41 federal members of parliament and senators from Queensland who sit in Canberra, there are 93 MPs who sit in this parliament in Queensland and there are over 700 full-time councillors in local government. People in Ipswich are asking this question, as they are across the state: why does there need to be hundreds of full-time councillors to look after rats, rubbish, rates, roads and recycling, except maybe not the latter in Ipswich given the recent controversies? In other states, councillors are in fact part time. I get it reported to me from many people, particularly from air force people who move into Ipswich, that they actually had better service interstate than they do with full-time councillors.

I raised some of these issues over 10 years ago in this parliament. I asked the Beattie government to establish a remuneration tribunal because at that point councillors were elected and then they decided—as they do—what they would pay themselves and what perks they could have, like cars, travel, electorate offices et cetera. Whilst everyone in this parliament is talking about the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal, codes of conduct and all of that, it would never have happened unless I stood up in this parliament and raised the issue all those years ago.

As more people find the cost of rates and council services skyrocketing because of some of these issues, there are some councillors still with their heads in the trough, and it has to stop. When we look at the remuneration tribunal, there are certain categories of councils which are in relation to their pay levels, but that does not include their electorate offices, electorate staff, extravagant overseas trips, private jets and even allegedly paying wives to drive them around.

I want to make a couple of brief comments in relation to donations by developers. The bill refers to donations in money form, but there are other types of currencies to assist developers. I refer to the naming of state schools, the influence of councillors in this process and potential misconduct or official corruption. There is a process whereby school principals of new schools are required to consult with the community over school names, but it is in the developer's interests to have the school named after their development name. I am not talking about suburb names but their particular development name. They sweet-talk the councillors or the elected officials, the interim P&C, the principal and staff to potentially influence the vote and, lo and behold, the new school could be named after the developer's slogan or the development branding. It has happened in my electorate, so the developer could have added millions of dollars to their development company just by this naming process of state schools. It is gold to the developers because it increases the value of their development, but no money changes hands as far as I know.

I want to see an outright ban on this practice instituted by Education Queensland as it is wrong in principle and potentially corrupt in practice. Given what has happened in my electorate, should residents in the Ripley Valley look forward to seeing schools named after developments, such as Sekisui State School, Ecco Ripley State School, Providence State School et cetera?

Then we have the naming of new suburbs. People in Brisbane and other areas might not understand this, but the department of natural resources are in charge of suburb names and they consult with councillors and state MPs. A former colleague here, Ian Rickuss MP, wanted to name a new suburb after an Aboriginal name. He put the name forward and I said that I had no issue with it, and then he was abused by Ipswich city councillors. Why? Because the very name of a suburb can make a developer more money. Nothing about the Aboriginal heritage or history counts; it is about the almighty dollar. Again, no money changes hands, there are no donations. It is about the influence of councillors and council staff to assist developers.

There have been four sackings of councils in New South Wales in the last 10 years and another four in Victoria. I ask in conclusion that there also be an investigation into the Local Government Association in Queensland, because it has morphed from a union of mayors and councillors, which I have no problem with at all, into a big corporate conglomerate and something needs to be done about them too. I think the bill is very good but it only goes halfway.

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (6.17 pm): I would like to start by quoting the chairman of the CCC, Mr MacSporran. He stated—

The Inquiry terms of reference did not include state elections. Consequently the Belcarra Report recommendations did not involve any detailed specific consideration of corruption risks in state elections and decision-making. Accordingly, the reforms depart from the scope of the Belcarra Report ...

He went on to say—

... the CCC did not contemplate that the proposed reforms would be introduced without preliminary review to identify and mitigate corruption risks in state elections and decision-making. A proper public consultation process is highly desirable.

That is the head of our corruption watchdog. I want to talk about what would have happened if there had been an investigation. In Queensland, we have, let us say, 15 or 20 key developers. Imagine if, with the government's blessing, those key developers had been given the name, address, mobile phone number and email of every public servant—imagine that. Imagine the developers receiving this information.

Imagine if those developers could decide who could run for preselection for an election in Queensland for one side of politics. Imagine if the developers had that power over preselection. Imagine if those developers had power over who could be a minister in Queensland. Imagine if they had power over which portfolio those ministers could be given. Imagine if we had 15 or 20 developers in the state who had that kind of power over our political process. Imagine if those developers could collect other money from lots of other little developers and small business people and consolidate it into one big lump so it cannot be traced and then they just slid it all over the table to the people whose preselections they controlled, whose ministries they controlled and whose appointments they controlled. Imagine if we had 15 or 20 developers in the state who had this kind of power over our government.

Imagine what would happen if these developers could, through a little backchannel, have a communication with one of their appointed ministers in their appointed portfolio and discuss pay levels and suggest that maybe the pay levels should go up a bit because those people have been good contributors to this particular developer. Imagine if they had some control and influence over the taxpayers' funds through the budget process and through various tenders that the government was putting together. I would suggest to honourable members that that would be truly an undue influence and a potential political corruption risk.

Imagine if whilst Mr MacSporran and the CCC were investigating a report of people who might have undue influence over our political system they uncovered these 15 or 20 developers and their ability to communicate directly with everybody appointed in the Public Service, their ability to pick ministers and to arrange portfolios, their ability to influence outcomes of legislation and appointments to government quangos. I would suggest that, without knowing, Mr MacSporran would come back to this chamber and strongly suggest that that kind of influence over the political system and the spending of money in Queensland by a government would be a serious threat to the independence of our government. I would suggest that it would be sloppy legislating if someone came into this place and said, 'Without any due consideration I put a piece of legislation together and that, in the words of Mr MacSporran, 'there is a potential successful challenge to the constitutional validity of the measure.'

If we put all that together and we were living in a state where 15 or 20 particular developers have that level of control would anybody suggest for a moment that they do not have undue influence over the outcome of government, that they do not have undue influence over potential outcomes that are in their own benefit? What would happen if we had developers who sent some of their staff out to break industrial laws of Australia and when they were caught they just simply paid their fines for them? What would happen if we did that? I think people in this place would be rightly concerned that the level of undue influence was growing, and so I do question why this bill has been rushed into this place.

I want to talk about one other part of the bill, which is its retrospectivity aspect. To suggest that making this bill retrospective to 12 October 2017, interestingly enough just prior to the election, was not politically motivated in any way to disadvantage one side—imagine if there was a piece of retrospective legislation brought in here that said any union donations that are received will attract a penalty of \$190,000 and 10 years imprisonment and we made it retrospective to just before the election. Imagine what people would say.

I put it to honourable members as they are thinking about Queensland and its governance, what is good for the people of Queensland and the strength and the integrity of our democracy is that they should not bring legislation into this place that will allow one side of politics to have a distinct financial advantage over the other. I put it to them that they are not serving the people of Queensland. I put it to them that all the powers that I have suggested people would find abhorrent if they were given to developers are actually powers that exist for the union movement in Queensland.

If we are going to ban a class of donation and particular individuals who conduct business legally and legitimately in our state, complying with all the various rules and regulations, and to suggest that they are not allowed to participate in our democracy is abhorrent. More abhorrent is to try to do it in a political way that will make sure that only one political voice can be heard, only one thought process

can be heard in this place because that will not lead to good government. Good government comes from people listening to what happens out there in their community.

If members go out into the community and they listen to those people, they will find they are very concerned about the undue influence of the union movement on the decision-making of this government. I do not want to besmirch all unions. There are good unions out there and there are good members of unions out there. What I do want to say is that the level of influence is a serious risk to democracy here in Queensland and is no different to what it would be if we had 15 or 20 developers with all of those powers and controls available to them.

I am very concerned about the legislation. I think it is bad law. I think it will lead to unjust elections and, ultimately, it will lead to Labor losing government.

(Time expired)

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (6.27 pm): I rise to speak today on the Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The Palaszczuk government is taking a strong stance on accountability and transparency with these bills that we are debating tonight. We are delivering on our election commitment to improve the public's confidence and trust in our system of local government and we are strengthening accountability, transparency and integrity. I would like to commend the Minister for Local Government for his work on delivering these bills.

The councillor complaints bill will put into place a more streamlined, transparent and independent councillor complaint system. It establishes an Independent Assessor to investigate complaints and determine how conduct should be dealt with. From now on local government CEOs will no longer undertake preliminary assessments for councillor complaints. This will deliver objective independence into the process. The Independent Assessor will then determine how the councillor's conduct should be dealt with in a fair and objective manner. The minister will also set a uniform code of conduct for councillors establishing appropriate standards of behaviour.

We expect our democratically elected representatives to treat people, their fellow colleagues and the public with dignity and respect, performing their role diligently and not bringing the local government into disrepute. The Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill puts in place reforms to ban prohibited donations and implement amendments that will allow the minister to effectively deal with unacceptable and unethical behaviour in councils as well as illegal behaviour.

These amendments will correct an endemic problem in our system of local governance which has unfortunately created a situation where the public has lost faith in their elected local government representatives. I do commend the Minister for Local Government for tackling this problem head on and working to ensure that the public's faith in local governments can be restored. It is very clear to me and the people in my electorate that this trust needs to be rebuilt and that accountability and transparency must be strengthened and improved in order to move forward as a community.

On behalf of my constituents I want to ensure the best outcome for Ipswich and rebuild trust and confidence in our system of local governance. It is important that the people of my electorate have confidence in their elected representatives. They want to be certain that their local council is working in the community's best interests. They want a local government that they can trust and a council that can deliver outcomes and improve their community.

I do want to put on record the respect I have for all of those hardworking councillors who understand the privilege of representing their communities—those councillors who work hard and show their altruistic commitment to those who elected them—each and every day. Unfortunately, the CCC's investigation has brought forth a number of matters that have resulted in the public losing faith in some of their elected representatives. This has cast a pall over our system of governance at the local level which has accordingly created suspicion and distrust with regard to our locally elected representatives, whether they be guilty or not. Over time this suspicion and distrust can slowly erode the effective governance that is needed for the day-to-day operation of services to our communities.

The Palaszczuk government and the Minister for Local Government have worked hard to strengthen our legislation to make sure that we can restore the public's faith and trust in our system of local government, and I wholly support and commend these two bills to the House.

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (6.31 pm): It is also my pleasure to rise to speak on the cognate debate for the Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. It has been interesting to note the contributions we have heard, and I have listened to many of them throughout the afternoon. I want to acknowledge the shadow Attorney, the member for Toowoomba South, and also the contributions of the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Caloundra, the member for Broadwater and the member for Toowoomba North about whether we have the government in this case trying to stack the deck.

No matter how much we hear from the Attorney-General about the evidence—which was said to be obvious—that the extension of the Belcarra stage 1 implementation should be applied in the way it has been, from what we have heard about the public hearings of the committee and the Electoral Commission’s representation at the committee—or lack of it—there is no way that the case stacks up for the second part of the cognate debate on the Belcarra bill to have been added in the way that it has. That is the point that the member for Toowoomba North concluded with.

To use an adage which those opposite have often used: the mob will always work you out. This government thinks they can continue to do all of these things because, having changed the electoral laws, they had electoral success in the latter half of last year. Now they seem to think that because they have more people with more money and more ideas they are always going to beat us, but the mob does work you out over time.

In my opinion, the bill exemplifies the overreach of this Labor government, which is used to being in power in Queensland for much of the last century apart from when they have internal divisions. They think they can now stack the deck electorally, and that is what we are now seeing with stage 1 of the Belcarra implementation. I am very concerned. As the member for Toowoomba North said, people may say that we are bleating on and on about union influence, but no-one likes to see an unfair fight. It is true, as we have heard, that people do want politics to be a contest of ideas, but if you are going to nobble someone in a race in such a way that they are not allowed to receive assistance it is clearly not fair.

Mr Crisafulli: It’s not fair!

Mr LANGBROEK: It is clearly not fair. I take the interjection from the member for Broadwater. They are my concerns. I am also concerned about something we heard in this House earlier today, and that is that people should be presumed innocent until they are proven guilty. There have been a lot of implications in the media over the last number of months in relation to complaints about councillors being made to the CCC.

Whilst I acknowledge there are times when people think they can make a complaint and nothing will come of it, I do remember a time when I was the Leader of the Opposition and I went to the chair of the CMC. I asked him when the CMC would act on complaints received or noted and I was quite stunned to hear him say, ‘We do not normally investigate something if we have only read about it in the media once.’ The implication was that if they had read about it more than once, maybe it was something they would look into. That begs the question whether there are people who, in a vexatious way, can make complaints about councils or councillors—or even MPs or other levels of government—for which there eventually will have to be an investigation simply because people are making a number of complaints so now the CCC will say, ‘We really think we should investigate this,’ which leads to potentially vexatious complaints being made.

This is happening at the Gold Coast. I am not going to refer to any matters that the CCC has already taken before the courts in relation to the Belcarra investigation, but it does really concern me that some of the media report on every complaint and write about that complaint and the person who is being complained about as though it is a done deal. It is as though whatever it is that someone has alleged about a particular person—it could be a council, a mayor or a candidate—is reported about in such detail day after day.

These complaints are often made by the same group of people who are unhappy with a decision that has been made—in this case by the Gold Coast City Council—and page after page, day after day the media goes into every detail about the allegations. Remember, Mr Deputy Speaker, that these are just allegations, but when these repetitive allegations are made and extensively reported on—and in this case it is being done by the *Gold Coast Bulletin*—about decisions that have been made or are being made at the Gold Coast that have not fully been enacted, it does start to make people question whether everything is hunky-dory at the Gold Coast City Council.

I cannot pass judgement about whether everything is okay at the Gold Coast City Council. I would hope that many of the people who are implicated in what the CCC is going to investigate end up being okay as a result of it. I am confident that, with their knowledge of procedure, there will be nothing they will have to answer for. I am concerned that some of the people who have been making complaints are sometimes concerned about the same issues that I have been concerned about. In other words, I am not happy with what the Gold Coast City Council has decided to do, but what I do not do is say anything to try to make out that that means that their decision was tainted by implying that they are corrupt because they made that decision.

I am a member of the state legislature and we make decisions that sometimes councils may not agree with, but what I would not do is say anything to try to get that person into trouble. That is what I have seen at the Gold Coast over the last few months. When light rail was being put through the middle of my electorate in Surfers Paradise, people would say anything about the corruption they were alleging was happening on the government's side—the Labor side at that time until 2012—and then asked us to stop the light rail development because it was going to affect their entertainment venues in Surfers Paradise, and are now saying—

A government member interjected.

Mr LANGBROEK: People just did not want these things to happen. At the moment we are talking about the sale of the Bruce Bishop car park. The same people who complained about light rail not going through Surfers Paradise are now stooping to say that the current mayor is embroiled in corruption with the CEO of the council in relation to anything he has ever been involved with. The media also have a responsibility to abide by the dictum that you are innocent until proven guilty. They have a significant responsibility to make sure that, when they are reporting on these issues, the allegations are not necessarily given the currency they are given when you look at the background of some of the people who are making them. That is my concern about some of these things that are happening with Belcarra stage 1.

On the other side, we all know that councils play an important part in making Queensland the best place to live, work, play and raise a family. The reputations of some local governments have been tarnished, but it is important that we ensure our processes for investigating complaints are simple, effective and efficient. The Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill is intended to make the complaints process more simple and streamlined. It amends the Local Government Act 2009 and the Public Service Act 2008. It does not amend the City of Brisbane Act 2010, which also governs local government.

Under the current framework, three categories of conduct are defined which can result in disciplinary action for councillors: inappropriate conduct, misconduct and corrupt conduct. I note that currently no time frames exist for a complaint to be lodged or dealt with. The only time frame which exists is with reference to former councillors—that is, a complaint can only be lodged within two years of when the councillor ceases to be a councillor.

I note that anonymous complaints are accepted. In my electorate office, if I receive an anonymous complaint I throw it in the bin. If people are not prepared to trust me to use the information appropriately—if they want to complain to someone about me anonymously—I am not interested in it. I will treat it with the respect it deserves. It is important for all of us to make sure that people are given the respect of the presumption of innocence until proven guilty and to make sure we do not stack the deck when it comes to political outcomes in this state. I think the mob will always work you out. I hope that is what will happen here. On the back of vegetation management, an arrogant Labor government and this legislation, over time we will be returned to government.

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (6.41 pm): I rise to address the Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 and the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. With respect to the councillor complaints bill, it is clear that an overhaul of the existing legislative policy framework applicable to councillor complaints is required. Recent councillor complaints experienced by local governments across Queensland, whilst few in number, have contributed to a loss of trust and have eroded community confidence. It is disappointing that incidents involving certain councillors have had a broader effect across-the-board.

The legislation before us provides transitional arrangements for the commencement of a new councillor complaints system. It is incredibly important for the state Labor government to work in close

cooperation with local councils and the Local Government Association of Queensland to ensure the successful rollout and implementation of the new framework.

The bill's primary objective is to implement the Labor government's response to the independent Councillor Complaints Review Panel report *Councillor complaints review: a fair, effective and efficient framework*. The changes proposed will provide for a more streamlined system for making, investigating and determining complaints about councillor conduct in Queensland. The bill establishes the position of Independent Assessor and the Office of the Independent Assessor to investigate all complaints and information about councillor conduct and provides sufficient powers to undertake investigations. The bill also strengthens offence provisions to support the new councillor complaints system such as providing protection from reprisal for local government employees who make complaints against councillors and provides for the minister to make a uniform code of conduct to set appropriate standards of behaviour for councillors.

The functions of the current Local Government Remuneration and Discipline Tribunal and the regional conduct review panels will be reallocated by the establishment of the new Councillor Conduct Tribunal to hear and determine complaints of councillor misconduct. A new Local Government Remuneration Commission will be established to decide the maximum remuneration payable to councillors. The bill allows for certain review rights for decisions about councillor conduct including review rights to the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal for decisions of the Councillor Conduct Tribunal about misconduct and judicial review of an administrative decision of a local government.

The amendments contained in the bill will make addressing councillor complaints less challenging and will assist in dealing with the concerns over the potentially conflicted role of chief executive officers in assessing complaints against their councillors, who ultimately are one of their employers.

This bill stems from the work of the independent Councillor Complaints Review Panel's report, and this should be acknowledged as a guiding light for the reforms being introduced. Whilst the LNP supports the proposed amendments, it is important to recognise that in all probability the new arrangements will require further refinement following their introduction. Therefore, the Liberal National Party and I, as a member of the opposition, will seek to monitor progress to gauge the effectiveness of these changes.

I acknowledge that both the Local Government Association of Queensland and the Brisbane City Council have been consulted and support the policy objectives of the bill. Amendments have not been proposed to the City of Brisbane Act 2010 as the Brisbane City Council currently operates its own conduct process in line with the act. The Liberal National Party will, however, support a review of the new framework for dealing with councillor conduct within six months of its commencement to determine whether the Brisbane City Council would benefit from adopting the new system.

The Labor Party has a history of changing the industrial relations laws for all of Queensland's local governments without consultation, costing ratepayers tens of millions of dollars more. Labor's forced amalgamations caused major disruption across the state and in some localities a level of resentment exists to this day. A decade ago Labor took \$1 billion from the grants and subsidies funding for local governments which was critical to water and sewerage funding, leaving ratepayers to make up the shortfall. Conversely, in 2012 the LNP introduced the Royalties for Regions program, designed to boost jobs and help regional communities meet critical infrastructure needs. This program, with the combined value of more than \$790 million over the 2012 to 2015 period, was targeted at helping communities to better manage the impacts that resources sector development was having on local government infrastructure and services.

The LNP has a sound record of working in partnership with councils and the Local Government Association of Queensland and has continued with a regular program of engagement with them to ensure their concerns are fully understood and that LNP policies reflect the needs of councils across the state. The LNP will continue to work closely with the LGAQ and liaise with councils to encourage the smooth adoption of the new councillor complaints system and to monitor progress on how well it is meeting the stated objectives of the new legislative framework.

I would like to acknowledge the important and significant role of our councillors and mayors across Queensland who work for the betterment of their communities. I am very fortunate in Moggill to have a close working relationship with a number of local councillors. I know that local governments share many of the same goals as the LNP—to create jobs, to provide safe and livable communities and to build the infrastructure that Queensland needs.

Overall, councils are respected by their local communities, and any conduct by councillors that diminishes that trust must be addressed to the fullest extent possible in order to maintain the reputation and confidence that has been built over many years. To this end, both I and the Liberal National Party look forward to working closely with councils on the proposed reforms to ensure transparency and accountability remain the foundation upon which public confidence is maintained, enhanced and strengthened.

I now want to address the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. The Crime and Corruption Commission Belcarra recommendations for local government electoral reform are extremely important. Will the Premier accept the advice from the independent CCC chair and undertake an inquiry into state political donations before introducing bans at the state level, or will the Premier instead acquiesce to her union bosses? As the member for Surfers Paradise so eloquently put earlier, what the Labor Party is attempting to do is stack the deck electorally in its favour. The Premier promised such an inquiry in 2015, yet here we are in May 2018 still waiting for that outcome.

The Palaszczuk Labor government, by ignoring the CCC, shows that this bill as it applies to the state is purely politically motivated. Time and time again we see the influence of the unions on the Labor government. Back-channel email communications, policy demands and board recommendations: if this is not a case to ban union donations to political parties then I do not know what is.

The inquiry process for this bill can only be described as a farce, with the Electoral Commission Queensland not answering questions publicly. On 12 October 2017 the Premier introduced the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. This legislation was introduced, as we all know, before the November 2017 state election. The Premier advised that its provisions would be backdated to the date of the bill's introduction. As a result of the dissolution of the 55th Parliament, the bill lapsed. On 6 March 2018 the Minister for Local Government introduced the legislation that is before us today. This bill is substantially the same as the bill previously introduced.

The Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 seeks to do the following: prohibit donations from property developers for both local government and state elections and allow councillors to vote on whether another councillor's conflict of interest or material personal interest should preclude them from participating in council discussions and votes on the matter. Penalties are severe, with unlawful acts and omissions attracting fines of up to \$50,000 or two years imprisonment and with knowing acts to circumvent the law attracting fines of up to \$190,000 or 10 years imprisonment.

The relevant parliamentary committee had a range of stakeholders appear before it including, but not limited to, the Department of Justice and Attorney-General, the Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs, the Environmental Defenders Office of Queensland, Brisbane Residents United, the Noosa Shire Council, the Queensland Law Society, the Property Council of Australia, the Crime and Corruption Commission and a number of others. The Electoral Commission of Queensland received an invitation to attend the public hearing but chose not to attend and the ECQ then agreed to appear before the committee at a later date in a private hearing. This is concerning to the Liberal National Party as the agency charged with delivering such a far-reaching change to Queensland's electoral system should have been prepared to answer questions about the policy implementation in public, and neither the Crime and Corruption Commission nor the Queensland Law Society were consulted on the drafting of the bill.

This is a government beholden to the unions. Those opposite in this chamber know that that is the case, and so does the public. Unions have had control over who gets into cabinet and which portfolios ministers are offered. If there was a checklist for what this Labor government has done for the unions, it would read something like this: overtly supporting campaigns about penalty rate decisions in the federal IR jurisdiction when the powers were referred in 2009 under the former Labor Bligh government when the Hon. Cameron Dick was the IR minister—tick; scrap right-of-entry protections against militant unions like the CFMEU—tick; change retail trading hours in favour of and to support the shoppies union—tick; create Energy Queensland so that the ETU can compete against mum-and-dad electrical contractors and expand its membership base—tick; and consider a Teachers' Union veto for independent public schools—tick. We could go on and on and on. I will conclude by saying this: this is really a political witch-hunt—

(Time expired)

 **Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works, Minister for Digital Technology and Minister for Sport) (6.51 pm): There is nothing more important in government than openness, transparency and accountability and it is both an immense honour and an immense responsibility to be elected to represent the people of Queensland. Whether it is the federal, state or local level, it is incumbent on our elected representatives to act with integrity in all our dealings with the public, with business and with our colleagues in all levels of government. When elected officials fail to act with integrity, it undermines the confidence and undermines the trust of the people who voted for them. It also undermines public trust and confidence in the institutions of government itself and it detracts from the important business of government.

We hear regularly that local government is the level of government closest to the community. Every day it affects the lives of Queenslanders, our local services where we live, and the look and feel of the communities in which we live. Our community does not expect our elected officials to meet the same standards of integrity, accountability and transparency as the rest of the community. On the contrary, our community expects them to exceed those standards. While local government is supposed to be the level of government closest to our community, in many cases it seems that our local governments have drifted away from the very communities that they represent.

I want to draw some parallels about conduct. I can remember that some councils grasped with both hands the IR powers granted to them by the LNP when it was in government. They grasped with both hands the power to ignore their workforce, to ignore that workforce right to collectively organise, to strip away benefits like redundancy pay and to remove their rights to bargain for fair working conditions. While the Palaszczuk government has taken action to restore workers' industrial rights and successfully reformed industrial relations practices to protect those local government employees across the state, it seems that the attitude that was legitimised by the then LNP government that it was okay to run roughshod over a workforce—over the rights of workers—has outlived its very brief tenure in government. Council workers have to abide by a code of conduct, as do many other workers—public servants, workers in the private sector and in many businesses as well—a code of conduct which outlines the standards they need to meet to live up to those community expectations. Local councillors have not been required to meet the standards of a code of conduct and the result has been that, in a number of cases, they have separated from the community values of integrity, accountability and transparency, and in those circumstances we are compelled to act.

I want to acknowledge the amendments that will be moved in cases where local government officials have separated their values from those of the community. That creates an injustice that they remain in a position of responsibility, that they continue to exercise power over workers and power over their colleagues. It is the community's expectation that in those circumstances the suspension proposed by amendments to this bill ought to be executed and that suspension ought to remain in place until those matters have been resolved. What is clear to everyone in this state is that without those types of provisions the ability of elected officials or council employees to discharge their obligations to integrity and transparency under either their own moral code or the code of conduct by which they are bound is compromised. Their position is compromised and in many cases rendered untenable. The injustice in that is that if their position becomes untenable because they are unable to discharge their obligations to integrity and accountability then that has not been through their doing.

This bill delivers on our commitment to the principles of good local government, of transparent and effective processes and decision-making that is truly in the public interest, and of good governance and ensuring ethical and legal behaviour of councillors and council employees. It is not enough to sit by given prevailing circumstances. It is our responsibility to ensure we have a system of local government that is efficient, that is effective and that is accountable. With these bills we are delivering on that responsibility. I commend these reforms to the House.

 **Mr McDONALD** (Lockyer—LNP) (6.56 pm): I want to thank the members of the Economics and Governance Committee—the members for Logan, Pine Rivers and Redlands but especially the members for Mermaid Beach, Bonney and Ninderry for their guidance. A broad summary of the overall objectives of these amendments includes reinforcing integrity, to provide increased transparency and to provide increased accountability. It is always at the heart and soul of LNP members in this chamber to ensure integrity, transparency and accountability and to hold the government to account to these values. Together with my fellow members, it is our intention to ensure the public's confidence in government at all levels. It is clear from the independent review that there are only a few complaints occurring across local government but, in line with our community's expectations, any complaints and certainly any substantiated complaints will not be tolerated.

Like others here, I want to pay tribute and thank the local governments across Queensland, particularly those in my area. I want them to know that their significant contribution is appreciated. Like others in the chamber, I have experience in local government. From my 17 years I understand the broad range of services provided by local government and the sacrifices of the office. I also want to acknowledge that local government is a great part of our democratic system where community members put themselves forward for public scrutiny with the hope to positively contribute to their communities. This is democracy in action. Local government is a great system of autonomy for our local communities. Local government is community leaders doing the best for their community, determining their own destiny and determining how they spend their council's revenue.

I want to recognise the efforts of the Somerset Regional Council as well as the Scenic Rim Regional Council and the Lockyer Valley Regional Council and their CEOs. The Lockyer council consists of Mayor Tanya Milligan, Deputy Mayor Jason Cook and councillors Chris Wilson, Janice Holstein, Michael Hagan, Kathy McLean and the recent addition of Rick Vela replacing me in that chamber.

They do a great job for our community. The Somerset councillors, Mayor Graeme Lehmann, Deputy Mayor Dan Hall, Councillor Helen Brieschke, Councillor Sean Choat, Councillor Cheryl Gaedtke, Councillor Michael Ogg and Councillor Robert Whalley, do wonderful things for the Somerset Regional Council.

I would like to stress the importance for the government to work closely in cooperation with local councils and the LGAQ to ensure the successful rollout and implementation of the new framework. I ask members to remember that not all councils have the resources of the larger councils and any changes are a burden on ratepayers

Debate, on motion of Mr McDonald, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

M1, Speed Limit

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (7.00 pm): The last time I stood in this House I spoke about the impending deadline for the decision following the trial speed reduction on the M1. I said that I would take the matter to the community. Not only did I take it to the community but also other members have taken the matter to the community. The response has been overwhelming. Seated beside me is the member for Burleigh, who has taken the issue far and wide via a Facebook poll. I report to the House tonight that the member for Burleigh has had 16,000 respondents—16,000 respondents—to a Facebook poll about this issue. Fewer than 1,000 want to see the speed limit set at 100. Over 15,000 people have voted no to reduce the speed limits on the M1 again. That message is clear. It is decisive.

On my page, I had nearly 300 comments. People such as Carla said, 'It is totally ridiculous to lower the limit. If anything, they should be focusing their attention on considerable upgrades to improve the line and capability.' John said, 'It's totally unreliable data over a statistically irrelevant short period with change of traffic density, skewing the perceived results.' Vanessa said, 'Please push to keep it at 110.' Matthew, a paramedic, said, 'Who are the fools that keep proposing this rubbish? If the limit changes, you lose my vote.'

I suggest that we channel our energy elsewhere. The last time I stood in this House I said that, if the government were going to lower the speed limit, it should have another trial, because this trial was undertaken during the Commonwealth Games when there was not the same level of traffic on the road, but the locals have spoken. I ask the Minister for Transport and Main Roads to heed that advice. I ask him to please not do something that would put him at odds with the members of the community, who have been very firm on their view.

I ask the minister to channel his energy elsewhere. I ask him to stop arguing with Canberra, take the money that is on the table and fix the road. I ask the minister to stop arguing about the alignment of the second road and whether the corridor was in the plan or not. I ask him to begin planning and build a duplicate road so that we do not all rely on one corridor to get in and out. I ask him to please improve the on- and off-ramps. Mark Boothman, the member for Theodore, has exposed a ridiculous scenario. At a spot where we should be planning a wider on- and off-ramp, we are embarking on a project to put solar panels there. Solar panels are an excellent way of offsetting costs, but not on a road reserve where duplication needs to occur in the future.

Another point that has come through loud and clear is that motorists are saying, 'Let us focus our energy on making sure that, when people are travelling, they are doing the speed limit and that when they are in an overtaking lane, once they overtake, they get back to the other side. Let us make the M1 better. Do not change the speed limit.'

(Time expired)

Greenslopes Electorate, Anzac Day

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (7.03 pm): Like all members of the chamber and the people of our nation, on 25 April I joined my community to remember the sacrifice of those women and men who have stepped forward to defend our great nation and maintain peace throughout the world. At these community services I particularly thought of my grandfathers who served in the First World War and the Second World War, my cousins who served in Vietnam in peacekeeping missions, my friends who still serve our country and, particularly, my nephew, Ryan, who has just started his journey protecting our great country and our values. I would like to pay a special tribute to my wife's great-uncle, Harley, who died serving this country in the First World War. Although he lies in a grave in Europe, many of the subsequent generations of his family carry his name. I also reflect on those women and men who are still on active duty. Like many other Australians, I am proud of their service and I hope for nothing more than their safe return home to their families and friends when their mission is done.

I attended services at Coorparoo Secondary College and Greenslopes State School. The students at those schools clearly understand the importance and significance of the day. There were also three local community celebrations at Greenslopes Private Hospital, the Coorparoo RSL and the Holland Park-Mt Gravatt RSL Sub-Branch. All of those services are special and well attended.

I would like to pay a special tribute to Sonja and Alan Hellier of the Holland Park-Mt Gravatt RSL Sub-Branch. They devote themselves to the welfare of the veteran community. Together, they are a formidable team who spend their time ensuring that the sub-branch is well run and capable of meeting the needs of its members and their families. In doing so, they provide many other services that support the broader community, not the least of which is maintaining the fine community hall that is well used by the entire community of Holland Park.

Alan and Sonja organise Anzac and Remembrance Day celebrations. The fact that these are truly community events is evidenced by the huge support that the events receive. Local schools, churches, Scout groups, Girl Guides, local businesses, the police, the fire services and numerous veteran groups all come together to commemorate these important days. On top of that, thousands of community members line the route of the march on Anzac Day and attend the service, with many taking the opportunity to lay a wreath. Alan is the master of ceremonies, but Sonja is never far from hand making sure that the event runs smoothly and attending to all the details large and small. On behalf of my community, I wish to say thanks to Sonja and Alan for the work that they do all year round, but particularly for their service to the community on Anzac Day and Remembrance Day. Like other members of my community, I truly appreciate the opportunity to reflect on and honour the contribution of so many great Australians, particularly my relatives and friends. I am glad that I have the opportunity because of the tireless devotion of Sonja and Alan Hellier.

Sunshine Coast Mind and Neuroscience—Thompson Institute

 **Mr MICKELBERG** (Buderim—LNP) (7.06 pm): I rise to speak about the invaluable work of the Sunshine Coast Mind and Neuroscience—Thompson Institute, which is part of the University of the Sunshine Coast. The Thompson Institute conducts world-leading neurological research and combines this with teaching and clinical outreach services in the areas of ageing, dementia and mental health issues related to youth and adolescents.

The Sunshine Coast is a hotspot for youth suicide and is also the location of a large number of ageing people who have their own mental health challenges. The Sunshine Coast also has as a percentage of its population the largest number of veterans and veterans' families. Indeed, the director of the Thompson Institute, Professor Jim Lagopoulos, has spoken on the potential link between traumatic experiences and the consequent effect on the genetic make-up of those who suffer from such illnesses, which may result in effects on their children. Surely, the research of such matters should be a priority for governments at all levels.

Mental illness does not discriminate. We are all susceptible at all stages of our lives, but mental illness can be treated with appropriate medical intervention. It is vital that we invest time and money to

better understand, treat and train in this space. The Thompson Institute provides the model and the way forward to do that. To date, this work has been funded thanks to the University of the Sunshine Coast, \$5 million from the federal government and a considerable contribution from Sunshine Coast philanthropists Roy and Nola Thompson.

I table for the House my question on notice No. 251, in which I call upon the government to match the opposition's \$1 million funding commitment to the Thompson Institute. The government's response to my question was a thoughtless buck-pass to another minister. That response was disappointing, but not surprising. I am sick and tired of this government trying to avoid its responsibilities and blame others. Queenslanders are sick and tired of politicians playing politics on issues that should be above such tactics.

Tabled paper: Question on notice No. 251 of 2018 [669].

In my maiden speech I spoke about my experience with PTSD after I returned from deployment in Afghanistan. I am passionate about ensuring that the challenge of mental health is addressed, because I do not want to see anyone feel like they do not have a way out when they are afflicted with the demons of PTSD or depression.

This morning, the Premier stated that she wanted all levels of government to work together. Despite that sentiment, the Palaszczuk government has sat on its hands and watched the federal government, industry and even philanthropists do the job of the state government. It is time for those opposite to stand up and commit to the LNP's promise of \$1 million in funding for the Thompson Institute. Again, I call on the Palaszczuk Labor government to match the LNP's commitment and provide the Thompson Institute with the support that is so dearly needed so that, as a community, we can fight the scourge that is mental illness.

Order of Australia Association, Central Queensland Region

 **Mr O'ROURKE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (7.09 pm): I rise today to acknowledge the work and the efforts of the Order of Australia Association in my electorate of Rockhampton. The Order membership is made up of people who have received awards in recognition of their contribution to our country from the Order of Australia Association, our premier national awards organisation. The Order of Australia Association Central Queensland region, convened by Mr Ray Young OAM, who sits on the board of the Queensland division, recognises that many ordinary people in the electorate of Rockhampton make wonderful contributions to our society. It understands that recognising these people and engaging them to provide ongoing community leadership is vital for socio-economic development in our region. I for one am very aware that the ongoing economic development in any place is heavily dependent upon social cohesion and a community shared sense of purpose and intend to do what I can to support such approaches in Rockhampton.

Experience is showing that well-established and often large organisations in business, government, education and civil society have a much greater capacity to do the necessary work to nominate their employees than small organisations and community members. As a result, much of the work undertaken by ordinary volunteers goes unrecognised simply because of a lack of understanding of what is required to nominate people and then to develop a suitable nomination. To this end the Order in Central Queensland is embarking upon a community program to raise awareness of the awards, to identify suitable applicants and to support those wishing to nominate community members.

Recently, the Order of Australia Association Central Queensland region conducted a very successful public forum in Rockhampton. The guest speakers were Dimity Dornan OA and Queensland Senior Australian of the Year 2018 and Peter Milne AM, chairman of Animal Health Australia. I was fortunate to attend this annual morning tea function and I was very impressed by what the guest speakers presented and the interest shown by members of my electorate.

I congratulate the efforts of the Order of Australia Association Central Queensland region to ensure that those who have been awarded recognition by the Order of Australia Association can continue to play a leadership role in my electorate and for their efforts to encourage more nominations to the order.

Beef Australia

 **Mr PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (7.12 pm): I rise tonight to acknowledge and congratulate Rockhampton and the organisers of last week's tremendously successful Beef Australia 2018, an event that is a highlight on the Queensland calendar. Australia's famous and thriving beef industry was on full

display for more than 100,000 people, including 1,200 registered delegates from 43 countries who came through the turnstiles. The success of the week was a testament to the hospitality and the work of Beef Australia chair, Blair Angus, and his wife, Josie, and the entire board in the lead-up to and during the event. I also want to congratulate the CEO, Denis Cox, and his team for their hard work in making this arguably the most successful Beef Australia yet.

Beef Australia 2018 is a celebration of all things beef—the industry and the people who produce it. It is important for grassroots producers to engage with the world to facilitate new trade and exports. As well as delivering a networking opportunity for graziers, it provided a showcase for the quality, taste and health benefits of everything beef. The depth of the industry is demonstrated by the almost 5,000 cattle that are entered into the competitions.

Queensland's cattle industry has a \$4.06 billion farm gate value and is the largest in Australia. It is vitally important to the state's economy and the rural and regional communities it supports. When one visits towns like Rockhampton one appreciates the scale of the beef supply chain—from on the farm to the jobs it generates in the abattoirs and those who sell and cook it to the grateful consumers. The industry's importance as an employer and economic contributor to Queensland is impossible to ignore.

As a grazer and as the shadow minister for agriculture, I valued the many interactions I had with those who raised issues and concerns with the industry and its future challenges. They are proud of their industry and its success. Despite the state Labor government's attempts to suffocate the industry with its unfair and unbalanced vegetation management laws, they remain resilient. It was disappointing that the fly-in fly-out minister for agriculture did not stay long enough to talk and legitimately listen to those who attended. It was heartening to see many graziers dressed in green as part of a campaign in opposition to Labor's unfair and unjust vegetation laws—to see them take back the true environmentalist label for farmers throughout the state. Farmers are the true original environmentalists.

I particularly thank the opposition leader who joined me with the members for Burdekin, Gregory, Condamine, Callide, Clayfield and Scenic Rim at the event. It was a valuable opportunity to talk and engage directly with those within the Queensland beef industry.

Federal Budget

 **Mr STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (7.15 pm): Like the member for Jordan, I too eagerly anticipated the federal budget last Tuesday. Unfortunately I did not have the popcorn or beverage accompanying me. It was touted as the infrastructure spend for Australians. Boy, I was looking forward to that, considering it was Townsville where the first city deal was signed which aligned the federal, state and local governments to the one strategic direction.

It has been the Palaszczuk government that has been doing the heavy lifting when it comes to infrastructure investment in Townsville. There is \$225 million for Townsville's water solution; \$140 million for the Townsville stadium due to open for the 2020 NRL season—go the Cowboys!—and \$75 million for the Port of Townsville to widen the channel to allow larger ships into the port. Despite the urgency of widening the channel to allow those larger ships into the port, the federal government still continues to refuse to co-contribute to this essential project.

When Scott Morrison in his budget speech stands up and says he will stop the boats, that is exactly what he has done in Townsville. Why is it that the LNP Turnbull government wants to stop the boats on 800,000 people who rely on the Port of Townsville to supply their goods? Why is it that the LNP Turnbull government wants to stop the boats on more than 8,000 jobs that are linked to the Port of Townsville? Why is it that the LNP Turnbull government wants to stop the boats on canefarmers from being able to get their sugar to market from the Port of Townsville? Why is it that the LNP Turnbull government wants to stop the boats on graziers who export their livestock overseas from the Port of Townsville? Why is it that the LNP Turnbull government wants to stop the boats and prevent the cruise ships filled with tourists from coming to Townsville and spending their money in our local, small mum-and-dad businesses? Why is it that the LNP Turnbull government wants to stop the boats on the largest commercial port in Northern Australia that contributes more than \$480 million annually into the economy? Why is it that the LNP Turnbull government wants to stop the boats and drive up the cost of living for hardworking mums and dads?

I said on the day after the federal budget that Malcolm Turnbull's budget was a disgrace for North Queenslanders and that is exactly what it is. It is time for those opposite to decide whether they support North Queenslanders or whether they stand by Malcolm Turnbull and stop the boats from entering the Port of Townsville and strangle the economic growth in regional Queensland.

Callide Electorate

 **Mr BOYCE** (Callide—LNP) (7.18 pm): I rise to speak about the electorate of Callide. We are the energy hub of Queensland. We have coal-fired power stations, coalmines, the CSG gas industry and proposals to build large renewable energy plants—solar and wind. I came across an article written by Mr Viv Forbes, a geologist and Fellow of the Australasian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy, and I believe it is relevant. I quote—

Earth is a dangerous place. Of all the species that have ever lived, over 95 per cent have already been extinguished by natural disasters.

Ice, not global warming, is the big killer and this recurring calamity often strikes quickly. Thousands of mammoths and other animals were killed by ice storms and their snap-frozen bodies are still entombed in ice around the Arctic. Just 15,000 years ago great ice sheets smothered the northern hemisphere as far south as Chicago, Moscow and London and all life had migrated towards the equator. This deadly ice had gripped Earth for about 50,000 years.

Ice ages are also times of dry winds and drought as cold oceans and cold dry atmospheres produce little evaporation or precipitation. Great deserts like the Sahara and the Gobi expand, and wind-blown dust fills the skies and rivers.

One of the great serendipities of modern life is that man's use of carbon-rich fuels like oil and coal not only provides energy but also adds carbon dioxide plant food to the severely depleted carbon stocks of the atmosphere. Satellites have detected the resultant greening of the Earth.

...

Humans are not immune to the threat of extinction, but it will not come from today's warm, moist, atmosphere or from the gas of life, carbon dioxide. It will probably come from the next glacial cycle ...

In every short warm era like today's Holocene, the warming oceans expel enough carbon dioxide into the atmosphere to terrify today's global warming alarmists. And these times have always supported abundant plant and animal life. But never has "global warming" from this "greenhouse gas" prevented the cyclic return of the ice.

When blizzards blow and glaciers grow, the great ice sheets will spread again and mankind will be decimated by cold, drought, crop failures and starvation ... Those still able to extract coal, oil or gas may manage to generate enough warmth and carbon dioxide plant food to offset the cold sun, the perma-frost and the barren atmosphere ... (but the Neanderthals did not make it last time).

We should celebrate, not fear, the Modern Warm Era and give thanks for the many benefits gained from recycling those marvellous batteries of stored and buried carbon resources to our still-hungry biosphere.

Mount Ommaney Electorate

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (7.21 pm): Sunday was Mother's Day and I take this opportunity to pay tribute to the many wonderful mums and carers who are raising the next generation of Queenslanders. I give a very special shout out to the mother of the five millionth Queenslanders who was born today, wherever she is. That is a very special late Mother's Day present for her.

Across the state, many mums were gifted with beautiful flowers. Indeed, I was gifted with a beautiful posy of flowers from my wonderful independent local florist, Middle Park Florist. It made my morning to be presented with those gorgeous flowers, created by a local small business artisan. It was the perfect complement to my children's lovely and heartfelt hand-drawn cards. When I attended the Mother's Day evening mass at the Twelve Apostles Catholic Church in Jindalee, Father Carroll spoke of how a mother's love is like a bunch of flowers, warm and fresh. He noted that the unwavering love of a mother gives us all a warm beating heart in the family home and, indeed, that is my memory of my mother's role in my childhood.

While we know that flowers are beloved by mums the world over, it is wonderful to see that the John Oxley Orchid Society in my electorate of Mount Ommaney is equally popular with men and women. For those who are not aware, the John Oxley Orchid Society is a wonderful group of like-minded people who, according to their regularly updated website, love orchids, love to grow orchids and love to learn from each other. Meeting every month from February to November, on the second Wednesday of the month, they hold a mini show where members can show off their beautiful collections and gain points over the year, as well as listen to guest speakers from either inside or outside the society. It was an honour to be bestowed with my first patronage at the April meeting of the society. I was presented with a beautiful phalaenopsis orchid. I am pleased to inform the House that six weeks later it is still alive. In large part that is due to the generous advice provided by the members as to how to best care for my beautiful plant.

It is no surprise to me that they have such a strong membership base if all new members are treated with the same warm welcome that I received. As a local member, your greatest wish for your community groups is that they have a thriving volunteer base with strong support from their membership. It was absolutely delightful to see that their membership fills the hall at the Oxley Bowls

Club each month and continues to draw in new members. Most recently, Mrs Thirkill signed up. I imagine that a large part of their ability to attract interested members would be down to their beautifully designed and continually updated website, which I mentioned earlier. I encourage all western suburbs gardeners looking to meet like-minded plant lovers to sign up. There is a wonderful group with a blooming membership base and everyone is welcome.

Cardwell

 **Mr DAMETTO** (Hinchinbrook—KAP) (7.24 pm): Once again the Cardwell community will regain the status of the jewel in the crown of North Queensland following yesterday's Supreme Court decision. Justice James Henry determined that applicant Sino-Resource Import and Export Company Ltd is the legitimate mortgagee of Port Hinchinbrook after a lengthy court battle with Oakland Investment Group Ltd. This decision will provide some much needed clarity for many locals who will now know who owns the development. I acknowledge that, while this decision will not fix all of Port Hinchinbrook's problems, at least all parties involved will have a starting block from which to move forward. When it comes to the maintenance of essential services such as roads and sewerage systems, everyone will need to work together to ensure the residential development and the marina get back on their feet.

This decision has been a long time coming. I know many residents have been eagerly awaiting the outcome. Now we need to work together to solve the many longstanding problems that have plagued the development. It is time for state and local government to work together and stop wiping their hands of the issues. Now that we have a court decision, I can see an opportunity for residents to put their differences aside and start working with the declared mortgagee of Port Hinchinbrook.

Once again I take this opportunity to urge the state government to step in and help with the maintenance dredging of One Mile Creek to restore tidal access to Cardwell's coastguard. One of the major hurdles with dredging One Mile Creek has been the dilemma of where to store the dredge spoil. Now there has been a clear directive on who controls the property, I suggest that the state government work with the developer and use the existing spoil storage ponds on the property to dredge One Mile Creek. One Mile Creek is a state owned waterway.

This week must have been a good news week for Cardwell, as a public meeting will be called tomorrow for all residents to hear who the prospective buyer of the Hinchinbrook Island resort will be. This Wednesday, a public meeting will hear how he looks to rehabilitate the island's lease in a bid to build a low-impact ecotourism resort that will be designed to bring holidaying families to Cardwell and Hinchinbrook Island. Community members will be invited to offer their ideas on how to best redesign the resort to help support the Cardwell region. It has been seven years since Cyclone Yasi, which was the catalyst for the undoing of Port Hinchinbrook and the Hinchinbrook Island resort, and the Cardwell community has never fully recovered. Ventures such as this will provide economic stability to the region. As a past tourism operator, I can see the potential in Cardwell and the seaside town that those residents call home.

Gladstone Literacy Centre

 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (7.27 pm): Tonight I rise to speak about the Gladstone Literacy Centre and the specialised program that has been successfully making a difference to primary school children in Gladstone since 2001. Last month it was fantastic to see the Palaszczuk government launch a suite of initiatives to support reading and writing, and to strengthen children's literacy in Queensland. The Premier's Reading Challenge is again encouraging children to read, as is the reintroduction of the successful Ready Reader Program, which was scrapped by the short-sighted LNP government in 2012. The Palaszczuk government is investing more than \$1.5 million to support up to 3,000 reading volunteers in our schools to share their love of reading.

Children are our future and literacy is the foundation of their education. Should they struggle with literacy, their education will suffer. In my electorate, 559 children have been given a second chance and have completed a program that changes lives. The cornerstone of the Gladstone Literacy Centre program, in partnership with Education Queensland, is the dedicated and passionate trained volunteer reading tutors who spend 20 minutes a day one-on-one with each student, pausing, prompting and praising their reading. Collectively, that is 40 hours each week spent listening to children read. Available to years 3 to 6 students with a reading age assessed to be two or more years below their chronological age, the program gives each student a personal program pitched at their level of ability. On average, the program is delivering an increase in accuracy and comprehension of 15 months above initial assessment, which is fantastic for those kids.

The key to this success is that each student is given time to master each essential foundation stone of literacy before moving on. As their confidence grows, their ability to read grows, as does their comprehension and ability to write, and their enjoyment of learning increases. Learning is celebrated with weekly awards, photos and phone calls to parents. Each student also learns responsibility, social skills, discipline, independence, self-belief and time management. The success stories are notable and reports from parents, teachers and guidance officers are that with increased confidence the students are thriving.

The Rotary Club of South Gladstone runs a weekly mentoring program, engaging business leaders, past students, emergency service workers and elected officers to speak with students. My twin brother and I have been invited to speak to the current intake, which has eight sets of twins across the two groups. It will be a privilege to swap twin stories with the kids. In closing, I make special mention of the very humble founder of the program, Mr Chris Tanner, who in 2015 was acknowledged for service to education in the Gladstone community with an Order of Australia medal.

The House adjourned at 7.30 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Andrew, Bailey, Bates, Batt, Bennett, Berkman, Bleijie, Bolton, Boothman, Boyce, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Costigan, Crandon, Crawford, Crisafulli, D'Ath, Dametto, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Frecklington, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Hart, Healy, Hinchliffe, Howard, Hunt, Janetzki, Jones, Katter, Kelly, King, Knuth, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Lauga, Leahy, Linard, Lister, Lui, Lynham, Madden, Mander, McArdle, McDonald, McMahan, McMillan, Mellish, Mickelberg, Miles, Millar, Miller, Minnikin, Molhoek, Mullen, Nicholls, O'Connor, O'Rourke B, O'Rourke C, Palaszczuk, Pease, Pegg, Perrett, Pitt, Powell, Power, Pugh, Purdie, Richards, Robinson, Rowan, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Simpson, Sorensen, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Trad, Watts, Weir, Whiting, Wilson