



RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SIXTH PARLIAMENT

Tuesday, 26 February 2019

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TUESDAY, 26 FEBRUARY 2019

 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 certain bills. The contents of the letter will be incorporated in the *Record of Proceedings*. I table the letter for the information of members.

The Honourable 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 Bills, 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: 21 February 2019

A Bill for an Act to amend the Criminal Code for particular purposes

A Bill for an Act to amend the Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011 for particular purposes

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

Yours sincerely


Governor

21 February 2019

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 21 February 2019, from His Excellency the Governor to the Speaker advising of assent to certain bills on 21 February 2019 [[232](#)].

REPORT


Auditor-General

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I have to report that I have received from the Auditor-General report No. 13 of 2018-19 titled *Health: 2017-18 results of financial audits*. I table the report for the information of members.

Tabled paper: Auditor-General of Queensland: Report to Parliament No. 13: 2018-19—Health: 2017-18 results of financial audits [[233](#)].

SPEAKER'S RULING

Irregularities in Petition

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, the Clerk has reported to me that the software that enables the Assembly's e-petition system has revealed a large number of irregularities in e-petition No. 3003-18, which proposes a three-year trial of conservation hunting in Queensland state forests. The Clerk advises that it appears that approximately 17 per cent of persons who joined the petition have duplicated their joining. Indeed, it appears that some petitioners have joined the petition up to 15 times.

Honourable members interjected.


Mr SPEAKER: Order! Members, that was not an invitation for commentary.

Honourable members interjected.


Mr SPEAKER: I will wait for silence. Under the standing orders and the conditions of use, a petitioner can join a petition only once. Duplicate signatories have been deleted.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS

School Group Tours

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I wish to advise that we will be visited in the House this morning by students and teachers from Mater Dei Primary School in the electorate of Toowoomba North, Kingston College in the electorate of Woodridge, and Mount Alvernia College in the electorate of Stafford.

Absence of Deputy Clerk

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I inform the House that the Deputy Clerk, Michael Ries, will be absent from parliament this week. Sadly, the Deputy Clerk's father passed away last night. On behalf of all members, I wish to place on record that our thoughts and prayers are with the Deputy Clerk and his family at this time.

PETITIONS

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

Recreational Hunting

Mr Dametto, from 13,576 petitioners, requesting the House to propose a 3-year trial of recreational hunting in Queensland's State Forests and establish a Restricted Game License scheme similar to New South Wales [\[234\]](#).

Mount Crosby Road-Warrego Highway Interchange, Upgrade

Mr Madden, from 1,736 petitioners, requesting the House to expedite the proposed upgrade of the Mount Crosby Road—Warrego Highway interchange [\[235\]](#).

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

Valuation Registration Board, Independence

From 161 petitioners, requesting the House to have the Valuation Registration Board chaired by other than the Valuer-General and independent from the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy [\[236\]](#).

Recreational Hunting

From 2,317 petitioners, requesting the House to reject all requests to open up state forests to recreational shooters and to maintain and toughen up our world-leading gun laws [\[237\]](#).

PA Hospital-Boggo Road Precinct, Cycling Infrastructure

From 349 petitioners, requesting the House to ensure that a cycle connection is provided from the PA Hospital to the Boggo Road precinct as part of the Cross River Rail project [\[238\]](#).

Petitions received.

TABLED PAPERS

PAPERS TABLED DURING THE RECESS (SO 31)

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

15 February 2019—

[197](#) State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development Committee: Report No. 22, 56th Parliament—Subordinate legislation No. 179: Fisheries (Vessel Tracking) Amendment Regulation 2018

[198](#) Innovation, Tourism Development and Environment Committee: Report No. 12, 56th Parliament, February 2019—Examination of Auditor-General Report No. 16 of 2017-18: Follow-up of managing water quality in Great Barrier Reef Catchments

[199](#) Innovation, Tourism Development and Environment Committee: Report No. 13, 56th Parliament—Subordinate legislation tabled between 19 September 2018 and 30 October 2018

[200](#) Education, Employment and Small Business Committee: Report No. 9, 56th Parliament, November 2018—A fair day's pay for a fair day's work? Exposing the true cost of wage theft in Queensland, government response

[201](#) Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee: Report No. 27, 56th Parliament—Subordinate legislation tabled between 5 September 2018 and 16 October 2018

[202](#) Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee: Report No. 28, 56th Parliament—Subordinate legislation tabled between 17 October 2018 and 30 October 2018

18 February 2019—

[203](#) Queensland Building and Construction Commission: Code of Conduct for Adjudicators, Version 1.0, November 2018

19 February 2019—

[204](#) Letter, dated 19 February 2019, from the Minister for State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning (Hon. Cameron Dick) to the Clerk of the Parliament, requesting tabling of the Albert Street Cross River Rail Priority Development Area interim land use plan and regulation map.

[205](#) Albert Street Cross River Rail Priority Development Area Interim Land Use Plan, December 2018

[206](#) Albert Street Cross River Rail Priority Development Area Regulation Map

[207](#) Professional Standards Act 2004: Professional Standards (Bar Association of Queensland Professional Standards Scheme) Notice 2019, No. 9

[208](#) Professional Standards Act 2004: Professional Standards (Bar Association of Queensland Professional Standards Scheme) Notice 2019, No. 9, explanatory notes

[209](#) Professional Standards Act 2004: The Bar Association of Queensland, Professional Standards Scheme [Refer to Professional Standards (Bar Association of Queensland Professional Standards Scheme) Notice 2019, Subordinate legislation No. 9 of 2019]

25 February 2019—

[210](#) Professional Standards Act 2004: Professional Standards (Australian Computer Society Professional Standards Scheme) Notice 2019, No. 14

[211](#) Professional Standards Act 2004: Professional Standards (Australian Computer Society Professional Standards Scheme) Notice 2019, No. 14, explanatory notes

[212](#) Professional Standards Act 2004: Australian Computer Society Professional Standards Scheme—Professional Standards Act 1994 (NSW) [Refer Professional Standards (Australian Computer Society Professional Standards Scheme) Notice 2019, Subordinate Legislation No. 14 of 2019]

[213](#) Economics and Governance Committee: Report No. 22, 56th Parliament—Subordinate legislation tabled between 5 September 2018 and 30 October 2018

[214](#) Speaker's statement—Answers to questions on notice

TABLING OF DOCUMENTS (SO 32)

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

The following statutory instruments were tabled by the Clerk—

Planning Act 2016:

[215](#) Planning (Excluded Development) Amendment Regulation 2019, No. 6

[216](#) Planning (Excluded Development) Amendment Regulation 2019, No. 6, explanatory notes

Crime and Corruption and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2018:

[217](#) Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 7

[218](#) Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 7, explanatory notes

Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994:

[219](#) Rural and Regional Adjustment (North and Far North Queensland Flood Disaster Recovery Funding) Amendment Regulation 2019, No. 8

[220](#) Rural and Regional Adjustment (North and Far North Queensland Flood Disaster Recovery Funding) Amendment Regulation 2019, No. 8, explanatory notes

State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999:

[221](#) State Penalties Enforcement (Hospital and Health and Regulated Waste) Amendment Regulation 2019, No. 10

[222](#) State Penalties Enforcement (Hospital and Health and Regulated Waste) Amendment Regulation 2019, No. 10, explanatory notes

Water Act 2000:

[223](#) Water Plan (Condamine and Balonne) 2019, No. 11

[224](#) Water Plan (Condamine and Balonne) 2019, No. 11, explanatory notes

Water Act 2000:

[225](#) Water Plan (Border Rivers and Moonie) 2019, No. 12

[226](#) Water Plan (Border Rivers and Moonie) 2019, No. 12, explanatory notes

Legal Profession Act 2007:

[227](#) Legal Profession (Society Rules) Amendment Notice 2019, No. 13

[228](#) Legal Profession (Society Rules) Amendment Notice 2019, No. 13, explanatory notes

REPORT BY THE CLERK

The following report was tabled by the Clerk—

[239](#) Report pursuant to Standing Order 165 (Clerical errors or formal changes to any bill) detailing amendments to certain Bills, made by the Clerk, prior to assent by His Excellency the Governor, viz—

Waste Reduction and Recycling (Waste Levy) Amendment Bill 2019

Amendment made to the Bill*

Clause 19 (Insertion of new ch 16, pt 3)


Page 99, lines 4 and 5, 'and Other Legislation'—

omit.

* The following page and line number references relate to the Bill, as amended.


SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

Visitors to Public Gallery

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I have been informed that former member for Burdekin Mark Stoneman and his wife, Joan, are in the gallery today.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Building and Construction Industry

 **Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works, Minister for Digital Technology and Minister for Sport) (9.35 am): I give notice that I will move—

That this House—

1. notes:

- (a) that under the supervision of the member for Everton, the Liberal National Party removed mandatory financial reporting for licensees in the building and construction industry—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Pause the clock. Minister, please resume your seat. Members, I have made myself clear that when motions as part of preliminary business are being read I expect to hear those motions in silence. That will be my last warning today.

Mr de BRENNI: I will continue—

- (b) the extensive consultation conducted by the Palaszczuk government leading to the development of the Queensland Building Plan which includes a suite of reforms to address security of payment;
- (c) that the independent Building Industry Fairness Implementation and Evaluation Panel was established to assess the implementation of the Palaszczuk government's building industry fairness reforms and that it will report to government in March 2019;
- (d) the Commonwealth government commissioned Murray report identifies the Queensland model of project bank accounts as best-practice;
- (e) the failings the Australian Securities and Investments Commission to fully enforce Australian corporate law as it relates to the building and construction industry;
- (f) that while the LNP federal government has failed to support subcontractors, this House welcomes federal Labor leader Bill Shorten's commitment to introduce project bank accounts—

Honourable members interjected.


Mr SPEAKER: Order! There will be a time and place to debate the motion. At the moment, I would like to hear the motion as it is being read to the parliament.

Mr de BRENNI: I will recommence that paragraph—

- (f) that while the LNP federal government has failed to support subcontractors, this House welcomes federal Labor leader Bill Shorten's commitment to introduce project bank accounts, target phoenix activity and establish a litigation fund for subcontractors to access justice; and
2. calls on the Prime Minister to include national action on security of payment, phoenixing and industry law enforcement at the next COAG meeting.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS


Ross River, Deaths

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.37 am): In the last month the people of Townsville have had to endure a lot of heartache and wrenching despair and now they must endure more. Yesterday afternoon, two young brothers, aged three and five, set off on an adventure that would end in tragedy. When an amber alert was issued, the people of Townsville did what they always do: they banded together to look after their own.

Police, fire and rescue crews and members of the community came together to search the banks of the Ross River, which are still impacted by the flood. They spent the night searching regardless of their own personal hardships after the floods. Once again I thank the people of Townsville, both civilians and those in uniform, for their dedication and passion for their community.

Sadly, early this morning we learned that two little bodies were found in the Ross River. The hearts of all Queenslanders go out to their family on this unimaginable loss.

Floods, Recovery Assistance


 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.38 am): As the House is acutely aware, Queensland is recovering from yet another natural disaster. Across late January and early February, the northern parts of our state received unprecedented rainfall as an almost stationary monsoon trough led to major flooding and damage across 35 local government areas. For some communities in the gulf region the flooding continues. For other communities the long road to recovery has begun.

Last week I met with the McKinlay shire mayor, Belinda Murphy, and cattle producers in Julia Creek to see how they were getting on and to see what more assistance we could provide. I was joined by State Recovery Coordinator Major General Stuart Smith, QFES Commissioner Katarina Carroll and Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries Mark Furner. Some cattle producers in the McKinlay shire have been on the land for up to four generations. While life on the land has taught them resilience, they told me the floods were the biggest blow they have ever faced. That was hard to hear. Recovery and financial assistance is happening but there are many hurdles to overcome. That is why this Thursday Minister Furner and I will be meeting with the beef industry stakeholders and AgForce to outline our recovery plan for both the short term and the longer term.

Special Disaster Assistance Recovery Grants up to a maximum of \$75,000 are available to help primary producers with clean-up and reinstatement costs, and that money has started to flow. A carcass disposal plan was adopted in Richmond last week and was signed by the Commonwealth and state governments and the five impacted councils from the north-west local government areas. Queensland Rail has created a dedicated task force to lead the recovery of more than 200 kilometres of flood damaged track on the Mount Isa line. More than 400 Queensland Rail employees and contractors are already working on repairs. The coordinated recovery crew means the repair time is down to eight to 12 weeks, subject to favourable weather and construction conditions, and we hope that the line can be reopened in late April or mid-May.

While in Julia Creek it was a pleasure to drop into the Queensland Country Women's Association Julia Creek branch to announce a \$50,000 donation to the organisation to help western communities recover. I want to thank the ladies for their wonderful hospitality and for their ongoing work helping the community. I will be talking about recovery in Townsville a little later and will update the House whenever I can on how progress is going across the entire north. It might be long and it might be hard, but I want to reiterate to everyone affected that we are here for you and we are in it for the long haul.


Disaster Resilience Fund

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.41 am): Queensland is no stranger to natural disasters. In fact, we are the most disaster impacted state in Australia. We have had more than our fair share of late. From catastrophic bushfires, unprecedented floods and unpredictable cyclones, we have had nine natural disasters this financial year alone. Since 2011 this state has faced more than 60 natural disasters causing more than \$14.5 billion in damage to public infrastructure while disrupting homes, schools and businesses.

While we are still recovering from the recent flooding events in the north, communities need to be planning for future events. My government is 100 per cent committed to helping make sure we are the most disaster resilient state in Australia. That is why today I am announcing that local governments, state agencies and non-government organisations can now apply for a share of the \$38 million Queensland Disaster Resilience Fund for initiatives that will better protect Queensland communities from natural disasters.


The \$38 million will be delivered over four years with \$9.5 million available in the first round of funding. The fund will support opportunities identified by applicants that build community resilience including infrastructure projects as well as regional resilience plans and public education programs. These initiatives have the potential to save lives as well as time and money spent on disaster reconstruction and recovery at all levels of government. I encourage local governments, departments and agencies, NGOs and not-for-profit organisations to apply. The first round closes on 18 April 2019. Applicants can head to the Queensland Reconstruction Authority website for more information.

Stewart, Commissioner I

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.42 am): I want to place on the record the government's deep appreciation for the service of Police Commissioner Ian Stewart. Mr Stewart joined the service in 1973. He knows Queensland like the back of his hand because, like many police, he has served in its regional cities and towns. It is this ground-up knowledge that we came to rely on during more than a dozen cyclones, storms, floods and fires through which Commissioner Stewart steered us as State Disaster Coordinator. As Yasi, Owen, Debbie and others became household names, so did Commissioner Stewart, calmly warning us when to take cover and when to get out. But once a traffic cop, always a traffic cop. His passion was trying to address the road toll because he knew what it was like as a police officer to attend those crashes and to knock on a door and tell someone the person they loved would not be making it home.

The commissioner will retire in July. A worldwide search will be conducted to find a replacement. It will be a merit based selection with many fine candidates already in Queensland because of Commissioner Stewart's outstanding mentoring. As I said at a media conference yesterday, when you are in trouble your friends do not stand behind you; they stand beside you. Commissioner Stewart has stood beside us in our darkest hours. He leaves Queensland a better place.

Insurance Round Table


 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (9.44 am): I rise to inform the House of this government's ongoing engagement with the insurance industry following the recent flooding in North and North-West Queensland. On 15 February this year I convened a round table in Townsville with the insurance industry, local business and community representatives. We covered a range of issues but particularly the need for insurers to respond fairly, compassionately and quickly to claims and ensure the use of local tradespeople for repair work. Hard hit are mum-and-dad small business owners who had some heartbreaking stories, and I thank them for taking the time to share these stories with me and the insurance industry representatives in attendance. I also want to thank the members for Mundingburra and Townsville for being in attendance. I know that the member for Thuringowa would have been there had he not had to attend a funeral. I place on record my thanks and acknowledgement to the local members in this place as well.

We agreed on some key actions to ensure the community comes first during this recovery, including the inclusion of local tradespeople in insurance company procurement for repair work, dedicated case management to ensure a smoother process for impacted businesses and residents and community forums to provide face-to-face advice and support, one being held yesterday. It is important that anyone who may have been told not to bother to submit a claim ignores that advice and lodges a claim with their insurer. It is important to know that all claims will be assessed. Every claim received will be assessed using independent hydrology reports to ascertain whether flooding was caused by dam releases or by storm events.

One of the issues that was raised repeatedly with me when I was in Townsville was that flood cover for small business is not mandatory as it is for households. This was a matter that was canvassed but not fully resolved by the federal government's 2011 natural disaster insurance review. I can advise the House that I have now written to the federal Treasurer and the federal shadow Treasurer regarding the lack of progress in addressing flood coverage for small business and requested that this be reconsidered as a matter of priority.

I would also like to put on record my thanks to Stuart Smith, the recovery coordinator, for his participation. He is doing an outstanding job, not only in North Queensland but also in North-West Queensland. I also want to take a moment to thank the Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development for travelling to Townsville last week to help process applications for recovery grants for flood-affected small businesses.

Exports

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (9.47 am): Queensland continues to set records when it comes to exports. Queensland's goods exports reached \$81.7 billion in 2018, a record 12-month total and 16 per cent higher than in 2017.


Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members, I am struggling to find what the Deputy Premier is saying that is objectionable. It sounds to me like factual statements are being made. I ask that you hear this ministerial statement.

Ms TRAD: As I was saying, Queensland's goods exports reached \$81.7 billion in 2018, a record 12-month total and 16 per cent higher than in 2017. Our resources exports, including coal, are an integral part of this success story. Over the last week, several media reports have emerged about delays in the processing of Australian coal through ports in China's Dalian customs district since late January 2019. I would expect that those opposite who claim they are interested in resource sector jobs would listen to this very carefully. Queensland has been a reliable supplier of high-quality coal to China's electricity-generating and steel-making industries for many years. In 2018 Queensland exported an estimated \$12 billion worth of coal to China, around 30 per cent of our total coal exports by volume.

Whilst the most recent import delays in China are not unprecedented and previous suspensions have been short lived, it is not yet certain what the root cause or impact of these latest restrictions will be. The Palaszczuk government values trade because it means more jobs for Queenslanders and, in this instance, more resource sector jobs. Since 2015, we have gone about building strong relationships with our trading partners. Now is the time for the federal government to help do its part to ensure that Australia and Queensland maintain a strong, ongoing relationship with our biggest trading partner. We need a federal government that is focused on securing jobs for Queenslanders; not one focused on its own internal machinations and political fortunes.


Floods, Queensland Reconstruction Authority

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning) (9.50 am): Queenslanders endure more than their fair share of floods, fires and cyclones, which is why the Palaszczuk government is working to make Queensland the most disaster resilient state in Australia. As the Premier announced today, applications are now open for state government agencies, local councils and non-government organisations to apply for funding from the \$38 million Disaster Resilience Fund. In my portfolio, the Queensland Reconstruction Authority will be contacting agencies and organisations to seek projects that will help communities become better prepared and more resilient to natural disasters.

In the past couple of weeks, I have travelled to both Townsville and Cloncurry to witness firsthand the impact of flooding. I have seen how the response has transitioned to recovery with efforts well underway, coordinated by the Queensland Reconstruction Authority. Under the leadership of Chief Executive Brendan Moon, since 25 January 154 QRA officers have worked tirelessly to respond to monsoonal flooding. QRA recovery officers and regional liaison officers have worked close to 4,000 hours assisting with recovery planning and reconstruction efforts. On a weekly basis, 13 regional liaison officers and recovery officers have been on the ground working with councils, industry leaders and community groups.

QRA leads the world in disaster recovery planning and they know helping impacted communities recover from this event will be long and challenging. With the support of all Queenslanders and the QRA, the Palaszczuk government is helping Queenslanders to get back on their feet, stronger than before.

Floods, Schools

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations) (9.51 am): I am pleased to advise the House that the repair of flood damaged Oonoonba State School in Townsville is continuing at an impressive pace. To date, carpets have been removed and replaced

in two buildings. The internal painting of one building has been completed and the painting of the administration area, resource centre and music block started yesterday. Contaminated sand has been removed from playgrounds and will be replaced by tomorrow, and the external wash-down of all buildings will commence on Thursday. The school is on track to once again welcome its students on the first day of term 2 on 23 April.


In the meantime, the Department of Education has established two temporary campuses of Oonoonba State School to ensure that students can continue to learn while repairs are made to their school. It was great to see the Premier and Minister O'Rourke visit those temporary locations last week. Students in prep to year 2 are now learning at nearby Wulguru State School, while students from years 3 to 6 are based at William Ross State High School.

Working on a 'school within a school' basis, my department has created a distinct Oonoonba State School within those other schools. That has ensured that class groupings remain together and that Oonoonba State School will continue to operate as its own entity. I was particularly pleased to learn of the efforts of the Wulguru and William Ross school communities in welcoming the Oonoonba students to their respective schools.

While Oonoonba is the only state school yet to be reopened after the flooding emergency, 11 early childhood education and care providers in North Queensland are still to reopen after sustaining damage. Six of those providers expect to reopen within eight weeks and two more within five months. Unfortunately, three services have not yet been able to determine a possible reopening date. My department is working with the operators of the centres to get them back up and running as soon as possible. We are also working with centres that are open to enable them to temporarily accommodate more children and assist families affected by the closures to find temporary alternative care arrangements.

I am also pleased to provide an update on the financial assistance paid to families, teachers and other school staff under the Department of Education's Flood Assistance Package. To date, there have been close to 5,800 claims from families of students impacted by the floods and over \$1.3 million has been paid out. There have been 168 claims from teachers and other school staff, with more than \$117,000 paid out. Again I pay tribute to officers from the Department of Education who have worked and continue to work so hard to get schools that were closed by the North Queensland floods back open and students learning again after that devastating weather event, because we know that every day counts.

Weather Events, Transport Infrastructure

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (9.56 am): The unprecedented flooding in North and North-West Queensland has severely impacted and damaged road and rail infrastructure. As soon as floodwaters receded, TMR and Queensland Rail workers were hard at work restoring road and rail access. Works have been underway at the Macrossan Bridge on the Flinders Highway, the Seymour River north of Ingham, at Rooney's and Bowen Road bridges in Townsville, the Landsborough Highway and the Wills, Burke and Gulf developmental roads out west.

Queensland Rail crews have already repaired damage to 50 sites and four rail bridges along the 300 kilometres of track on the Mount Isa line between Cloncurry and Hughenden. Yesterday, a rail recovery task force, created with the sole focus of restoring access on the Mount Isa line, met for the first time in Townsville. As reported by the Premier, the task force has 400 rail specialists dedicated to the task and believes it can reopen the line by late April to early May, of course depending on the weather from the remaining wet season. We understand how important the supply chain is for the livelihood of North and North-West Queensland local communities, their jobs and the whole Queensland economy. Getting freight moving on the line is critical for Queensland's mining and agricultural exports and every effort will be made to open it sooner if possible.

Removing the Pacific National freight train wreck at Nelia, east of Julia Creek, will be a significant logistical task. Pacific National is leading that recovery with support from other agencies, including Queensland Rail and the Department of Environment and Science. Independent environmental specialists are playing a key role in developing the action plan that guides that recovery. We will continue to keep the community up to date with progress.


Last week, I travelled to the north-west to meet the mayors in Cloncurry and the McKinlay shire and see firsthand the damage that their communities are dealing with. On sections of the Flinders Highway between Richmond and Julia Creek, floodwaters have shredded bitumen like confetti. Given the devastation, I am pleased to report that Transport and Main Roads expects to reopen those sections

of the highway to traffic tomorrow. More than 150 Transport and Main Roads and RoadTek staff have worked long hours in extremely hot conditions to clear debris, inspect and rectify damage and manage roadblocks.

Earlier this month I was in Townsville to see the damage at Hervey Range Road, Paluma and the Bowen Road bridge, and also to our rail network where I met and thanked all rail crews working very hard on the Rooney's rail bridge. Specialists blasted boulders on Mount Spec Road so that emergency vehicles could access Paluma. Multiple landslips opened up under-road fissures on a 150-metre stretch of Hervey Range Road. Last Thursday that road reopened under traffic control, thanks to the hard work of Transport and Main Roads and Townsville City Council's crews. I thank them for their work. Recovery will take time—such as the long-term works required at the Alice River bridge—but we are committed to restoring our networks as soon as possible.

Recovery is also underway in Central and North Queensland following the bushfires that raged through the Eungella Range and threatened Gracemere last November. The government's response to this summer of extreme weather events has relied on the leadership and courage of women and men in our lead agencies across Queensland who have stepped up in our darkest times. I thank them all for giving so much to support the recovery in North-West, North and Central Queensland.

Floods, Housing

 **Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works, Minister for Digital Technology and Minister for Sport) (9.58 am): As we have heard, North Queensland is working hard to recover from the devastating floods. Today, a great sadness hangs over the city of Townsville as they mourn the loss of two young boys gone too soon. Throughout this difficult time, under the leadership of the Premier our government has been working closely with other agencies in a team effort to ensure that everyone has a safe, secure and dry place to live. To date, 1,493 people in North Queensland have sought housing support and not one of those is without accommodation. We are still working closely with 790 more people, while 703 of those have been helped to get back to a normal life in their homes.

For those living in public housing, we have helped 164 families by repairing their homes or finding alternative places to stay. I plan to have all of those homes fully restored within the coming month. While 268 people have lodged emergency housing assistance requests while staying with family and friends, we know and acknowledge that sometimes those welcome mats can wear out over time. For those in that situation, we are supporting 329 displaced people in temporary accommodation such as motels and apartments.


I take this opportunity to also acknowledge the Operation Energise team. I give full credit to the Electrical Trades Union and Minister Lynham for this initiative that has been helping restore power to homes and sporting clubs for years in Queensland. On my most recent visit to Townsville, I met fourth year apprentices Matthew and Cooper working with qualified tradies Brett and Karl. On behalf of everybody in North Queensland whom they are assisting, we say to Matthew and Cooper and the rest of the Operation Energise team and the ETU: thank you.

I also congratulate my ministerial colleague Coralee O'Rourke who last week announced the first ever disaster scene Rental Recovery Hub. For seven days a week as long as is needed, the Rental Recovery Hub, a partnership between the Palaszczuk government, the Residential Tenancies Authority, the Real Estate Institute of Queensland and Tenants Queensland, will help renters and agents figure out the fairest housing outcomes possible.

As property owners repair their homes, the member for Townsville and the member for Thuringowa stood with me in Townsville last week to give a clear message to insurers—go local first. That message applies to government building restoration as well. I can update the House that more than 175 licensed contractors have been employed to carry out almost 3,000 repair jobs on our schools, public housing and other government assets. Importantly, I can report to the House that 99 per cent of those 3,000 repair jobs have gone to local North Queensland contractors. Only two contracts have not gone to local contractors because literally every North Queensland company was fully booked out.

The North Queensland flood register is supporting the region's economy and helping local tradespeople to get back on their feet as well. It also ensures that works are done safely and by an appropriately licensed contractor. To date we have had 834 licensed builders and tradespeople approved to list their details on the North Queensland Flood Register. Queenslanders in flood-affected areas can rest assured we will be there with them to help rebuild their communities because we put Queenslanders first.

Floods, Small Business

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development) (10.02 am): So many Townsville residents have been hit hard by the recent flooding, but it makes it even harder when your business is affected as well. When I visited Townsville last week to meet with small business owners at our Small Business Recovery Centre, I heard stories of a cafe owner having to strip the fit-out he had completed only six months ago.

I heard of small business owners looking out for their community. One pharmacy owner was still taking calls from customers as they were mopping up and throwing out stock. He said, 'When your business is looking after people, why would we stop now?'

At the Small Business Recovery Centre I met with Michael, who had not only lost his home to flooding; his auto recycling business on Ingham Road had also been hit hard. He was most worried about getting back to full trade for the sake of his staff. It was everyone around him he was most worried about. I was genuinely moved by his concern for his family and his staff. I met with Sal from Lancini Group that operate Fairfield Central Shopping Centre. Sal said the support shown by the state government has been exemplary and that we had a great team of people assembled providing support for business.


Trying to overcome all the hurdles in order to reopen one's business can be a daunting experience. There is insurance, cleaning up, replacing fixtures and stock, and looking after staff, clients and customers. I am pleased to say that the Small Business Recovery Centre is there to support our small businesses at every hurdle.

Already the centre has assisted more than 250 small business owners—people like Jenna, the owner of TalkHQ Speech Pathology, whose home and business were both flooded. Jenna's business employs 20 people and these fantastic staff have helped her with finding a temporary place of business. She could not speak more highly of the assistance she has received from the community and our Small Business Recovery Centre.

While at the centre I heard about the importance of cash flow for small business during the recovery effort and the impact delays in insurance assessments were having on allowing businesses to plan their recovery. We have heard this message and we have acted. To better support small business in this situation we have made clear the way our category C small business grants can help. The initial \$5,000 component of this grant is available for small businesses even if their insurer is yet to decide their cover. They need to get this assistance quickly to get moving and to get their doors open. This provides some immediate cash flow relief for small businesses waiting on their insurance assessments and allows them to get on with the clean-up and recovery.

We know the recovery process will be long, but we will be there with them every step of the way. We all want to rebuild this vibrant and important sector and get Townsville and North Queensland's economy bouncing back to long-term growth.

Floods, Recovery Assistance

 **Hon. CJ O'ROURKE** (Mundingburra—ALP) (Minister for Communities and Minister for Disability Services and Seniors) (10.05 am): I take a moment to express my sadness for the loss of two small boys in Townsville this morning and express my condolences to the family and friends of those two young boys.

The impact of the recent devastating flooding is continuing for many communities across the north, far north and north-west of our state. To help aid the recovery of these communities and the individuals and families who live in them, we have now provided more than \$15.3 million in emergency hardship assistance grants as at eight o'clock this morning. These funds have seen support go to more than 86,000 people across those areas.

We have had teams working 24/7 to get these grants out to people who need them as quickly as possible. We have seen the majority of these grants being distributed to people across Townsville. We have also seen more than \$447,000 of those grants being distributed to approximately 2,493 people in the north-west.


More than 860 Ready Reserves continue to be deployed across the state. Many of our hardworking public servants have put their hands up again and have done more than one deployment to continue to support those who have been impacted by these floods. I have seen firsthand the difference these dedicated staff have made and continue to make to the people doing it tough after the floods.

While disasters bring so much devastation and destruction to communities, they also see people from all walks of life come together and support those in need. I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge that we have been fortunate enough to have community recovery worker reinforcements come from interstate to work on our recovery operation. I would like to thank the Victorian, South Australian, Northern Territory, ACT and Western Australian governments for their support.

Our community recovery hubs and information and referral centres are continuing to operate, with people still attending and getting the help that they need. We also have 29 outreach teams working across more than 30 suburbs in the Townsville local government area reaching out to those who cannot make it into one of those recovery hubs.

This is a large-scale community recovery effort. I want to reassure people in all of those areas that we are there for the long haul. I am very proud of the Queensland government's community recovery effort to support affected people across the north, the north-west and far north of Queensland.

Floods, Agricultural Industry

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries) (10.08 am): It is positive to see that all sections of the community have come together to support those impacted by the North Queensland flooding. The devastation that has been seen across the north-west is exceptional and confronting. Over the last fortnight I have seen on several occasions the impacts on the ground in Hughenden, Richmond, Julia Creek—with the Premier—Cloncurry and Winton. The mayors, councils and producers are now turning to recovery and finances going forward. In the previous fortnight I have convened meetings with the senior and regional agri-bankers in Cloncurry as well as in Brisbane. I note that the major banks, as well as other financial lenders, have all publicly announced assistance for producers and this is welcomed.


The economic fundamentals of most producers in this sector in this region, as noted by the most recent QRIDA Rural Debt Survey, are sound and, notwithstanding this event, most producers are likely to be viable in the longer term. Sadly, this rainfall is the best some producers have had after years of drought—relief turned to despair. I heard from producers that when the rains started there was hope. After a few days it was clear that the rain has now brought devastation.

Community groups and individuals have also given their support to the region with both donated fodder and assistance with repairs to infrastructure. Due to the magnitude of the event, the Australian Defence Force, supported by the Palaszczuk government; industry groups such as AgForce; and local government have delivered large amounts of fodder to livestock across the most severely impacted region. The focus now is on livestock disposal and obtaining a more accurate assessment of damage—and this will take time. I commend the Department of Transport and Main Roads for their efforts in the recovery of livestock and the disposal process as well.

Flooding impacts in the gulf shires will be significant, with many producers losing significant numbers of livestock and farm infrastructure. All levels of government have promptly responded to support the region with the activation of assistance under the disaster recovery funding arrangements. For primary producers this includes concessional loans, freight subsidies and clean-up and recovery grants, which for this event are up to \$75,000. I can report that, as of yesterday, QRIDA approved a total of 36 recovery grant applications for almost \$2.2 million. Going forward, I encourage the community to keep up the support to our producers and, down the track, to visit these regions and to support the Queensland flood appeal.

MOTIONS

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.10 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That, notwithstanding anything contained in standing and sessional orders, the following time limits apply to the debate on the motion standing in the Premier's name, government business notice of motion No. 1 to be moved at 3.00 pm today:

- 5 minutes for the Premier and Minister for Trade;
- 5 minutes for the Leader of the Opposition (or nominee); and
- 3 minutes for each member;
- Total debate time before question put—1 hour 15 minutes

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Order of Business



Hon. YM D'ATH (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.11 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That general business orders of the day be reordered on the *Notice Paper* as follows:

1. Liquor (Rural Hotels Concession) Amendment Bill
2. Safer Waterways Bill
3. Vegetation Management (Clearing for Relevant Purposes) Amendment Bill
4. Electoral Legislation (Political Donations) Amendment Bill
5. Working with Children Legislation (Indigenous Communities) Amendment Bill

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Comments by LNP



Mr COSTIGAN (Whitsunday—Ind) (10.12 am): I rise to make a brief statement in response to recent events including the disgraceful attack on me by the LNP opposition in the last sitting week. Firstly, can I say that the comments made in this place by members of the opposition made me sick. They were misleading, exaggerated, deceptive, extremely hurtful and politically loaded to say the least.

In relation to the complaint received by the LNP regarding what supposedly happened in Victoria last month, I will say this: I do not believe I did anything wrong whatsoever and I shall be taking the strongest possible action against the person or persons involved in what can only be described as a malicious attempt at destroying someone's career—and gleefully accepted by the LNP hierarchy. I might remind everyone that I have never even met the person who lodged the complaint. That is right: I have never laid eyes on that person. I would also like to point out to the House that I have never been contacted by the police anywhere regarding this matter at all, and I do not expect to.

It is no secret certain people within the LNP wanted us gone—and for some time. Many constituents of mine and certainly supporters will remember the white-anting before that bitter preselection battle in Proserpine in 2014. Despite two more election wins since then, those white ants have come back. It is probably no surprise given my speech in this place on 14 November last year, when I dished it out to the LNP for its inability to campaign effectively in North Queensland and the treatment of North Queenslanders in general. Put simply, it went down like a lead balloon with the Leader of the Opposition, not to mention the faceless men at Spring Hill.

It is fair to say the events of the last couple of weeks have knocked me around—ditto for my family and loved ones. So much for bullying in the workplace—or no bullying. Nevertheless, I am back in parliament still representing the good people of Whitsunday here on the crossbench. The responses from back at home from most constituents have been humbling to say the least. To these people I say thanks. I will continue to fight for my constituents regardless of what has happened or where I sit in this chamber.

I might add that more and more LNP party members are disappearing. The number of resignations is approaching 40 this morning between Mackay and Bowen which is in stark contrast to the big talk up in Whitsunday last week by the current deputy opposition leader. I am surprised he even knew where to go. After all, the member for Everton had not even bothered to come to Whitsunday since he beat me for the position of deputy leader. Yes, it took him 14 months to come to Whitsunday.

In conclusion, I have never proclaimed to be perfect and if I have offended anyone I most sincerely apologise. That said, I will take up the fight to clear my name and stare down anyone who tries to tarnish it. And guess what, Mr Speaker? I have no intention of going anywhere. I look forward to taking the fight up to the major two parties at the next state election.

PARLIAMENTARY CRIME AND CORRUPTION COMMITTEE

Reports



Mr NICHOLLS (Clayfield—LNP) (10.16 am): On indulgence, before I table my reports—and I will be brief—I want to inform the House of the passing of former senator the Hon. John Herron AO. John was a senator for Queensland between 1990 and 2002, a former minister for Aboriginal and Torres

Strait Islander affairs between 1996 and 2001, and a former ambassador to Ireland and the Holy See from 2002 to 2006. He was also an outstanding surgeon and a stalwart of the Liberal Party. I want to pass on my condolences to his family and his wife, Jan, on their sad loss. I thank the House for the indulgence.

I table the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Commissioner's reports titled *Report on the results of the inspection of the records of the Crime and Corruption Commission pursuant to section 362 of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000*, dated December 2018, and the *Report of the work and activities of the Crime and Corruption Commission under chapter 11 of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000*, dated 10 January 2019.

Tabled paper: Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Commissioner: Report on the results of the inspection of the records of the Crime and Corruption Commission pursuant to section 362 of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, December 2018 [240].

Tabled paper: Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Commissioner: Report of the work and activities of the Crime and Corruption Commission under chapter 11 of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, 10 January 2019 [241].

The committee is required to table the reports within 14 sitting days of receipt. The committee received the reports on 19 December 2018 and 10 January 2019 respectively.


I also table a certified copy of the *Register of reports and recommendations to the Minister for Police, ministerial directions and tabled ministerial reasons 2018* and related correspondence. The committee is required to table this report within 14 sitting days of receipt, and the committee received the report on 24 January 2019.

Tabled paper: Crime and Corruption Commission: Certified copy of the Register of Reports and Recommendations to the Police Minister, Ministerial Directions and Tabled Ministerial Reasons 2018 and related material, pursuant to section 4.7 of the Police Service Administration Act 1990 [242].

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr SPEAKER: Question time will conclude today at 11.18 am.

Adani Carmichael Mine

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (10.18 am): My first question is to the Premier. Labor's MP Cathy O'Toole says that the south-east-centric Palaszczuk government must stop 'shifting the goalposts' on the Adani Carmichael mine. Is the reason 3,400 jobs have been lost in Townsville since the election because the Premier has sold out jobs in North Queensland, according to Cathy O'Toole?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. Our No. 1 priority is jobs in this state. That is why under my government since we were elected over \$9 billion worth of resource projects have been approved in this state. Just last week I was in Townsville when the Sconi project was given Coordinator-General approval. From memory, that could create around 500 jobs. Scandium, cobalt and nickel are needed for the production of batteries. We know that Townsville has a clear priority of having a battery factory in Townsville. The mayor has been on the public record about that, and as a government we have been on the public record as well.

Next week the Minister for Mines and I will be travelling to Weipa for the official opening of the Rio Tinto Amrun bauxite mine, commissioned for approval under my government. From memory, it will create over a thousand jobs and a lot of local Indigenous jobs as well. I had the honour and privilege of touring that facility at the end of last year. The bauxite produced from that mine is transported to Gladstone and used in the manufacture of mobile phones. Many people with mobile phones across the world have a little bit of Queensland with them each and every day.

Let me also make these comments. I want to reiterate what the Deputy Premier said today as well. There is over \$81 billion in exports. Those export figures are continuing to increase under my government and we will see more increases in years to come. In relation to—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Members to my left! The Premier has the call.

Ms PALASZCZUK: The question was about jobs and jobs in Townsville.

Ms Jones: We didn't sack people.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I take that interjection. We did not sack people in Townsville like those opposite, including the assistant treasurer, who sat around the cabinet table and made those decisions that are still felt in communities—western regional communities and everywhere I travel. When I was in Longreach they still talk about the massive sackings that happened in Longreach.

Some \$9 billion worth of resource projects have been approved under my government. Of course we will back the resource sector because it is strong in this state and it will continue to be strong in this state.

(Time expired)

Thermal Coal

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: My second question is also to the Premier. I refer to the Premier's charter letter to the Deputy Premier dated 17 February 2018 which tasked the Deputy Premier with commissioning a study into long-term global demand for thermal coal. What advice has the Premier received from the Deputy Premier in the past 12 months about global demand for Queensland's thermal coal?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. Can I correct the record? I said that the Amrun project was 1,000 jobs. It is actually 2,000 jobs and a \$2.7 billion investment. I wanted to correct the record.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Manager of Opposition Business, you are warned under the standing orders. My tolerance is growing pretty thin with interjections that are clearly aimed at disrupting the speaker.

Ms PALASZCZUK: The Deputy Premier and I have many conversations when it comes to exports, because we know how important exports are for Queensland and Queensland jobs.

I am more than happy to talk about coal in this state. Let me make these comments. I made comments in the parliament last session to the member for Maiwar about metallurgical coal. Metallurgical coal makes up the majority of our coal exports. It is roughly three-quarters. Thermal coal is roughly one-quarter. What we are seeing in terms of global demand is that there is strong demand for metallurgical coal. As I mentioned, in this state there is \$9 billion worth of projects. A mine has recently been approved and the first export has gone to Japan for metallurgical coal, used in steel. As long as everyone is still using steel, as I said last time, there will be a strong demand for metallurgical coal.

I was looking at Queensland's export statistics just before parliament started. In relation to thermal coal, let me say this—and remember it was a Labor government which had the foresight to look at LNG in this state—our LNG exports are now overtaking our thermal coal exports. What does that say? The market is deciding in relation to what the market wants. In a year, LNG has gone from \$9.6 billion to \$13.5 billion.

Let me also make this observation to the Leader of the Opposition. Recently a few members of the government met with the University of Queensland and we have had discussions with the QUT. There is a big push for hydrogen in this state—one that I am backing 100 per cent. In fact, it is something that I raised when I came back from a trade mission to Japan. The advantage of hydrogen is that it will become a worldwide commodity and Queensland stands on the cusp of being a leader when it comes to this industry. In fact, in the next session of parliament I will be hosting an industry information session about hydrogen, and I encourage those opposite to come along and hear about this new industry. On this side of the House we are not afraid of new industries and backing Queensland jobs.

(Time expired)

Townsville, Flood Recovery

Mr HARPER: My question without notice is to the Premier. Will the Premier please update the House on the recovery efforts in Townsville following the unprecedented flooding disaster, particularly responding to local concerns raised with me about housing availability and increased costs?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Thuringowa for the question. We have heard of some recent reports where people are charging increased rents. Let me make it very clear as Premier of this state—and I know that local members will back me here—that we want to see a continued Townsville spirit in terms of helping people recover. I do not think it is acceptable or good practice for people to be charging more than what is reasonable when people are going through some of the toughest times they have ever gone through in their life.

Having walked the streets, gone into people's homes and spoken to people who have gone through the floods, along with Minister de Brenni, I know how important it is to ensure people get the boost they need to get into safe and secure accommodation. We do not accept that practice that is

going on. I would once again stress to all operators in Townsville: please treat people decently and treat people with respect. I think the community absolutely needs that. I thank the member for Thuringowa for raising that because it is an important issue. It is one that we are hearing reports of on the streets and we do not want that to happen.

I am happy to update the House that more than \$17.1 million in personal hardship assistance grants has been paid out so far, benefiting more than 85,000 people across the north and north-west of our state who have been impacted. Our appeal tally has now reached \$7.5 million. I want to thank all Queenslanders who have given so generously. I also thank the parliament because we will also have the opportunity to give to the floods appeal at the end of March. I want to thank everybody who has been involved in that.

Givit has connected more than 1,000 donated items to community households. I think that is absolutely wonderful. Once again, I would like to thank Givit. More than 1,100 affected people have sought housing support. I have been advised that no person who has lodged an emergency housing assistance request relating to the North Queensland monsoon is without accommodation. I want to thank Minister de Brenni's department and his director-general for working so hard with the local community to ensure that, as those needs arise, they are addressed very quickly. Housing is a very important issue for the community, and his department has moved heaven and earth to ensure that people are rehoused.

In relation to insurance, I want to thank the Deputy Premier for having that meeting in Townsville to make sure that insurance companies are treating people with respect and dignity.

(Time expired)

Thermal Coal

Mr MANDER: My question without notice is to the Deputy Premier. The Deputy Premier's ministerial charter letter instructs the Deputy Premier to study the long-term global demand for Queensland's thermal coal. Did the Deputy Premier find that sufficient demand exists to support opening up new thermal coalmines in the Galilee Basin?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for Everton, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, for the question. I am glad they have actually gotten around to reading my charter letter. I thank those opposite for the first question to me about my obligations to the Queensland government and the people of Queensland regarding the commitments we made to them at the 2017 election. Of course, one of those key commitments was to undertake a long-term study into the future of thermal coal in the global market.

It is very interesting that those opposite have decided to ask this question, and I wonder whether it is about the LNP being ironic or opportunistic. What we have seen—and this made global headlines last week—is one of the most significant global players in the area of thermal coal announced last week that they would be capping production around thermal coal and thermal coal exports from Australia. Here we have Glencore and the market making significant changes around their production of thermal coal. This is fundamentally based—and what the Premier has been articulating on a state and a national stage—on climate change. Businesses, governments and communities are asking for national, global and local action around climate change. What we saw last week is a major—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Members, the Deputy Premier is being responsive in her answer. I would like to hear the answer to this question. Deputy Leader of the Opposition, you have asked the question. I would hope you would also like to hear the answer.

Ms TRAD: As I said, what we have seen is local communities, state communities, national communities and global communities ask for increased action to tackle climate change. We have been talking about natural disasters here this morning, and the link between the more frequent and ferocious natural disasters and climate change is scientifically clear. Those opposite should actually understand the science. The fact of the matter is economics is moving—

Mr Watts interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Toowoomba North.

Ms TRAD: The fact is markets are moving away from thermal coal; communities are moving away from thermal coal; nation states are moving away from thermal coal. What we need to do as a coal exporter is understand that and equip our communities with the best possible chance of reskilling. That is why we are focused on other materials.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Deputy Premier, do you have anything further to add?

Ms TRAD: I refer them to the November publication of the progress of our election commitments.

(Time expired)

Climate Change

Ms PUGH: My question without notice is of the Premier. Can the Premier please update the House on her government's policies for tackling the impacts of climate change? Is she aware of any alternative policies?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Mount Ommaney for the question. On this side of the House we understand that climate change is real and it is happening. Last week I made an address to the Media Club here in Queensland in which I talked about the number of natural disasters we have seen in Queensland—and more recently in the last two months the number of natural disasters that we have seen—that clearly shows that there is a link between what is happening in our climate and natural disasters.

We accept the science of climate change and we know that as a state we can play our part, which is why we have our 50 per cent renewable energy target by 2030, which I understand New South Wales is now following. I note that we have our solar and battery program and that New South Wales has announced an election commitment following our lead in relation to that. You could have knocked me over the other day when our own Prime Minister came out and finally accepted the science of climate change. Not only has the Prime Minister accepted it; anyone only needs to get a copy of the most recent *Time* magazine which has the headline 'Dire warning: Australia's historic drought and a world transformed by climate change'. It is all there in black and white for people to see.

What is very interesting is that we do not know the position of the Leader of the Opposition and those opposite. Do they believe in climate change? Do they accept the science of climate change? We had the member for Burdekin attacking the Bureau of Meteorology saying that they were making it up. We then had the member for Callide attack the bureau over their reporting of climate change. In fact, in his post the member for Callide says, 'It appears the Bureau of Meteorology changed the records to suit the climate change agenda.' There is a bit of division over there. It could be the Liberals and the Nats; I am not quite sure. If I was a member of the National Party on that side I would separate from the Liberals. That is what I would be doing. I would be separating from them. We only have to go out to our farms and talk to the farmers to find that they believe in climate change. I went to the National Drought Summit. I was the first person to raise climate change; it was the elephant in the room. Then the farmers got up and backed me in. It was good to see the farmers on our side. Let's get a clear policy from those opposite—

(Time expired)

Coal Industry

Mr LAST: My question without notice is to the Premier. Last week federal Labor frontbencher Richard Marles said that the global collapse of the thermal coal market is 'a good thing'. Does the Premier stand with the hundreds of thousands of Queensland families who rely on the coal industry for their livelihoods, or does the Premier celebrate the collapse of the coal industry with federal Labor?

Ms PALASZCZUK: We support resource jobs. We support the tens of thousands of resource jobs that have made Queensland go from strength to strength in this state. We also accept climate change, and those opposite do not.

Mr Lister interjected.

Mr Powell interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Southern Downs. Member for Glass House.

Ms PALASZCZUK: There is dignity in work; there is dignity in jobs. Having a job enables people to provide a roof over their head and put food on the table. That is why \$9 billion worth of resource projects have been approved under my government. As I said clearly, there is a strong demand for metallurgical coal. We continue to export thermal coal—

Mr Saunders interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Maryborough.

Ms PALASZCZUK:—but LNG has overtaken thermal coal.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Maryborough, you are warned under the standing orders. I sought your attention. You continued to go across the chamber. I am not sure who your sparring partner was on this occasion, but you are warned under the standing orders.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I find it ironic that the member for Burdekin asked me a question when he attacked the weather bureau about the most recent monsoonal event that happened in Townsville. We do not know where you stand on climate change.

As I said, LNG continues to increase and our other minerals are increasing as well: copper is up, aluminium is up and zinc is up. Queensland is rich in minerals. Of all the eastern states we are the only one that is releasing more gas into the domestic market. Minister Lynham recently went up to Mount Isa, where the Jemena project is creating jobs and allowing gas to come from the Northern Territory into Queensland. We will continue to back resource jobs, but when it comes to job-creating projects those opposite cut 14,000 jobs. There was no care or understanding for the people they sacked. It was an absolute disgrace, and I will continue to stand on my record against theirs any day of the week.

Floods, Recovery Assistance

Mr STEWART: My question is of the Deputy Premier. Will the Deputy Premier please update the House on the likely cost of disaster recovery efforts following the devastating flooding in Townsville and North-West Queensland and any initiatives to assist with the economic recovery of the region?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for Townsville for the question. Again I want to place on record my thanks to the member for Townsville, the member for Mundingburra and the member for Thuringowa for being such amazingly staunch advocates for their communities and ensuring that the government's attention is focused on the rebuilding and recovery of their communities. As the Premier and other ministers stated, I have witnessed firsthand the damage. There is a mammoth task ahead in terms of recovery and rebuilding in North Queensland. The full impact on the state budget is yet to be determined. It is something that we are very, very focused on. Preliminary estimates at this stage have the damages bill at around \$1.5 billion, but I do have to caution that this is a very preliminary estimate. As we know from other disasters, there is a process of assurance and further refinement around those estimates.

I want to reassure the communities of North Queensland and the North Queensland and North-West Queensland MPs who are here that we will ensure that we are focused on the cost and what it takes to deliver for the people of North Queensland and North-West Queensland in the budget preparations which are currently underway for the 2019-20 budget. Unfortunately, we have been in this place before with Tropical Cyclone Marcia and Tropical Cyclone Debbie. We know what it takes to rebuild. It will have a big effect on the Queensland budget and, as I said, we will continue to focus on recovery efforts.

I want to take this moment to say that we have shown incredible discipline in terms of our budget management strategy over the past four years. Because of our surpluses each and every year, because of the responsible revenue measures that were introduced at the last budget and taken to the people of Queensland and because we have paid down \$14 billion worth of debt, we are in a position where we can respond to the people of North Queensland and North-West Queensland. Those opposite have opposed every single measure we have put forward. They have promised more expenditure and less debt and tax, but what we have seen from them is that they have promised the world with no plan. It is up to them to detail—

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: Ministers, I do hope that you keep an eye on the time allotted for your responses. Please take note of that throughout question time today.

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

Ms LEAHY: My question is to the Premier. Rockhampton mayor Margaret Strelow said this about the Carmichael mine approval process: 'The Palaszczuk government could have helped bring clarity and integrity to the process. They have failed.' How does the Premier respond to this damning criticism of her government from the Premier's hand-picked candidate for the seat of Rockhampton?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Warrego for the question. Let me state very clearly again in this House that we support jobs. We support the tens of thousands of resource sector jobs that are created in this state. We also support our strong export market. Over \$81 billion worth of our exports

go overseas, which is more than New South Wales and Victoria combined and almost double what we saw under the LNP. We will continue to back those industries and new industries when it comes to creating jobs in this state—

Mr Mander interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Please resume your seat, Premier. Members to my left, I believe the Premier is being responsive and answering the question. Deputy Leader of the Opposition, you have already been warned without being warned. You are now warned under the standing orders.

Ms PALASZCZUK: In Rockhampton we are continuing to build on our profile in terms of delivering even more jobs to the city of Rockhampton. For example, the member for Rockhampton and the member for Keppel were with me recently when the Leader of the Opposition was in Rockhampton talking about the Rockhampton ring-road. My government is putting \$200 million into that as a transformation project in terms of job development. The \$240 million expansion of the Capricornia correctional facility is creating jobs. We also have money going into the art gallery and creating jobs. Across regional Queensland there is a key focus—

Opposition members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I know those opposite are a little bit upset today. I too would like to know why 40 people left the North Queensland branch of the LNP. On this side of the House we know how important jobs are. We know their attitude towards jobs on that side. As I said before, it is about cutting and sacking. I went to the election promising stability. On that side—

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order under standing order 118(b), relevance. The question was about Labor mayor Margaret Strelow and her criticism of the Palaszczuk government, and that is not what the Premier is speaking about.

Mr SPEAKER: As I said earlier, member for Kawana, I am listening to the Premier's response. The question contained several elements and I believe most of those have been addressed. Premier, with your remaining 48 seconds I would draw you back to the core of the question as per the point of order.

Gold Coast, Jobs

Mrs McMAHON: My question is of the Minister for State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning. Will the minister please advise the House what the government is doing to support jobs on the Gold Coast and is he aware of any other approaches?

Mr DICK: I thank the member for Macalister for the question and for her strong support for growing jobs in Queensland, particularly in the manufacturing sector. I was delighted to join the member for Macalister last week at PWR Performance Products on the Gold Coast, whose products are used in cooling systems for motorsport, aerospace and Defence vehicles. I was pleased to announce that PWR was the recipient of a \$1.1 million round 2 Made in Queensland grant to help them invest in an advanced 3D CT scanner to improve quality control and, of course, to help create 46 new Queensland jobs.

I can report to the House that every vehicle which races for Formula 1 racing teams, including Aston Martin Red Bull Racing, Renault, McLaren, Williams, Haas, Racing Point, Alpha Romeo, Red Bull Toro Rosso Honda—the greatest of them all, Ferrari—and every vehicle racing in the US NASCAR series whether at Indianapolis, Daytona or the Talladega Superspeedway carries inside it a piece of Queensland manufactured by PWR in Queensland. This is a great Queensland story—making the best in the world for the best in the world, right out of Queensland. I acknowledge Kees Weel; his son Paul; Teresa Handicott, the chair of the board; and everyone who works at PWR racing. It is a great story about ingenuity, innovation and industry in Queensland. It shows the vibrancy of manufacturing in Queensland.

I have been asked whether there are any other approaches to growing the economy. There was another approach to job creation on the Gold Coast last week. It was great to see the member for Glass House talking about the global tourism hub. There he was, freelancing outside of his shadow portfolio. He was on the Broadwater talking about the Broadwater. Of course, the member for Broadwater was not there. Where was Verity Barton? That is another question.

We hear one thing in the House and another thing outside. We have heard all of this palaver about coal today. There is the queen of coal in the parliament, the member for Nanango. What does she say in her electorate? In the member for Nanango's message to her constituents at the end of 2018 she included—

Supporting the Kingaroy Concerned Citizens Group in their fight against the proposed Kingaroy Coal Mine.

She is a champion of coal in here but she is a hypocrite. She says anything because her leadership is in chaos—chaos on the global tourism hub, chaos on the economy, chaos on jobs, chaos on Costigan. Chaos, chaos, chaos.

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: Member for McConnel and many others to my right, I was having very great difficulty hearing the Minister for State Development, which I believe is the point of question time. I would like to ensure that these outbursts are minimised in future, please.

Resources Industry

Mr POWELL: My question without notice is to the Premier. The Premier's hand-picked candidate for the seat of Rockhampton, Margaret Strelow, has said that the Adani issue is now a matter of trust and the Palaszczuk government is changing the rules for the people of regional Queensland. Given that 3,400 Townsville jobs have been lost since the election of the Palaszczuk government, why has the Premier risked more jobs and the trust of regional jobseekers by changing the rules for resource industry projects?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Glass House for the question. I reject the premise of that question. We back our resources industry and we back jobs in regional Queensland. We will continue to work with our local members and the mayors across this state on new ideas, new industries—

Mr Powell: Just not old ones like thermal coal.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I take that interjection. Obviously the member has not been listening. I have made it very clear in this House that metallurgical coal and thermal coal—and LNG and all of the other minerals—contribute to the \$81 billion worth of exports. I have said very clearly that there is a strong demand for metallurgical coal, and metallurgical coal makes up roughly three-quarters of all exports when it comes to coal in this state.

A government member: And jobs.

Ms PALASZCZUK: And jobs. I note what the Minister for State Development said earlier: the member for Nanango rejects a coalmine in her own backyard.

Mrs Frecklington: In Kingaroy, absolutely.

Ms PALASZCZUK: There we go. She picks and chooses which coalmine—

Mrs Frecklington: In Kingaroy, seriously? On the airport?

Ms PALASZCZUK: There we go. She picks and chooses which ones she wants to support and which ones she does not.

While I am on my feet I would like to talk more about the \$9 billion worth of investment that is happening in our state in the resources sector. I talked about the Byerwen project, with 545 jobs. The first shipment of metallurgical coal arrived in Japan a couple of weeks ago. I have talked about the bauxite mine. Stanmore's Isaac Plains metallurgical coalmine is supporting 210 jobs. The Dugald River zinc mine, with \$1.4 billion invested, achieved commercial production last year, with 400 jobs at full production. Shell's \$1.7 billion Charlie Fields gas project, approved in November 2015, will see 1,600 jobs. Santos's \$750 million Roma East expansion in south-west Queensland, supporting 400 construction jobs, was announced in February last year.

Today the Prime Minister backed in his old boss's Snowy Hydro project. Those opposite are unsure where they stand. It is such a mess. There is such a rabble. They do not know where they stand. Their record speaks for itself—14,000 people sacked under the Newman government.

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: Minister for State Development, it has been brought to my attention—I missed it—that in your earlier statement you used the word 'hypocrite'. That is unparliamentary. I ask that you withdraw.

Mr DICK: I withdraw.

Floods, International Students

Mrs LAUGA: My question is of the Minister for Innovation and Tourism Industry Development and Minister for the Commonwealth Games. Will the minister please update the House on the government's efforts to support international students following the recent flooding across Queensland?

Ms JONES: I thank the honourable member for her question. Indeed, I acknowledge all of the work that is happening in all of the streams of state government that are working with the many Queenslanders who are still doing it tough after the extreme flooding we saw in Far North Queensland. We as an agency are also working really hard to support the international students who call Townsville home. Around 2,000 international students are based in Townsville because of the wonderful work that JCU does, as well as Reef HQ, to attract international students to make Townsville their home. The member for Townsville and I have spoken about this at length. Certainly part of our international education strategy is how we as a state government can support more international students to be based in regional parts of Queensland. Townsville is a shining light in that regard.

I am proud to confirm today that the state government will make a contribution of \$100,000 in emergency hardship assistance grants to international students in Townsville or those affected by the floods in North Queensland. Of course, they are also eligible for essential household contents grants. That is up to \$1,765 per adult. This is just another example of the tangible work we are doing to support people who are doing it tough, particularly those students who are away from their families and friends and in a different country—another example of our government getting on with the job. This stands in stark contrast to those opposite, who have had more positions on Adani than Glenn Close has had nominations for an Oscar, more positions on—

An honourable member interjected.

Ms JONES: What? I will quote the comments of the Leader of the Opposition before the last election.

Mrs Frecklington: Before?

Ms JONES: I will come to that; don't worry about that! She said—

... this do-nothing government could not get its act together and make a decision to support Adani's Carmichael mine.

After the election, asked whether she supported it, the honourable member for Nanango said—

Obviously, I've said everything's on the table, and I'm happy to say, yep, that's on the table.

She went on to say after the election in regard to a proposal for a \$1 billion northern Australia infrastructure fund loan that is was 'dead and buried and gone'. LNP members say one thing in parliament and another thing when they are out in the community. Who could forget this beautiful document, when the Leader of the Opposition was—

Mr SPEAKER: Are you going to table that, Minister?

Ms JONES: I am happy to table it.

Tabled paper: Document titled 'Integrated Resort Developments: Frequently Asked Questions' [\[243\]](#).

When the member was with Tim Nicholls, she said in criticism of us that Queenslanders are missing out on billions of dollars of jobs and investment because we stalled on the global tourism hub. What a joke! She cannot control her team. You could do a vox pop and find that every single one of them has a different position.

(Time expired)

Department of Environment and Science, Adani Carmichael Mine

Mr MILLAR: My question without notice is to the Premier. It has been reported that the Department of Environment and Science has engaged anti-Adani campaigner Tim Seelig in addition to former Greens party candidates Kirsten Lovejoy and Gary Kane to provide advice to the department. The same department is tasked with approving the Adani Carmichael mine. How does the Premier have confidence in an impartial decision on an important job-creating project by the department when some staff have political agendas?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for the question. My understanding is that those positions were on a recruitment basis as they are Public Service positions.

Mr Powell interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Glass House, you have already been chatted to earlier today. You are warned under the standing orders.

Ms PALASZCZUK: In the case of the Adani mine there is an independent review happening in relation to the black-throated finch. At the same time there is a federal government review—my understanding is by CSIRO and an independent panel—

Ms Trad: Geosciences Australia.

Ms PALASZCZUK:—Geosciences Australia—that is looking at the groundwater impacts of the mine. This is normal practice. This is standard practice that happens with mining projects across the state. In fact, there have been several other examples, and I will give the House a couple. In 2016 professional contractors were engaged for the management of contaminated water of the Texas silver mine in south-west Queensland. It is also not uncommon, for example with the Ensham coalmine, for there to be engagement of specialist engineering advice to determine the suitability of detailed design options for post-mine landforms. That is the advice I have been given from the department of environment. These are standard processes.

I am proud of the fact that in Queensland and Australia we have perhaps the strongest environmental laws nationally and projects must stack up. Today I have shown very clearly that \$9 billion worth of resource projects in this state have been approved under my government and are now either in production or are in the process of exporting. We will continue to back our resources industries as we back our agricultural industries, as we back our tourism industries, as we back our health services industries, our transport industries, our international education industries and our Advance Queensland industries where we have overtaken Victoria for start-ups. We will continue to back the industries in this state for one reason, and that is because they provide jobs for Queenslanders. Every single person in my government is focused on that. We are focused on jobs. Over 180,000 jobs have been created since we were elected which is in stark contrast to the 14,000—

(Time expired)

Wage Theft

Mr SAUNDERS: My question is to the Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations. Will the minister please advise what the Palaszczuk government is doing to protect workers who are victims of wage theft?

Ms GRACE: I thank the member for Maryborough for the question. He was an excellent member of the parliamentary committee and he heard firsthand how one in five Queenslanders were robbed annually of about \$1 billion in lost wages. That is directly out of our economy. The Palaszczuk government's No. 1 priority, as the Premier has said time and time again, is jobs. We want jobs to not only boost our economy; we want to ensure that Queenslanders benefit as well. We want to ensure that these jobs are secure and that Queenslanders get a fair day's pay for a fair day's work.

Unfortunately we have seen some high-profile cases such as 7-Eleven, Caltex and Domino's. Many of those cases were brought forward to the parliamentary inquiry and I thank the chair, the member for Nudgee, and the other members of that inquiry who did an excellent job. We know that wage theft takes many forms—deliberate underpayment of wages, unpaid super, unpaid penalty rates, unauthorised deductions from pay. I note that there are some young people in the gallery today. I am sure that many of them would have experienced some wage theft in their time or maybe not being paid according to what they should have received.

We want to ensure that we do not bury our head in the sand in this state. We want to ensure that we do something about it and the government has now accepted the whole 17 recommendations of the parliamentary inquiry. Six of those recommendations related to the Queensland government—and we will work through these—but 11 of them related to the federal government. What do we see from the federal government? Absolutely nothing. We see the Prime Minister burying his head in the sand and not doing anything with regard to this issue, and we are on good ground. Recently the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry—the ACCI—in a submission to the prebudget in January this year backed recommendation 11 of our parliamentary committee. Not even those opposite in their dissenting report could back the findings of the committee—

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Minister, I am listening very carefully to your contribution, noting that there is to be debated on the *Notice Paper* matters which relate to the parliamentary committee and the inquiry, so I ask you to not make those references to that committee.

Ms GRACE: Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I apologise for that. The ACCI is very firmly on the ground of wanting to ensure that there is a strong cop on the beat. It knows that employers who do the right thing are undercut by those who do the wrong thing and it wants to be sure that there is a level

playing field. I will be writing to the federal minister for industrial relations, whoever that may be, about this. I am wasting my time with Kelly O'Dwyer at the moment because she is on the way out. There is no point in writing to Julie Bishop or to Julia Banks. Michaelia Cash has gone into hiding, so there is no-one that we can rely on. Bring on the federal election, bring on a Shorten Labor government and bring on an end to wage theft in this country. I can guarantee those in this House one thing: Labor governments act on this issue while those opposite just sit there and do nothing.

Hughenden Irrigation Project

Mr KATTER: My question is to the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy. Given the \$180 million from the federal government to the Hughenden irrigation project and hydrology data now show that storage would have been filled, preventing mass flooding and providing immediate locally grown fodder, will the minister now commit to fast-tracking any state government processes to have this water storage built as a priority, ensuring that this money from the feds is not lost to Queensland?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for the question about a project that has such importance to his area, the Hughenden irrigation project. The Queensland government is already in his electorate working carefully on the Flinders River irrigation project with the mayor. That is a coordinated project steaming well and truly ahead, with the Minister for State Development in the lead role on that project.

There are a number of water projects being announced in North Queensland. We have the federal member announcing projects such as the Hells Gate Dam proposal and also the Big Rocks Weir proposal. These announcements essentially come out of the blue. There are no feasibility studies on them or no final feasibility studies on them, yet the hand is out immediately for the Queensland government to stump up 50 per cent of these projects. The federal LNP member said that I had \$234 million given to me by the federal government for that project. He was asked what sorts of promises or commitments they got out of him. He said that this \$234 million was a big commitment that they got out of me to ensure that these projects somehow go ahead.

We are working carefully, but any of these water storage projects anywhere around Queensland really do have to stack up. We really need science behind them. These announcements are by the federal government as it enters into an election campaign. Honestly—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Members to my left! Member for Warrego!

Dr LYNHAM: Every time the federal government gets into trouble we have a dam announcement in Queensland. As the federal election rolls on, we will have more and more dam announcements in Queensland. I think there is now one dam per 2.5 rivers announced in Queensland. We are running out of rivers to dam in Queensland because the federal government is in so much trouble. We will work carefully, we will examine the proposals, but we have to make sure that these proposals stack up for the benefit of the people of Queensland.

War on Wrecks Program

Ms RICHARDS: My question is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Will the minister update the House on the progress of the government's War on Wrecks program to remove derelict and abandoned vessels from Queensland waterways?

Mr BAILEY: I thank the member for Redlands, who chairs our War on Wrecks task force—a very important election commitment by the Palaszczuk government to ensure that the navigation and environmental values of our waterways are maintained and to have a specific fund to deal with wrecks in our waterways. So far, under the leadership of the member for Redlands, we have been able to remove 96 derelict vessels that were clogging our waterways. After only a year into our second term, we are nearly a century up already. We have lined up 47 more vessels to deal with. We have also been able to ensure compliance for another 69 vessels so that people who still own their boats know their responsibilities.

It is the responsibility of boat owners to maintain and care for their boats. Sadly, we see some boats left derelict, adrift and sometimes sinking in our waters. Often, when a vessel sinks, women and children are the first ones off. The Prime Minister is very familiar with that, as he is losing women left, right and centre from the wreck that is the revolving door of the Abbott-Turnbull-Morrison government. They have lost Julia Banks, a member from Victoria. Julie Bishop has left. Kelly O'Dwyer has left.

It gets worse. The government in Canberra has a gangplank by which to push women off its team. Jane Prentice has been pushed off the gangplank. Ann Sudmalis has been pushed off the gangplank. A senator from South Australia has been put in an unwinnable position. It resembles the Queensland LNP. The former member for Broadwater lost preselection to the current member for Broadwater. The Queensland LNP puts its women candidates in marginal seats. Tracy Davis has gone.

The Queensland LNP does not support its women candidates and it does not support equal opportunity. We see this dysfunction in the 40 members of the LNP from Bowen to Mackay who are resigning. Maybe there is compensation for that, because I understand that about 50 people have become new members in the seat of Chatsworth. I do not believe those people are very friendly to the current member for Chatsworth. Maybe those new members compensate the flood of members the LNP is losing from North Queensland. I look forward to the next preselection in Chatsworth as the division and the dysfunction in Canberra infects the Queensland LNP. The Queensland LNP does not support women and does not support equality—

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: Can I urge ministers to recall the question that was asked.

Milk Prices

Mr PERRETT: My question is to the Premier. When the minister for agriculture was asked what he thought of Woolworths paying dairy farmers more he said that he was 'disappointed' and said, 'Oh, look, I'm concerned about it certainly that's something that came about today.' Will the Premier explain why the government is disappointed by Queensland dairy farmers getting a fair price for their product?

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members to my left, the Premier had barely risen to her feet and you were injecting. I would like to hear her response.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I want to confirm what the minister said. I am happy to get back to the House.

Renewable Energy

Mr PEGG: My question is to the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy. Will the minister update the House on the growth in Queensland's renewables sector under the Palaszczuk government and is he aware of any alternative policies?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for Stretton for the question. When it comes to renewable energy, Queenslanders are world leading. Our biggest power station in Queensland is our rooftops—2,000 megawatts of solar PV capacity. In the pipeline is another \$2.5 billion worth of projects. Why is that important? Because of the 4,000 jobs it creates—an industry that you over there destroyed.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, I ask you please to direct your comments through the chair.

Dr LYNHAM: It is an industry that the LNP destroyed. We are working on the next renewable energy wave and that is battery storage. Queenslanders have been enthusiastic first movers—2,000 applications for solar alone and home battery grants. Earlier this month, an installer on the Sunshine Coast, Dave Gardner, told me that his phone was ringing off the hook.

Queensland is powering ahead with renewable energy. As we power ahead, let us look at what the LNP did to the renewable energy sector. In 2012, the member for Clayfield told an estimates committee about his efforts to kill green schemes. As those renewable energy programs were wiped from their books, so were the jobs that went with them. There is more. Under the LNP, as the minister for environment, no less, the member for Glass House cut the Queensland Climate Change Fund, shut down the Office of Climate Change and terminated the ClimateSmart Home Service.

As of yesterday, weak LNP climate change policy is back. The Prime Minister dusted off Tony Abbott's old emissions reduction fund and dressed it up as new climate change policy. Up in Innisfail, the people there are not convinced that climate change is real. The Innisfail LNP branch want a royal commission just to make absolutely sure that it is not volcanos that are emitting all of that carbon. Innisfail is in luck because, as part of the Morrison government's climate change solution, the Innisfail LNP branch is up for a \$100 million grant—as long as it promises not to build a carbon-emitting volcano in North Queensland.

After four years, the Palaszczuk Labor government has Queensland back on track to a renewable energy future with more jobs. As I said before, there are now 4,000 people employed in a renewable energy sector. Every 15 minutes, a new rooftop solar system is installed and every month 100 batteries are installed in Queensland homes. This is effective policy, addressing climate change and creating jobs in this state.

Adani Carmichael Mine, Black-Throated Finch

Mr CRISAFULLI: My question is to the Minister for Environment. Queensland's Resources Investment Commissioner has publicly labelled the Palaszczuk government's approval process for the Adani Carmichael mine 'an absolute mess'. Can the minister tell the House when the decision on the black-throated finch management plan will be made?

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Members to my left, the minister is awaiting instructions as to how long her response time might be. I will be advising her that she will have one minute to answer the question. Members to my left will hear this in silence.

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question. Of course, putting this in context and understanding that there are about 8,000 environmental authorities that my department takes care of and more than 60 per cent of those—

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Broadwater, you are warned under the standing orders. I asked that the minister be heard in silence owing to the unnecessary interjections before the minister had risen to her feet.

Ms ENOCH: Of that 60 per cent, about 3,000 individuals and companies in the resources sector currently hold environmental authorities that the regulator, without political interference, is able to manage. In terms of exports, we have seen increased revenue. We have seen increased investment in the resources sector in the state, because we have the most—

Mr CRISAFULLI: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The question was about when the decision will be made, not the history of who is involved.

Ms Trad interjected.


Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am ruling on the point of order. The minister is answering the question and, given the one-minute time frame, I ask the minister to ensure she comes back to the question asked.

Ms ENOCH: Of course, the independent regulator has the right to seek out independent, scientific advice in the decision-making processes without political interference and that process will continue without political interference, the same way that federally there is a review going on with regard to groundwater.

Mr SPEAKER: The minister's time has expired. The time for question time has expired.

MOTION

Business Program

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (11.20 am): In accordance with sessional order 2B, I move—


1. That the following government business will be considered this sitting week, with the nominated maximum periods of time as specified:
 - (a) the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, a maximum of 1 hour to complete all stages;
 - (b) the Human Rights Bill, a maximum of 5 hours to complete all stages; and
 - (c) the Fisheries (Sustainable Fisheries Strategy) Amendment Bill, a maximum of 4 hours to complete all stages.
2. The following time limits for the bills listed in paragraph 1 apply:
 - (a) the minister to be called on in reply—
 - (i) for the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill—20 minutes before the expiry of the maximum hours;
 - (ii) for the Human Rights Bill—20 minutes before the expiry of the maximum hours;
 - (iii) for the Fisheries (Sustainable Fisheries Strategy) Amendment Bill—20 minutes before the expiry of the maximum hours.

- (b) consideration in detail to be completed by 3 minutes before the expiry of the maximum hours;
 - (c) question on third reading to be put by 2 minutes before the expiry of the maximum hours;
 - (d) question on long title to be put by 1 minute before the expiry of the maximum hours.
3. If the nominated stage of each bill has not been completed by the allocated time specified in paragraph 2, or by 5.55 pm on Thursday, 28 February 2019, Mr Speaker:
- (a) shall call on the minister to reply to the second reading debate;
 - (b) shall put all remaining questions necessary to either pass that stage or pass the bill or motion without further debate;
 - (c) may interrupt non-specified business or debate on a bill or motion to complete the requirements of the motion; and
 - (d) will complete all stages required by this motion, notwithstanding anything contained in standing and sessional orders.

The motion was circulated in advance to give members the opportunity to look at the times allotted to speak to the bills. We say that the business motion is working well for this parliament. The public who come in this week to observe will see debate on bills such as the health practitioner bill, the Human Rights Bill—very important legislation that many across Queensland have a particular interest in—and also, importantly, the Fisheries (Sustainable Fisheries Strategy) Amendment Bill. This is legislation that is important to the people of Queensland and, I am pleased to say, will be dealt with by the parliament this week with the times that have been allotted.

To ensure government business can be achieved during the week we also have the motion that I have already moved in relation to the time frames for the debate on the most recent disasters, being the floods and fires, allowing members the opportunity to be heard on important issues.

I do not intend to speak at length on this motion—we speak on this motion every single week—other than to say I thank the member for Kawana, the member for Murrumba and the member for Noosa for their contributions at the business committee meeting. It is a meeting where we seek to have open discussion about time frames and the interest in these bills. I am very pleased to see that there are many members on both sides interested in speaking on the Human Rights Bill. Before we hear those on the opposite side in any way claiming that they are going to be guillotined once again this week, my rough calculation is that if members work together and look at the length of time for their speeches, every single member who has put their name down on this list will be heard on this bill. It is about working together. It can be achieved with cooperation, which is what the people of Queensland expect us to do on these important pieces of legislation. I ask members to support the motion.

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (11.23 am): The fact is that the business motion that we are debating today has not worked for the House. It has not worked for democracy in the state of Queensland. As I always say, the Leader of the House gets up and talks about the niceties of the business committee meeting. She says that if we work together and cut our speeches short we can all speak in the House. That might be okay for the Labor Party where they can get up and speak for 30 seconds—

Mr Mander: That is all they can speak for.

Mr BLEIJIE: That is all they can speak for, but I think Queenslanders would get much more out of listening to the LNP speak for 30 seconds than Labor members speaking for 30 seconds. The reality is that there is not much one can say in 30 seconds. I have been in this place now for 10 years. The members for Clayfield, Currumbin, Caloundra, Surfers Paradise and Maroochydore have all been here longer. They would know that over the years there may be a speaking list but at some stage during the debate things may happen or things may be said and people may want to respond to them. Members may think they do not have a particular interest in speaking to a bill, but something occurs during the debate that they do want to speak on and they will then add themselves to the list. The reality is that that is being denied because of the constant guillotining.

I have here an A5 page of Liberal National Party speakers who did not get a chance to speak on the waste reduction bill at the last sitting. They were on the speaking list. Every week I will table the speaking lists to show that members who are on the list are not afforded the opportunity to speak. I table this document.

Tabled paper. Document, undated, annotated speaking list for Waste Reduction Bill second reading debate [\[244\]](#).


We are paid to come to parliament and speak on behalf of our constituents. With the Labor Party in government parliament is turning into a nine-to-five job where we cannot do after hours. The government talks about efficiencies. We have seen library research briefs where week after week


debates are guillotined, motions are cut off and members are not afforded the opportunity to speak. In fact, last week the member for Broadwater was talking on a guillotine motion and he was guillotined while talking of a guillotine! I do not know what the prospects of success are for someone having been guillotined once already guillotined, but he was sat down. That is the reality of it.

The Leader of the House talks about the freedoms we have in the Human Rights Bill. If you are a parliamentarian you do not have the right to speak if you want. That is the reality of it. Everyone has free speech unless you are a parliamentarian and then the Labor Party will cut you off. It is because the government is arrogant. It uses its majority. It does not want to hear what other people have to say. It does not want to hear the LNP ask questions of the Premier about her good mate Dave Hanna, who is now sitting in one of their overcrowded jails for a rape conviction. If we had asked does she recall getting a selfie with him she would have stood up and denied ever knowing the fellow, despite receiving CFMMEU donations. In question time today the member for Gympie asked a question about the minister for agriculture's comments on the Steve Austin program last week. I heard him say three times how bad it was that the dairy farmers are getting a better go and getting more money, yet the Premier stands here knowing nothing about it. How does someone not have a clue what is happening in her own government?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stewart): Order! Pause the clock. Member for Kawana, I bring you back to the debate.

Mr BLEIJIE: We are debating the time limits and what we want to be afforded the opportunity to talk about. This is the stuff the LNP want to talk about that we are not afforded the opportunity to talk about because the Leader of the House is guillotining these discussions and guillotining the debates. I have always held the view, and one only has to look at historical records of *Hansard*, that I am quite happy to have members stay here until four o'clock in the morning. The member for Clayfield had us here until 4 am with his budget in 2012. The LNP are happy to be here all hours of the morning. Look how happy the member for Clayfield is! He remembers the days of the 2 am and 4 am finish. That is what we get paid for. We want to do the best job we can for Queensland. This government is arrogant in guillotining our debates.

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (11.28 am): I rise to support the business program motion moved by the Leader of the House. Unlike the member for Kawana and many of those opposite, I know that I can make my point briefly. This motion affords the House ample opportunity to deal with three important bills and I therefore support the motion.

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (11.29 am): Again I rise to support the Manager of Opposition Business in opposing a motion that is a deliberate and absolutely shameful guillotining of the debate to be had on bills. Time and time again we have debated this matter. Last week, I was denied free speech in this House by the guillotining of the bill on the very waste tax that is going to inflict a two per cent rise in the rates charged by the Gold Coast City Council in the next rate notices to come out. They are putting their waste tax on my residents in Mermaid Beach. That is why I need to speak on this motion. We could not be fitted into that debate. The Manager of Opposition Business had given the government the list and I cannot jump other speakers. There is no priority for me. The Leader of the House said that, if 93 members had an opportunity to speak on a matter for a minimum of 10 minutes, it would take 930 minutes. That is a lot longer than the 5½ hours allocated last time.

We have been allocated four hours to debate the fisheries bill. I assure the House that many of our members would like to speak on the fisheries bill, which is coming up this week. Unless it is guillotined—which it will be—the debate would take a lot longer than four hours. We have been allocated five hours to debate human rights, which is a major issue for Queenslanders. It is a major issue for our future. It is also a major issue for the legal system in terms of the breaking down of matters in Queensland. We should have every opportunity to clearly debate it in this House.

We are not a rubber stamp for this government. I am elected to represent the people of Mermaid Beach. I want the opportunity to talk for a minimum of 10 minutes. I would like more, but obviously under our new regime 10 minutes is good. I would like 10 minutes to talk on behalf of the people of Mermaid Beach. That opportunity is being denied by the arrogant Palaszczuk government, which is displaying all the hubris of a government that wants to shut down the House. They do not want any problems aired in the House, because that would look bad for the Palaszczuk government and might damage the image of 'Aunty Perfect'.

This is a deliberate political tactic to quieten the voice of the opposition under the Westminster system. That is totally shameful. Even the fourth estate should be disappointed at the fact that the government of the day is shutting down debate here in the people's house—that is, the House where all representatives should have the opportunity to have their voices heard on legislation before us. Members will have a particular interest in different pieces of legislation and will want to speak on those bills.

The one reason this government does not want debate is that it would expose their incapacity to cover all matters. They are hungry for money. They want to shut down all speech in this House so that they can pass things such as the waste tax, which was passed last week following the guillotining of the debate. They do not want scrutiny of their mad tax grab. It does not matter whether it is poker machines on the Gold Coast, a waste tax, a tax on cars—

Mr Krause: A tax on wagering.

Mr STEVENS: A tax on wagering; that is absolutely correct. It is a tax, tax, tax regime. They are using the guillotine system in this House to stop that being highlighted by the opposition, including by, for example, the member for Mermaid Beach.

If this motion is passed, I will be very disappointed that not all members will be able to speak to legislation, particularly the fisheries bill that will impact a lot of residents in areas right across Queensland. I will be very disappointed if we have only four hours of debate on that bill. Of that four hours, the government takes up half an hour either end of the debate. In other words, thanks very much for the three hours that we have to split between their members and ours. If they want to give us five hours, that is fine, but they do not.

This is a deliberate tactic to shut down debate, ruining this palace of democracy that we are privileged to have been elected to. It is a shameful exercise in hubris and arrogance that is being demonstrated by this government. I hope that the fourth estate brings it home to the people of Queensland that this government is bereft of proper morals and ethics in relation to the operation of this House. The government needs to rejig and rethink the whole process of shutting down and guillotining these motions.

Mr O'Connor interjected.

Mr STEVENS: I thank the member for Bonney. He is doing a bit of riding here. I am getting to the winning post, bringing it home.

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

AYES, 48:

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.

Ind, 1—Bolton.

NOES, 43:

LNP, 37—Bates, Batt, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Boyce, 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, Sorensen, Stevens, Stuckey, Watts, Weir, Wilson.

Grn, 1—Berkman.

KAP, 3—Dametto, Katter, Knuth.


PHON, 1—Andrew.

Ind, 1—Costigan.

Resolved in the affirmative.

NATURAL RESOURCES AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Message from Governor

 **Hon. AJ LYNHAM** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy) (11.39 am): I present a message from His Excellency the Governor.

Mr SPEAKER: The message from His Excellency the Governor recommends the Natural Resources and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The contents of the message will be incorporated in the *Record of Proceedings*. I table the message for the information of members.

MESSAGE

NATURAL RESOURCES AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2019

Constitution of Queensland 2001, section 68

I, PAUL de JERSEY AC, Governor, recommend to the Legislative Assembly a Bill intituled—

A Bill for an Act to amend the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Holding Act 2013, the Aboriginal Land Act 1991, the Aboriginal Land Regulation 2011, the Electricity Act 1994, the Foreign Ownership of Land Register Act 1988, the Geothermal Energy Act 2010, the Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2009, the Land Access Ombudsman Act 2017, the Land Act 1994, the Land and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2017, the Land Regulation 2009, the Land Title Act 1994, the Land Title Regulation 2015, the Land Valuation Act 2010, the Mineral and Energy Resources (Common Provisions) Act 2014, the Mineral and Energy Resources (Financial Provisioning) Act 2018, the Mineral Resources Act 1989, the Petroleum Act 1923, the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004, the Right to Information Act 2009, the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) Act 2009, the South East Queensland Water (Restructuring) Act 2007, the Surveyors Act 2003, the Surveyors Regulation 2014, the Torres Strait Islander Land Act 1991, the Torres Strait Islander Land Regulation 2011, the Valuers Registration Act 1992, the Water Act 2000, the Water Regulation 2016 and the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 for particular purposes

GOVERNOR

Date: 26 February 2019

Tabled paper: Message, dated 26 February 2019, from His Excellency the Governor recommending the Natural Resources and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 [\[229\]](#).

Introduction



Hon. AJ LYNHAM (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy) (11.39 am): I present a bill for an act to amend the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Holding Act 2013, the Aboriginal Land Act 1991, the Aboriginal Land Regulation 2011, the Electricity Act 1994, the Foreign Ownership of Land Register Act 1988, the Geothermal Energy Act 2010, the Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2009, the Land Access Ombudsman Act 2017, the Land Act 1994, the Land and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2017, the Land Regulation 2009, the Land Title Act 1994, the Land Title Regulation 2015, the Land Valuation Act 2010, the Mineral and Energy Resources (Common Provisions) Act 2014, the Mineral and Energy Resources (Financial Provisioning) Act 2018, the Mineral Resources Act 1989, the Petroleum Act 1923, the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004, the Right to Information Act 2009, the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) Act 2009, the South East Queensland Water (Restructuring) Act 2007, the Surveyors Act 2003, the Surveyors Regulation 2014, the Torres Strait Islander Land Act 1991, the Torres Strait Islander Land Regulation 2011, the Valuers Registration Act 1992, the Water Act 2000, the Water Regulation 2016 and the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 for particular purposes. I table the bill and explanatory notes. I nominate the State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Natural Resources and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 [\[230\]](#).

Tabled paper: Natural Resources and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019, explanatory notes [\[231\]](#).

The Natural Resources and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 delivers on several government commitments and ensures a number of key regulatory frameworks within the Natural Resources, Mines and Energy portfolio remain effective and responsive. As part of our Powering Queensland Plan, the government established CleanCo on 17 December 2018 as a publicly owned clean energy generator. CleanCo delivers on the government's objectives for a clean energy future, affordable energy electricity prices, and growing investment and jobs. It will achieve this by supporting the growth of Queensland's renewable energy industry and increasing competition in the wholesale electricity market.

The bill aligns CleanCo with Queensland's other government owned energy generators, CS Energy and Stanwell, by providing it with a partial exclusion under the Right to Information Act 2009, to protect its competitive interests in the national energy market. The partial exclusion will provide that CleanCo's commercial-in-confidence information will not be provided under the Right to Information Act 2009. This exclusion does not apply to providing information on CleanCo's community service obligations. Changes to the Electricity Act 1994 will enable CleanCo to be designated as a state electricity entity, which will ensure that CleanCo is subject to government directions and provide legislative protection of employees' entitlements.

The bill strengthens the compliance and enforcement provisions under the Water Act 2000 to deliver on Queensland's commitments under the Murray-Darling Basin Compliance Compact and the government's response to the independent audit of Queensland's non-urban water measurement and compliance. These changes will help ensure that water users are taking water in accordance with their entitlements, increasing confidence that Queensland is sustainably managing its water resources. This supports a program of work to deliver more transparent, sustainable and equitable rural water management in the Queensland Murray-Darling Basin region and across the state.

Other amendments to the Water Act 2000 will facilitate balanced gender representation on category 2 water authorities, demonstrating the government's ongoing commitment to achieving gender parity for statutory boards by 2020. Specific criteria for the ratepayer selection process will be established to ensure that these authorities have balanced gender representation and the representatives have the appropriate skills, knowledge and experience for the authority to operate effectively. This approach aligns with the governance models for other statutory boards in Queensland. Other water legislation changes will improve operational efficiency, reduce the regulatory burden and improve or clarify the operation of existing provisions for Queensland's Bulk Water Supply Authority, water service providers and make operational improvements for dam safety and emergency action plans provisions.

At the last election the Palaszczuk government committed to continue improving the state's resources tenure management system. This bill delivers on that commitment, focussing on improvements for the exploration sector through amendment to the Mineral Resources Act 1989 and the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004. The activities of the exploration sector are vital to increase the state's knowledge of its resource potential, driving the discovery of new minerals and energy resources and for the continued growth of the resources sector across regional Queensland.

These amendments will support the efforts of genuine explorers by providing flexibility to respond to on-ground findings and adequate time to make informed investment decisions. To achieve this flexibility and responsiveness, the bill introduces a new outcomes based work program. The outcomes based work program enables petroleum and gas, minerals and coal explorers to adjust their exploration strategies quickly without prior approval from the department. This will result in administrative savings for both industry and government.

Activities based work programs will continue to apply to the initial term of a new exploration authority awarded through a competitive process. This will ensure that the integrity of these competitive processes is maintained. Once that initial term is complete, the authority holder may then choose to adopt an outcomes based work program as part of their renewal application.

Relinquishment requirements for exploration authorities will also be adjusted. The additional time given will allow for more exploration to be undertaken and the findings of these activities to be analysed before a holder is required to decide on the areas to be relinquished. The new provisions will require 50 per cent of the exploration area to be relinquished after five years for coal and mineral explorers and after six years for petroleum and gas explorers.

Further, that area to be relinquished can now be selected from across a group of authorities that are being worked together. Also, for mineral and coal explorers, the area of an exploration permit that is converted to a mineral development licence or mining lease can be counted towards their relinquishment requirement. The area to be relinquished may also be reduced in the case of an exceptional event, such as a natural disaster or another global financial crisis.

The bill also includes powers for the minister to impose, vary or remove conditions in the case of an exceptional event, as I have just mentioned. Where one of these exceptional events has impacted on the ability of the authority holder to deliver on their exploration programs, the minister can vary or remove conditions. This can be used to provide some industry relief or assistance to one or more particularly impacted projects.

To provide greater certainty for the communities and landholders that interact with the coal and mineral exploration sector, exploration permits will be capped at an overall life of 15 years. This will usually be through three renewable terms each of five years. An extension of the final term by up to three years may be granted, where an exceptional event has interrupted an exploration program.

Specific amendments to the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004 provide for the amalgamation of either multiple potential commercial areas or petroleum leases and remove the current area limits for these authorities. Other minor amendments to all resources acts are also being made to improve their operation, effectiveness and clarity for the resources sector.

The bill will amend the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Holding Act 2013 to provide a more efficient process for the transmission of leases under that act, where the lessee has died intestate. These changes will complement the government's commitments in response to the Stolen Wages Reparations Taskforce report on reconciling past injustice to resolve the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Holding Act 2013 leases.

A number of amendments to the Land Act 1994 will improve its operation and ensure state land is appropriately managed and allocated. These amendments include administrative changes to clarify that the prescribed terms framework only applies to interests created under the Land Act; add matters relating to government commitments and undertakings, and previous evaluations, to be considered when assessing state land's most appropriate tenure and use; transfer a number of administrative decision-making responsibilities from the minister to the chief executive administering the Land Act; and simplify the procedures and clarify the notification requirement for road closures.

The bill will also improve the process under the Land Act to resolve disputes between a lessee and sublessees of state land. The improved framework provides a safety net dispute resolution process for disputes that may arise under a sublease. Where a sublease does not include a dispute resolution process capable of being used to resolve the dispute, the new framework provides a process of mediation or arbitration that the parties to a dispute can use.

Under the framework, parties must first attempt to resolve the dispute through mediation, unless they both agree to seek arbitration of the dispute. Where parties cannot jointly agree on whom to appoint as a mediator or arbitrator, the bill provides a process for independent mediators and arbitrators to be appointed to ensure disputes are resolved in an appropriate, unbiased and professional fashion. These options will be available in addition to the existing court process under the Land Act.

As a responsible land manager, the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy is keen to ensure that land under its direct control is well managed. However, this is difficult for parcels of land that have no direct access or the access has been removed or damaged, as in the case when a river changes its course and inundates a road. While the department always seeks the consent of neighbouring landholders to enter their land in order to access these otherwise difficult to access parcels, there are times when gaining consent has been difficult or consent has been refused. This can mean that actions such as pest and weed management and fire hazard reductions cannot be undertaken, as well as compliance action for illegal dumping and unauthorised occupation.

This bill provides powers for authorised officers to enter and cross adjoining land to access state land in certain, limited circumstances where it has not been possible to negotiate consent, or where no other point of access can be found. The new powers balance the rights and interests of affected landholders with the requirements to effectively administer and manage state land by ensuring a number of safeguards are in place.

The bill provides that adequate notice is given of any proposed entry, including its purpose, duration and any relevant information about the number of people or equipment that are to be taken across the adjoining land. Authorised officers will also be required to take all reasonable steps to ensure as little damage and inconvenience is caused when exercising the entry power and will not be permitted to enter any residential buildings or structures under any circumstances. If damage is caused by the actions of an authorised person exercising this power, the bill includes provisions to enable the department to make good any damage that has occurred. These new powers may be applied where the adjoining land is leasehold, freehold or trust land.

The bill will also make minor, technical and administrative amendments to a number of acts. The bill amends the Surveyors Act 2003 to clarify the Surveyors Board of Queensland's delegation powers and increase the board's membership to add a qualified mining survey expert to advise on the increasing numbers of mining surveyor registrations. Further, the bill makes clarifying amendments to provisions relating to the appointment of an investigator; who may carry out a cadastral survey; and who may provide surveying services. These will allow the Surveyors Board to appoint an investigator with expertise and qualifications relevant to an alleged noncompliance and ensure the high standard of surveying practices is maintained in Queensland.

Minor amendments to the Land Title Act will improve the operation of the act and clarify processes. The Land Title Act amendments will align the witnessing requirements for paper titling transactions, such as a transfer, with the verification of identity requirements for electronic conveyancing.

The bill also increases the defined area of a 'small' lot for high-density development easements to 450 square metres in response to industry feedback. This change will enable statutory easements to be utilised in a wider range of high-density developments.

An amendment to the Foreign Ownership of Land Register Act 1988 will remove the need to table an annual report of foreign ownership of land in Queensland to parliament. The Queensland Registrar of Titles will continue to collect data on foreign ownership of land which can be reviewed and reported on when necessary.

A range of other minor, technical and administrative amendments to the Land Valuation Act 2010, the Valuers Registration Act 1992 and each of the acts I have mentioned will ensure the state's statute book remains up to date and is more effective. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. AJ LYNHAM (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy) (11.53 am): 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 State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development Committee

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms McMillan): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development Committee.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Milk Prices

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries) (11.54 am): I rise to make a short ministerial statement. I rise to reiterate my unequivocal support for the Queensland dairy industry. I encourage all Queenslanders to drink Queensland branded milk and consume Queensland produce to help our farmers. Consumers should be supporting and buying our local produce.

In response to the question from the member for Gympie this morning, I acknowledge that I misspoke in responding to a question on milk prices on ABC Radio. What my statement on the issue that same day made clear is that I welcome the announcement by Woolworths. It means more money in our dairy farmers' pockets. I am a 100 per cent supporter of that. I table that statement for the benefit of the House.

Tabled paper: Media release, dated 26 February 2019, by the Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries, Hon. Mark Furner, titled 'Movement of \$1 milk welcomed' [\[245\]](#).

DEPUTY SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

School Group Tour


Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms McMillan): I acknowledge in the gallery today school leaders from Earnshaw State College in the electorate of Nudgee.

HEALTH PRACTITIONER REGULATION NATIONAL LAW AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 14 February (see p. 304), on motion of Dr Miles—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (11.55 am): I rise to speak in support of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. This bill amends the health practitioner regulation national law—the national law—which commenced in 2010 following the agreement of the Council of Australian Governments to establish a national registration and accreditation scheme for health professionals.

This bill will amend the national law to implement two priority reforms agreed to by health ministers at the COAG Health Council on 12 October 2018. Firstly, the bill will change the operation of mandatory reporting requirements that apply in the situation where one health practitioner is treating another health practitioner. The purpose of these changes is to strike a better balance between improving access to treatment for practitioners with health conditions that potentially impact on their own practice while ensuring appropriate protections for consumers of health services.

Secondly, the bill will also increase the penalties that apply if a person holds themselves out to be a registered health professional when they are not, improperly uses a protected title, claims someone is a health professional when they know they are not, or contravenes a prohibition order. These changes will strengthen consumer protections and public confidence in the health system.

The goal of mandatory reporting reforms is to ensure that health practitioners have the confidence to seek treatment for health conditions while maintaining public safety and public confidence in registered health professionals. Mandatory reporting requirements ensure that the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency, the national boards and co-regulatory agencies such as Queensland's Health Ombudsman are made aware of and can take appropriate action to protect the public if a registered health practitioner is engaging in conduct that could cause harm.


The mandatory reporting provisions in the national law require employers and registered health practitioners to report certain conduct of other registered health practitioners that may place the public at risk. The conduct that must be reported includes the following: practising while impaired, practising while intoxicated, practising in a way that significantly departs from standards and engaging in sexual misconduct in connection with practice.

These changes have come about in response to increased concerns from stakeholders that mandatory reporting requirements may be a factor in discouraging patient practitioners who are unwell from seeking treatment for their health issues, especially mental health issues or drug and alcohol problems, for fear of being reported by their treating practitioner. These concerns are serious because seeking treatment and support for health conditions is critically important to ensuring the health and wellbeing of practitioners as well as the patients they care for.

The community want to ensure that health practitioners get the help they need when they need it. To address these concerns the bill makes several important changes to the mandatory reporting obligations of treating practitioners and when they provide treatment to a practitioner patient. The bill strengthens requirements for the reporting of sexual misconduct, including a new requirement to report risks of future sexual misconduct. This will ensure that, if a treating practitioner becomes aware a practitioner patient is, for example, grooming a child or a patient, they would be required to report that to the regulator.

The bill contains a new, higher threshold that governs when a treating practitioner is required to report a practitioner patient for an impairment, intoxication or substandard practice. Under this new threshold, a treating practitioner is only required to report this conduct if the public is being placed at substantial risk of harm. This is a higher standard, making it clear that the treating practitioner is not required to make a mandatory report unless the safety of patients or the public is assessed as being at substantial risk of harm.

I thank all those who made submissions. I thank my colleagues on the committee. I also thank the work of the secretariat, who continue to do outstanding work for the committee. Their time and efforts are always greatly appreciated. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr BERKMAN** (Maiwar—Grn) (11.59 am): I rise to speak in support of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Broadly speaking, I support the bill. The health committee heard very broad but somehow limited support from stakeholders in the medical profession on the basis that this reform moves mandatory reporting and the current framework in the right direction. However, the mandatory reporting framework at the centre of the bill raises really important and complex ethical questions, which I will address in a moment.

First of all, though, I want to note that, while the crossbench is used to having no role in the debate on the business motion for the week, it is disappointing that we do not have a bit more time to address this bill in the House. It is a very important bill, and to have had only two hours between the

last sitting week and this week to deal with it I think is wholly inadequate. This is important legislation that at some point touches on each and every one of us, especially given the widely held view in the medical profession that mandatory reporting risks unnecessary harm to health practitioners and potentially worse patient outcomes.

This reform is driven by agreement at COAG. While that certainly provides a very important background for our work in the committee and here in parliament, I would suggest that agreement at COAG should not derogate from our responsibility as legislators in Queensland to very carefully consider each piece of legislation that comes before us.

There is no dispute about the fundamental importance of patient safety, yet the committee heard very real concerns about the consequences of mandatory reporting for health practitioners in need of medical assistance themselves. While I agree with the recommendations of the committee as set out in our report on the bill, I still have some concerns about the paucity of evidence to justify mandatory reporting and the potential unintended negative consequences for not only health practitioners who may be deferred from seeking the treatment they need but also the wellbeing of patients in the care of those health practitioners.

In simplest terms, we heard evidence that mandatory reporting requirements make health practitioners more reluctant to seek treatment themselves given the risk that they might find themselves reported in relation to the medical condition for which they are seeking treatment. This makes sense intuitively, and we heard accounts like this from a number of medical practitioners. The obvious consequence is that the system of mandatory reporting will in some cases deprive medical practitioners of the help they need, whether in respect of addiction, substance abuse or poor mental health. The less obvious consequence is that the patients of such a medical practitioner—the one deterred from seeking treatment—may also find themselves at a greater risk of harm. This point was succinctly put by Dr Michael Clements of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, who told the committee—

You need to be fearful of the doctor who is not seeking medical care, not fearful of the doctor who has a treating relationship with a practitioner ...

The establishment of a higher threshold for mandatory reporting is certainly an improvement and, along with the additional guidance that is proposed to be developed for treating practitioners, is a development that the health profession broadly welcomes. However, this support for the proposed 'step in the right direction', as it is described, must be considered in the context of widespread opposition to mandatory reporting.

The Department of Health provided the committee a response to submissions on the bill, which makes clear that most submissions on the bill advocated for a complete exemption to mandatory reporting by treating practitioners in line with the approach that currently applies in Western Australia. This includes submissions from a number of health practitioners and various peak bodies including the Queensland Nurses and Midwives' Union, the Queensland Doctors' Health Program, the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, the Royal Australasian College of Medical Administrators, the AMA, the Australian Medical Students' Association, the National Association of Practising Psychiatrists, the Australian Society of Anaesthetists, the Australian Psychological Society and the Australian Doctors Federation. It is a long and substantial list. Surely a united voice of concern from all these organisations warrants very careful consideration by this parliament and should not be dismissed as we simply legislate to implement an agreement reached by an unaccountable organisation like COAG.

The evidence from a number of these organisations noted the risk of overreporting by time-poor treating practitioners because of the remaining ambiguity in the proposed mandatory reporting framework. Alongside this, a number of submitters noted the terrible prevalence of mental health issues and higher suicide rates among the medical profession. No other group or class of patients faces the same kinds of limits on the confidentiality they are afforded in seeking treatment for poor mental health or addiction. There is a clear need for health practitioners to be provided better guidance on the threshold for reporting, and the factors to be taken into account under this new threshold, as is proposed alongside these changes to the reporting threshold. However, peak bodies representing the medical profession remain concerned that the nuanced change we are making to the Queensland law will make little practical difference for treating practitioners, resulting in at least a perception around the risk of overreporting and fewer medical practitioners seeking help when it is needed.

I do not think many of us would dispute that characterisation of the change we are making—a shift in the wording from 'risk of substantial harm' to a 'substantial risk of harm'—is indeed a nuanced one. It is difficult to argue that the new threshold does not carry much of the same ambiguity and could create the same uncertainty for medical practitioners as the former threshold.

The position of these professional bodies in line with the WA model is that medical practitioners' ethical and professional obligations are sufficient. For example, the obligations set out in section 9.3 of the Medical Board of Australia's code of conduct already quite clearly require medical practitioners to report a practitioner patient who may put public safety at risk. This brings us to the nub of the question before the House. Does more heavy handed regulation in the form of mandatory reporting improve public safety or diminish this by deterring our professionals from seeking treatment to ensure their own wellbeing?

Health Consumers Queensland, as always, provided the committee with really valuable insight from the consumer perspective, but their evidence also noted the difficulty in arriving at a position on the reform given the paucity of robust evidence and useful data on this question. Melissa Fox, the CEO of Health Consumers Queensland, highlighted vitally important questions to which we do not yet have evidence based answers. For example, how many health professionals do not seek care because of uncertainty about the impact on their careers of doing so? Has the care of their patients been compromised because of this? Where is the evidence about an increase in access to health care by health professionals without an adverse impact on public safety from other jurisdictions that have changed their threshold?

In the same vein, the committee notes in the report that there is very limited evidence of the impact of the current mandatory notification regime. I would much prefer to see evidence based answers to these questions before we lead the COAG charge to implement this new regime. In the absence of this evidence, I would suggest that we take very seriously the committee's suggestion that there be an independent review of proposed changes through the COAG Health Council.


The committee in its report contemplates the following—

A two stage review could initially consider existing data and make recommendations about data collection, including recommendations to identify the impact of the reforms on help-seeking by health practitioners. The second stage of the review could consider the impact of implementation of the mandatory reporting reforms.

I am very interested in the minister's view on this suggestion and I would implore him to advocate in the strongest possible terms at COAG for this kind of evidence gathering to better inform any future reform in this space.

I will turn very briefly to the LNP's proposed amendments and the explanations circulated in relation to these. In essence, they propose what was described in a number of submissions to the committee as the 'WA lite' model. The proposed amendments are afflicted by the same absence of an empirical evidence base, but I applaud the LNP for having erred on the side of harm minimisation in this instance. This position came as somewhat of a surprise to me, particularly in comparison to the 'tough on crime' and 'just say no' rhetoric that they are usually inclined to rely on. I would encourage the opposition as a whole to carefully consider harm minimisation strategies and medicalisation of our response to issues like drug use, addiction and substance abuse, and the intersection of these with our treatment of mental health issues.

I want to thank the committee members and the secretariat, as always, for the work that they put into the report on this bill. I want to thank everyone who assisted the committee with their evidence and experience in this space.

 **Mr O'ROURKE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (12.08 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. This bill will make two priority reforms to the health practitioner regulation national law following an agreement by all Australian health ministers. The first is an amendment to the mandatory reporting requirements for treating health practitioners. This amendment will encourage registered health practitioners to have the confidence to seek treatment for their own health condition. Secondly, the bill will increase the maximum penalties for persons who falsely hold themselves out to be a registered health professional, thus strengthening patient and consumer protections under the national law.

The national law commenced operation in 2010 and has established 15 national boards that register and regulate health practitioners from 16 health professions including doctors, nurses, midwives, dentists, pharmacists and psychologists. Queensland parliament is the host jurisdiction for the national law and any changes to the law must be agreed by health ministers of all states, territories and the Commonwealth at the COAG Health Council before they are introduced. On 12 October 2018 COAG Health Council approved amendments to the national laws to implement these two priority reforms.

AHPRA and the national boards are notified about registered health practitioners who may be placing the public at risk of harm. In Queensland, mandatory reports are made through the Queensland Health Ombudsman and dealt with under Queensland's co-regulatory arrangements. The mandatory


reporting provisions in the national law require employers and registered health practitioners to report certain conduct of other registered health practitioners. This includes intoxication at work, sexual misconduct in connection with the practice of a health profession and placing the public at risk of substantial harm.

Concerns have been raised that these requirements may discourage health practitioners from seeking treatment due to the requirement to make a mandatory report, particularly where the patient practitioner is seeking treatment for mental health issues or drug and alcohol problems. Given these concerns, the bill makes several significant changes to the threshold for mandatory reporting requirements applying to treating practitioners. The threshold only requires reporting if there is a substantial risk of harm to the public and includes guidance about factors a treating practitioner may consider in deciding whether a practitioner patient's impairment would meet the threshold of substantial risk of harm. Treating practitioners are to use their professional judgement, expertise and holistic assessment when considering whether an impairment is being managed appropriately to mitigate risks to the public. It is important to give registered health practitioners greater confidence to seek treatment for their health issues and that it is done in a way that does not compromise the safety of the patient or the public.

This bill also strengthens requirements for the reporting of sexual misconduct including a new requirement to report risks of future sexual misconduct. This will ensure that if a treating practitioner becomes aware that a practitioner patient is, for example, grooming a child or a patient, they would be required to report the matter to the regulator. Subject to the bill being passed, Commonwealth, state and territory health ministers have asked the Australian Health Practitioners Regulation Agency, in conjunction with stakeholders, to develop educational material.

Secondly, the bill will introduce a maximum penalty for persons who falsely hold themselves out to be a registered health professional. The bill will double the maximum penalty for holding out and related offences to \$60,000 for an individual and, where relevant, \$120,000 for a body corporate. The bill will also introduce an imprisonment term of up to three years for the most serious offences. These reforms strengthen patient and consumer protection.

This bill demonstrates an ongoing commitment to protecting the health and safety of the public and a focus on professional and competent practice by health professionals. It will enable health practitioners to have the confidence to seek help when they need treatment for their own health conditions. This is vital not only for their own wellbeing but also to ensure that the public receives safe health care. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (12.14 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. I address this bill today not only as the state member for Moggill, an electorate I am proud to say has a significant number of residents who work in the healthcare sector, but also as a registered doctor and health professional myself.

It was 10 years ago that mandatory reporting requirements were introduced nationally to ensure that patient safety is, rightly, paramount when it comes to the professional conduct of health practitioners. No-one could argue that the safety of patients and the broader public must not be at the forefront of any public health policy or initiative, but it is also imperative that the health and wellbeing of health practitioners themselves is looked after.

As a specialist physician in addiction medicine and as a former deputy chief medical officer and executive director of medical services, I have seen firsthand the consequences if a balance is not achieved between patient safety and the health and welfare needs of impaired health practitioners. The devastating consequences of doctor and health practitioner suicide and self-harm is a significant professional issue. Unless the complexity of mental health issues, including alcohol and drug issues, is well managed and treating clinicians are empowered and supported to manage such complex care, the real risk is that impaired doctors and health professionals may not seek the care they so desperately need.

Since the introduction of the mandatory reporting requirements, health practitioner advocacy groups and many within the health system have argued that such requirements not only place an unfair burden on treating practitioners but also discourage health practitioners from seeking medical help for fear of adverse professional repercussions and punitive ramifications. Before I outline some of the valid concerns that health professionals have raised regarding this bill and expand on the Liberal National Party's amendment, as foreshadowed by the shadow minister for health and ambulance services, I wish to briefly go through what this bill is seeking to achieve.

The objectives of this legislation are to amend the health practitioner regulation national law to, firstly, introduce reforms to mandatory reporting by treating practitioners to ensure health practitioners have confidence to seek treatment for health conditions while protecting the public from harm; and, secondly, double the penalties for holding out and related offences under the national law from \$30,000 to \$60,000 and introduce a maximum term of imprisonment of three years for the most serious offences.

The bill will make consequential amendments to the Queensland local application provisions of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (Queensland) Act 2009 to: align Queensland's approach to mandatory reporting by treating practitioners with the approach in the national law by removing a Queensland-specific provision; and provide for circumstances in which the holding out and related offences are prosecuted on indictment and summarily in Queensland. Finally, the bill will also make consequential amendments to the Ambulance Service Act 1991 in Queensland and the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011.

At the very heart of this bill is the proposal to raise the mandatory reporting threshold for treating practitioners. Under this bill a treating practitioner will only be required to make a mandatory report if their practitioner patient's conduct involving impairment, intoxication or substandard practice places the public at substantial risk of harm. This high threshold will not apply to mandatory reporting of sexual misconduct.

The Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee stated in its recently released report—

These reforms are aimed at ensuring health practitioners seek treatment for health conditions (such as a mental health issue or an alcohol or drug problem) without fear of being subject to mandatory reporting.

Whilst this key objective may be a noble one, it is not without substantial criticism from those whom it affects the most. As the consultation on this bill revealed, a number of concerns have been raised, specifically regarding the reforms to mandatory reporting. I will quote from that same committee report, report No. 17, on page 8. It states—

Many stakeholders were not confident that the proposed legislative change would encourage health practitioners to seek help for their conditions or discourage over-reporting by treating practitioners.

The report continued—

Some stakeholders blamed this lack of confidence on the ambiguity and complexity of the proposed amendments in the Bill.

One such organisation was the Australian Medical Association, which said of this reform—

... we must remove language that creates any level of ambiguity for the treating practitioner. Otherwise, as with the current National Law, they will seek to manage their own risk by over reporting, or equally the patient practitioner will adopt an overly cautious approach and not seek treatment.

The Bill as it currently stands, does not remove this ambiguity and will cause patient practitioners to question their ability to seek treatment, without risking their future livelihoods and careers. The AMA believes that, like the current legislation, this Bill will risk health practitioner's well-being and their lives.

Furthermore, and somewhat echoing the sentiments of the AMA, the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners said—

The current mandatory reporting arrangements are of serious concern to the RACGP and its members, and have been since the inception of the National Law in 2009. The amendments outlined in this bill make no material difference to the current arrangements which are, as previously stated, unsatisfactory.

Whilst consultation on this bill revealed significant concerns with regard to the ambiguity and complexity within the amendments, it also revealed support for alternative ways to protect patients. In particular, many expressed their support to adopt what is commonly referred to as the West Australian model. With reference again to the committee's report, as stated on page 15—

The Western Australian model provides treating practitioners with a complete exemption from mandatory reporting across all forms of 'notifiable conduct'. Notifiable conduct means a health practitioner has:

- practised their health profession while intoxicated by alcohol or drugs
- engaged in sexual misconduct in connection with the practice of their profession
- placed the public at risk of substantial harm in the practice of their profession because of an impairment
- placed the public at risk of harm by practising their profession in a way that constitutes a significant departure from accepted professional standards.

The committee report went on to say—

In place of mandatory reporting by treating practitioners, Western Australia relies on health practitioners' ethical and professional obligations to report a practitioner-patient who may put public safety at risk. Professional and ethical obligations are referred to in the codes of conduct published by National Boards.


The committee report further states—

For example, the AMA suggested an exemption from mandatory reporting was necessary to save lives:

The law in Western Australia works well to protect patients and save doctors. The AMA has strongly advocated for the National Law to more closely reflect the protections provided to doctors by the WA legislation. The Committee has the opportunity to effect real change and save lives, if they were to recommend that Health Ministers reconsider their decision not to adopt the WA model.

To that end, we on this side of the House care about the Queensland health system and want to support its amazing health practitioners. The Liberal National Party believes that Queenslanders deserve a world-class health system, because for far too long the Palaszczuk Labor government and the Beattie and Bligh Labor governments before that let our health system deteriorate. Labor is all too happy for elective surgery times to blow out, ambulance ramping to get out of control and emergency departments to overcrowd, all the while being more concerned with the renaming of a hospital and the shameful tearing down of the legacy of one of Queensland's greatest female pioneers. That is why we listened to and support the needs of Queensland's health professionals, and that is why we are moving to make amendments to this bill that are similar to the Western Australian model with respect to mandatory reporting requirements. As I said earlier, it is a model that has the support of a variety of health advocacy bodies, and it has served Western Australia and the health practitioners of that state very well.

The Liberal National Party is listening to the concerns of the medical profession, and our proposed amendments balance out all of the public policy considerations relating to the health of medical professionals and the safety of Queenslanders. I hope that the Premier and the Minister for Health choose to do the right thing by both patients' and health professionals' wellbeing and support the amendments moved by the shadow minister. I commend the LNP's shadow minister for health and ambulance services and the member for Mudgeeraba, Ros Bates MP, for bringing these amendments, and I call on all in this House to give them their full support.


 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (12.22 pm): I rise to speak in support of the bill. I would like to thank the committee and the people and organisations who took the time to make submissions. Of course, I would also like to thank the minister and his staff for their hard work on this bill.

Just over 30 years ago I started my training as a student nurse. We were amongst the last group of nurses trained in this country under what was known as the Nightingale system. In the 1800s a small number of Nightingale nurses—just five—arrived in the colony of New South Wales at the invitation of the New South Wales governor and went on to establish a training system for nurses across the entirety of Australia. Nightingale established standards of nursing care that persist to this day. She established rules, practices, ethics and attitudes for nurses. They had one aim, and one aim only, and that was to protect patients. She established a system whereby, when a nurse said she was a Nightingale nurse, everyone knew she would be operating to the highest possible standards. All health professionals no doubt have their own stories of the development of their own profession's standards, but the key objective of all of those professional standards is patient protection. This bill is merely a continuation of that long and ongoing process that has existed amongst various health professions for many centuries. It is a process of continually improving our professional standards.

There is no debate in this place that health practitioners do an amazing job. They make great sacrifices to deliver excellent evidence based care. I doubt there are many nurses who have not on occasion gone a whole shift without going to the toilet or without having a proper break because they prioritised the care of their patients over their own needs. It is common to see health professionals going above and beyond because that is what their patients need. Doctors, nurses and allied health professionals all know that the job does not stop when the shift officially finishes. All health professionals know that you are never truly 'off the clock'. If someone needs care and you are on the spot, you stop what you are doing and deliver it. All health practitioners no doubt have run impromptu clinics at family and community gatherings. Putting the needs of patients first is a good and great thing, and I know that all health professionals are prepared to render health care whenever it is requested or required. However, this selflessness often means that health professionals are often not that good at looking after themselves or seeking treatment. This natural tendency not to seek treatment is further exacerbated by mandatory reporting regimes that require the mandatory reporting of practitioners who have any impairment that may cause them to pose a risk to the patients they are caring for. Practitioners who may be suffering from mental health issues, addiction or other health issues could be reluctant to seek health care for fear of their treating practitioner's mandatory treating obligations.

We should also bear in mind that for many health practitioners their mental health or addiction problems may in fact be caused or exacerbated by the things they deal with in their practice. I certainly know many nurses, doctors and allied health professionals who have dealt with a range of stressful and

difficult situations. Failure to seek treatment and care will inevitably lead to poor outcomes for clinicians and the patients they care for. It is a problem that has been recognised wherever mandatory reporting obligations exist, and this bill seeks to deal with this issue. It strikes the right balance between protecting patients and protecting clinicians, it raises the threshold and it puts the treating physician in a very important decision-making process. Treating physicians constantly have to balance the rights of patients and carers. It is a common thing for doctors to have to determine many things: whether a patient is safe to drive; whether they are safe to return to work; if they will do damage to people if they go back to work and they are unfit for that duty; and whether they are, in fact, safe to live and operate in our community. These are all decisions that health practitioners, particularly doctors, are commonly entrusted to make. I believe that this bill gets the balance right and I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr HUNT** (Nicklin—LNP) (12.27 pm): I rise to speak to the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I would like to begin by thanking the other committee members who examined the bill, the secretariat staff and Hansard, and all of the people who took time to make submissions to the committee and attend various hearings and briefings. The objectives of the bill, as stated in the committee's report, are to amend the relevant act to—

- introduce reforms to mandatory reporting by treating practitioners, to ensure health practitioners have confidence to seek treatment for health conditions, while protecting the public from harm, and
- double the penalties for holding out and related offences under the National Law ...

The Bill makes consequential amendments to the Queensland local application provisions of the *Health Practitioner National Law Act 2009* (Qld) to:

- align Queensland's approach to mandatory reporting by treating practitioners with the approach in the National Law by removing a Queensland-specific provision, and
- provide for circumstances in which the holding out and related offences are prosecuted on indictment and summarily in Queensland.

The Bill also makes consequential amendments to the *Ambulance Service Act 1991* (Qld) and *Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011* (Qld).

If passed, the bill would automatically apply in all states and territories except Western Australia, which must pass corresponding legislation, and South Australia, which must make its own regulations. This is because Queensland is the host jurisdiction. On 12 October 2018 the COAG Health Council approved the proposed amendments to the national law.

The public has high expectations of our health professionals. In the main they deliver on these high expectations consistently, but our health professionals are human and as such are prone to illness, mental health issues, abuse of alcohol and drugs, and behaviour that does not meet those high expectations. The public should have confidence that our health professionals delivering services to them do not pose a risk to their wellbeing or, as the bill defines, expose them to a substantial risk of harm by operating in a diminished capacity because of a physical or mental impairment, disability or disorder or place the public at risk of harm by practising their profession in a way that constitutes a significant departure from accepted professional standards.

If a medical practitioner treating a patient who is also a practitioner becomes aware that this may be the case, the bill imposes a requirement for them to make a mandatory report. It was submitted by various stakeholders that a system of mandatory reporting may make medical practitioners fearful of seeking help when they need it and therefore put the public at greater risk. Rather, they would prefer to operate under obligations and ethical frameworks and for all intents and purposes could be summarised as using their discretion under all of the circumstances. Our medical professionals are probably best placed to make those assessments on a case-by-case basis so that other medical professionals seeking help can have more confidence in their privacy being maintained and in the care provided. The Western Australian model, it is submitted, provides that protection by allowing for voluntary reporting.

The distinction between the Western Australian model and that proposed in Queensland would be that in Queensland it does not matter if the medical practitioner or student is seeking treatment, is complying with the requirements of the treatment and is for all intents and purposes on the road to improvement and recovery; the Queensland law may still require a mandatory report under the proposed bill. The problem with this situation is that the practitioner, knowing this, may not seek help in the first place, possibly placing the public at greater risk of harm than otherwise would be the case if the person concerned was receiving the treatment they needed, confident in the fact that their privacy would be maintained and they could work towards recovery. The AMA in its submission stated—

The law in Western Australia (WA) works well to protect patients and save doctors. The AMA has strongly advocated for the National Law to more closely reflect the protections provided to doctors by the WA legislation. The Committee has the opportunity to effect real change and save lives, if they were to recommend that Health Ministers reconsider their decision not to adopt the WA model.


The receipt of medical treatment is generally afforded the strictest of privacy for good reason. We as a society rely on many other people in positions of authority, protection and trust to serve our community who are not subject to laws of mandatory reporting of impairment or mental health conditions. For example, police officers, other emergency services workers, armed security guards, truck drivers, public transport operators and others have roles in society that carry elements of risk to the wider community if they are not performing their duties to the highest standards or have issues with their health.

I performed duties in one of those professions—policing—for 30 years. Throughout that time I saw police reluctant to seek professional help through the resources provided by the Queensland Police Service in human services for fear that those internal processes might lead to breaches of confidentiality or a loss of career opportunity. I heard a similar message expressed by medical practitioners concerned that their colleagues would not seek the help they need out of those various fears. The results of this can be tragic.

Certainly, both police and medical practitioners face day-to-day trauma that can have an effect on their mental health. In my maiden speech to parliament I undertook to do all I could in this House and in my time in parliament to improve the mental health of and access to assistance for police and emergency services workers. I cannot stand here and claim to do that without including medical practitioners in that group as well. I also cannot say that I have looked after medical practitioners without advocating for, as they themselves have submitted, the removal of barriers to necessary treatment to allow them to maintain good mental and physical health.

The AMA commented that doctors should be able to seek treatment for health issues with confidentiality whilst also preserving the requirement for patient safety. When looking at the Western Australian model, the AMA noted that there is no evidence to suggest diminished patient safety in Western Australia and that adoption of the Western Australian model would also provide much needed national consistency. In conclusion, the LNP recommends that the House adopt the Western Australia model, as indicated in our statement of reservation in the committee's report and the amendments that will be presented.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stevens): Order! The time allocated for debate has expired. Under the provisions of the business program motion agreed to by the House, the time limit set for this stage of the bill has expired.

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (12.36 pm), in reply: I would like to thank all members who have contributed to the debate on this bill. As Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services, I have the privilege of visiting health services in all corners of our state. I am incredibly proud of our hardworking health practitioners and I have seen firsthand the dedication they show in providing world-class health services to the people of Queensland.

We must recognise that health practitioners are not immune to the same health issues that can affect all of us. Health practitioners are patients too and deserve access to the same high-quality care they provide to their own patients. Health professionals must be encouraged and supported to seek help for their own health.

This bill addresses concerns about the current mandatory reporting provisions in the national law by raising the reporting threshold and giving treating practitioners more discretion to decide if a mandatory report about an impairment is needed. The reforms provide guidance to assist treating practitioners in determining whether a practitioner patient's impairment reaches the level at which it must be reported so that the public is protected from harm. The bill makes clear that treating practitioners are not required to make a mandatory report if a practitioner patient has insight into their health condition and is taking appropriate steps to manage it. This sends a clear message to health practitioners that they can and should seek treatment for their health issues.

By encouraging practitioners to look after their own health, the bill will also deliver better health outcomes for patients and the public. To ensure the public is protected, the bill retains mandatory reporting obligations for treating practitioners to ensure practitioner patients are reported if they engage in sexual misconduct or place the public at substantial risk of harm. These protections do not detract from the goal of empowering and encouraging practitioners to seek help when it comes to their mental health.

Although the reforms in the bill are a significant step forward, practitioners may be reluctant to seek treatment for a variety of reasons. Legislation can only go so far in addressing this issue, which often stems from long-held attitudes not related to mandatory reporting laws. This is one reason the

committee highlighted the need for a comprehensive education campaign, to raise awareness of the reforms and change attitudes and perceptions among health professionals when it comes to dealing with their health issues. The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency will develop and lead this education campaign in partnership with key stakeholders and professional bodies.

In addition to mandatory reporting reforms, the bill also provides improved protections for healthcare consumers by strengthening the penalties for holding out and related offences under the national law. These important reforms are needed to deter deceptive conduct that can harm consumers. The increased penalties for these offences, including the potential for imprisonment in the most serious cases, will put the imposters on notice and promote trust in registered health practitioners and the care they provide.

The debate on this bill has focused on the mandatory reporting reforms contained in the bill. In particular, members opposite have argued that reporting should not be mandatory even where a practitioner's impairment poses a substantial risk of harm to the public. I note that the member for Mudgeeraba has given notice of her intention to move an amendment to the bill that would give treating practitioners a complete exemption from mandatory reporting requirements except for reporting of sexual misconduct. This means that they would have no obligation to report a practitioner patient on the basis of an impairment, intoxication or substandard practice, even when this behaviour is ongoing and is placing the public at substantial risk of harm.

I remind the House that this bill enacts reform to a national law. It implements an agreement between all of Australia's health ministers through the Council of Australian Governments Health Council. Health ministers from the Commonwealth, states and territories carefully considered the merits of a complete exemption from mandatory reporting by treating practitioners and health ministers decided not to provide treating practitioners with a complete exemption from mandatory reporting or to adopt the WA model because these models fail to adequately protect members of the public. Let me give some examples. With a complete exemption from mandatory reporting or the LNP's proposed laws, a treating practitioner would not be required to report a practitioner patient who has dementia, psychosis or another serious impairment that cannot be managed with treatment or would be placing the public safety at risk.

Likewise, a treating practitioner would not be required to report a practitioner patient who has been, and is likely to continue to be, drunk or under the influence of drugs while at work. These are scenarios in which patients would be put in harm's way. There is no evidence to support the claims made by the opposition that the West Australian model is optimal. Rates of mandatory reporting by treating practitioners are very low across all jurisdictions and there is no evidence that the West Australian model has led to better health outcomes for either practitioners or their patients.

We must provide an environment in which health practitioners can confidentially seek proper treatment for their own health conditions—this is not in dispute—but this cannot come at the cost of patient safety. That is why health ministers agreed that treating practitioners should continue to have mandatory reporting obligations in limited circumstances. The bill defines those circumstances narrowly to ensure that mandatory reporting occurs only where there is a real danger to the public.

I also note the comment from the member for Mudgeeraba that stakeholders raised concerns about a lack of consultation during development of the bill. These reforms were developed through an extensive policy development and consultation process over an 18-month period. It included multiple rounds of consultation within the national processes and also by individual states and territories. It started with a discussion paper released by the New South Wales government in September 2017 with four possible policy options. Then in April 2018 the COAG Health Council considered the results of the consultation process. At that meeting health ministers agreed that the reforms should ensure that registered health practitioners can seek help when needed but must also protect the public. A further round of consultation was undertaken in August 2018 to determine if the proposed reforms fulfilled the policy intent of health ministers. The bill was also examined in detail by the Queensland parliamentary committee, which endorsed it and recommended it be passed.

In closing, I again want to thank the members of the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee for their consideration of the bill. I also want to thank the organisations and individuals who took the time to provide feedback on the bill during both the parliamentary committee process in Queensland and through the extensive national consultation process. This bill reflects the hard work and dedication of many people around the country.

I extend my sincere appreciation to my colleagues from the COAG Health Council for their collaborative approach. I also acknowledge the extensive work that happens behind the scenes to reach agreement in each jurisdiction and to navigate the approval processes of each state and territory and

the Commonwealth. Finally, I call upon all stakeholders to help communicate these critical reforms to their members and work together to promote a culture that encourages practitioners to seek help for their own health and wellbeing. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 4, as read, agreed to.

Clause 5—



Ms BATES (12.45 pm): I move the following amendment—

Clause 5 (Insertion of new ss 25A–25C)

Page 5, line 19—

omit, insert—

(2) National law provisions, section 141B(2) and (4), from 'must, as soon as practical'—

omit, insert—

may,

(3) National law provisions, section 141B(6), after 'this Part'—

I table the explanatory notes to my amendment.

Tabled paper: Health Practitioner Regulation National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018, explanatory notes to Ms Ros Bates's amendments [\[246\]](#).

As I said in my speech during the second reading debate, we support the concerns raised by organisations, including the AMAQ and the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners. I understand that the AMAQ has written to honourable members about this specific issue in the last week. The amendment we are seeking to move ensures that mandatory reporting obligations will only relate to treating practitioners for allegations of sexual misconduct. We trust medical practitioners every day to make decisions based upon their training, expertise and obligations to act ethically to protect Queenslanders from harm. Surely we should do the same when they are treating a fellow medical practitioner or any practitioner. As the Royal Australian College of Surgeons said in its submission to the parliamentary committee—

The RACGP accepts that mandatory reporting, as applicable to employees, colleagues, and managers, has an important role in protecting public safety.

However, treating practitioner mandatory reporting of medical conditions and impairments remains a barrier for practitioner-patients requiring care/treatment, as they fear the consequences of being reported by their treating doctor. This barrier can have a negative effect on the wellbeing of our health workforce, and in turn patient safety.

The only issue that a treating practitioner should be subject to on mandatory reporting is where there is evidence of sexual misconduct.

That is what our amendment will do and I encourage all honourable members to support it. I also note that the QNMU in its submission, which is probably the largest group of practitioners that will be affected, made these comments—

It has been the consistent position of the QNMU that it is not necessary for treating practitioners to make mandatory notifications where the health practitioner is engaged in and compliant with treatment. International and Australian research ... indicates mandatory reporting carries a punitive quality rather than compassion towards rehabilitation. A focus on sanctions is weighted against the practitioner, particularly when they are aware of the need for help but fear retribution.

As I said before, a similar model has been in place in Western Australia for a decade and the sky has not fallen in. We must do everything we can to protect patient safety, and that includes the health and welfare of health practitioners. That is what our amendment will do and I encourage all honourable members to support it.

Dr MILES: I rise as I foreshadowed to oppose the amendments moved by the member for Mudgeeraba. This amendment raises serious concerns about public safety and fails to provide practitioners with clear guidance about their mandatory reporting obligations. The most concerning aspect of the amendment is the disregard it shows for the safety of the Queensland public. The LNP proposal would fail to provide adequate assurances that the public will be protected if a practitioner patient poses a significant risk of harm to their patients.

Beyond concern for public safety, the very fact that the opposition has moved this amendment demonstrates its inability to govern. Attempting to amend on the floor of our parliament a national law that is the result of national consultation and the decision-making processes of the COAG Health Council is terribly irresponsible. Queensland is the host jurisdiction for the national law under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009. Any changes to the national law must be passed by the Queensland parliament. The COAG Health Council must approve any changes to the national law before a bill can be introduced into the Queensland parliament.

On 12 October 2018, the COAG Health Council approved the changes to the national law contained in this bill. It is embarrassing for the LNP that it does not understand or care about the process of determining the national law. This law is the result of agreement between the states and territories, including those governed by Labor and coalition governments. Ministers were in part motivated by a desire for reporting laws to be as nationally consistent as possible. The government will not tear up an agreement with all other Australian jurisdictions as the opposition has proposed.

The Palaszczuk government respects the consensus position adopted by the COAG Health Council at the conclusion of an extensive period of debate and consultation. More importantly, we will support laws that protect patients from substantial risk of harm. Therefore, we oppose the amendment.

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

AYES, 42:

LNP, 37—Bates, Batt, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Boyce, 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, Sorensen, Stevens, Stuckey, Watts, Weir, Wilson.

KAP, 2—Dametto, Katter.

PHON, 1—Andrew.

Ind, 2—Bolton, Costigan.

NOES, 48:

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.

Resolved in the negative.

Non-government amendment (Ms Bates) negated.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, under the provisions of the business program motion agreed to by the House and the time allocated for this stage of the bill having expired, I will now put all remaining questions.

Question put—That clauses 5 to 32, as read, stand part of the bill.

Motion agreed to.

Clauses 5 to 32, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Long Title


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

Motion agreed to.

HUMAN RIGHTS BILL

Resumed from 31 October 2018 (see p. 3187).

Second Reading

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (12.57 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

On 31 October 2018, the Human Rights Bill was introduced to parliament and was referred to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee. The committee has tabled its report, making one recommendation: that the bill be passed. The bill before the House demonstrates the Palaszczuk government's commitment to a better Queensland—a modern, fair and responsive Queensland. This is our commitment to making sure that we put people first in all that we do: in our actions, in our decisions and in our interactions with one another.

In 2016, the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee completed a seven-month inquiry into whether it was appropriate and desirable to legislate for a human rights act in Queensland. In 2017, after considering the evidence and findings from the committee's inquiry, the Palaszczuk government committed to the introduction of a human rights act for Queensland modelled on the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006. In 2018, we delivered on that commitment by introducing the bill that we debate in this House today.

The committee received over 280 submissions from stakeholders and members of the public and held public hearings, hearing oral submissions and evidence from over 20 stakeholder groups and individuals. The committee, including both government and non-government members, noted the overwhelming support for the bill from the vast majority of submitters.

The bill will ensure that human rights are a key consideration in public sector decision-making and in the development of policy and legislation in Queensland. In doing this, the bill facilitates a discussion, or dialogue, about human rights within and between the three arms of government: the executive, the legislature and the judiciary. Each has an important role to play.


The majority of submissions supported the dialogue model of the bill, which follows the example of various other jurisdictions in legislating for human rights protections, including Victoria, the ACT, the United Kingdom and New Zealand. The bill before the House builds on a wealth of experience from those jurisdictions with human rights legislation and is tailored to our system of government, maintaining the sovereignty of the parliament. The bill provides a consolidated statutory protection of human rights recognised under international law—protecting 23 rights drawn primarily from the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Debate, on motion of Mrs D'Ath, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.00 pm.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.00 pm): This summer of disasters has shown how heroic ordinary Queenslanders are in times of tragedy. However, it has also shown how the Labor government has left Queensland dangerously exposed. Queensland is facing a \$1.5 billion repair bill from these disasters, but we are already \$83 billion in debt because the Labor government cannot manage the economy. It means there is nothing left in the bank when there is the next fire, the next flood, or a cyclone comes our way. Queenslanders hit by disasters now face being slugged with even more taxes because of this terrible planning. No matter what the problem is Labor's solution is always tax, tax, tax and more tax. I have ruled out introducing any new taxes because the LNP knows that you cannot tax your way to prosperity.

Labor has no plan to help the Queensland economy. Instead, as we have heard this morning in question time, it is turning its back on the resources industry and deliberately destroying thousands of jobs, even with the Deputy Premier calling on coal workers to reskill. Just last week at the Queensland Media Club, the Premier could not even bring herself to say the word 'Adani'. Her leadership on this

international issue is an embarrassment. Even the state government's own resources expert, Commissioner Chestnutt, said the process was an absolute mess. The unions are also outraged by the radical agenda of those opposite. They know Labor is selling out on jobs and turning its back on the very important resources industry.

This Labor government is a mess and the rot starts at the top. On this side of the House the LNP is a united team, backing jobs and the Queensland resources sector. Those opposite are hopelessly divided and dysfunctional. Labor is betraying all of Queensland, but it is betraying regional Queensland most of all. The gap between the regions and the city is only widening under Premier Palaszczuk. There is a crisis in rural maternity services. It was shocking to hear that mums are being handed do-it-yourself birthing kits. I can imagine the fear of being a mum-to-be in the bush and being handed a do-it-yourself medical kit because maternity services in the bush are being shut down. This is a shocking disgrace in maternity services in regional Queensland. This incompetent health minister blamed the private GPs. No wonder private GPs are handing out do-it-yourself birthing kits: we cannot trust the Palaszczuk government to support mums in the bush in their regional maternity services. This government could not be more out of touch if it tried. It has shut down 26 regional maternity services since 2000. The Chinchilla Hospital is once again on maternity bypass after being closed down for most of last year. Women deserve better no matter where they live.

It was the LNP that reopened maternity services that were shut down by this Labor government. Mums in the bush deserve exactly what mums in Brisbane get. An LNP government would not waste time, effort and money on renaming hospitals; it would put patients as its priority. Just getting out of an ambulance and into a hospital bed is an achievement under this Palaszczuk Labor government. Since Labor came to government ambulance ramping has jumped 24 per cent and if you are unlucky enough to go to Logan Hospital the rate is 40 per cent. The Premier has broken her election commitment to provide better health services in this state. The health system is in chaos and it is at crisis point.

Queenslanders deserve safe communities. We have a serial sex offender walking our streets without GPS tracking. Those opposite are the ones who have let serial sex offender Robert John Fardon live in public housing.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stewart): Order! There is not permission for you to start debating across the chamber. It has been made very clear by the Speaker what the expectations are. If you continue like that I will start to name members.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Those opposite have the right to be embarrassed because it is the Palaszczuk Labor government that has let this serial sex offender wander our streets living not 100 metres away from a childcare centre and a stone's throw from a school. The public are rightfully disgusted by the Palaszczuk government because they know that the Palaszczuk government could not care less for their safety. They are terrified that someone with the sadistic criminal history of Fardon is walking free on our streets. In true Labor style the Premier, the Deputy Premier and the minister all passed the buck to the Police Commissioner.

Queenslanders want leadership. They want a Premier who is prepared to take responsibility. Queenslanders are rightfully asking what this Premier gets paid for if she cannot take responsibility for decisions of her own government. The public want answers, they deserve answers and they deserve accountability. The buck stops with the Premier. We must ensure our kids are safe from persons such as these predators. Our kids cannot defend themselves, but we as legislators can defend them. The heartbreaking story of little Mason Jett Lee exposed serious flaws in both the child safety system and the judicial system. It is time Labor released the report into how the department of child safety failed young Mason—no more cover-ups, no more secrets. We must be relentless in preventing harm to our children.

Sadly, passing the buck is just a theme under Annastacia Palaszczuk and her government. The Premier's press conferences last week and in the previous year have been littered with responses like, 'I haven't been briefed', 'I didn't see the media about that', 'There's been a disaster on', or, hang on, 'It's Canberra's fault', no, hang on, 'It's Newman's fault.' She says this despite the fact Labor has been in power for 19 out of the last 22 years. The Premier does not get it. Maybe because she is not briefed or maybe she simply does not understand. You cannot lead this state if you are not taking responsibility and owning up to your own government's mistakes. The Premier will not support an independent inquiry into bushfires, she will not answer questions about Ross River Dam and the releases and she will not call out poor behaviour by Labor members. When Robert Schwarten called one of my team a terrible

word we heard nothing. When the Deputy Premier of Queensland said the same terrible word we heard nothing. When Labor powerbroker Dave Hanna was convicted and sentenced, what did we hear from those opposite? What did we hear from the Premier? Nothing!


Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stewart): Order! Members, it has been made very clear that you will not be debating across the chamber. I will start to name members who counter that direction. I make that very clear.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: When we heard about the vote rigging and the community was screaming out about the vote rigging around the Lady Cilento hospital, what did we hear from this government? 'I know nothing, I see something and I can't do anything about that'!

This is not leadership; it is cowardice. When I took this job, I said I would offer solutions because it is obvious that the Palaszczuk government is incapable of coming up with its own solutions. It will be the LNP team that will continue to work together for all of Queensland. We will continue to make sure that all of Queensland is heard. We will always stand up for jobs in the very important industries of resources and agriculture. We will make sure that decisions are being made in the best interests of Queenslanders.

Cook Electorate Office

 **Ms LUI** (Cook—ALP) (2.11 pm): I hope I can take the temperature down a bit with my speech today, so here goes. Today I rise to place on the record my decision to relocate the Cook electorate office from Mareeba to Cairns. In December 2018, I publicly announced my intention to relocate the Cook electorate office from Mareeba to Cairns. It was not a decision that I made lightly. I based my decision on fairness and equity for the Cook electorate as a whole.

I came into office in late 2017 and I had 12 months to get a feel for the job, working across a vast and diverse electorate. I can proudly say that I have made every effort to visit communities in the Cook electorate, because I feel strongly about having good representation. Through my work across the electorate, I make it my No. 1 priority to promote my office space to encourage positive engagement with my constituents. I have talked and listened to constituents in communities throughout the electorate, to get a better insight into what communities are saying. I can tell the House that constituents want reassurance regarding good representation, because the one issue that keeps coming up, time and time again, is the ability to readily access the office of their local member of parliament.

I acknowledge the view that Cairns is not in the Cook electorate. However, it is the most central location for the large number of constituents who live in the Cook electorate. To put this into perspective, the Cook electorate covers almost 290,000 square kilometres of Far North Queensland. The Cook electorate consists of 14 local governments, including 27 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, one town authority and three small townships. It is unrealistic, to say the least, that I will hold a regular mobile office in every single community. The best way to cover the vast area is from Cairns, which is the transport hub for Far North Queensland.

I encourage my constituents to actively engage with me regarding issues that are important to them. To be inaccessible to my constituents is not something that I can be proud of. Take a mother from Saibai Island in the Torres Strait who is travelling through Cairns to take a child to boarding school and is looking for an opportunity to access the office of the local member. Take an elderly client from Cape York who is in Cairns for specialist care. My point is that my constituents need to know that they will be listened to and that they can access me or my electorate staff. A Cairns office means that I can meet with more locals more often.


My decision is based on what is fair for the whole electorate, taking into consideration the barriers that restrict people's ability to access my office in Mareeba, including the social, economic, disability and transport factors that are involved. I have made every effort to invite constituents to meet me in Mareeba. I can tell the House that only one person has kindly offered to do so as a matter of convenience, being a resident of Atherton who works in Cairns. To make myself accessible, on many occasions I have made allowances to meet constituents in Cairns. I would like to say a huge thankyou to the member for Cairns for being an absolute champion by offering his conference room for my regular meetings.

Initially, I would travel to different venues to see constituents, until I realised that I was wasting valuable time travelling between meetings. My office would try to schedule appointments in Cairns on the same day, but this turned out to be a huge challenge. In particular, people flying into Cairns who were looking for opportunistic meetings that, unfortunately, could never occur, were disadvantaged.

My decision to relocate the office is based on fairness and equality. I am in this position for a reason and I have a responsibility to all the communities and all the people of Cook. There is no right or wrong answer in this situation, but I am doing what I feel is in the best interests of my communities, including Mareeba. I am committed to the future aspirations of the Cook electorate and I will honour that by being a representative who serves everyone, no matter where in the electorate they live.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stewart): Before I call the member for Everton, I inform members that joining us in the gallery today are students from Mater Dei Primary School in Toowoomba, in the electorate of Toowoomba North.

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (2.16 pm): For businesses to have the confidence to invest in our state, they insist on stability and consistency in decision-making. However, when it comes to that, this Labor government will go down as one of the greatest flip-flop Queensland governments of all time. They are absolutely spineless when it comes to taking a position, backing themselves and having conviction. There is no greater example of that than what has happened with the Carmichael mine project. Labor's sitting-on-the-fence attitude is damaging our international reputation, causing sovereign risk and costing jobs in regional areas. When we have one of the worst unemployment rates, it is incredibly important that we do not do anything that undermines jobs, particularly in north and regional Queensland.

It is not just the LNP that is raising these issues. In the past week, a list of Labor luminaries has spoken out against this Palaszczuk government's lack of conviction, instability and inconsistency in policy and decision-making. Bill Ludwig has spoken out. Former Labor minister Steven Conroy and the current agriculture minister, Joel Fitzgibbon, have spoken out. We have also heard from former powerbroker Graham Richardson; Rockhampton mayor, Margaret Strelow; Mike Brunner from the Whitsunday Regional Council; the federal member for Herbert, Cathy O'Toole; and, of course, the CFMMEU, which knows that the most important thing in regional Queensland is jobs.

What are some of those Labor luminaries saying? Mr Ludwig was the stalwart of the Labor Party in Queensland. Never ever under his watch would a government sacrifice jobs in regional Queensland for ideological purposes. He puts the blame squarely on the Labor Left and then puts in a dig at the Deputy Premier, saying that while she thinks she will be Premier one day, there is no chance of that happening.

Mr Conroy was reported in the *Australian* as saying—

I thought the Queensland government had been behind this project and right at the last minute, when it's cleared all hurdles, suddenly we've got a (problem with a) finch'.

How convenient is that? They will go through the process and hopefully the finch will be saved from any chance of extinction. But then they will look for the yellow-bellied sapsucker, so that they can say that it has a chance of being affected negatively by the mine.

Probably the most damning comments were made last week by the mayor of Rockhampton, who said—

At this time, we need our government to back us. Now more than ever.

In an article in the *Courier-Mail*, Mayor Strelow said that in India she sat at the table with seven other mayors as the Premier looked Mr Adani in the eye and said, 'We back you, we support you, we support a NAIF loan.'

Mr Lister: That's what she says about Queensland.

Mr MANDER: I will take that interjection. What is happening now? This is the telling thing that the mayor said. She said, 'This has now gone from an environmental issue to a matter of trust.' We cannot trust this Palaszczuk government because they flip-flop all over the place for political purposes.


We know where these Labor luminaries stand, but where do the members who represent the Townsville area stand? Where does the member for Thuringowa, the member for Townsville and the member for Mundingburra stand on this issue? The member for Thuringowa proudly shows off his Cowboys jersey everywhere he goes. He wears it all around the precinct. I am sure he wears it up in North Queensland, but a proud North Queenslander would back North Queensland jobs. That is what they would do. They would get off the fence, take the splinters out of their backside and say that they back Queensland jobs. They would stand up to the left of the party, which is sacrificing these jobs for ideological purposes.

Mrs Frecklington: What about Keppel?

Mr MANDER: And the member for Keppel. I will take that interjection. Where are they on this? What people are looking for is people with conviction to come out and say that they back Queensland and they back Queensland jobs. We are not seeing that with this current Labor government.

(Time expired)

Climate Change

 **Ms SCANLON** (Gaven—ALP) (2.20 pm): Last week I visited the Griffith University Gold Coast campus during O week to hear from students about what issues are important to them. The overwhelming majority of students I spoke to said that acting on climate change is a priority. They know that we are experiencing hotter summers, more frequent natural disasters and impacts on our natural environment such as coral bleaching on the Great Barrier Reef, a huge job-generating sector for the tourism industry which supports around 60,000 jobs.

If we do not act these changes in climate pose a real threat to our economy, to our environment and to local jobs. We know that there is a global economic transition underway as countries around the world move to reduce emissions and adopt low-carbon alternatives. In fact, one of Australia's largest coalmining companies, Glencore, has recently announced that it will cap global coal output and instead focus on commodities like copper, cobalt and zinc.

We on this side of the chamber accept climate change. That is why the Palaszczuk government has a 50 per cent renewable energy target by 2030 and a net zero emissions target by 2050. This has driven more than two dozen large scale renewable energy projects, mainly solar but including the largest wind farm in Australia at Coopers Gap, which is being constructed right now. We are putting solar panels and energy efficiency measures in state schools.

Queensland is living up to our reputation as the sunshine state, having seven of the top 10 Australian areas for rooftop solar-generating units since 2001. Pacific Pines, a suburb in my electorate, makes the list. We are providing interest-free loans for battery and solar panels for families in Queensland. We are establishing CleanCo, a new publicly owned clean energy generator. I want to give a shout-out to the Labor Environment Action Network for their advocacy in this space.

We are investigating hydro in places such as Burdekin. We are reinstating stronger vegetation management laws that prevent the large scale tree clearing that was happening under the Newman government. We are leading the way on bioenergy and on electric vehicle infrastructure through our electric vehicle superhighway.

While we are committed to managing the transition to new low-carbon power generation here in Queensland, all we have had is policy paralysis from the LNP Abbott-Turnbull-Morrison federal government. As the Premier said a week ago at the Queensland Media Club, 'Ideology has unseated science. Evidence and facts are simply ignored.' We have LNP members in Queensland who still refuse to even accept that climate change is real.


Clearly, the Premier rattled the Prime Minister because yesterday he did a press conference on his so-called plan to address climate change. It was nothing more than a Tony Abbott 2.0 dusted-off policy—this time with a \$2 billion taxpayer funded handout for big polluters that does very little to reverse the significant rise in carbon emissions. Even Malcolm Turnbull once branded the approach as 'a recipe for fiscal recklessness on a grand scale'. That is probably why he is no longer the leader of the LNP.

Renewables are the cheapest form of new energy generation and they are getting cheaper every year. We understand this. The private sector understands this. Why does the LNP—the party that claims to represent private enterprise—not support what the market is doing? There are billions of dollars going into Queensland renewable energy infrastructure right now. It is critical that we have governments at all levels playing a part in this transition to support regional jobs and energy security for the future.

My generation wants to see governments with a vision. We want to see investment in new sectors like hydrogen energy, which has the capacity to create new blue-collar jobs in our regional communities. The world is shifting towards cleaner energy sources and will not get anywhere until the LNP gets real and joins the conversation.

It is not surprising that the response to any bold, new idea is to incite fear, but we have the science, the facts and the economics on our side. I am more than happy to stand here day in and day out to fight for my generation and for future generations because this is our shot to be courageous to generate new industries that create jobs and support regional economies. Let us be part of a legacy that future generations can be proud of.

Racing Industry

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (2.25 pm): There is no doubt that in Queensland we have what it takes to have a thriving racing industry—an industry that involves over 40,000 people statewide, injects \$1.2 billion into Queensland's economy and has a profound impact on regional communities throughout our state. It is concerning that the industry is under threat from Labor on two fronts—integrity and tax.

We have had unprecedented strikes on Cox Plate day, with further strikes threatened for Melbourne Cup day last year. According to the government's own projections, Labor is looking to raise \$367 million from a consumption tax, but we are very concerned that those projections will not be reached if integrity matters cannot be resolved. Delays in QCAT hearing Racing Queensland integrity matters have dragged on for nearly a year. In Victoria, matters relating to Darren Weir were heard within a week whereas Queensland Racing has 36 matters—some nearly a year old—before QCAT still waiting to be heard. Justice delayed is justice denied.

Nothing is more important in racing than the integrity of our participants. Nothing illustrates the inaction of the do-nothing, go-slow Palaszczuk Labor government better than the turgid processes of dealing with racing integrity issues. This has seen more than 36 cases idling before the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal, QCAT, for more than a year.

Last sitting week the minister put up a straw man defence about Victorian trainer Darren Weir which had nothing do with the specific Queensland cases. The minister has demonstrated no urgency in fixing the situation. Whilst Labor fiddles, Rome burns. Racing Queensland and its stakeholders, who include honest and law-abiding owners, trainers and punters, know that if the integrity issues are not dealt with post haste, the money invested in racing will go elsewhere. This would be due to the integrity issues not being dealt with quickly.

I note from the government's own projections in Budget Paper No. 2 Strategy and Outlook at page 57 that they are looking to raise \$367 million over the next four years. The Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal—Labor's current tribunal mechanism—was not set up to deal with racing matters, as was evidenced by a presiding QCAT member not even knowing who or what Racing Queensland is at a recent hearing. I quote from an article in the *Sunday Mail* by Nathan Exelby which reads—

There was a line at Thursday's stay of proceedings hearing for trainer Ben Currie that summed up the absurdity of Queensland racing's appeals system.

The presiding member of QCAT asked, 'What is Racing Queensland?' The article goes on to read—

It is through no fault of (the member) that he would not know who or what Racing Queensland is ... QCAT was not set up to deal with racing matters.

Journalist Nathan Exelby wrote about the level of angst caused by the Currie case. He said—

Regardless of where you sit in the Currie argument—for or against the Toowoomba trainer—the fact remains he has now been stood down twice by QRIC—

the Queensland Racing Integrity Commission—

and twice secured a stay of proceedings within the next 72 hours. It's created the perception that the very body set up by the State Government to uphold the integrity of the industry doesn't have the power to fulfil its charter.

I table a copy of that article from yesterday's *Courier-Mail*.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Courier-Mail*, dated 25 February 2019, titled 'Long-running case highlights need to fix "broken" integrity system' [\[247\]](#).

This trainer was permitted to have horses race two weekends ago despite facing serious allegations of animal cruelty. These allegations are disturbing and serious. It begs the question: why does Queensland racing integrity have a lower threshold for alleged animal cruelty than Victoria? Trainers across Queensland have made it clear they are not satisfied with the explanation provided by the Racing Integrity Commission. The Palaszczuk Labor government must provide an explanation to Queenslanders.

As I have mentioned, the questions about integrity may lead to less revenue from betting already impacted by the point-of-consumption tax, which is amongst the highest in the country. There is still no guarantee from the government that a sufficient percentage of the revenue will be reinvested in the industry. Queensland's racing industry is losing its edge over other states under Labor. I table a copy of an article by Peter Gleeson, 'Better racing bets south of the border'.


Tabled paper: Article from the *Courier-Mail*, dated 29 January 2019, titled 'Better racing bets south of the border' [\[248\]](#).

He makes the point in that article, 'In NSW, the POC tax is eight percent and in Victoria ten percent.' The point-of-consumption tax here in Queensland is higher than in other states. What that means for Queensland is that corporate bookies are directing their resources, marketing and employee numbers to New South Wales and Victoria. He states—

My understanding is that Ladbrokes is seriously questioning whether it needs its Queensland Headquarters, which employs 60 people.

What we have learned since 2015 is that Labor has no plan to sustain this vital industry.

Maryborough Electorate

 **Mr SAUNDERS** (Maryborough—ALP) (2.30 pm): Before I inform the House and the great constituents of Maryborough about what is happening in my electorate, I want to congratulate the Fraser Coast Regional Council's Australia Day award recipients. The Citizen of the Year, or 'senior citizen of the year'—I know he will laugh at that—is a great mate of mine, Greig Bolderrow. Greig is the 'senior citizen of the year' for the Fraser Coast. He is a fantastic bloke. He is one of the leaders in our tourism industry on the Fraser Coast. Greig is head of the Fraser Coast tourism board and he is also one of the drivers behind the Duncan Chapman Memorial in Maryborough. Greig is a fantastic man. I have worked for Greig. He has been my boss. We get on quite well. He said the other day to Minister Enoch that I turned up for work every day. He did not say that I worked for him but that I turned up for work every day.

The Fraser Coast Regional Council's Young Citizen of the Year is Karen Boulton. She was a member of the Youth Parliament in 2018. What a tremendous ambassador this young lady is for the Fraser Coast. Karen has been one of the youngest members of the Youth Parliament. She did a fantastic job as the youth member. She comes from a great family and is a very good ambassador for our coast.

I want to talk about education and continue the journey the Maryborough electorate has been on since the Palaszczuk government was elected. It has been fantastic. We hear from the other side about a divide. They only have two members outside of Brisbane. They have Bundaberg. I forgot about Gregory. Then we move up north. They have about three members in regional Queensland. When they talk about regional Queensland, I do not know where they are talking about.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stewart): Order! Member for Maryborough, you have the call.

Mr SAUNDERS: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I see the former education minister sitting in the House here today, and the current minister has continued in the same vein as the former minister in terms of spending on education throughout Queensland.

When we look at the upgrades to the schools in the Maryborough electorate, they have been nothing but amazing. Education is the key to lifting electorates like mine, to make sure that we have a skilled workforce and that children have the opportunity to go on to university and to do a trade. Sunbury State School has been upgraded. Granville State School has been upgraded by the Palaszczuk government. The Palaszczuk government has funded a STEM room at the Albert State School—something that has been sadly lacking. We have a great principal at Albert State School in Principal Phil. This is money that has been spent on education by the Palaszczuk government.

Thanks to the Minister for Transport, in conjunction with the Fraser Coast Regional Council, we have a new car park at Aldridge State High School. It will now be easier for parents and students to access that school.


Skilling Queenslanders for Work has been a great program and has helped a lot of people in the Maryborough electorate. It is one of the programs that in 2015 the Palaszczuk government committed to bring back. This program has done great work in the Maryborough electorate.

The Back to Work program has helped 18,000 people across Queensland. Out of those 18,000 people, 1,164 have found work on the Fraser Coast. I know quite a few of these young people who have been given an opportunity to find work as a result of the Back to Work program. It is a great program. We know that those on the other side of the House do not want people to work because they did not back this program. This program has enabled people, and young people who I know, to get back to work.

Then there is the Works for Queensland program with regional councils. In my area, the Palaszczuk government has delivered on the Works for Queensland program. If you look around the Fraser Coast, you will see the work that is happening in conjunction with the Fraser Coast Regional Council—footpaths, sewerage upgrades, intersection upgrades. This is all money coming to the regional councils from the Palaszczuk government.

If you look at the Maryborough CBD, the Maryborough CBD looked like Beirut after the civil war. Now it is a CBD that we can be proud of thanks to the Palaszczuk Labor government. This is what this government does. We are reinvesting in regional Queensland—reinvesting in electorates like the Maryborough electorate. We are not the wealthiest electorate in the state. With Works for Queensland and the money from the Palaszczuk government, we are now getting things done. We are starting to lift the electorate. I am so proud to be part of this Labor government.

Central Queensland, Bushfires

 **Mr ANDREW** (Mirani—PHON) (2.35 pm): I rise again to speak on behalf of my community about their concerns following the Central Queensland fires which occurred three months ago. As recently as last week, the Mackay mayor was quoted as saying, 'All the QFRA experts are too busy up in Townsville and the north-west floods, and it will be another month before we can even start talking about burn-backs and land management.' Unfortunately, these things do back up like that.

These delays amount to setting much of Queensland up for a repeat fire season, as properly planned and managed controlled burns can only happen in cooler months beyond April and need to be finished by September as the summer heat returns again. I honestly fear that we could wind up engulfed in an even bigger inferno. Upwards of 10 years worth of fuel load still remains in my electorate across all of the state forests and up in the ranges.

Quality rainfall and lack of cyclonic winds has been wonderful for our sugarcane growers and the graziers unaffected by the bushfires, but the extraordinary amount of grass regrowth on neighbouring state forests and national parks is once again adding more material to the pre-existing fuel loads in those areas. Whilst the media were quick to report all of the green regrowth in the upper Pioneer Valley, not everywhere has bounced back.

The intensity of fires destroyed decades of old trees along with every piece of ground cover, leaving barren and exposed soils behind, especially on the slopes of the Clarke and Connors ranges. I am especially disappointed in the efforts by some agencies tasked with reef protection and land management. As soon as the crop dusters were finished dropping loads of water on the fires, these agencies should have been championing the same equipment to stay around and drop much needed grass seed to accelerate the regrowth and, in turn, minimise unwanted erosion and run-off to our Great Barrier Reef.


Where credit is due I tip my hat to those pilots who performed the water-bombing task. Indeed, the 737 loaned from New South Wales scored much of the publicity and glory, but without the bush ingenuity by some locals to dramatically modify the short Finch Hatton 'international' airstrip overnight, several townships would have been lost. That would have been a long-term disaster for tourism in the upper Pioneer Valley. Fortunately, the heroic combined efforts by many hundreds averted such a calamity. I urge as many people as possible from Brisbane and from interstate to visit the Pioneer Valley area. There are beautiful spots such as Finch Hatton and the gorge, Broken River, Eungella, Crediton National Park, Pinnacle, Gargett and the Teemburra Dam. They are all open for business again.

Speaking of the hardware used by the rural fire brigade units to put the fires out, I found it inexplicable to have volunteers put at risk, with elderly rural units failing on route to or at the fire front. I know of several brigades that had been asking for months previous as to the whereabouts of their long-promised replacements and availability of P3 masks to fight grass fires.

Rather perversely, the answer was forthcoming when dozens of brand-new rural fire units in convoy from Brisbane turned up outside the Koumala Pub. These were manned by Western Australian RFS people. Furthermore, I question what was achieved by not dispersing these interstate people to better exchange knowledge and skills with the local crews and work together. I would certainly hope that these brand spanking new rural fire trucks have since been distributed to the needy units and that they are now no longer being used as centrepieces for media grabs and being delivered in a piecemeal style.

To finish off the strongest message delivered by the rural people across my electorate, this state must get its act together and properly manage seasonal burn-off permits. Likewise, it must ensure that the fuel loads that have been building up in the state forests and national parks are taken care of in a timely manner.

Fall of Singapore, 77th Anniversary

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (2.39 pm): On Sunday, 17 February I had the honour of attending the Fall of Singapore commemorative service at the Shrine of Remembrance at Anzac Square. It was a really moving service which honoured 130,000 allied troops, including 15,000 Australians, who were taken prisoner by the Japanese in Singapore during the Second World War. The capture of these 130,000 allied troops was the largest surrender of British-led military personnel in history. Winston Churchill declared that the fall of Singapore was the worst disaster and the greatest capitulation in British history.

For 3½ years many of these prisoners endured unimaginable brutality working as slave labourers on projects including the Thai-Burma railway and at Sandakan in Borneo. Of the 60,000 allied prisoners of war who worked on the Thai-Burma railway, 16,000 died including at least 2,815 Australians. Most of the allied troops who were incarcerated at Sandakan died in a series of forced marches, and the surviving prisoners were not liberated until late August 1945, just prior to the end of the war.

Sometimes it is hard to fully appreciate the enormous suffering that these veterans endured and the sacrifices they made. It is, however, important that we continue to reflect on their service and tell their stories. I would like to acknowledge the 2nd/10th Field Regiment Association for its efforts in organising this moving and respectful event. In particular, I would like to make mention of Libby Parkinson, who has been organising the event for many years. This year's service had an extra layer of poignancy for Libby as she recently lost her father, Colin Clinch, in the last 12 months. He was 100. He was a member of the 2nd/10th Field Regiment and he was a prisoner of war himself.

For me, anniversaries of events such as these are also important reminders of not only our veterans past but also those personnel who continue to serve in war and peacekeeping operations today. I have been particularly heartened by the incredible efforts of our own Defence Force personnel in supporting the disaster recovery efforts in Townsville, home to many of their own friends, families and colleagues. The comradeship, mateship and spirit that our Anzacs showed over a century ago are still obvious in our service men and women today.


During my time as Assistant Minister for Veterans' Affairs, I have had the honour of meeting with many veterans' organisations and attending a number of commemorative services. Each of these opportunities reinforces the importance of what the Queensland government is doing to support our veterans and ex-Australian Defence Force personnel.

The Queensland government has made a number of commitments to better support our former service men and women including the development of a veterans' portal to make navigating relevant services across the Queensland government easier for veterans. We are committed to supporting veterans' employment and finding ways to better enable our veterans to transition from the ADF to public sector employment. We have developed the Oasis Townsville facility, a one-stop shop for welfare support and employment transition services for ex-ADF personnel—something close to Coralee O'Rourke's heart and something close to your heart, Mr Deputy Speaker.

We have increased public transport concessions for Department of Veterans' Affairs white card holders. An extra 19,000 ex-Defence people now have access to concessions on transport. We have established the Queensland Veterans' Memorial Grants Program to help support the creation and upkeep of monuments, memorials and other public sites that recognise our veterans. The first round closes next Sunday, 10 March 2019 so I would encourage organisations to have a look online and be a part of that \$1½ million. The Queensland government has a long history of supporting veterans, the broader ex-service community and Queensland's war legacy. This government is committed to ensuring that veterans are honoured with dignity and respect and that their contribution and service are recognised.

I was very privileged to attend the recent Fall of Singapore commemorative service, and I would like to pay tribute to all of the people who organised it and all of the people who got involved, especially those who selflessly gave their lives to provide us with the freedom that we enjoy today.

Health System

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (2.43 pm): The LNP believes Queenslanders deserve a world-class public health system. This includes ensuring that our hospitals are well equipped to deal with a growing and ageing population, that regional Queenslanders have access to quality health services and that our allied health professionals—our doctors, nurses, midwives and paramedics—have the support they need. As a former hospital administrator and a current registered nurse, this is

one of my main priorities. Unfortunately, like every profession there is always a very small minority who do the wrong thing. When that happens in the health profession, the consequences can be dire as we have seen with high-profile cases in the past.

Over recent weeks I have been contacted by medical professionals who have raised concerns about the professional and clinical conduct of a senior general and laparoscopic surgeon. He currently operates at both public and private hospitals on the north side of Brisbane in Metro North HHS. The issues relate to allegations of sexual harassment, sexual misconduct and reasonable grounds to support the belief he has practised the profession of medicine and surgery in a way that constitutes a significant departure from accepted professional standards, placing the public at risk of harm.

From the information we have received, these allegations go back to 2016. I say 'allegations' because they are claims—many claims—from various senior medical professionals. They claim that he is a rogue surgeon placing surgical trainees and patients at risk. They have taken the extraordinary step of speaking out and they want me to speak out because they are sick of nothing being done. These are some of the reported concerns that we have received, and I table a number of these issues for the public record.

Tabled paper: Bundle of correspondence detailing allegations against Dr William Braun [\[249\]](#).

This is the first case—

In one case of a patient that presented to the Princess Alexandra Hospital days following elective Sleeve Gastrectomy surgery for obesity, it appeared that the patient suffered a post-operative haemorrhage and subsequent leak directly as a result of surgical technique. This was then followed by a failure to diagnose the complication and manage it accordingly ... a departure from acceptable professional standards.

The second case involves a different issue being reported in relation to professional misconduct—

My other great concern ... is in regard to his engagement in sexual misconduct in connection with the practice of his profession as a doctor and surgeon directed towards female staff members, including nurses, junior medical staff and female medical equipment company representatives. In the last 48 hours, I have been made aware of numerous examples of ... making inappropriate sexual remarks, touching female staff members inappropriately, engaging in sexual behaviours in front of female staff members in an operating theatre, and attempting to use his power as a Consultant General Surgeon to coerce female staff members into sexual favours in exchange for various rewards.

The same medical practitioner continues—

I have also been informed that allegations of sexual misconduct ... are common knowledge amongst female General Surgical Trainees in Brisbane and Queensland and are well known ... As a result of his alleged sexual misconduct towards junior female surgical doctors, Queensland Health and The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons Queensland Surgical Training Board have not permitted junior female doctors to undergo General Surgical Training at Queensland Health's Redcliffe Hospital where (the doctor) is employed for fear of exposing any more female junior Surgical Trainees to his sexual misconduct, yet he continues to practice there.


There is thus an acknowledgement of a problem of sexual misconduct by a powerful General Surgical Consultant at Redcliffe Public Hospital towards less powerful inexperienced junior female Surgical Trainees without obvious resolution of this serious problem thus far.

The third case I want to highlight is in relation to the discomfort witnessed on a daily basis from women in the workplace—

His interaction with women is not professional, he is well known amongst female trainees and nurses as having highly inappropriate behaviour. I would not entrust him with the care of any of my relatives or people I care about.

They are not my words: they are the words of senior medical professionals who are tired of inaction and who are speaking out. Senior clinicians have raised concerns for years and trainee doctors are speaking out, but the situation seems to have been managed, not dealt with. Today I have written to AHPRA and the Office of the Health Ombudsman with these concerns. I am also calling on the health minister to ensure that these and all other claims are thoroughly investigated by Metro North HHS's integrity unit. I have written to the health minister and Ramsay Health Care to that effect as well. I am asking for a full and thorough investigation into these allegations. Something has to be done. This has dragged on for far too long. It does not matter who you are or what you do. Bad behaviour should never be tolerated.

Logan City, Council Representation

 **Mrs McMAHON** (Macalister—ALP) (2.48 pm): I stand here as an elected representative of over 34,000 Logan City electors. I take this responsibility seriously so it would be remiss of me not to publicly address the issue that is most commonly raised by a large portion of my electorate, and that is the representation or lack thereof from their elected council representatives. Not only is Logan City without its elected mayor; Logan's division 6 in my electorate comprising Edens Landing, Holmview and parts of Waterford are without their elected councillor. Both of these representatives currently sit on the sidelines suspended. The residents of division 6 not only have an acting mayor but also an acting

councillor in Councillor Cherie Dalley. This is not to discredit the work of Councillor Dalley, who has her own division to look after as well as taking on the role of acting mayor and endeavouring to represent the residents of division 6. However, she is only human and cannot be all things to all people. The residents of division 6 deserve better. They deserve the same amount of representation as other divisions. Goodness knows they are paying the same amount of rates as ratepayers in other divisions.

In December 2016, just nine months after being elected, division 6 Councillor Stacey McIntosh was charged with stealing, a charge later amended to fraud in relation to allegations surrounding her previous employment. I am not standing here to prejudge Ms McIntosh or to pre-empt the outcome of the court matter. I firmly believe that everyone is entitled to the presumption of innocence and to have their day in court. However, the reality is that it has been 26 months since the initial charges were laid by police. Ms McIntosh has had more than her day in court; she has had several. The matter has been adjourned over 10 times and she still has not entered a plea. This has been drawn and dragged out and the ratepayers of division 6 deserve better.

I cannot go anywhere in division 6 without residents justifiably voicing their concerns about not only the lack of representation but also the fact that they are still paying a councillor who is not representing them. I will say that again: Logan ratepayers are paying the wages of a councillor who is not representing them and for this privilege they receive reduced representation.

Just to demonstrate the outright embarrassing position this leaves the city of Logan in, early on in the saga back in February 2017, it was the Logan city mayor, Luke Smith, himself the former division 6 councillor, who called on Councillor McIntosh to do the right thing by the city of Logan and resign. That is right, the now suspended mayor of Logan, currently himself facing a corruption charge as well as criminal charges relating to private matters, called on Councillor McIntosh to resign for the good of the people of Logan. I wonder how that advice sits with the suspended mayor now that he himself faces numerous charges. I could almost see the amusing side of this if it were not for the embarrassment that these matters cause locals as well as the red hot anger over the fact that we as ratepayers are forking out for this circus.

I know that neighbouring councillors and state members, including the member for Waterford, are doing the best we can to progress council related issues when raised by residents. However, there are some serious issues, particularly with respect to proposed developments in division 6, that require a consistent and persistent local councillor presence. A crematorium has been planned adjacent to one of our largest retirement villages and numerous commercial development applications have been submitted, including a multistorey hotel, which will impact on the local community. Each of these developments needs to be considered on their merits and the local councillor should be an advocate for their division.

I fear that massive changes will be happening around the residents of division 6 and that their views and feelings cannot be adequately taken into consideration without full-time representation. Ms McIntosh is entitled to her due process throughout the legal system. However, considering the full pay she is on while this saga continues, I am calling on Councillor McIntosh to stop the delaying tactics and allow the DPP to get on with their job. This has gone on long enough, the councillor has delayed long enough and this is an abuse of process. Justice, whichever way it swings, must be done. The residents of division 6 demand it.

I understand that representation has been made to the Minister for Local Government to appoint an administrator to cover division 6. While I welcome any move that would see the division capably represented, I would caution the appointment of anyone who would seek to use the position as a springboard into the upcoming 2020 council elections. After over two years of turmoil, the residents deserve solid, honest representation, not political campaigning by someone preoccupied with winning an election.

MOTION

Natural Disasters



Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (2.53 pm): I move—

That this House:

1. acknowledges with great sadness the devastation caused in Queensland by recent natural disasters;
2. extends its condolences and deepest sympathy to the families and loved ones of those who have lost their lives as a cause of the recent natural disasters;
3. grieves for those who have suffered injury and who have lost their homes, property, livestock and personal possessions;

4. places on record its gratitude for the support and hard work of all emergency service personal, front-line responders, members of the Australian Defence Force, local, state and federal agencies and staff, private sector, community and voluntary service providers who all came together to not only support Queenslanders during the natural disaster events, but are continuing to support them through the recovery phase; and
5. pledges to work with all Queenslanders, communities and governments at all levels to ensure that Queensland recovers from these natural disasters and rebuilds better than ever.

I wish to express my personal sympathies and condolences to the people across Queensland who suffered loss and trauma during the recent disasters that have struck our state. First one, then another and another hit; our season of shock and sorrow—shock at the size and number of disasters and sorrow at their ferocity and cruelty. We had days of 40-plus temperatures that lit the fuse for our bushfires. For the first time they officially reached the level of catastrophic and, unfortunately, they lived up to that name. It was the first time I have ever had to call the ABC Radio to issue an immediate and urgent warning to people living around Baffle Creek. 'Get out now,' I said.

Even more lives were at risk at Gracemere. Eight thousand got out—and got back—and it did not happen by accident. Our defences were coordinated and well managed. Wherever there were fires, they were met by heroic firefighters. There is no other word for it; they are heroes. There were 1,200 firefighters who came from around Australia to help our existing firefighters here at home. We owe each and every firefighter a debt of gratitude and we extend our thanks today.

I met a rural brigade at the base of Eungella Range. Joe Scherzos goes by the nickname 'Zap'. He and his sons fought bushfires, too. They showed me photographs they took of the firestorms. It was as if they could not believe what they were seeing. There were more hugs at the community hall where Tam Smith was keeping crew fed and their spirits up. No-one had been home in days. Their home had been burnt back to bare earth. It is people like Tam and Zap who make Queensland what it is.

This fire was our last warning about climate change. Scientists say what happened to us was the equivalent of ice sheets breaking off in the arctic. A total of 1.4 million hectares burned; there were 2,324 separate fires, but arguably more was to come. Tropical cyclones Owen and Penny were next and then came the monsoon. In days, Townsville went from being on water restrictions to suffering a flood. Almost all of the 1,158 millimetres of rain fell over an eight-day period. It was a time that we never want to see again. We want to make sure that we do everything we can to help people on that road to recovery.


The one-in-50-years marker fell, then one-in-100 and it still was not over yet. If honourable members look at a map they will see Richmond, Cloncurry, Hughenden and Julia Creek sit on Queensland's sunburnt shoulder. A six-year drought seemed like dragging into another summer. Then there was the sound of rain on the roof, but elation quickly turned to despair. Nature had saved her cruellest torment for our cattle country. In Cloncurry a grazier held back tears while telling me how they had nursed their stock through the drought only to lose them to exposure to cold and rain. In Julia Creek there are cattle producers who have been on the land for four generations. They had seen it all until this. An area the size of Victoria went underwater.

Although our problems are big, they are not unsolvable. I have already met with AgForce and industry groups, and we are charting a way forward. I really want to pay tribute today to our Minister for Agricultural Industry Development. I know that both the minister and the shadow minister immediately left parliament and travelled north. I think this House owes them a debt of thanks for going to communities in their hour of greatest need. There are 857 staff working on community recovery, \$17.1 million in personal hardship grants have been paid out and we are working, of course, with Housing, which is such an important issue for people. As I said this morning, our Queensland flood appeal has raised over \$7 million.

This morning I announced a \$38 million Queensland Disaster Resilience Fund to build back what nature has taken away better than it was before. I want to pay special tribute to our State Recovery Coordinator, Major General Stuart Smith, who is tasked with this journey. We are working with 35 mayors and councils; a large part of our state was impacted. I also want to thank our State Disaster Coordinator and also Commissioner Carroll for their leadership during this time as well as all of the ministers, the state government agencies, the councils, the mayors and of course our hardworking front-line public servants who go beyond the call of duty and are now helping with the recovery process as well.

It is times like this we are reminded that although thousands of kilometres separate us, we are Queenslanders and are in everything together. They say that every cloud has a silver lining. The courage of Queenslanders is our silver lining and in our darkest hours it always comes shining through.

(Time expired)


 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.58 pm): Rallying as one to rebuild from natural disasters is in Queensland's DNA. We rely on the heroism of everyday Queenslanders when floods, bushfires and cyclones come our way. However, the grief is endless when lives are lost. This morning in Townsville a community was reeling again and, frankly, I am not sure how much more that community can take. I can only imagine what the family is going through with the death of those two little boys. It is so terribly sad and devastating, and I join with the Premier in passing on my condolences to that family.

On behalf of the opposition I would like to place on record the LNP's condolences to all of the families and loved ones of those who have lost their lives in the recent natural disasters, be it fires or floods. With great sadness we acknowledge this devastating summer of fires, cyclones and floods. We know that in late November massive bushfires broke out in Central Queensland which raged across more than a million hectares of land. I would like to place on record the LNP's thanks to our hardworking QFES workers, rural fireys, volunteers, police officers, ambos, park rangers, community members and everyone who put in an enormous effort to help our communities stay safe. On behalf of the LNP I say thank you. While more than 100 bushfires were burning across Queensland, Tropical Cyclone Owen formed off the coast. We knew that Tropical Cyclone Penny would also cause significant damage across the region. Then in late January flooding from the monsoon trough began. We have spoken in this House before about the terrible damage to areas around Townsville and the clean-up efforts.

I would like to use this time to talk about those in North-West Queensland as well. The shadow minister for emergency services, Lachlan Millar, and I went out there and visited the communities of Cloncurry and Julia Creek. It takes enormous strength to make the bush and the land your home. The strength of our landholders in that part of Queensland has never been tested like it has now. Years of drought turned almost instantly into a flooding tragedy. I had an opportunity to take a helicopter ride over some of the devastation. I would like to thank Marcus and Shelly Kerr, and of course pilot Tony, for taking me over. I will never, ever forget the sight of hundreds of cattle piled up on top of each other in the north-west corner of each paddock. I will never forget talking to hardened landholders in the Julia Creek pub that afternoon about their losses. Fifty to 75 per cent of their herds gone. I also spoke to local business owners Michael and Karina Leake—good friends of my brother—who own the Julia Creek hardware store. They also have cattle. They have lost so much, but they are only leaseholders so they are unable to get any government grant. I look forward to having discussions with the Premier and Minister for Agricultural Industry Development.

I also want to give a shout-out to hardworking bushies like Jane McMillan and Susan Dowling, who started up Sisters of the North. This amazing charity has already raised around \$250,000. The reason why they are doing this is because they believe it will get to the people who need it the most. I also want to give a shout-out to the volunteers who have come from all across the state to help. Bill Roughan has the Toogoolawah vet practice. He packed up his kitbag and went up to the north-west because so many of the cattle that are still alive are going to die from pneumonia after what they have been through, and Bill went up there to help. While I was with the Prime Minister I was reassured to hear him say that the federal government will help rebuild, no matter how long it takes.

We have had absolute tragedies up there. I just got off the phone from speaking to a lady in Julia Creek, and these were her words to me: 'Deb, the smell is gradually growing but I'm not hearing as many guns go off.' I hope to God that we never see another tragedy like we have had across Queensland this last summer. I would like to place on record the LNP's thanks to all of the volunteers and everyone across Queensland who will help this state get through.

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (3.03 pm): I wish to join with other members in this House to speak in support of the motion moved in the name of the Premier and Minister for Trade. I will begin my contribution by acknowledging the efforts of the Premier over the recent months of extreme natural disasters we have seen in Queensland. There is no doubt that, whether they are at the front line as SES officers, firefighters, police officers, Australian Defence Force personnel or volunteers and community members, we are all Queenslanders when we are facing adversity, and in times of adversity and in times of great fear it takes a real leader to step up and lead us through that. I do want to acknowledge the Premier's efforts, particularly over the past few months during the natural disasters.


I am in a very privileged position to travel the length and breadth of this state. It is always heartbreaking to go into communities after devastating events, including the recent catastrophic bushfires near Gracemere and floods in Townsville, North Queensland and North-West Queensland. I have seen firsthand what people have lost—sometimes their homes and their livelihoods. I have also

been extraordinarily proud of the Queenslanders who have stepped up, emergency services and front-line respondents, and their brave rescue efforts during our time of need. I am proud of the volunteers who have put their own needs aside to help out their neighbours, their mates and complete strangers. I am particularly proud of the local representatives of our devastated communities who represent these communities in this House. Thank you for your continued efforts and your leadership in your local communities.

I also want to take this opportunity to call out some individuals I met during my recent trip to Townsville who are doing such a remarkable job. I want to call out the efforts of Anne-Marie Day, the principal of Oonoonba State School who, together with the education department and the Minister for Education, made an incredible effort to rebuild that school; and all of the small business owners at the Fairfield shopping centre who made the time to come and meet with me recently during my visit to talk specifically about their insurance claim issues.

I want to particularly single out Regan and Mikkayla from Lenard's Chicken, an amazing young couple who started up a small business in Townsville. They have just been devastated, and I am very proud that this government is helping them get through during their time of need. Dr Michael Clements, Annette from Greenfield's Optical Centre and Lyronne and Justin Bamford from Brumby's—all of these small business owners have been hit hard, and I want to take this opportunity to thank them and let them know that we will stand beside them every step of the way.

(Time expired)

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (3.06 pm): Sometimes you wonder how much more Queenslanders can take, particularly those who live in North Queensland and regional Queensland. Year after year—too often lately—North Queensland has been hit by cyclones and floods and this year Central Queensland has been hit with bushfires as well, but they just keep on keeping on. From the comfortable suburbs of Brisbane, where I am from and my electorate is, it is sometimes hard to appreciate what sort of struggles our northern cousins go through. That is why I really appreciated the opportunity to go to North Queensland with the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Burdekin to witness this firsthand and to get out there and help.


We were at the suburb of Idalia—the member for Burdekin is nodding his head—and you really had to see it to believe it. Never, ever did they think that suburb would flood. To give you some perspective, I think I heard at one stage that the amount of rain that fell in that seven or 10 days was the equivalent of three years rain that Melbourne gets, and we all know how much rain Melbourne gets. That is just unbelievable. The day we arrived the rain was starting to dissipate. When I asked the girl at reception, 'How was it last night?' she said, 'It was a good night last night; we only got five inches.'

It is just unbelievable to see people going through all their goods and lifelong memories. The husband of one lady, Carol De Ambrosis, was in hospital getting a hip replacement and there was no-one there to help her, but there is a fantastic community spirit there. Matt and Marlene from across the road just basically took over. Matt, forgetting about his own house that needed work, went across the road to coordinate the volunteers who came from other houses that were not as badly affected.

Then of course there is the destruction that has happened in the north-west. One moment they were so glad they were about to get rain and the next moment they were devastated by the impact of the rain, with literally hundreds of thousands of beasts dying—again, beyond belief.

We thank all those involved in the volunteer effort, both paid professionals and volunteers. We are a very fortunate state. We have a fighting spirit. We want the people of North Queensland and regional Queensland to know that we will not forget them and that together we will get through this.


(Time expired)

 **Hon. CD CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (3.10 pm): I rise to speak in support of the motion. For the past four months I have woken daily to news and updates about the natural disasters sweeping across Queensland. The 2018 bushfire season hit early and hit hard, with QFES personnel dealing with more than 1,200 fires between November and December last year alone. While the fires were still burning, severe Tropical Cyclone Owen, our zombie cyclone, and Tropical Cyclone Penny were bearing down on Queensland's north. After Owen and Penny ran out of puff and while the fires continued to burn, a monsoon trough parked itself over Townsville and let loose. In less than a fortnight the city surpassed its annual rainfall of 1,143 millimetres.

Our social media feeds, our newspapers and our nightly TV news bulletins were all being bombarded with images and stories of almost unbearable heartbreak. Then came the outback ocean in the north-west—hundreds of kilometres of parched earth that became an inland sea. Regions that had been in drought for seven, eight or nine years were underwater, coupled with the loss of hundreds of thousands of head of cattle—another disaster to test Queenslanders. Then Oma came knocking on our door, putting much of our coastline on alert.

Throughout all these events our front-line emergency services workers and volunteers were there. I cannot thank them enough for providing what is recognised as a world-class effort. Amid the sadness, the devastation and the loss there have been some uplifting stories—stories that renew and reinforce our faith in each other. The Burdekin volunteer marine rescue team delivered much needed medication to stranded patients. The Rural Fire Service's northern region support operational group, along with the Townsville Lions Club, served more than 11,000 meals to staff and volunteers as the floodwaters rose.

You would be hard pressed to find one Queenslanders who has not been affected in some way by the events that have swept across the nation in the past few months. I place on record my thanks to our swiftwater rescue firefighters—nation leading, brave and strong; our auxiliary firefighters, there to protect their local communities; our Rural Fire Service volunteers, who not only dealt with fires but also went to Townsville to help deal with the aftermath of floods; our SES units, which dealt with over 4½ thousand calls for assistance for the Townsville incident alone; our Volunteer Marine Rescue and our coast guard units up and down the coast who, whilst we do not hear a lot about what they did, were there and worked day and night as part of the tinnie army; our councils; our not-for-profits; our state government departments; in particular my commissioner, Commissioner Carroll, and her deputies, Doug Smith, Mark Roche and Mike Wassing; all of the senior staff from QFES; and all of our leaders, both staff and volunteers. It was an amazing effort and an amazing job. I know that they are there to help us out in future events.


 **Mr PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (3.13 pm): I rise to speak to the motion. Floods and bushfires not only bring devastation but also bring out the very best in our communities. They are a natural part of living in our state. I acknowledge the words of this motion, which sums up our thoughts and sentiments. Coming from a regional area which has seen its fair share of natural disasters, I know the devastating impact on communities. The extent of the damage from these natural events is mind boggling. Our valuable agricultural industries were hit hard. After already struggling from years of relentless drought, more than 500,000 head of cattle have perished in the north-west floods, with stock losses estimated at 50 to 100 per cent per farm. At a minimum, graziers have lost an estimated \$500 million in stock.

Travelling with Minister Furner to Mount Isa, Julia Creek, Richmond, Winton, Cloncurry and Nelia two weeks ago, I saw it firsthand. We talked to local authorities, bankers, community leaders, graziers and small business owners. I am still talking to local mayors. I thank the police officer and army officer who took me to Nelia to observe from the air and watch the operations of feeding starving livestock.

Hardened and tough locals from generations of farming families had tears in their eyes recounting the devastation. It was confronting. They endured years of drought only to find everything washed away. They do not deserve the cruel and vindictive vilification they are receiving from animal welfare activists, who are deliberately blind to the care that farmers have for their stock. It is hard trying to segment the issues they face—firstly dealing with thousands of dead stock around the homesteads, the yards and water points, then months of work to repair and replace thousands of kilometres of fencing to contain what stock is left and then restocking.

After the 2011 and 2013 floods I chaired a local disaster management group. I know that some producers are still struggling. It will take many years after these disasters to repair, rebuild and restock. Other farmers, canegrowers and horticultural farmers who also suffered losses have had crops destroyed in floods and bushfires. More than 800 hectares of sugar cane was burned in the Pioneer Valley and Blue Mountain areas near Mackay and Carmila near Sarina.

I also know about the tragic loss from bushfires. In the Woolooga bushfire north-west of Gympie we saw 500 head lost and millions of dollars gone in property including sheds, fences, equipment, livestock and fodder. Locals continually raise with me their serious concerns about land management practices to control their fuel loads, the management of our national parks and what landholders can do to protect their properties. I acknowledge all those who have suffered and served to protect Queenslanders. I stand ready to continue to support them.


 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries) (3.16 pm): I rise to speak in support of the motion. We have seen and heard the heartbreaking images and stories associated with this extreme weather event. I would like to add my

support to this House's call for the recognition of the women, men and children in our rural communities who have been affected by recent natural disasters. Today we say to those who have been affected: we grieve with you, we stand with you and we will work with you to help rebuild our communities. I have made that pledge on the ground, in the cabinet room and in this parliament—and so will all members in this House.

During the last sitting week I made my third visit to the regions at the Premier's request. I visited the communities of Winton, Cloncurry and Julia Creek. I was joined by the shadow minister for agriculture, the member for Gympie, and a hand-picked group of senior Public Service officers. These officers came with the skills required to assess the situation and the authority to implement solutions, in conjunction with local leadership. I have had the chance to meet with many of the helicopter pilots who were conducting the fodder drops to livestock. They are now affectionately known as the angels of the sky. I thank the House for its indulgence and the Premier for entrusting me with this task. I acknowledge the spirit of bipartisanship shown by the opposition in joining me on this trip.

Words do not easily convey the reality of what has occurred. What I saw on the ground shocked me, but it also gave me great reassurance of the fundamental decency of ordinary people and the professionalism of our government and industry representatives. These are people who have seen extreme, once-in-a-lifetime events unfold within mere weeks of each other. A long and protracted drought, a focus of national and international outreach, was followed by a monsoonal event. The one constant was the character and fortitude of those people who have been and continue to be affected. Today we recognise that resilience and what support we can provide to assist them.

I pay tribute to the local mayors and leaders for standing up and speaking out for their communities. I pay tribute to the departmental staff, disaster respondents, military personnel and ordinary people who stepped in, in North-West Queensland and further afield. The overwhelming support for Queensland's flood-affected communities continues, with donations to the North Queensland floods appeal reaching more than \$6.7 million in the two weeks since it was launched. The monsoonal and drought events have shown us that even in tragedy there are things to hope for. I draw great inspiration from the people across the state who have one simple desire: to help their fellow persons in a time of need. This is what Queenslanders do.

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (3.19 pm): I was in Townsville to view the damage and to spend some time with the member for Hinchinbrook despite the fact that I was already aware of the flooding that was starting to hit the north-west. I want to pay tribute to Jenny Hill, who at the time said, 'I know what you guys are going to go through and our heart's with you.' I thought it was touching to say that the people of Townsville were still thinking of us in their time of trouble and I appreciated that. It was ironic at the time because the mines had passed the hat around out west to give \$1 million to Townsville, yet we were not ready for what was about to hit us.


As the Premier and opposition leader mentioned earlier, 500,000 head of cattle have been lost. Cattle were bogged down for days and could not get to feed. Many people were saying that we should have dropped hay in, but that was very hard and would sometimes do more damage than you would trying to save them. Nothing moved except by air, so I think the helicopter pilots are the heroes of the situation. There were outstanding efforts by those individuals. What kept them going given the mental trauma they suffered with the livestock is something I cannot imagine and probably never will understand. There were three days of no sun, heavy winds and the boggy mud. If fatigue and lack of feed did not kill livestock, the hypothermia wiped out most of the rest, and not just cattle but kangaroos and birds. Everything was wiped out. Quite strangely, kangaroos by their hundreds of thousands were all dead because of the cold winds.

There is no doubt that there is devastation and it has touched everyone. It has been indiscriminate. We cannot say that it only touched the little guys or the big guys; it has hit everyone, from the big companies right down to the likes of Shauna Royes from Julia Creek and Lisa from Town Common trying to get ahead, but they lost about 100 per cent of their herd so it is very difficult. There is an industry problem for them to restructure, and we do not want to forget all of those businesses in town as well that can often get left out of the mix, not forgetting that a lot of those are still carrying customers from the drought who had the inability to try and pay bills. It is very difficult.

With regard to the donations—and I hope this does not sound disrespectful—one of the cattle producers said, 'Mate, I really appreciate your 50 bucks, but take your wife out to dinner because I've got huge problems here that will need a bigger amount to fix.' He did really appreciate the kind gesture. We still welcome donations to come in and I think there is a place for them, but I think that was a good story for him to say, 'I want to make sure you're looking after yourself on the coast. We'll do our best to

get through this out here.' There is a long road ahead—a very hard road ahead—in the north-west, as I am sure there is for Townsville and those places affected by bushfires. Those bigger industry issues will need assistance, primarily from the federal government, and a lot of rebuilding—

(Time expired)

 **Hon. CJ O'ROURKE** (Mundingburra—ALP) (Minister for Communities and Minister for Disability Services and Seniors) (3.22 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Premier's motion. Every day in my electorate I witness firsthand the impact of this weather event and, as minister responsible for community recovery, I am briefed daily on the scale of support required just to get people the immediate help that they need to be sheltered, clothed and fed. We have moved beyond the stage where the community is simply running on adrenaline and into experiencing shock. Now we face the sadness that comes with counting the losses and the way that lives have been changed forever—the farmers who are at a crossroads because of their loss of livestock and fencing and equipment, the children who do not have their toys or clothes and the businesses that do not even know if they are going to be able to reopen their doors.


I acknowledge the extreme sadness being experienced by the friends and families of people who lost their lives during this event. To the people who have lost businesses, houses and households full of furniture and personal items, I know that this means that you have lost so much—some completely irreplaceable—and it will take a long time to rebuild. It will cost more than money and will require many emotional hard yards. I sincerely hope that there comes a time sometime soon where you can feel like you are approaching normality again.

I also want to place on record my gratitude and deep admiration for all the people who have contributed to the recovery. Recovery efforts need all sorts—from the practical to the emotional. Through the SES, the Defence Force, the local governments, the state government, non-government organisations and all of the volunteers, there have been people from all walks of life lending a hand and making it better. The best way I can explain what the recovery efforts mean for people on the ground and how much the flood event has impacted on them is quoting an email I received from Annandale Christian College—

The Government provided a pop-up Community Recovery team to come out to our school this afternoon. They were absolutely amazing. Whoever does the interview process for these employees should also be commended. Your staff were kind, compassionate, professional and extremely helpful. Our College had a lot of severely impacted families and it was a very scary time for many, and now full of complete heartache for a lot of families.

Their stories are so varied in how they were affected, but each one just as heartbreaking. Your team heard our families today and I could tell it made a huge impact on them. Thank you.


I am pleased that these people felt so supported, but there is so much more to do. I also pledge that the Palaszczuk government will keep working with all Queenslanders and communities to help ensure that North Queenslanders recover from this event and rebuild better than ever before.

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (3.25 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Premier's motion—a motion that has particular relevance to the Burdekin electorate because, like Townsville, we also lost a life. Tragically, Justin Scott was killed in a boating incident at Groper Creek. I want to extend my condolences to his wife, Sabrina, and their family and friends. I want to also acknowledge the work of our emergency service staff, volunteers and members of the public in my electorate for their bravery, their compassion and their dedication throughout this event.

In our electorate we did not escape nature's wrath. Giru, Majors Creek, Woodstock, Groper Creek, Rita Island and Gumlu saw the effects of these events firsthand. Many primary producers throughout the Burdekin electorate have been affected. I have seen firsthand how the productive farming land has been gouged out by the Haughton River and crops lost. Last week I stood on the bank of the river with local farmer Tony Poletto and he indicated to me that his pump and all his cylinders and all his irrigation equipment were somewhere on the bottom of the river—somewhere in the vicinity of \$100,000 lost—and it means that his sugar crop for the rest of this year will not be irrigated.

I also acknowledge the people of Giru. Far too often they are the victims of flooding and are effectively cut off from the outside world, but the people of Giru are a tough lot and during this recent event they were cut off for six days, with the only assistance available to that community via boat or helicopter. In that community we saw them come together. We saw a small team of emergency services personnel, volunteers and business owners band together to keep their community safe. We saw people in danger cared for, people with medical issues evacuated and people in need fed, and on many occasions that group that undertook these tasks did so without a thought for their own comfort.

I want to acknowledge the efforts of this small but dedicated group that gave so much for the people of Giru: Peter and Alex of the Queensland Ambulance Service; Ryan and Joel from the Police Service; Cherie from QFES and Peter and Frank of the Giru SES who drove through water that you would shudder to think of even entering in an effort to make sure that people were looked after and evacuated as required. To Greg, Ange and the team from the Giru cafe and post office: thank you for taking care of our dedicated emergency crews and locals alike. To Mick and Rita from the Giru store: thank you for your efforts as well. When you think that these people had water through their shops, through the ambulance station, through the fire station and yet they worked, in some cases, for 48 hours straight without a break, then you truly appreciate how they went above and beyond their duties to meet the needs of that community. I take my hat off to them and thank them for their efforts during that flooding event.

 **Mr STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (3.28 pm): Today I begin by expressing my condolences to the parents of the two young boys who were tragically lost in the Ross River overnight. Many of us in the chamber are parents or grandparents and I am sure that we feel the sorrow of this tragic loss, but in some small way I would like to think that the parents may take comfort from our collective heartfelt thoughts and prayers for them.


I want to thank every minister, every member and every single person who has conveyed, in some way, their well wishes to those of us who live in Townsville who were victims of the recent flooding event. Just last week in fact we received in the mail a \$20 note from a D Maxwell from Ravenswood in Tasmania who sent the legal tender with a simple note attached: 'For the flood victims.' Thank you, Mr or Ms Maxwell. Your kind donation will help someone who has lost everything.

There is no doubt that generosity and compassion is far reaching in my Townsville community. During the last sitting week of this parliament, I thanked all of those who helped and I also shared stories of generosity from strangers—people randomly handing out sandwiches, rolls, muffins, water and coffee on a 35-degree day. The strength of my community welded together strangers who knew that they could depend on each other.

On Friday, I joined His Excellency the Governor of Queensland when he thanked all of those from the local disaster management committee for doing their work during the floods. His Excellency also met with several Townsville City Council truck drivers who rescued many stranded people using their dump trucks to ferry people to safety. Earlier in the week I travelled to Richmond and co-signed the carcass disposal management plan agreement with the mayors of the Winton, Richmond, Flinders, Cloncurry and McKinlay shires. This plan will see shires making the best decisions with local graziers on how best to safely dispose of the dead cattle owing to the floods in their area. The key to this program is empowering local majors.

I also take this opportunity to thank my family. I thank my son, Lachlan, who, at the age of 19, sandbagged and cleaned houses with me for about a week and a half. He worked like an absolute trooper. I am very proud of my young man. I also thank my daughter, Jordan, who, despite being evacuated for 10 days and living with us and then we got evacuated, also worked with me and sandbagged for hours and hours. I have to tell members that she worked like a man as well. She was fantastic. I also thank my nephew, Ryan Attard, who could not get back to the Burdekin. He helped sandbag and clean houses. I thank my neighbours Andrew and Matthew Mee and Dylan, their sister's partner, who sandbagged houses for neighbours. I also thank my mate Matt, who lives two doors down. He served his country, but now he has lost everything. He is struggling with his own issues now. I say to Matt: mate, I am with you and, if you need to talk, I will be there. Matt is not alone. We are going through this together.

(Time expired)

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (3.31 pm): On behalf of all of my constituents in the electorate of Gregory, I rise to speak in support of this condolence motion. I know that they would wish me to acknowledge their great sadness at the losses suffered by Queenslanders owing to these natural disasters over summer. I also wish to express my thanks and admiration to the people of Queensland for their calm courage in the face of these disasters.

I would also like to thank the Premier and her staff for their responsiveness to my requests on behalf of my constituents in the Winton and Diamantina shires. These shires are still experiencing in the south the stages of that monsoon. I would also like to acknowledge the member for Traeger, whose electorate has been at the epicentre of the north-west floods. He and his staff have worked tirelessly to assist his constituents and I thank him for that. I would also like to commend the Leader of the Opposition for her compassion when we toured the area last week. It was difficult, not the least because of the stench of the hundreds of thousands of dead cattle and wildlife.


This week, the Governor-General remarked on what he called Queensland's institutional memory of natural disasters past and how it helps us respond better to challenges. As members of this House know, that institutional memory has been painfully built and it is fragile. It needs our ongoing bipartisan commitment. We must strive not just to respond but also to understand what happened and what we can learn for next time. Key to both the response and the learning is the people on the ground. I mention the local mayors, councillors and all of their staff of my electorate, the Fire and Emergency Services personnel, the SES volunteers, the natural disaster committees and the local coordinators. They did an absolutely fantastic job. I do not have the time to thank everybody but, as shadow minister for fire, emergency services and volunteers, I must acknowledge with admiration the work of the many volunteers and volunteers from other parts of the state who helped on the ground.

I will also respond to an email that I received yesterday from Katie Riethmuller from *Allambee* at Rolleston asking me not to let the bushfire victims be forgotten. Katie writes—

The fires are still burning along the Carnarvon Highway between Rolleston and Injune and up into Expedition Range. They are still burning and the weather last week was the same as that of the crisis—43 degrees Celsius and windy.

I would also like to give a big thankyou to a group of Central Highlands people called Baked with Love—families from Springsure, Lochington, Gindie, Rolleston and Emerald—who baked biscuits and cakes. We loaded those baked biscuits up in the back of my car and went out to Winton, Kynuna and Corfield and dropped them off to people. It was not much, but it meant that we cared. I thank them from the bottom of my heart. I also thank all the earthmoving contractors in the Central Highlands who got loaders on to trucks and went up there. Lastly, we must also not forget that we are still in drought.

(Time expired)


 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (3.34 pm): I rise to speak in support of the motion, moved by our Premier, which acknowledges with great sadness the devastation experienced in our great state of Queensland by the recent natural disasters, be that drought, fire, or flood. Much of Queensland has suffered.

I dearly want to speak to many parts of this motion, but time limits me. I want to place on record my sincere condolences to the family and friends of the two young boys who this morning were found submerged in Ross River—the same river that recently devastated my community. Out of this heartbreaking and tragic news, I know that my community will provide love and support to the family.

The rain started on Australia Day during celebrations in my city and continued for nearly two weeks straight, in that time delivering more than a year's rainfall. It left an indelible mark on my city. Sadly, that monsoon rain event rewrote the history books of Townsville and, indeed, for the north-west region in a way that is extremely difficult to articulate unless you were one of the members of those communities that were affected or had witnessed the devastation firsthand.

I acknowledge Mayor Jenny Hill and the leadership team of the LDMG who guided us through. I also acknowledge our caring and compassionate Premier and the many ministers who have been to Townsville and seen the devastation and heard the stories of survival and the efforts of our state's bravest. I have deep admiration for the men and women of the 3rd Brigade of the Australian Defence Force who, on that fateful night of Sunday, 3 February, along with our State Emergency Service, the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services' swiftwater crews, the Queensland water and general duties police and many locals, pitched in and helped move thousands of isolated and stranded people, saving lives.

Some days later the water receded, but many suburbs across Townsville have suffered devastation. Some 8,000 homes were inundated, affecting people's personal belongings. Some houses were inundated with water over a metre high. Some people will never return to their homes. Weeks later, the clean-up continues. Last Saturday, I joined Team Rubicon Australia and Volunteering Queensland to help. I encourage anyone who has any spare time in my community to register to help through Volunteering Queensland. There is a huge task ahead of us in cleaning up.


 **Mr DAMETTO** (Hinchinbrook—KAP) (3.37 pm): I rise to speak to the motion moved by the Premier. Firstly, I acknowledge everyone in the Hinchinbrook electorate who pitched in during this time. The northern beaches and Bluewater areas were the first to be hit when the flooding rains came to Townsville. This event was bigger and worse than the 1998 flooding, which set record flood heights along the Bohle River. As the rains hung around, the Ross River started to rise, the Ross River Dam reached capacity and the rest of Townsville started to feel the pinch.

I would like to acknowledge the work of Mayor Jenny Hill and her leadership in heading the LDMG in Townsville and all the departmental officers who were involved in helping keep Townsville safe—from the QFES, the QPWS, the Queensland Ambulance Service to the Australian Defence Force. Everyone worked together well. In my mind and from what I saw while sitting in those meetings, everyone did what they could to keep Townsville safe.

I would also like to acknowledge the people who helped out by not only sandbagging to look after the city in its time of need but also loading their vehicles, getting their trucks ready, getting machinery ready and getting out there to do the clean-up before the water had even subsided in their own properties. I worked side by side with people who still had sewage running through their houses. Water had inundated their properties and they were looking at how they could help someone out because they knew that they had already lost their things.

Donations from members of the community went beyond the amount of space we had to hold them. People as far north as Tully and Innisfail were looking for ways to get their donations to those in need. Celine Aquilina worked with Ingham Express Transport and Ingham Travel to make sure donations of nappies, food and clothing could get to those who needed them.

I would also like to talk about the role that the member for Traeger played. On the Friday when we were still in Townsville trying to decide on how we could best help our and the Townsville electorate, he knew the extent of what was coming for his electorate but he was in Townsville making sure we were all right before helping his people. He was instrumental in getting the story out before people knew that there was going to be a problem. I thank him very much. Townsville is in a bit of an economic slump. I believe this tragedy will help to rebuild the soul of Townsville.


 **Mrs LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (3.40 pm): I rise to speak in favour of the motion moved by the Premier. The bushfires in Central Queensland in late 2018 were unprecedented fires coming off the back of weather conditions that included high temperatures, low humidity and hot gusty winds. It felt like a dry cyclone and it caused fear and panic. Central Queenslanders though are tough and in the last few years we have endured a category 5 cyclone, a major flood and unprecedented weather conditions that caused extremely serious bushfires. For two weeks in November and December last year, Queenslanders battled more than 1,000 fires across the state for 24 hours a day. The unprecedented bushfire crisis was a traumatic event for our community. However, the resilience of our communities, such as The Caves, Gracemere, Stanwell and Alton Downs, during the bushfires was nothing short of remarkable.

The role of emergency services in assisting residents, businesses and landholders was invaluable. I saw the local, permanent and volunteer firefighters, backed by colleagues from other parts of Queensland and interstate, do a wonderful job at protecting the people and their property in Central Queensland. They are incredibly brave men and women who put their lives on the line to protect our community. The Rural Fire Service volunteers from Bungundarra, The Caves, Keppel Sands, Cawarral, Tanby and Adelaide Park brigades within my electorate all rose to the occasion. The fire and rescue stations at Emu Park, North Rockhampton and Yeppoon played an incredibly important role too.

I want to thank in particular The Caves rural fire brigade, QFES personnel and SES volunteers. These men and women did an amazing job containing the fire at The Caves. They sacrificed their time, but also made significant financial sacrifices as well. They missed work or running their businesses in order to keep our community safe. Volunteer firefighters like Brad had been volunteering fighting fires down south at Mount Larcom for days and then came home to The Caves where they were fighting their very own fire. Brad was fighting fires for over eight days.

The Caves rural fire brigade volunteer Jenny Kingston is the behind-the-scenes angel of the brigade. She cooks for the men and women firefighters, has the fridges stocked with water, soft drinks and Powerade and when I visited the brigade she had a hearty chicken gravy dish simmering away in the slow cooker ready for the men and women when they returned. Thanks so much, Jenny, for all that you do.


The smooth preparation for and recovery after the bushfires was a credit to the cooperation between all levels of government, including Rockhampton and Livingstone mayors, their respective local disaster management groups, the member for Rockhampton and all of the respective state agencies involved. Thank you to all of our local firefighters, both the volunteers and officers, who left their families to help keep our local families safe. We love your work.

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (3.43 pm): Many a day goes by when Queenslanders are incredibly grateful that we live in the best state in the best nation in the world and we reflect on how perfect it often is, but tragically there are days, there are weeks, there are months when disaster after disaster befalls us and we epitomise the drought and flooding rains that Australia is known so well for.

As a south-east member of parliament and as the representative of some 20 communities in the Glass House electorate, I send my thoughts and prayers to our fellow Queenslanders in North and North-West Queensland. We have not experienced what you have. What you have experienced is almost beyond imagining for those of us in South-East Queensland. We have had only but a taste of what you have experienced. In May 2015 in my part of the world we tragically lost four individuals through flooding. It does not compare to what those in North and North-West Queensland have experienced over the last couple of months and those in Central Queensland have experienced with the fires. I want to reassure you that we understand.


There are people in the electorate of Glass House who know exactly what you are going through, people like Kim and Tove Easton whose nephew Gerald and his wife Megan Easton live on a property, Cameray Downs, 100 kilometres north-west of Richmond. Kim shared with me the tragic story of how the Easton family of Cameray Downs have nursed their 2,500 head of cattle through seven successive years of drought only to watch 2,000 of them perish in the floods and are now fearing that the 400 to 500 remaining will die of starvation because they cannot get feed to them because the infrastructure is broken and they do not have the bullets to end the misery that those cattle are experiencing.

I have shared on my Facebook page a GoFundMe page that the Easton family has set up. They are on their way. Sadly they have only raised \$14,840 as I speak. They are willing to name a cow after anyone who makes a donation. I have made my donation so I am hoping sometime soon there will be a cow running around at Cameray Downs with Andrew Powell written on it—Powell cow. I call on those in Glass House to step up and help out the Easton family of Cameray Downs and all of the families in North and North-West Queensland. The LNP team, led by Deb Frecklington, stand ready to assist those in that part of the world in their recovery over the coming months as the immediacy dissipates but the reality of recovery kicks in. I say to them we are here to help you, we will continue to visit you, we will be there to listen to you and make sure that you rebound better than ever.

 **Mr O'ROURKE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (3.46 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Premier's motion. Throughout Central and North Queensland we have seen unprecedented events, from the bushfires late last year to the devastating floods in Townsville and Western Queensland. It seems year after year we are seeing unpredictable weather events never seen in Queensland's recorded history and it highlights the importance and our thanks to our responders.

I offer my condolences to those who have lost loved ones, those with serious injuries and those who have lost all their possessions as a result of the natural disasters. I have seen firsthand the devastating effects on Queenslanders of fire and flooding, with extensive damage to property and loss of their possessions which can never be replaced. We have seen the impact on wildlife and the hundreds of thousands of cattle that have perished. I would like to thank all those who have assisted in the ongoing response to these disasters, from emergency services and Defence Force personnel, local, state and federal governments and community sector workers and volunteers. I would also like to put on record my thanks for the fantastic team work and collaboration across all sectors of the community in responding to these recent events, particularly our volunteers. These men and women sacrifice their time with family, their jobs, their businesses and also their sleep. I cannot commend all of those involved highly enough for their dedication to continue working in incredibly difficult conditions. Their dedication to our communities makes them an inspiration to us all.

I once again thank Fire and Emergency Services and SES staff and volunteers who saved our communities in the Gracemere, Rocky and The Caves area. I say a heartfelt thanks to all of the responders to our recent natural disasters and all those, such as our community recovery and housing staff, along with many others, who will continue to support our communities as we rebuild.

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (3.49 pm): I rise to support the motion. I put on the record my thanks to those emergency workers and volunteers who have helped and, in many cases, are still helping to rebuild and with the recovery. This will go on for some time and their efforts to assist those affected are greatly appreciated. In Townsville, around the Burdekin and across the north-west, there is heartbreak—piles of heartbreak—on the roads and the footpaths, from hundreds of flooded homes and businesses that are going through the mucky, smelly clean-up.

In the north-west, rural properties and towns are also doing it tough. It is very hard for those rural producers to go out every day and see what Mother Nature has unleashed on their properties and livestock. One day they were feeding their stock due to drought and the next day, and for days after that, they were wishing that the rain would stop. They have been and they are going through a traumatic experience, and I fear for the health and wellbeing of those good people. From Townsville on the coast to the border of the Northern Territory, people are in physical and mental pain. In this parliament, I want to acknowledge all of them.


I also want to acknowledge the leadership of the mayors and local governments from across the region, which have kilometres and kilometres of roads and other infrastructure to repair. I acknowledge the council workers who have been right at the coalface of this disaster. I acknowledge people such as Mayor Jane McNamara, who said that they had their annual average rainfall in seven days. I acknowledge Mayor Gavin Baskett at Winton, where part of the shire was hard hit and still they are losing stock. In the McKinlay shire, Mayor Belinda Murphy said that her shire looked like an ocean. The region needs a massive recovery effort.

At Richmond, Mayor John Wharton reported that producers have lost up to 50 per cent of their stock, if not more. The mayor from Carpentaria, Jack Bawden, does not want any rain, because four rivers are in major flood and all that water is heading to Kurumba. In the Croydon shire, Mayor Trevor Pickering would really like a new bridge over the Gilbert River, as they have been cut off in every direction. The mayor of Etheridge shire, Warren Devlin, said that they have a massive road repair job in front of them. I table pictures of some of the road damage in that shire.

Tabled paper: Photographs depicting the Hann Highway in the Etheridge Shire Council [\[250\]](#).

I also acknowledge the mayor of the Burke Shire Council, Ernie Camp, who said that this disaster may have a generational effect—it may last for generations—even though they have had a dry flood. At Cloncurry, Mayor Greg Campbell said that parts of his shire have been affected. I acknowledge Jenny Hill and her council workers. Their community will be recovering for some time to come.

I acknowledge those mayors from right across Queensland. They are doing a day-in day-out job. It is a tough job. I thank them for their leadership and for their efforts. I thank their councillors and the council workers for what they all do for their shires.

 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (3.52 pm): I rise to support the Premier's motion with a short contribution to acknowledge with great sadness the devastation caused by the recent natural disasters in Queensland. I acknowledge the contribution of the members for Thuringowa, Mundingburra and Townsville. I commend the great work that they have done for their communities during the flooding event in Townsville over the past month. I know how hard all three of these members have worked. I acknowledge them for that and also for the work that they continue to do for their communities.


During November 2018, parts of my electorate and parts of my neighbouring electorates saw the worst fires in the history of the area. Hundreds of homes were at risk and two properties were lost at Deepwater and Round Hill. Hundreds fled their properties and many lost livestock and personal possessions. I place on record my gratitude for the support and hard work of all of the emergency services personnel; front-line responders; local, state and federal agency staff who were there to help; people from the private sector; members of the community; and voluntary service providers. They all came together, not only to support the people in the region during the natural disaster events but also to continue that support through the recovery phase.

I acknowledge the tremendous work that the local disaster management group did to support the communities under threat. I acknowledge the exceptional work done by Mayor Matt Burnett, who is a very good friend of mine. His leadership during what certainly were very difficult times for the community must be commended, as must the councillors who were involved and the Gladstone Regional Council staff.

I had the pleasure of going out to the airport and meeting the firefighters who came from New South Wales, Victoria and the ACT. I acknowledge that the Premier was also at the airport when one of those groups arrived. It was great that they could shake hands with the Premier who was there to support us in our time of need. It was heartening to see many local people welcoming those firefighters to our community, many of whom had left their families and work to fly to Gladstone to help us in our time of need.

I am pleased to report that the Gladstone Regional Council has been holding community feedback sessions to discuss improvements and solutions in relation to the disaster response and also the recovery. The community debriefs for Agnes Water and Wartburg that were to be held last week

have had to be rescheduled, ironically due to Cyclone Oma. I am sure that when those debriefs are held in April the community will come together, as they do, and also celebrate a community recovery event headlined by Adam Harvey.

 **Mr BOYCE** (Callide—LNP) (3.54 pm): I rise to speak to the motion put forward by the Premier. I put on the record my recognition of the fact that the people of North and North-West Queensland have suffered from the catastrophic effects of widespread and devastating flooding, the true ramifications of which will not be determined for quite some time. Those floods will impact on the economies of both the state and the nation and we will all feel it in one way or another, although certainly not to the extent felt by those who have been directly affected.


There are stock losses looming in the hundreds of thousands. Possibly as many as one million animals have perished. The exact figures will never be known. People have lost their loved ones. They have lost their homes and all of their possessions. Businesses are bravely and desperately trying to calculate their losses and are contemplating their future with little or no income stream. There has been major damage to infrastructure, including to roads, bridges, railways and communications.

On behalf of the people of Callide, I most earnestly tell the people of North and North-West Queensland that we feel your pain and we will do whatever we can to help, for we have also experienced times of massive flooding and torrential rain. We saw that in 2010, 2011 and again in 2013 when the Burnett, Dawson and Boyne river systems reached record flood levels and the people of Callide suffered major losses.

We live in a 'sunburnt country, a land of sweeping plains, of ragged mountain ranges, of droughts and flooding rains'. We have seen these events before and we will see them again. The people of North Queensland are tough and resilient and they will recover, but it will take time. However, it will not be long before we once again see the 'vision splendid of the sunlit plains extended'.

To those suffering I say: I wish I could be in North Queensland to help you and to share your grief, for I am just a Wondoola ringer who made it all the way to parliament. However, I am here in Brisbane, 'sitting in my dingy little office, where a stingy ray of sunlight struggles feebly down between the houses tall'. My heart and my thoughts are with you.

I take this opportunity to thank and recognise all of those people who have come together to assist in the massive clean-up, which is continuing as I speak. I support the Premier's motion.

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (3.58 pm): I rise to support the Premier's motion and to add, with all Queenslanders, my condolences and the condolences of my community to all those affected by the recent natural disasters across Queensland. This summer has been a summer like no other, with record temperatures broken, rainforests burnt and bushfires at a level that we have never experienced in living memory. As a community, we embrace those who are affected. We put our arms around them and hold out a helping hand to those who have lost property and homes. We thank the many volunteers, the SES, the rural fire brigade, QFES, the police, the ambos and all of the emergency workers, including the firefighters from other states, as well as all the good citizens who put their lives on hold to help neighbours and strangers to protect lives and property.

The fires actually came only metres away from the township of Eungella. There were donations of food and water for firefighters on the front line from individuals and businesses. An engineering company offered to service all the privately owned vehicles used to combat the fires. Disasters certainly bring out the best in our communities. I commend our local disaster management committee for the work they did in coordinating all of the services.

The smoke had barely cleared as we watched anxiously the formation of Cyclone Penny. We had never been so happy to see a cyclone. That meant that the fires would be put out. Then we turned our eyes to the north and watched the rain depression move over Townsville and not move. There was initial joy to see the Townsville water supply replenished and see the rain move out to western regions to quench the ground that had been in prolonged drought. It was delightful to see the young and old splashing around in the rain, dams filling and green shoots starting to poke up their heads.

One thing we can be sure of is that weather never follows predicted paths. While we were preparing for a predicted 700 millimetres of rain in Mackay we only had squalls. The rain stayed up to the north and north-west. Our neighbours bore the brunt of the relentless rain that was measured in metres instead of centimetres. Our excitement for the rain in the thirsty areas to the north turned to horror and sadness as we saw the unfolding flood take over. Our hearts go out to our neighbours as they rebuild their lives and livelihoods. We are with them as they clean away the mud.

(Time expired)

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.


Motion agreed to.

HUMAN RIGHTS BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 353, on motion of Mrs D'Ath—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (4.01 pm), continuing: The bill provides a consolidated statutory protection of human rights recognised under international law—protecting 23 rights, drawn primarily from the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The bill also includes cultural rights, both for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and more broadly, recognising our culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

The protection of civil and political rights is often the first step in legislating human rights protections, and thus equivalent legislation in other jurisdictions generally includes a similar selection of those rights enumerated in the bill. While those examples provided a good base in that regard, this bill also goes beyond other jurisdictions by incorporating two rights from the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights—the right to health services and the right to education. The first review of the operation of the act will occur as soon as practicable after 1 July 2023 and will include consideration of whether additional human rights should be included under the act.

The bill will impose obligations on public entities to act and make decisions in a way that is compatible with human rights. Clause 9 sets out the definition of 'public entity' under the bill, which includes entities that could be understood as core public entities—for example, government departments, statutory bodies and local government—and entities whose functions are or include functions of a public nature, but only when that entity is performing those public nature functions on behalf of the state.

The bill does not bind private corporations that may perform functions of a public nature but are not doing so on behalf of the state. For example, the delivery of education services by non-state schools would not be captured within the definition of public entity on the basis that, while a non-state school may arguably be performing a public function, it is not doing so on behalf of the state. This approach is consistent with the Victorian charter and reflects the position that parents have a right to choose to send their children to privately operated non-state schools. State schools are clearly captured by the definition and as public entities state schools—and decisions made by principals in state schools—will need to comply with the obligations imposed by the bill.

The bill also makes it clear that registered providers of supports or registered National Disability Insurance Scheme providers are public entities when they are performing their functions as a registered provider under the Commonwealth NDIS Act 2013 in Queensland. This means that registered providers will be required to comply with the human rights obligations on public entities when they are providing publicly funded services to participants in the NDIS in Queensland.

The specific inclusion of registered providers is necessary to ensure coverage of this type of service delivery traditionally delivered by the state as Queensland transitions to the new national scheme. As in other jurisdictions, the particular characteristics of the entity in question, its relationship with the state government and the nature of its functions will be determinative as to whether it is a public entity for the purposes of the bill.

Where it is necessary for certainty, the bill provides a facility whereby an entity can be prescribed as either a public entity or not a public entity for the purposes of the bill. The application of the bill will be monitored, including by the Queensland Human Rights Commission, and if issues arise they can be considered in the first review of the act under the terms of the bill.

The intention of this bill is to put human rights at the centre of public sector decision-making and to establish a mechanism whereby individuals aggrieved by decisions of public entities may have their issues resolved in a way that is accessible and focused on practical outcomes. There is no stand-alone legal course of action created by the bill, although a claim of unlawfulness under the Human Rights Act may be attached or piggybacked to an independent claim. This reflects a sensible and measured approach to introducing a human rights framework into the Queensland public sector landscape.

This approach is consistent with the Victorian charter and the dialogue model adopted by the bill, which promotes discussion, awareness raising and education to encourage compliance with human rights rather than a strong enforcement and compliance model. It is also consistent with the position the Palaszczuk government took to the people of Queensland. I also note that the committee considered this was in keeping with the dialogue model utilised by the bill and that the bill provides a sufficiently effective mechanism to address grievances.

This leads to the overwhelming support noted by the committee for the transformation of the Anti-Discrimination Commission into the Queensland Human Rights Commission, the QHRC, along with their new functions to support the proposed Human Rights Act. The QHRC will play an important role in promoting the understanding, acceptance and public discussion of human rights in Queensland, including educating and informing the community about human rights and the act. This function will be the first across Australian human rights jurisdictions, based on the learnings from the Ombudsman's report in Victoria.

The QHRC's complaints conciliation role was supported by the majority of submitters to the committee who welcomed the provision of an accessible, affordable and effective complaints mechanism that the bill provides. Should a complaint not be resolved by the QHRC, there are a number of actions the QHRC may take that will encourage public entities to ensure human rights compliance. For example, if a complaint cannot be resolved, the commissioner must prepare a report for the respondent and complainant which may include details of the actions the respondent should take to ensure its actions are compatible with human rights. Information, not including personal information, from this report may be published. The commissioner will also report on the outcome of complaints in the commissioner's annual report.

Courts and tribunals will play an important role under the bill in interpreting statutory provisions, to the extent possible consistent with their purpose, in a way that is compatible with human rights. The government has achieved the correct balance. The interpretative provision at clause 48 has been very carefully drafted in light of experience from other jurisdictions and is intended to avoid a strong remedial approach that would facilitate a legislative role by the courts. The emphasis on giving effect to the legislative purpose in interpretation means that the provision does not authorise a court to depart from parliament's intention.

If the Supreme Court or Court of Appeal is unable to interpret a statutory provision compatibly with human rights then it may issue a declaration of incompatibility under clause 53. Importantly, any declaration made by the court does not affect the validity of the law with which it is concerned, but instead triggers consideration of the relevant statutory provision by the minister, portfolio committee and parliament.

I note amendments circulated by the shadow Attorney-General seek to remove the powers and role of the courts altogether, including the ability to issue a declaration of incompatibility. This would mean that our legislation would be inferior to other charters in other jurisdictions and would not allow proper scrutiny of our laws. If the opposition were to understand this bill properly, they would clearly see that this bill does not infringe on the separation of powers or the independence of the courts but importantly allows the courts to decide matters where they are piggybacked in relation to an existing claim that does allow for the legislation to be considered and scrutinised, but still ultimate power rests with the parliament as to whether that legislation should be changed in the future. We believe this is the appropriate balance going forward.

The bill aims to ensure that consideration of human rights is an integral part of the development of legislation. When bills are introduced into parliament by any member, government or non-government, they must be accompanied by a statement of compatibility which assesses the human rights impact of the legislation. Portfolio committees will also have a complementary role in scrutinising legislation, adding another dimension of scrutiny to their existing role.

The facility in the bill for parliament to make an override declaration is consistent with the Victorian charter and, along with the statement of compatibility, ensures that transparency and accountability is maintained throughout parliamentary processes. When it comes to crime and, importantly, victims, keeping our community safe is a priority for the Palaszczuk government. This is reflected in a number of government initiatives including the suite of legislative and administrative reforms arising out of the *Not now, not ever* report of the Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland and the work arising out of the Queensland government's response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

Some submissions were concerned that the bill focuses too much on the rights of defendants to criminal charges and that explicit rights for victims of crime should be articulated. This particular bill, however, is not just the best vehicle for that commitment. This bill does not privilege or elevate the rights of criminal defendants over the rights of victims in the criminal process. Rather, the government explicitly delivered on this commitment with the introduction in 2016 and passage of the Victims of Crime and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2017.

Human rights in the bill are not absolute. The general limitations provision, clause 13, recognises that human rights may be subject to reasonable and demonstrably justifiable limits. Implied legitimate reasons for limiting human rights, as drawn from human rights jurisprudence, include community safety and the protection of the rights of others including, for example, children and victims of domestic violence.

Clause 12 of the bill also clarifies that the human rights in the bill are in addition to other rights and freedoms included in other laws, meaning that victims' rights that are contained in other sources of law will continue to apply. In this regard, the committee noted the victims' rights charter in the Victims of Crime Assistance Act 2009 and the existing complaints mechanism that is available under the victims' rights charter, as I referred to earlier.

The consequential amendments to the Youth Justice Act 1992 and the Corrective Services Act 2006 are intended to provide clarity and guidance to decision-makers under those acts about the relevant factors in making certain decisions. The amendments mean that, just because those additional factors have been considered, the decision or act will not be unlawful for the purposes of the Human Rights Act. Importantly, the amendments do not prevent a person from making a complaint to the QHRC or attaching the ground of unlawfulness under the Human Rights Act to an independent claim as a piggyback action.

A number of submissions raised concerns about the inclusion of these consequential amendments in the bill. Clause 95(4) requires that, at the time of the first review of the act, consideration must specifically be given to whether the amendments are operating effectively or whether further or different provision should be made for the interrelationship between the Youth Justice Act, Corrective Services Act and Human Rights Act.

It was pleasing to read in their statement of reservation that opposition members of the committee recognised the strong support for the bill and the pressing need to offer our community's most vulnerable as much legal protection as possible. In light of their commitment to the objectives of the bill, I would like to address a number of other issues that were raised in the statement.

The statement of reservation notes a concern as to whether the bill 'appropriately adds any additional substantive legal protection' for those who are vulnerable in our community. In response to this concern, I would point those opposite to the multitude of submissions to the committee that explained exactly how the bill will do just that. It is true that the rights protected by the bill are the subject of international treaties to which Australia is a party and in many cases they are also recognised common law rights, but their protection and access to remedies where those rights are breached is currently partial and fragmented. I do find it surprising that in a statement of reservation from the opposition they talk about whether there is substantial legal protection, yet the amendments circulated seek to remove any legal scrutiny in relation to statutes that are passed by this parliament.

The bill delivers a consolidated statutory protection of selected human rights, facilitating a more transparent and systematic examination by government of how our laws, decisions and actions impact on those rights, whilst providing a meaningful and accessible avenue for members of the community to raise human rights concerns with public entities with a view to reaching a practical resolution.


Stephen Keim SC, barrister and member of the Criminal Law Committee of the Bar Association Queensland, summed it up nicely in his evidence before the committee. What the Human Rights Bill does is 'provide to the most powerless among us and the most disadvantaged among us—who are probably more than most of us very, very dependent on government services—with an option to look after themselves, to complain, to have themselves treated properly and decently in accordance with human rights'. That is the substantive legal protection that this bill offers, and it is so very important.

Further, experience from Victoria and the ACT, which both have similar legislative frameworks, does not indicate a misuse of the rights in the bill or an explosion of frivolous complaints. The High Court's decision in the case of *Momcilovic v the Queen* is authority for the proposition that the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006, the model upon which this bill is based, is valid, rejecting suggestions that it gives courts some type of remedial legislative power or law-making function that is inconsistent with the judicial function of courts.

More importantly, feedback from human rights advocates in Victoria have stated that they have witnessed positive change for the most vulnerable over the years since the Victorian charter was introduced more than 10 years ago. It is as simple as putting people first in everything that we do. If the opposition are truly committed to the protection of the most vulnerable in our community then they will support this bill in its passage through the House.

The issues dealt with by the committee throughout their inquiry and in their report are complex and challenging. I thank the committee members for their thorough and thoughtful consideration of the bill. I would also like to thank the stakeholders who have advocated for this bill for many years: without your tireless work we would not be where we are today. I understand that some of these people may be joining us in the gallery over the next two days for this debate. I welcome them and I thank them for their advocacy and hard work over so many years.

I was encouraged and moved by the many written and oral submissions given to both inquiries—from individuals who shared their personal stories and aspirations of what this bill would mean for them to the organisations and community service providers that work tirelessly to support and advocate for our most vulnerable Queenslanders. Thank you for sharing your views and experiences. They embody what this bill is about: recognising the equal and inalienable human rights of all persons that are essential in a democratic and inclusive society and doing all we can as a government and as a community to protect them. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr JANETZKI** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (4.17 pm): I rise to address the Human Rights Bill, which was introduced by the Attorney-General on 31 October 2018. In Australia, currently only Victoria and the ACT have adopted human rights legislation. New Zealand and the United Kingdom both have statutory bills of rights, which largely Victoria copied.

The bill before us contains 23 human rights and brings about four major reforms. Firstly, the government must have regard to human rights principles when drafting laws. All legislation proposed by the parliament, including private members' bills, must be accompanied by a statement of compatibility with human rights.

Secondly, public entities must have regard to the human rights of the people they are dealing with, especially when making important decisions that affect their lives. Such entities are broadly defined and include government entities, public servants, the QPS, local governments and even private companies undertaking work for Queensland government entities where they are performing functions of the state.

Thirdly, courts are granted involvement by virtue of part 3 division 3. If in a proceeding a statutory provision cannot be interpreted in a way compatible with human rights, the court may make a declaration of incompatibility which is then referred to the relevant minister, who must prepare a written response, and the respective parliamentary portfolio committee.

Finally, any person can make a complaint to the newly named Human Rights Commission if they believe their human rights have been breached. The commission will receive complaints from aggrieved persons about public entities acting in a way that is not consistent with human rights. An aggrieved person may also seek judicial review of that decision by seeking a declaration of unlawfulness from the Supreme Court.

The Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee delivered its report on 4 February 2019 recommending that the bill be passed. Opposition members submitted a statement of reservation. The LNP will not be supporting the bill on the grounds that I will shortly outline. I will also seek to move one amendment during the consideration in detail.

Politicians often talk about protecting the vulnerable in our community. I certainly do and this is the place where we debate how best to do that. It is a worthy aspiration and regularly cited by many of us in this chamber as a reason for seeking to enter public life. I acknowledge the strong support for the bill from many submitters advocating for the vulnerable in our community, including the Endeavour Foundation, Disability Law Queensland, People with Disability Australia, Children and Young People with Disability Australia and a range of lawyer organisations. The problem we face is that there is no evidence to suggest that a human rights act has provided any additional protection or helped service delivery to the vulnerable throughout the world. Here in Queensland across numerous parliamentary committee processes no-one has been able to persuasively articulate the inadequacies in our current system that fail our most vulnerable.

Queensland already has a robust system for protecting the vulnerable from poor bureaucratic decision-making through a well-resourced and professional Public Service, the capacity for judicial review of administrative decisions and an outstanding judiciary. The Queensland Ombudsman keeps a close eye on the Public Service and has proven to be a strong check on bureaucratic decision-making. Of course, sitting above all this are the implied and express freedoms and rights contained in the common law and our Constitution. Indeed, these freedoms and rights go back to the Magna Carta in 1215 and have been built upon throughout the centuries. They are constitutionally, legislatively and judicially entrenched governing notions such as just terms for compulsorily acquired property; freedom

from arbitrary arrest and detention; freedom of expression; freedom of religion; freedom of association; rights associated with the protection of the accused and prisoners; and controls managing police powers of search, arrest, investigation, the gathering of evidence and, ultimately, the admissibility of that evidence in court.

Queenslanders today have a right to privacy; freedom of movement; freedom of peaceful assembly; freedom of thought, conscience and religion; the right to own and acquire property; the right to vote in democratic elections; the right to social welfare; the right to protections in the workplace; the right to rest and recreation; the right to a clean environment; the right to an education. There are rights protecting children and the right to equality regardless of gender, age, parental status, impairment, sexuality, race, religion or creed.

From this extensive list of rights I think it is safe to argue that our rights and freedoms have been very well defended by this place and our judicial system for 160 years. That is why there has been very little, if any, public push for a human rights act in Queensland. There is no outcry or clamour. The truth is that the opposition has had very little, if any, correspondence or requests for meetings to discuss the bill. There is no burning desire for change and I believe that is because our system is well balanced as it stands today. There is, of course, always room for improvement, but there is no justification for the tilting of the balance of our separation of powers in the fashion as proposed and contemplated by this bill.

The opposition's concerns with this bill are rooted also in deep philosophical moorings that have spanned centuries. In Australia these foundations have been supported by many eminent jurists and politicians, among them the current Governor of Queensland, former chief justice Paul De Jersey; former governor-general of Australia Sir Ninian Stephen; Sir Harry Gibbs, former chief justice of the High Court; Justice Patrick Keane, currently serving on the High Court; former prime minister John Howard; Professor Geoffrey Blainey; the current federal Attorney-General, Christian Porter; and two quite notable Labor figures, former Queensland premier Peter Beattie and former New South Wales premier Bob Carr.

Former New South Wales premier Bob Carr has written widely on this topic. I remember when reading his thoughtful book *Thoughtlines: Reflections of a Public Man* in the early 2000s that he was always taken with the dangers of the introduction of a human rights act or a bill of rights in Australia. In a *Canberra Times* article from August 2001 he says—

I object because a bill of rights transfers decision on major policy issues from the legislature to the judiciary. It is not possible to draft a bill of rights that gives clear cut answers to every case.

These are issues that should be decided by an elected parliament, not by judges who are not directly accountable to the people. Furthermore courts operate within an adversarial process. Matters only arise before them when there is a dispute and judgements are made on the basis of particular facts. Decisions are therefore piecemeal in nature and cannot take into account all issues relevant to determining policy. In short a court is not an appropriate forum for making these decisions.

Carr goes on—

A bill of rights included in the Constitution in 1901 would most likely have enshrined the White Australia policy. Even when a bill of rights is not constitutionally entrenched and can therefore be changed by legislation—

which is similar to the bill we are examining today—

the political reality is that it is given 'quasi constitutional status' and is almost impossible to amend.

The opposition's primary objection is that the bill infringes orthodox principles of statutory construction by requiring courts to interpret the bill's provisions in a way that is compatible or most compatible with another act, that is, the human rights listed in the bill. This will constitute a significant change in the relationship between the courts and the parliament and will increase the relative power of the courts. This will occur because the rights contained in the bill are very abstract and leave open to debate their particular application in any particular situation. For example, clause 16 refers to the right to life. It states—

Every person has the right to life and has the right not to be arbitrarily deprived of life.

If we take this example to its natural conclusion, it means that in one form or another there must be a right to deliberately deprive somebody of life. I am intrigued as to whether someone is able to explain under what circumstances this might arise.

Virtually all laws seek to protect rights in one way or another and all laws interfere with rights in some way. Resourceful lawyers will be able to devise human rights arguments both for and against just about any conceivable law. Judges will then decide which arguments to accept and which to reject. For example, Amnesty International are concerned that the bill does not sufficiently protect the rights of

young people convicted of crimes and that it may be possible they could be incarcerated with adults. Amnesty has recognised that the bill is so ambiguous that it is unclear what its effect will be. Accordingly, they are lobbying for changes to clarify that children cannot be imprisoned with adults.

If the bill is uncertain in this instance, then it is arguable that it is uncertain in every other instance as well. It is irresponsible law-making to enact a law the practical meaning of which no-one knows. Rights are always best protected by carefully drafted legislation. The bill will introduce vagueness and uncertainty into the law. It is possible that the express legislative intent of the parliament might be ignored by unelected judges—sometimes colourfully named committees of ex-lawyers. Again, as Bob Carr has argued—

Parliaments are elected to make laws. In doing so, they make judgements about how the rights and interests of the public should be balanced. Views will differ in any given case about whether the judgement is correct. If it is unacceptable the community can make its views known at elections. A bill of rights is an admission of the failure of parliaments, governments and the people to behave reasonably, responsibly and respectfully.

I turn now to the basis for the opposition amendment. The declaration of incompatibility will impair the institutional integrity of the Supreme Court as it goes beyond the court's ordinary duty to only make observations in their judgements. The issuing of the declaration of compatibility to the relevant parliamentary portfolio committee and minister will result in a significant change in the relationship between the court, the parliament and the executive which thereby distorts the separation of powers relationship. This in turn will politicise litigation and indirectly allow courts to be involved in political decision-making. The Queensland Law Society has raised concerns in this regard, observing that any human right incompatibility should be contained within a judicial officer's judgement.

The bill will distort the proper functioning of the courts by asking judges to evaluate legislation against broad standards, which ultimately results in the court being embroiled in political controversies. It will politicise the judiciary and impair their ability to uphold the rule of law. The circus that was the appointment process of Brett Kavanaugh to the United States Supreme Court may well be replicated here in different forms in the decades ahead.

The concern with regard to our opposition amendment will be addressed by the proposed removal of part 3, division 3, excepting clause 48, which would remove the power of the court to make a declaration that a statutory provision cannot be interpreted in a way that is compatible with human rights. This will address many of the criticisms in relation to the declaration of incompatibility impairing the institutional integrity of the Supreme Court, as it goes beyond the court's ordinary duty to only make observations in their judgements. I will speak further on this matter during consideration in detail. I do note that a declaration would not currently affect the validity of the relevant statutory provision or create a cause of action. A declaration of compatibility would compel the relevant minister to prepare a written response and table it in parliament.

As has already been mentioned by the Attorney-General, the constitutional validity of the Victorian charter equivalent of declarations of incompatibility was considered by the High Court in *Momcilovic v the Queen*. In a 4-3 judgement the High Court upheld the constitutional validity of section 36 of the Victorian charter, which is the equivalent of this bill's section 53. Although the High Court held that it was merely a mechanism for the court to direct the legislature to a deviation between a state law and a human right in the charter, it remained parliament's ultimate responsibility to determine the law it enacts. Notably, some judges of the High Court raised uncertainty as to how the declaration may operate in the future.

I note that the Queensland Law Society holds concerns that the functions set out in clause 53 of the bill may be perceived not to fit within a judicial officer's role. They expressed their concerns in relation to the involvement of judicial officers in making declarations of incompatibility and the subsequent referral of those declarations to the Attorney-General and relevant parliamentary committees. The QLS states that the substance of a declaration of incomparability could be contained within a judicial officer's judgement.

There will be practical implications and some absurdities that, although provocative, do need to be shared during this debate. When practising as a lawyer in the United Kingdom in the mid-2000s I saw the operation of the Human Rights Act—there passed in 1998—in operation. At that stage many people in the United Kingdom were alarmed by the ever-encroaching power of Europe through decisions that, although delivered in Strasbourg, would have application right across Britain. There are some observations that ought to be made in this regard.

There the Human Rights Act had an impact on the United Kingdom government's counterterrorism legislation. It is widely accepted that judges are now required to police constitutional boundaries which would have been unthinkable there 40 years ago. Too often human rights have

become associated with unmeritorious individuals pursuing claims that do not command public support: the schoolboy arsonist permitted back into the schoolroom because enforcing discipline apparently denied his right to education; the convicted rapist paid £4,000 compensation because his second appeal was delayed; the burglar given taxpayers' money to sue the man whose house he broke into; and a convicted serial killer allowed hardcore pornography in prison because of his right to information and freedom of expression.

In 2006 Labour prime minister Tony Blair described a Human Rights Act judgement about a group who hijacked a plane as an 'abuse of common sense'. The Human Rights Act protected terrorists and hate preachers such as Abu Hamza who, at a time when he was advocating radical Islam and violence within UK cities, initially could not be deported. Contributors to the *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* articulated that the Human Rights Act there impinges on several areas of medical practice including life-and-death issues, mental health, confidentiality and access to treatment. Perhaps its greatest impact in clinical practice is in the area of end-of-life decision-making and the withholding and withdrawal of life-prolonging treatment.

Across the Atlantic there is a famous case in Ontario, Canada, known as Askov's decision. There it was determined that delays in excess of six to eight months between committal and trial were unacceptable. As a result, someone charged with conspiracy to commit extortion was given a permanent stay of proceedings because of a delay in excess of six to eight months. In that case it was some 23 months. Furthermore, over the next couple of years 47,000 charges were either dismissed, stayed or held over, never to reappear in the courts. The charges that were dropped included thousands of drink-driving charges and a number of serious assault and serious sexual assault charges. Imagine the problems that may arise for any government, especially in circumstances where—we now know—there would be substantial delays in our justice system. These are deliberately provocative examples but they highlight how human rights legislation can play out—unforeseen, but with serious consequences.


Back in Australia during the parliamentary committee process in relation to this bill the Women's Legal Service noted that there is no right that recognises victims of crime while defendants are protected. Bob Carr wrote about an Australian prisoner who went to court a few years ago claiming that his human rights were violated under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. His complaint was that there was not enough choice on the prison's vegetarian menu. Notorious Queensland armed robber and violent escapee prisoner Brendan Abbott made a complaint to the United Nations many years ago arguing that he was subjected to harsh and inhumane treatment. The list is endless.

There are other concerns that ought to be raised in my contribution. They pertain to potential issues arising from the special privileging of certain rights rather than the full implementation of rights protected by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The government has said that the rationale for the bill is that it applies to all laws and all administration within Queensland. If that is so, then there can be no justification for removing some topics outside of the bill such as the killing of an unborn child. Further, there is an argument that amendments should be made so that the bill expressly affirms, among other things, that the state has a duty to respect the liberty of parents to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions and that freedom of expression may only be limited by laws to the extent that it constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence. Queensland's religious and racial vilification law is not limited in this way and therefore contravenes the protection of freedom of expression under article 19 of the ICCPR.

While individuals cannot bring rights challenges as a sole cause of action, they have the option to attach it to a judicial review or lodge complaints with the Human Rights Commission. In light of articulate rights advocates pressing for a stand-alone right to bring actions, it is not likely to remain this way for long. No threshold for complaints has been set, and it is therefore likely to encourage frivolous complaints and ensure the proliferation of vexatious complaints and the ensuing lawyers' picnic.

I would argue that state and national governments of all political persuasions have delivered the citizens of Queensland a high standard of individual rights. Our parliament should constantly be considering how best to protect the rights and freedoms of its citizens. Our most vulnerable deserve nothing less. Such rights and freedoms are ever changing. Rights that people may argue are important today may well be irrelevant in decades to come. The founders of our nation realised this in the 1890s when it was decided not to implement a bill of rights. In 1944 and 1988 referenda proposing amendments to the Australian Constitution relating to various freedoms were defeated. Instead, human rights in Queensland have been protected by a rigorous Westminster system, legislative instruments, the common law and independent judiciary, a strong Public Service backed, in Queensland's case, by

the Queensland Ombudsman and, importantly, a free and forthright media. Let's continue to support this system as it has stood the test of time, delivering abundant rights and freedoms for all citizens in our great state.

 **Mr RUSSO** (Toohey—ALP) (4.40 pm): I rise in the House today to speak in support of the passing of the Human Rights Bill 2018. In my first speech to this House, on being elected for the first time, I spoke about the need for the introduction of human rights legislation to protect vulnerable Queenslanders from the excesses of government. We saw many examples of how such legislation would have protected Queenslanders from the excesses of the Newman LNP government.

There were many submissions on this legislation, some in support and some against. Whilst I do not have sufficient time to deal with all of the submissions, I do intend to speak to the submission made by the University of New South Wales, Sydney. I should note at this juncture that both Dr Janina Boughey and Professor George Williams wrote their submission in a personal capacity. The submission advised that the Queensland Human Rights Bill follows the same general model as the human rights legislation in the United Kingdom, New Zealand, the ACT and Victoria. Importantly, the submission says that the bill does not seek to fundamentally alter the roles of or the relationship between the three branches of government. Rather, the bill aims to encourage dialogue about human rights protection between the branches and foster a human rights culture within government.

The submission went on to say that the bill builds on the experience of the human rights legislation in those jurisdictions that have already passed similar legislation, particularly Victoria and the ACT. The submission went on to say that this bill is the best drafted and most effective shield of people's rights yet seen in Australia.


I will now deal with one of the differences between the Queensland legislation and the Victorian and ACT legislation. Again, I draw on the information contained within the UNSW submission. One of the main problems with the Victorian and ACT human rights acts is the absence of an accessible, affordable and effective complaints mechanism. The Queensland bill overcomes this problem by providing for a low-cost mechanism of resolving complaints through the Human Rights Commission. The submission referred to this feature of the Queensland legislation as an excellent feature.

I will now turn to some of the history of the process that has brought us to the historic position we are placed in today when this legislation will be passed. It is without any doubt that a federal bill of rights would be a great thing for the people of Australia but, as is often the case, it is left to the Queensland government to do the heavy lifting on social change. The bill aims to embed a human rights culture in the Queensland public sector so that public functions are exercised in a principled way that is compatible with human rights. The bill will be an ordinary act of parliament, as opposed to a constitutionally entrenched model, and will maintain the existing relationship between the executive, the legislature and the courts about human rights.

As I referred to earlier, the differences between our legislation and the Victorian model include dispute resolution. Dispute resolution, as I have already said, provides an accessible, independent, appropriate avenue for members of the community to raise human rights concerns with public entities with a view to reaching a practical resolution.

The bill primarily protects civil and political rights, drawn from the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and one right drawn from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The bill imposes obligations and functions on the three arms of government consistent with the dialogue model.

In closing, I take this opportunity to thank all of the parliamentary staff who worked on the report on the bill and the previous committee, which dealt with the issue of whether or not to have a bill of rights. I also acknowledge Norm Bullen and Frank Carroll, two true believers and advocates for the introduction of the bill, strong supporters of a fair go and members of the Yeronga branch. I also thank all of the submitters to both of the committee inquiries and those who attended hearings. I acknowledge the group Human Rights Act for Queensland and the hard work that group did in lobbying for the introduction of the legislation, and Aimee McVeigh. Last but not least, I thank the Attorney-General, the members of cabinet and the entire parliamentary Labor Party for their support and the departmental staff for their hard work in bringing to the House a workable and progressive piece of legislation. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (4.45 pm): I rise to speak against the Human Rights Bill 2018. I am a member of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee and I acknowledge my colleagues on the committee and, of course, as always, the staff, who do such a great job to support us.

I commend the shadow Attorney-General, the member for Toowoomba South, for his excellent speech earlier. Given that I have less time to speak than he had, there is not much I can add to the excellent observations he made regarding some of the absurdities that could well arise from this bill and how it represents a complete incompatibility with our long-established system of government in Queensland under the Westminster system. Vital and sacrosanct though human rights are, this bill is not the way to protect them. The LNP will be moving amendments to make sure that our long-established mechanisms for protecting human rights under our Westminster system are protected.

The purpose of the bill is to implement 23 human rights and bring about the following changes: the government must have regard to human rights principles when drafting laws; government agencies must have regard to the human rights of people they are dealing with, especially when making important decisions that affect their lives; courts must consider and uphold human rights when determining legal issues affecting people who appear before them; and any person can make a complaint to the newly named Human Rights Commissioner if they believe their human rights have been breached. I believe that all of those protections are available to Queenslanders now, without the need for this bill.

Our amendments propose to remove the power this bill confers on judges to declare legislation that we pass—that is, legislation that we as people representing our constituents in Queensland pass—to be incompatible with human rights. We believe that the declaration of incompatibility impairs the institutional integrity of the Supreme Court as it goes beyond the court's ordinary duty to only make observations in its judgements. The LNP does not agree with changing the role of the judiciary by making it a legislative requirement for the judiciary to refer a notice to the minister that one piece of legislation conflicts with another. The role of the judiciary, in our view, should remain as it is—that is, they express their concerns through their judgements.

The LNP is opposing this bill on the grounds that it is not the best way to protect human rights and because it is fundamentally undemocratic. The bill distorts the separation of powers by empowering judges and disempowering the legislature. We are basically giving away our job to the judiciary, which was not the intention of the founding fathers of our Federation or of this state.

A human rights act will fracture the fundamental foundations of Queensland's democracy by allowing judges to take on what has always been the role of the parliament and us as the people's representatives. We will not support a bill which will give judges the ability to ignore the intent of parliament and to scrutinise the intent of every piece of legislation that comes before it to determine whether it is inconsistent with a broad and fixed definition of human rights. We will not support a bill that explicitly gives the judiciary the power to depart from the literal meaning of words in legislation, which creates an extraordinary power to effectively rewrite the law. This is why the LNP will be moving amendments.

There are other considerations as well which I can add to those that the shadow Attorney-General raised earlier. With regard to cost, we have no idea what the financial implications of this law would be.

Mr Stevens interjected.

Mr LISTER: I take that interjection from my honourable friend the member for Mermaid Beach. Yes, I do not think those opposite care and will think, 'We'll just chalk it up on the tab with the other \$83 billion.' In committee hearings I asked but had no success in getting an answer from representatives from the department of corrections as to their view on the likelihood that there may be increased costs to their department as a result of this bill. I would say that they are probably facing a very substantial increase in costs when prisoners start using this as a way to vexatiously tickle the legal system and make trouble. Perhaps the officer was wise not to answer the question because I suspect a full answer under the circumstances may not have been appreciated. What about the rights of victims? We hear about the rights of offenders throughout this, but there is no enshrinement of the rights of victims, which is an omission. This escapes no-one's notice thanks to the appearance of Teeshan Johnson, who gave a very fiery submission to us that the rights of the unborn are not referred to or protected in any way under this bill.


Queensland already has a robust system for protecting the vulnerable from poor democratic decision-making through the Ombudsman, the Public Service and of course through our judiciary. Queenslanders already have ample protection of their human rights embedded in Queensland and Commonwealth legislation and common law protections such as the freedoms of association, expression and belief—express or implied—and constitutional rights such as religious freedom, and these have been operating for a long time in Queensland. There is no need to duplicate that. Rights are already contained in legislation and case law and are thorough and have been developed over time to reflect the growing need to protect rights.

I turn to a very good written submission that was provided by professors Nicholas Aroney and Richard Ekins, two very eminent legal minds. Their objections to a statutory enshrinement of rights were quite persuasive I felt. To paraphrase their submission, they said that respect for human rights does not require enactment of a statutory charter of rights and that human rights are best protected by carefully drafting legislation which specifically addresses particular issues in a manner that gives certainty to all of those affected by the law. That is an important concept that they are talking about there. The uncertainty that this introduces is a bad thing. Secondly, they said that they invite judges to evaluate matters which are essentially political in character. I think it would be bad for Queensland to have members of our judiciary, which in future will be appointed with the expectation that they would have to work under this law, appointed—that is only a perception—because of a view they hold on certain matters that may bear on this law. That would be a bad thing because we need to have an independent judiciary, one without a skerrick of tainting by political affiliation or open political views. Paul de Jersey, our Governor, in his previous capacity as chief justice and an eminent jurist expressed similar concerns in a paper that he wrote some years ago concerning bills of rights.

Statutory charters of rights do not produce a dialogue, so once we are done here what happens to the debates which are supposed to shape our perception of what human rights are as they evolve? We are here to represent Queenslanders and do that job. Charters of rights are in essence a constitutional statute and it is a long accepted tradition in our system that such constitutional matters should be bipartisan if they are to proceed, and we do not have a bipartisan position on this bill. Previous Labor governments have not gone here and this bill seems to accompany the progressive march of Queensland Labor to the left, towards activism and symbolism and away from practicalities—the sorts of things we would have seen from premiers like Goss and Beattie.

Mr Stevens: What happened to the AWU?

Mr LISTER: What did happen to the AWU? I take that interjection. There are a number of serious concerns that we have around this bill. As I said, we will be moving amendments which I will be supporting. Other than that, I do not commend this bill to the House.

 **Mrs McMAHON** (Macalister—ALP) (4.54 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Human Rights Bill 2018 and want to thank my fellow committee members, in particular the chair, the member for Toohey, who has been a passionate advocate for this bill for as long as I have known him. I also want to thank the secretariat for its support throughout this process. This bill represents the largest that the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee has considered in the 56th Parliament. I also want to thank those individuals and organisations—over 140 of them—who made submissions in relation to this bill, as well as those who attended and spoke before the public hearings.

To stand here in this House and speak in support of the introduction of a human rights bill is something that I have the utmost pride in doing. This is an historic moment and I stand here with a view to history. We only need to look back through dark periods in the world's history to understand why we have documents like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights—a document first adopted in the shadows of World War II. The mistreatment of women and children, unarmed combatants, those of differing races, ethnicities and religions and the mistreatment of those with mental and physical disabilities represented a stain on our humanity and the declaration by the newly formed United Nations General Assembly was a reaffirming statement on the rights of all humans. Australia is a signatory to this declaration and many other international covenants and conventions which seek to protect individuals and preserve their freedoms.

In passing this legislation, Queensland will join the ACT and Victoria as the only other state or territory to legislate for such protections and freedoms. In fact, the submissions spoke at length to the Victorian model which Queensland has not only drawn heavily on but also expanded further on. This is something that all Queenslanders should be proud of. This bill seeks to introduce the right to recognition and equality before the law; the right to life; protection from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment; freedom from forced work; freedom of movement; freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief; freedom of expression; the right to peaceful assembly and freedom of association; the right and opportunity to take part in public life; the right to own property; the right to privacy and reputation; the protection of families and children; the right to enjoy culture; the recognition of the distinct cultural rights of Australia's first peoples; the right to liberty and security; the right to humane treatment when deprived of liberty; the right to a fair hearing; the right of the presumption of innocence; the protection of children throughout the criminal process; the right not to be tried or punished more than once; protection from retrospective criminal laws; and the right to an education and health services. The bill states that acts, decisions and statutory provisions made by legislators in government departments

should be compatible with these human rights and that any act, decision or statutory provision that does limit a human right or any other ratified declaration should only be done to the extent that it is reasonable and justifiable in the circumstances.

The introduction of a human rights act does place some obligations on the Queensland parliament, and that is to consider each piece of legislation against the stated human rights provisions. It requires ministers to produce statements of compatibility when introducing a bill to parliament. It places obligations on parliamentary committees to consider each bill's compatibility with human rights throughout the committee process and report on its considerations. These are not great impositions and, quite frankly, I am astounded that these considerations have not been part of explicit processes before now. Mature, compassionate and fair governments should consider these things—these human rights—as a matter of course, and now Queensland will.

There were concerns raised by some stakeholders around the impact that this legislation would have on the sovereignty of parliament and that non-judicial functions are now being conferred to the courts in a manner that is unconstitutional. However, several submitters saw no impact or differing in the role of the three branches of government.

Academics from the University of Queensland's TC Beirne School of Law saw the bill as 'tailored to our Commonwealth system of government' and that it 'maintains the role of the courts in interpreting the law, and preserves the sovereignty of parliament'. Likewise the Queensland Council for Civil Liberties assessed that the bill was an 'appropriate means of both protecting human rights and maintaining parliamentary sovereignty'. The Queensland Council for Civil Liberties went so far as to say that it was 'even more favourable to parliamentary sovereignty' than any other similar legislation from around the world.

There was a relatively consistent theme among submitters that a human rights act that stated a list of human rights should require an element of enforcement. That is to say that there is no point rattling off a list of human rights if there is no punitive measure for someone who breached or infringed those rights. Having come from a law enforcement background, I can understand the concerns raised, but I am more than happy with the proposed remedy for suspected breaches of human rights, this dialogue model. The intent of this legislation is not to be punitive. The main objects of the legislation are to protect and promote human rights, to help build a culture in the Queensland public sector that respects and promotes human rights and to help promote a dialogue about the nature, meaning and scope of human rights. I draw the analogy of being a mother of little children when they misbehave or break the rules. It is tempting to rush to corporal punishment, but the best practice is to engage with them, highlight their poor decisions and work with them to help make better choices. Frustrating as it can be, I know that this is a better approach and I am happy to see that this is the preferred approach of this bill.


The creation of the Human Rights Commission from the current Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland will give life to the dialogue model. It will create and administer the processes by which those who appear to have had their human rights breached or infringed can take remedy to decisions or behaviours. The Queensland Human Rights Commission will be the face and the first line of defence for people in protecting human rights in Queensland.

The introduction of a human rights bill in Queensland is a massive step forward. I understand that, with a bill of such scope, not everyone is going to be happy. Although some believe that the bill goes too far and is too prescriptive, others feel that it does not go far enough. I am confident that, with the provisions for independent reviews of the legislation in 2023 and beyond, should any of these concerns materialise they will be addressed.

I am particularly proud of the inclusion of the provisions for the right to education and the right to health services. No other Australian or international jurisdiction encompasses both of those rights. Personally, I would like to acknowledge the submissions by the Queensland Teachers' Union; the Student Engagement, Learning and Behaviour Research Group at QUT; Queensland Advocacy Incorporated; Michelle O'Flynn; the Youth Advocacy Centre; Children and Young People with Disability Australia; Australian Lawyers for Human Rights; All Means All; the Queensland Collective for Inclusive Education; and Professor Tamara Walsh, Bridget Burton, Dr Rhonda Faragher and Dr Glenys Mann. I can assure them as I stand here that I will work for a better Queensland.

I refer to my first speech in this House. I stated then that I would use my time in this House to fight for the thousands of Queensland children with disabilities, that I would fight for every opportunity to be made available to them. I say to them to please rest assured that, to me, it is not enough that they will just have an education appropriate to their needs but that they will have the best education available

regardless of their abilities. That is my commitment to them and that is my commitment to thousands of Queensland parents. We are on the cusp of something great here in Queensland. It is an exciting time and I am proud to be part of it. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr McDONALD** (Lockyer—LNP) (5.03 pm): On 10 December 1948 at a meeting of the United Nations General Assembly the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was proclaimed. This self-proclaimed common standard of achievement detailed a list of fundamental rights that the assembly felt should be universally protected in order to maintain freedom, justice and peace in the world. That was in light of the recently finished war. Ever since, legislators across the globe have controversially sought to enshrine those rights into their individual legislation. Queensland is not immune to this trend. That is why I stand to make a contribution to the debate on the Human Rights Bill 2018.

The bill seeks to define and protect 23 human rights through the implementation of four major reforms, which are each set to alter the way in which this House and other entities make decisions. Like my colleagues on this side of the House, I will be opposing the bill and express my concerns about its shortcomings and the potential for it to fail to accomplish the single-most important objective it sets out to achieve: the protection of the rights laid out in it.

I would like to thank my colleagues on the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee for their work on this bill. I make special mention of the member for Southern Downs, whom I joined in making a statement of reservation to the report on this bill. I also thank the shadow Attorney-General for the contributions that he has made to the debate. I thank the committee secretariat for their tireless efforts in handling the 288 submissions and the evidence received by the committee from 34 individual witnesses. I, too, would like to thank those submitters and witnesses for their contributions.

There are a number of serious flaws in this legislation. Although its intentions may be noble, questions must be asked about its necessity. Protecting the rights of the vulnerable and offering them every legal protection possible is a key priority that will always be supported by the LNP. Queensland already has an incredibly robust and well-developed system to protect the vulnerable from poor bureaucratic decision-making with a well-resourced and professional Public Service and the capacity for judicial review of administrative decisions. There is little that this bill can do to further protect the rights of Queenslanders without undermining the protections that are currently in place.

Each of the 23 rights detailed in the bill already have a level of protection through our current state and Commonwealth legislation. Despite not having a singular bill of rights, other Commonwealth legislation and common law protections, including anti-discrimination legislation and the legal protections of freedom of association, expression, belief, religion and others all ensure that Australians' rights are protected. Australians deserve and expect those protections, as we do in Queensland.

Let me make it clear that we in the LNP support human rights, but coming into this honoured place is not about doing popular things because they sound good. If we were to ask most people on the street here in Brisbane, or in my home town, if their human rights were protected in Queensland we would get the answer, 'Yes.' For years, those people have been relying on the representative human rights model where every bill passes through the lens of fundamental legal principles, including the Legislative Standards Act 1992.


I cannot help thinking that this bill is merely an act of self-promotion—to serve as a way government members can pat themselves on the back and tell Queenslanders, 'Look, we did something good for you.' This follows the passing during the last sitting of the government's \$1.3 billion waste tax grab. Unfortunately for those opposite, this bill, which is designed to be a tool for self-promotion, may very well backfire and prove to be their undoing.

As was expressed by a number of submitters to the committee on this bill, including the Queensland Law Society, this bill will completely change the function and operation of our courts, public agencies and this House. The Law Society expressed concern that the functions set out in clause 53 of the bill may not fit within the boundaries of a judicial officer's role. That is why the LNP will be moving amendments to remove clauses 49 to 57 of the bill, which will relieve judicial officers of this pressure as well as maintain the institutional integrity of the Supreme Court and limit the court's ability to interfere in the workings of the legislature. These amendments are critical. As it stands, without any amendment, this bill will prove to be the undoing of one of the most fundamental rights enjoyed by Queenslanders: the right to democratic process. Although, like we have seen happen again this sittings, the government business program seems to achieve that by cutting the debate time for important legislation, even this Human Rights Bill.

As Governor Paul de Jersey AC, when he was the chief justice, in an essay titled 'A Reflection on a Bill of Rights' as part of an article published by the Menzies Research Centre in 2009 stated, the debate here is not so much about whether human rights should be protected but about the best means of achieving that protection. The Governor outlined a number of concerns regarding the implementation of a human rights bill, including parliamentary sovereignty. This is the core of our democracy. The parliament represents the people. If the people are unhappy with decisions they can bring the government down at the next election. The former chief justice also outlined his principal concern, which is the prospect of investing non-elected judges with a broad, socially based jurisdiction which they would be ill equipped, whether by training or experience, to discharge, and the discharge of which would inevitably erode public confidence in the judiciary's fulfilment of its mission—the delivery of justice according to law. He also talked about other practical issues, including cost and the extent of litigation. Regarding cost, the \$2.4 million establishment fee for the next four years of the Human Rights Commission will pale into insignificance compared to the cost and extent of other litigation. This is a lawyer's picnic.

Every bill that comes into this House costs the community, but it is not just this cost that the community will be wearing; it will be the additional cost through the extent of the unforeseen litigation that will occur as we have seen in the ACT and Victoria. I will outline a couple of examples. The ACT Supreme Court delivered a decision declaring that there was a provision in the ACT Bail Act which was inconsistent with the right to liberty under section 18 of the Human Rights Act. Section 9C of the Bail Act requires those accused of murder, certain drug offences and ancillary offences to show exceptional circumstances before having a normal assessment of bail undertaking. This was found to be inconsistent with the requirement of section 18 of the Human Rights Act that a person awaiting trial not be detained in custody as a general rule. This is not in keeping with community standards.

In Victoria police who performed a random stop and a licence check which was held to be lawful and within their powers would exceed their common law powers and breach a person's human rights by subjecting them to coercive questioning for their name and address. That is just ridiculous. As police were conducting a random licence check the defendant allegedly began using offensive language and committing street offences and assaulting an officer. The defendant was arrested for using offensive language and failing to state his name and address. On hearing of the charges, counsel for Mr Kaba objected to the evidence of police under section 138 of the Evidence Act and later under the Human Rights Act. The police have a hard enough job as it is, let alone being worried about human rights legislation. As I have said, this is a lawyer's picnic and will cost the community enormously. I do not support the bill.

 **Ms McMILLAN** (Mansfield—ALP) (5.13 pm): Rather than rise to speak about fear and condemnation as those opposite do on a regular basis, I rise today to make my contribution to the Human Rights Bill 2018 which is before the House. This bill stemmed from several recommendations from the 2016 Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee inquiry regarding the appropriateness and desirability of a human rights act for Queensland.

As a current member of this committee, I commend the committee's insight for realising the lack of a contextual framework to protect and enforce the rights of all Queenslanders. Currently and rightly, Australia has ratified several United Nations treaties such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the ICCPR, which covers an extensive range of human rights. The legal consequence of Australia's ratification is Australia's acceptance of the legal obligations under international law. However, treaties such as the ICCPR only become an enforceable source of individual rights and obligations when they are directly incorporated in domestic legislation.

I make particular comment on clause 27 of the Human Rights Bill which recognises an individual's right to practise their own culture. I have had experience of that on a number of occasions throughout many years. Specifically, clause 27 states that all persons with particular cultural, religious, racial and linguistic backgrounds have a right to enjoy their culture, declare and practice their religion and use their language in community with other persons of that background. As a principal I spent my career removing barriers and advocating for those children who are often condemned for using their first language either in a learning context or amongst their peers. Similarly, those students who choose to wear cultural or religious jewellery are often condemned. Today is a very significant day for many of our young people, particularly our children, who do not share our political and cultural beliefs. As a person who has been very fortunate to be educated and has a developing and sophisticated view of the world in which I live, rather than condemning them I have been in awe of our students who speak a second or perhaps even a third language.


In such a multicultural society as Australia and in my community of Mansfield it is important for us to recognise and celebrate each others' differences. As we often say on this side of the House, our difference is our strength. As a community leader I frequently attend citizenship ceremonies in my electorate, embracing the warmth, the culture and the wonderful learnings that are presented to me as a member of my multicultural community. It is very heartwarming to see how many of my constituents are proud of the introduction of the Human Rights Bill by the Palaszczuk government. In the words of the Attorney-General and member for Redcliffe, this clause, among many others included in this bill, is the next step towards the protection of the human rights of Queenslanders. This is due to the term 'compatible with human rights' being used throughout the bill as a unifying concept that is central to many provisions. As a result, this bill provides that an act, decision or statutory provision is compatible with human rights if the act, decision or provision does not limit a human right such as the right mentioned in clause 27 or limits it as reasonably justifiable as per the standard in clause 13.

An important aspect of this bill is the rebranding of the Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland to the Human Rights Commission. The rebranding and rebranding of the Anti-Discrimination Commission sets the scene and builds the culture across Queensland that the Palaszczuk government wants and is prepared to lead into the coming years. The QHRC will have important functions under the bill, including community education and awareness raising about human rights and working with public entities to assist them to ensure their services, policies, programs, procedures and practices are compatible with human rights.

Right across Queensland on a daily basis there are decisions made by our government and its employees that impact the rights of our young people and those in our communities who are most vulnerable. Many members of this House would not have experienced poverty. I have had the opportunity to lead a community that has many challenges. Until one lives within a community that is experiencing poverty, one cannot really understand the impact that the introduction of a human rights bill will have in Queensland.

I acknowledge the work of the previous committee and thank the current secretariat and Chair Peter Russo, the member for Toohey, for the great work they have done in preparing this report. I also acknowledge the vast number of community members from Mansfield who have spoken to me personally about the need for a human rights bill in Queensland. In particular, I pay tribute to the many members of the Mansfield local Labor branch who have been so passionate and had such honourable convictions towards this very important bill.

The historic introduction of the Human Rights Bill in Queensland will ensure that a strong culture of understanding, equality and tolerance is apparent across and within all that we do in government. It is a fair and compassionate bill. I am proud to stand with this progressive Palaszczuk government, which proposes contextual and legislative reforms that demand a change to the cultural context of the public sector, by aiming to place people first in all that we do. The people of Queensland have different needs, interests, dreams, attributes, abilities and capabilities. This bill is for the people of Queensland, our people.

 **Mr ANDREW** (Mirani—PHON) (5.20 pm): I thank all committee members and the people who gave submissions to the inquiry into the Human Rights Bill. As my grandfather would probably say, not even the good Lord has told us what our rights are, although he has told us what not to do morally through the Ten Commandments.

I rise to speak on the Human Rights Bill 2018. I consider this bill to be a waste of the Queensland parliament's time and resources. It would be a tough ask to find any Australian who would disagree with the fundamentals of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948. Australia was in effect a foundation member. Way back then our Commonwealth legislation and social standards were advanced as a model for post-World War II recovery and essentially have been adopted, or at least considered, as a baseline for any number of international conventions since. Australia has a comprehensive suite of Commonwealth laws, backed up by a robust judicial system, with centuries of established common law. Why do we now need Queensland legislation promising to cover that very same ground? Section 109 of the Australian Constitution clearly states—

When a law of a State is inconsistent with a law of the Commonwealth, the latter shall prevail, and the former shall, to the extent of the inconsistency, be invalid.

Therefore, this is a Clayton's bill leading to a pointless act sitting on the statutes that future governments could attempt to apply in a great show of political theatrics. However, in doing so, they could further erode the respectability of this place and all who are elected to fill its seats.


What is being achieved by this Human Rights Bill is nothing but a false sense of security, presenting a mirage of great promise sitting on the horizon that, if actually relied upon, would quickly vanish into nothing. Let us keep in mind that a state based human rights act might well be pointless legislative duplication. How we arrive at passing the bill may well set a dangerous precedent for bills introduced by any future Queensland government.

I ask members to please remember that this is a unicameral parliament. In effect, the legislative power afforded to the government of this time is barely more respectable than that of a warlord dictatorship. For instance, the most basic concept of human rights is often obliterated by literally guillotining anyone with opposing views and advancing to an arbitrary majority vote of one.

I have a suggestion: if the minister were fair dinkum, the Premier and the cabinet should refer the intent of the bill to the federal government, to ensure that amendments required are consistent and fully contained at the Commonwealth level.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Pugh): Member for Mirani, I caution you not to use unparliamentary language. 'Warlord dictatorship' would be considered unparliamentary language. I ask you to please withdraw it.

Mr ANDREW: I withdraw and I thank you for your wisdom in this matter. If the present state government has no traction in the other place, I offer an introduction to the One Nation leader in the federal Senate, Senator Hanson. We will help get any changes through the federal parliament. However, I do not believe the present government would consider such a measure. Why does Labor seek to denigrate anything that they did not think of themselves, and they do not think of much themselves? I am not going to support the bill's passage, knowing that it has no chance of achieving anything.

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algera—ALP) (Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for the Arts) (5.24 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Human Rights Bill 2018. I am the daughter of a Quandamooka man who, until the year before I was born, was not even counted as a human being in this country. I am the granddaughter of a Quandamooka man and a Kanjuu woman who were never counted as human beings; they were counted as animals in this country. My grandfather, a Quandamooka man, never had the right to vote in his whole life. He died before he was able to vote. Right here and now, two generations later, his granddaughter is a member of this parliament.

The member for Mirani mentioned the 1948 period—the year that my father was born—as a heralding time for human rights across the world. Let me be very clear: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in this country did not benefit from any of those conventions. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people—my father, my grandmother, my grandfather and the thousands of generations before them—did not benefit from any of that. In fact, the laws that continued since that time were seen through a prism that saw Aboriginal people—first nations people—as less than human. That is why a bill of this nature is so incredibly important, so that from this point on every piece of legislation considers the human rights of all human beings in this country and in this state. It will not matter if you are somebody from the South Seas. It will not matter if you are a first nations person or a person who has just arrived as a refugee. It will not matter if your family has been here for four, five or six generations. You will be treated equally through the lens of a human rights bill. That is why this bill is so incredibly important.

Through this bill, we will never see the kind of legislation that we have seen in the past that affected my grandparents, my father and people in my generation. We have seen the legacy of past legislation that has not had a human rights lens. We have seen it through reports such as *Bringing them home*, when whole generations of Aboriginal people were stolen from their families. We see the outcomes of that kind of legislation when we look at the number of Aboriginal people who are incarcerated and particularly when we see the increasing number of Aboriginal women who are incarcerated. We are seeing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people overrepresented in all of the things that we do not want to see them overrepresented in. That is because we have had legislation that has not fully understood the human rights of all.

This bill will ensure that respect for human rights is embedded in the culture of the Queensland public sector. It will deliver on our election commitment and it will set a standard of achievement to which government and citizens should all aspire. All of the 23 human rights protected through this bill are important in advancing the rights of Queenslanders.

I make special mention of the fact that the bill explicitly recognises cultural rights and, in particular, the distinct right of first nations peoples to exercise our culture. We must remember that it was not that long ago—only a few generations ago—when Aboriginal people were told that they were not legally allowed to practise their own culture in this country. This legislation, the Human Rights Bill, will ensure that that can never happen again to Aboriginal people or to any other peoples in this state.

This bill will mean that future legislation will be passed through a lens of human rights, which has never been done before. It will also lay a foundation for the bigger conversation that needs to happen between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australia. In Queensland already we have been saying that we need to talk long term about the truth telling of what has happened in this state. We need to be able to use that truth telling to enter into a contract between our governments, our country and first nations peoples. That is why I have very clearly articulated that I am very much in support of the treaties going forward. The fundamental aspects of the Human Rights Bill give us the right to be able to have a conversation about truth telling and a treaties process for this state.

I acknowledge the Attorney-General for all of her hard work. I acknowledge all of the members of the committee who have worked so hard on this. I acknowledge my father, who is deceased, and my grandfather and grandmother who would never have imagined our state having such a focus on their human rights. On behalf of all of those generations and the people who will come after us, I support this bill and commend it to the House.

Debate, on motion of Ms Enoch, adjourned.

LIQUOR (RURAL HOTELS CONCESSION) AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 2 May 2018 (see p. 888).

Second Reading



Mr KATTER (Traeger—KAP) (5.30 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I proudly stand before the House today and say that the Liquor (Rural Hotels Concession) Amendment Bill 2018 all started with the letter that I hold in my hot little hand from Alan Start at the Einasleigh Hotel. He said in the letter that his pub is small and it takes three weeks of trading to pay off his pub licence fee, which is ridiculous. He also said that large hotels that earn a hell of a lot more than him pay the same as him. He said he is struggling to stay afloat and his accountant tells him to shut. He does not want to, but the writing is on the wall. He said he would be just another dole bludger, to quote the song *From Little Things Big Things Grow*.

Alan wrote that letter to me in 2013 and five years later here we are addressing this issue. Good on him for bringing that up. I hope that in this House tonight we can come together to help people like him. Alan is not at the Einasleigh Hotel anymore. He has handed that hotel over to someone else.

Here we are debating the Liquor (Rural Hotels Concession) Amendment Bill. I believe historically the licence fee was based on the litres sold. That meant there was some relativity between the size of the pub and how much the licensee was charged. That was changed. I am told that as soon as a bill relates to turnover, the number of people who attend a venue or its size, that becomes the taxation domain of the federal parliament.

An easy formula had to be proposed that would fit within the constraints of the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation. I am the first to admit that this is not perfect legislation, but it is as good as we are going to get to try to get something through the parliament, particularly from a non-government position. We picked the ABS statistical division of very remote and the nominal discount from \$3,700 to \$370. That reflects the type of businesses these small pubs are.

This is not a game changer. I do not pretend it is going to solve the problems of the world for small pubs, but it will really help. I think it is a good message from all sides of this parliament that we can work collaboratively to help the battlers out there. We have people from a lot of towns driving to larger centres to go to big bottle shops like Dan Murphy's that have discount liquor. They will drive four hours to pick up liquor instead of getting it at the local pub. Sometimes that is killing the pubs. There are a number of factors involved.

What I have said throughout the debate on pub licensing fees for small and remote pubs is that these pubs serve a completely different function to pubs like the Breakfast Creek Hotel, the Hamilton Hotel or the Story Bridge Hotel in Brisbane, which are big commercial operations and entities. There is critical mass in the market and if one fails there are usually a lot of competitors in the market.


In small towns the pub is often the only business. If people are going into town and they need some cash or need to make a phone call because their phone is out of service, there is often only one business in the town and that is the pub. They end up performing a lot of commercial functions. They are often the only community hub. If people want to catch up and socialise—they may not even drink alcohol—they will meet at the pub.

They are also important for tourism. We all talk about this year being the Year of Outback Tourism. If a lot of these pubs, just like Alan Start's Einasleigh Hotel, are struggling to survive or are not there we will not have outback tourism. Do not waste time. We have to do everything possible to keep these pubs alive. This goes some way to relieving some of the cost pressures they face like insurance and electricity. This is one way we can help.

I will keep my contribution brief because it is very important we get through this debate tonight. I believe there are time constraints in order for this to rollout by 1 July when the next bill cycle comes around. We have truncated debates in this parliament so it is very important to get this through.

I acknowledge the support of the government. I am very appreciative of that. I will give credit where credit is due. They acknowledged this problem, particularly in times of flood and drought. I acknowledge the support of the opposition. The member for Gregory has been a very strong supporter of this proposal, as have my colleagues in KAP and on the crossbench.

This is a good news story. It is about doing something specific for remote areas. Small pubs are feeling a lot of pain. I am very pleased to be the person bringing this bill to the House on behalf of KAP. I hope the House will support this bill and help the struggling pubs everywhere.

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (5.36 pm): I rise to speak to the Liquor (Rural Hotels Concession) Amendment Bill 2018 introduced by the member for Traeger. The Palaszczuk government acknowledges the challenges of living in very remote Queensland and the role that certain licensed premises play in maintaining the social fabric of the community. In this the Year of Outback Tourism, we also acknowledge the contribution of these businesses and communities to tourism in this state.

The government supports the intent of the bill to introduce a licence fee concession to licensees in very remote Queensland who provide vital services and social support to their communities. To further assist these communities, I will be seeking to move amendments to the bill during consideration in detail to extend the concessional fee framework to also include community clubs with 2,000 members or fewer located in very remote Queensland.

I note during the committee's consideration of the bill, the member for Traeger stated that he would not object to the inclusion of small community clubs in the concessional fee framework. I welcome that. While not recommended by the committee, it is considered appropriate that these small community clubs be included as part of the concessional fee provisions. Under the amendments that I am proposing to move, these small Queensland community clubs located in the area classified by the Australian Bureau of Statistics as 'very remote Australia' would pay the same amount as a commercial hotel in the same area. For the 2018-19 licence period, this would have equated to \$376.

Without these small clubs, very remote towns would struggle to provide the sporting clubs and facilities that these towns thrive on—no bowls in Winton, no golf in Boulia, no tennis in Bollon. Every dollar counts for these communities, and these amendments will serve to support them and acknowledge their fundamental role as social hubs in their towns along with the many hotels.

Currently, 42 small Queensland community clubs are within the boundary of the 'very remote Australia' classification. Combined with the 112 commercial hotel licences that will be eligible for the concession, the annual projected revenue loss to government is approximately \$392,100 based on the current fees.

I will briefly speak to the opposition's proposed amendments that have been circulated to include all licences in a drought declared area. For a party that talks about reduction in red tape, I am surprised by this amendment. It is quite absurd to have a framework to have the annual payment of liquor licensing fees tied to something that fluctuates like drought declared areas. When taking into account pro rata assessment of fees, the task facing the regulator and licensees becomes very bureaucratic. When there are natural disasters such as floods and drought, there are already mechanisms through the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation to support those licensees in those difficult times. This is about a permanent structure being put in place.

We want to support our drought declared and flood-affected communities. I acknowledge all of those hotels and clubs in those very remote areas that have been affected but also those in the broader drought affected areas in Queensland. It has been recognised that the best method of assistance is to

provide immediate relief to those most affected by the drought—being the farmers. Through assistance to them, other businesses affected by drought will also benefit. Part of the challenge of conducting business in very remote Australia is the ability to obtain supplies. Part of the challenge is a lack of choice in terms of services and businesses due to small populations in vast areas. Part of the challenge is being the only business providing social opportunity in a town. This bill and our amendments go directly to this and the bill put forward by the member for Traeger.

In the amendments that have been put forward by those opposite, what we are being asked to now consider is that we include pubs that are only 120 kilometres away from CUB's brewery at Yatala and pubs in areas like Toowoomba with a population of over 115,000—the sixth largest city in Queensland with plenty of social outlets for the populous. They would be covered by the LNP amendments. I will say that 58.1 per cent of Queensland is a drought-declared area. That shows how many licensed venues would be included if this amendment were supported. Places like Toowoomba do not share the same challenges as very remote Queensland which is the purpose of the bill.

The opposition would have you believe that circumstances of a small pub—such as Chillagoe hotel, supporting a population of 251, or Muttaborra Golf Club, supporting a population of 88—are comparable to venues such as the Spotted Cow Hotel in Toowoomba or the Grand View Hotel in Bowen. The original bill recognises the vital services these businesses provide to the local community that go well beyond what is normally associated with these types of venues due to their isolated geographical location from service centres. Cities like Toowoomba, Bowen, Dalby, Gatton, Kingaroy and Warwick are service centres.

I will also be seeking to move amendments on behalf of the government to ensure that the concessional fee framework can be more effectively integrated into the existing regulatory framework. This involves clarifying that the concessional fee will only apply to the base licence fee for the affected licensees and not the risk criteria and fees relating to extended trading hours or poor compliance history.

It is important to note that the concessional fee does not apply to the fee for detached bottle shops. I believe this amendment aligns with the intent of the bill as outlined in the explanatory material. The opposition's amendments are not limited to the base fee. This means that licensees who pay a higher fee because they have been in constant breach of liquor laws would have a significant 90 per cent discount on that fee, even though it is risk related.


Mr NICHOLLS: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I have been listening very carefully to the Attorney. The amendments have not yet been moved for debate. The standing orders of the House require that the second reading speech contain only matters raised in the committee report or amendments recommended by the committee. Amendments are subject to proper debate when consideration in detail occurs. I ask you to rule on the Attorney-General's comments.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Whiting): Member for Redcliffe, the debate is on the general principles of the bill and should not go to the foreshadowed amendments. Having said that though, I invite you to continue with that in mind.

Mrs D'ATH: I am happy to speak to those amendments in consideration in detail. It is important that we ensure that detached bottle shops are not included in this as well. Detached bottle shops are not there providing a particular community service or giving back to the community or being used in any way other than as a liquor store. They have a higher fee attached to them and they are detached from the hotel or pub or club. We believe it is important to clarify that in the bill.

The other issue we seek to clarify is when this will apply. The licensing system applies from 1 July each year. We believe this should align from 1 July. If the Australian Bureau of Statistics comes out with new boundaries as to very remote areas and they change during a financial year, then they will still retain that lower fee for that full financial year until 1 July each year when they are assessed. Depending on the passing of this bill, we would hope that this could come into effect on 1 July 2019 to provide that support to those venues as soon as possible.

On behalf of the government, I support the bill. I do believe it is important to have the amendments to clarify that it should apply to the base and not the full fee. It should extend to clubs, as was flagged before the committee, because small clubs as well as hotels and pubs do important work in supporting the community in very remote areas. We should make it clear, when this assessment is done and when the fees will be paid, to align with the current licensing system to make the administration of it as simple as possible. I ask that members support the bill and ask them in consideration in detail to support our amendments as well.

 **Mr KNUTH** (Hill—KAP) (5.45 pm): I acknowledge and support the Liquor (Rural Hotels Concession) Amendment Bill introduced by the member for Traeger. I acknowledge his work. I appreciate and thank the government for their support of this bill and also the opposition. The explanatory notes probably explain almost everything. They state—

Remote communities contain a relatively smaller pool of potential patrons and income for venues in these areas can be highly impacted by external factors and seasonality. Therefore, profitability is extremely low even with the highest level of commercial prudence.

This Bill recognises the need to reduce unnecessary non-operational costs for venues in small remote communities to support their viability and the service they offer to the community.

The explanatory notes state—


The *Liquor (Rural Hotels Concession) Amendment Bill 2018* acknowledges the need for a less prescriptive approach to licencing fees. Currently all liquor licence holders pay the same fee regardless of their location, size, services, revenue or profitability.

As I said, it is good that the government is supporting this bill. We have seen in rural and regional Queensland the closure of railway stations, courthouses and pubs, which are the social fabric of those communities. Pubs are a place where people enjoy social interaction. They are a meeting place. People can play games there. They can have functions. When those pubs are gone then that is it. That is the end of the community.

When I was first elected, I had the opportunity to represent some areas that are now covered in the electorates of the member for Gregory and the member for Traeger. There was nothing much in those communities other than the pub. You would send them a flier to let them know that you were meeting people in those towns and the pub was the only place where you would meet. I will mention a few places: Forsyth, Muttaborra, Jericho, Aramac and Torrens Creek hotels. They are just a few examples. The interesting thing is that some of them are on as low as \$16,000 gross a year, yet they are still paying around \$3,700 in pub licence fees compared to some pubs that are on \$30 million gross a year and are paying exactly the same in fees.

The member for Traeger mentioned Alan Start. The township of Einasleigh was part of my electorate. There is only a pub in the township. That is it—nothing else. To that community the pub is everything. That was another place that I used to visit. I acknowledge and thank Alan Start. He used to say to us that he does not do this for money; he just wants to keep his community alive and keep that social interaction. He loves his job. At the same time he cannot keep going like that year in year out because when it comes to income he cannot get away. I met him on the Tablelands. He says that he does not even have money to travel. His life is the pub and that is it. It is great to see such a wonderful patriot continuing to support pubs. This is like all the small rural pubs in Queensland. Yes, we admire what the big pubs and hotels do, but we also have to look after the small pubs. They are the social fabric of their communities. I would like to table what Alan asked me to bring to the attention of the House because it is so important. He has made a difference. He is going to improve the quality of life of small pubs and communities across Queensland.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 4 July 2013, from Einasleigh Hotel (Mr Alan Start) to Mr Katter regarding licence fee summary [\[251\]](#).

 **Mr RUSSO** (Toohey—ALP) (5.49 pm): I rise in the House today to support the passing of the Liquor (Rural Hotels Concession) Amendment Bill 2018 and recommend the private member's bill be passed. On behalf of the committee I would like to take this opportunity to thank the previous legal affairs and community safety committee for its work in relation to this bill. The recent floods and bushfires in regional Queensland and North Queensland make this a timely piece of legislation. Whilst I acknowledge that this passing of the legislation will not undo the devastation of the floods and fires, I hope it is some recognition that remote Queensland has not been forgotten by the Palaszczuk Labor government. As the Premier stated in the *Sunday Mail* on 10 February, the legislation has been expanded to cover clubs. She said—

It's especially important, in this Year of Outback Tourism, that we support the viability of these hotels and clubs, as they are a critical part of the social fabric in our remote towns ...

The Premier went on to say in the same article that hotels 'often provide a diverse range of services such as accommodation, meals, petrol, general stores and postal services. They face very real financial pressures from small and declining local populations, difficult access during wet months, the small amounts of liquor some sell and the cost of freight.'

The changes to the fees is also supported by publican Frank Wust, who is the owner of Walkabout Creek Hotel in McKinlay. In the same *Sunday Mail* article he said the change was needed as the high fees and exorbitant costs that remote pubs also copped were behind the closure of many remote hotels. The editorial in the *Sunday Mail* of 10 February said that we should raise a glass and


toast the good news decision to slash licensing fees for Queensland's remote pubs and clubs. As most commentators have said, the editorial also commented that these watering holes in the outback are often a veritable oasis for travellers, as well as a vital gathering place; they are the heart of their own communities. They add so much to the fabric of small towns and are frequently crucial to their economies. Without them, some small towns would simply die.

The editorial went on to say that nothing defines the image of country Queensland more than the charm of old pubs, and the timber and tin of drinking spots such as the Walkabout Creek Hotel in McKinlay between Winton and Cloncurry, made famous in the *Crocodile Dundee* movie. These pubs are magnets for grey nomads and other visitors, and it is entirely fitting that the Palaszczuk government has moved to extend a helping hand to this part of quintessential Queensland in what has been declared the Year of Outback Tourism.

While speaking in support of this private member's bill I would also like to use this opportunity to thank those individuals and organisations that contributed to the report on the 2017 bill. Many individuals and organisations provided written submissions. They also gave evidence at the hearing and participated in the roundtable discussions. Many of the individuals took time away from their businesses and travelled long distances to participate. I know I can speak on behalf of the previous committee and the current committee when I say that we appreciate the sacrifices that were made to assist the committee in its consideration of the issues.

A report in the *Sunday Mail* on 10 February summed up the bill as providing a lifeline to rural hotels and clubs. The inclusion of clubs means that concessions will be extended to RSLs, bowls clubs, golf clubs, social and recreational clubs that fall within the definition of a rural and remote licensee. As we know, this is a private member's bill introduced by Katter's Australian Party to reduce fees for remote pubs. As the *Courier-Mail* stated, remote pubs and clubs will no longer be paying the same as their city slicker counterparts. The reduction in fees for the 112 pubs and 42 clubs will be a reduction from about \$3,757 a year to \$376. The reduction in fees after the passage of this legislation this evening will cost the government about \$395,000 in lost fees.

As set out in our report, the committee recommended that the Liquor (Rural Hotels Concession) Amendment Bill 2018 be passed. The bill is substantially the same as the Liquor (Rural Hotels Concession) Amendment Bill 2017, which was introduced into the Legislative Assembly on 23 March 2017 and was referred to the legal affairs and community safety committee of the previous parliament. The bill proposes to amend the Liquor Act 1992 to introduce a concessional commercial hotel licence fee for hotels located in 'very remote Australia'. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (5.54 pm): I rise to speak to this bill with pleasure. I will not oppose it. It is a very good bill and it has been a long time coming. These pubs and clubs are not grand affairs like the bars in the Valley or the gourmet pubs like the Breakfast Creek Hotel or the Regatta. They have nowhere near the marketing pull of larger hotels in cities and towns. In many regional towns these pubs have a core of local customers and the benefit of a limited pool of visitors. Their profitability is actually limited by their locality, yet the central role they play in their communities makes them far more essential to those communities than city hotels could ever be.


In some cases the country pub is the town's main centre. When I say that many people think of the iconic Birdsville Hotel in the seat of Gregory. Of course, it is not the only one in that position. We have many pubs in the seat of Gregory. Often they are the only place where meetings can be held for community groups and the only option for dining out. They are a place of joy and grief—celebrations, weddings, anniversaries, christenings and wakes. Some pubs even act as the petrol retailer or post office. In small towns in my electorate of Gregory there are publicans like Ken and Anne Tanner of Isisford who run the Great Western and Chris and Gerry Gimblett of the Yaraka pub. There are many other pubs like the Union Hotel in Blackall, which we visited. We saw the struggle that people like Chris Turner were facing when it came to being able to pay the bills.

However, the same remote locations mean they all have very high fixed costs. For publicans in regional and remote Queensland, Ergon is still the only supplier of electricity. I am talking about the input costs of these pubs because they are significant. They have to keep the coolroom on; they have to keep the beers cold if they want people to come and have a beer at their pub. Of course, the Labor government likes to talk about the subsidy it pays to ensure regional Queenslanders can access electricity. However, I can tell honourable members that the money they have paid in subsidies is a droplet compared to the buckets of dollars the government keeps in profits. I can tell them that some of the electricity bills of these pubs that I have seen are absolutely sky high. I do not know how they pay

for them when they have three or four people that come into these pubs on a daily basis—or they might get five people. The input costs that they have to pay would scare anyone. We need to do everything we possibly can to ensure that these pubs continue to operate.

These pubs play a significant role in the community. They are an important part of not only the local community but also people outside the community. They are meeting places. If we look at the three or four most important pieces of infrastructure in a small town like Yaraka, Isisford or Ilfracombe, it usually starts with the pub; it is the place where people meet. I would say the second would be the post office; it is important. The third, and another important one, is of course the newsagent. Those three businesses play a key role in making sure that those small towns have connectivity and the community continues to have some sort of opportunity to not only have a beer and a feed but also a venue for a wedding, a christening, a wake. They ensure that people continue to come into town.

Finally—and I do not want to take up too much time—I fully support this bill. My only concern is that it has taken too long to come to this House. This bill was before this House in the previous term and now it is before it again this term. If we look at the amount these pubs are paying—\$3½ thousand—I am estimating that in the time since this first came to parliament they probably would have paid another \$10,000 in licensing fees when it could have been only \$1,000. There is \$9,000 that could have been injected back into the local economy. We need to get this bill over the line so we can provide relief to small pubs in regional Queensland.

 **Mrs McMAHON** (Macalister—ALP) (5.58 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Liquor (Rural Hotels Concession) Amendment Bill 2018. I would like to thank my fellow members of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee and the secretariat for their work and assistance in preparing the report. I would specifically like to acknowledge the work of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee under the 55th Parliament, chaired by the member for Stretton, because it is on the back of the work that they did travelling around Queensland and holding public hearings with relevant stakeholders that we have tabled our report.

We stand here as 93 elected members of the Queensland parliament with a view to providing the best level of representation for our constituents, but do I not think there would be anyone here in the House who does not also consider it their role to make decisions in the best interests of all Queenslanders where possible. Regardless of whether we are from the south-east corner of this state or the far north, we must consider and balance the interests of Queenslanders regardless of where they live, work and play. It is with that approach in mind that I can stand here as a representative of my constituents in Logan City and speak to a bill that directly impacts those Queenslanders who live 1,000 kilometres away with a lifestyle vastly different to those in my local town of Beenleigh.

We are a large state and one of the most decentralised in Australia, but for all that a large percentage of Queensland is considered very remote. Having had some experience growing up and living in Western Queensland, I feel that to some degree I can speak about the importance of the local hotel in Queensland communities—even if I may have gone in there when I was not old enough. You cannot go past a more iconic image of Queensland than the outback pub. There is an entire trope devoted to what this image evokes. Other than the golden sands of our beaches and the colour of our Great Barrier Reef, there are few images as easily identifiable as Queensland as that of the outback pub. It is more than just an image which we can glorify to export our local brand on the world stage in film, stage and cultural events.

The role our hotels play in very remote Australia is a valuable one. In very remote Australia, where there are few viable commercial ventures due to limited populations and almost no government services, the role of the local is multifaceted, and to refer to it merely as a licensed venue downplays the many functions it has. Sure, it is a place to have a drink, but it is also where town meetings and local fundraisers are held, where tourists venture for the authentic experience and valuable local information is exchanged. It plays a central role in any community, and in areas where it is the only commercial venture it has its own challenges.

A liquor licensing structure whereby a hotel which supports a local population of 75 or even less is required to pay the same licence fee as an urban hotel that has 75 walks-in per hour is not a fair one, and that is what is at the heart of this bill. It is about acknowledging that in this state—a state as large and diverse as Queensland—a one-size-fits-all approach is not always a fair one. In a submission from the owners of the Prairie Hotel, Mr and Mrs Duddy stated that the licence fees may sometimes represent an entire month's takings.

This bill proposes a concessional licence fee for hotels which operate in very remote parts of Queensland, and it would see a 90 per cent reduction in their base annual license fee. Based on the 2018-19 licence fee, this would see the amount drop from over \$3,500 to just \$376 for a year. This


would impact 112 commercial hotels that operate in very remote Queensland. I note that a minor amendment presented in the previous parliament represents a tightening of the definition of the term 'very remote Australia'. Where the previous bill fixed the definition, the 2018 amendment bill allows for the area classed as very remote Australia to vary as and when the Australian Bureau of Statistics publishes variations. The most recent variation to the definition was in 2016. Further amendments to be moved will go further. I thank those who made submissions which outline the impact that small community clubs also have; that is, golf clubs, RSLs, bowls clubs and social and rec. clubs in these areas. The Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation annual licence fee concessions will also apply to them.

I acknowledge that while most submissions, particularly from the roundtable meetings held at locations across Queensland, were supportive of the bill, submissions from the Queensland Council for Action on Alcohol did not support the bill. It was their submission that nothing should be done that reduces the cost of alcohol and that decisions should be made which have the best impact on health outcomes. As someone who has spent a significant period of time directly responding to alcohol fuelled violence, it does sound like a simple conclusion to draw; however, I feel it simplifies the roles that hotels play in these remote communities. Firstly, the concession will apply only to the base licence fee. Licensees that have risk criterion fees around the service of alcohol or that have a poor compliance history will still pay the applicable amount for those additional fees.

As I said earlier, the role of the hotel is more than just a drinking venue. I would like to share a lesson that was learned the hard way on the valuable role that social gathering destinations play in society. On deployment to a remote part of a foreign country, a well-meaning troop of soldiers observed that villagers walked from miles around, sometimes up to two hours away, to gather at one water pump and wait their turn to collect water every day. The troops decided to take it on as an engineering and humanitarian aid project and set about creating water pumps throughout the region. People no longer had to walk distances and wait their turn at that one water pump, but while this project delivered convenience it also resulted in reduced social cohesion and increasing health and violence issues. Where once villagers gathered and shared information, sought advice, swapped work opportunities and checked up on each other—both physically and mentally—social isolation now hid violence and deteriorating mental health. Young women could no longer turn to their elders for advice or help.


Our hotels in very remote Queensland are valuable community hubs and gathering destinations. Yes, they serve alcohol, but they are more than just that. The loss of these hotels in these communities—which operate on thin margins at best—would have a far greater effect on the social cohesion and health of its community members than the mere loss of an establishment for drinking alcohol. They are an integral part of the mental health and wellbeing of very remote communities, and measures like those proposed in this bill will provide a modicum of relief for those business owners who continue to operate for the good of their community rather than for some imagined large commercial gain.

Overall, as it stands there will be 112 commercial hotels and 42 small community clubs that will benefit from this legislation. It has been assessed that the reduction in licence fees will cost the government just over \$395,000 annually. I am quite confident that, while the owners of hotels and managers of clubs in my electorate will not benefit from this legislation, they will see the importance and the fairness of it. A Queensland where we support decisions that are fair for others, not just for ourselves, is exactly the direction in which we want this state to be heading. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr DAMETTO** (Hinchinbrook—KAP) (6.06 pm): I rise to support the Liquor (Rural Hotels Concession) Amendment Bill 2018. This bill started off when a handwritten letter penned in pure desperation was sent to the member for Traeger. A publican was backed into a financial corner. Even the man's accountant could not find a reprieve from the mounting costs of running his rural pub. Rural pubs pay the same licence fee as pubs in Brisbane, and that seemed to him—and us—to be very unfair. Rural pubs have been the backbone of Queensland for over a century. They are places where not only social lubricant is sold but people can withdraw to a central location for a chinwag about business, job prospects and life. These traditional meeting points have resulted in the Queensland lifestyle that we have today, and sayings like 'it's five o'clock somewhere' have become part of the Queensland vernacular.

It is more important than ever to protect our national identity, and a big part of this is protecting the commercial viability of some of our more historic pubs. Just because some of these pubs are historical, it does not mean they are in the main streets of Brisbane or Townsville. These pubs are sometimes positioned in some of the most remote areas of Queensland. One of the great pubs that will

benefit from this concession will be the Walkabout Creek Hotel in McKinlay—that's right, the home of the *Crocodile Dundee* film. Imagine if these pubs were lost due to the pressure of mounting electricity and freight costs! This bill will make sure those costs are relieved for publicans. These are rural pubs, places where people have their weddings, funerals and birthdays, places where you catch up and talk with your mates. People might ask, 'What's a pub?' Before social media, way before we had Facebook and things like that, the pub is where you went to hang out with people, share ideas and entertain yourself. It is good to see that the committee has supported this bill. We applaud the state government and the opposition for supporting this bill. Hopefully, all 93 elected members will support this bill. We thank everyone for their help here, and I commend this bill to the House.

 **Ms McMILLAN** (Mansfield—ALP) (6.09 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Liquor (Rural Hotels Concession) Amendment Bill currently before the House. The purpose of this bill is to introduce a concessional licence fee for commercial hotel licences in very remote Queensland. Underscoring this intention is the recognition that these hotels are the heart and soul of these communities and that they provide vital services and social support to their communities.

The bill proposes a 90 per cent reduction on all of a licensee's annual licence fees, including base fees and risk criterion fees for extended trading hours and poor compliance history. This will be integrated into the existing regulatory framework. I commend the intent of this private member's bill; however, I take issue with the application of the reduction to risk criterion fees and detached bottle shops. Regardless of location, it is sensible that risk criterion fees remain as they are, to be paid in full, to ensure not only that licensees effectively address all risks in their venues but also that demands on the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation are effectively compensated for through an effective regulatory framework. As such, I fully support the amendments being proposed by the Attorney-General that the concession will only apply to the base fee for relevant licences in very remote areas.

In considering this bill the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee gave consideration to many submissions—I thank those people who made submissions—relating to the application of the concession to licence fees for community clubs in very remote Queensland. The committee report outlined that the inclusion was not initially recommended due to the relatively minor change in fees when compared to hotel concession fees. I would suggest that, regardless of it being a minor amount, any assistance in these communities would be welcome.

We have seen very recently the extreme challenges that Queenslanders face as a consequence of drought and now flood. That applies generally to Queensland, significantly to remote Queensland but especially to very remote Queensland. Last week it was difficult for me to comprehend the scale of the flood event in North-West Queensland as I considered images of barges travelling down the main street of Normanton. I table those images.

Tabled paper: Photograph, undated, depicting barge [\[252\]](#).


Tabled paper: Photograph, undated, depicting State Emergency Service boat [\[253\]](#).

To my knowledge, these barges were the only way a community could get supplies. Even more difficult to comprehend were the reports of the scale of the loss suffered by farmers. The Carpentaria shire mayor suggested recently that up to 75 per cent of the region's cattle had died. Farmers in the region require support, and it is the community that will respond. It is in considering the extreme plight suffered not only now, during this time of natural disaster, but at all times that I wholeheartedly support the amendments being proposed by the Attorney-General to include in this concessional scheme the 42 small community clubs—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Whiting): Member for Mansfield, I remind you, as in the point of order raised earlier, to please make sure you do not anticipate the introduction of amendments.

Ms McMILLAN: Thank you for your guidance, Mr Deputy Speaker—in very remote Queensland of less than 2,000 members. The amendments recognise the fundamental role that small community clubs play in those communities—a very similar role that is just as vital as that of the hotels. What is more, these clubs largely facilitate the survival of sports and sporting facilities in those very remote towns.

Whether it is the Purple Pub in Normanton or the Normanton Bowls Club, pubs and clubs alike will be at the forefront of the recovery for these communities. Every dollar counts, and we as legislators should do all we can to ensure these clubs and pubs can continue to deliver for their towns—our Queensland towns. I commend this bill and the proposed amendments to the House.


 **Mr JANETZKI** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (6.13 pm): I rise to speak in support of the bill introduced by the member for Traeger. I did not have an opportunity this afternoon to speak to the Premier's motion, but I want to convey my dismay and sadness and extend my best wishes to the

people in particular of North-West Queensland, in the electorate of Traeger, but across Townsville as well. To see the devastation across North-West Queensland and to see hundreds of thousands of cattle lost, perished by exposure or drowning, is heartbreaking. I extend my very best wishes to affected families as they seek to get back on their feet.

That is precisely why a bill of this nature is an important one. As we know, pubs in small country towns—and in larger country towns and in regional centres—are often the heartbeat of the area. We know that these pubs face all kinds of pressures in the 21st century. We have changing demographics, with populations leaving these areas—young people seeking work and study opportunities in bigger urban centres or in Brisbane. These pubs are facing a series of challenges, with people leaving the communities. As we have seen all too tragically, they now face flooding. More than anything else, these local communities face drought. The amendment I will be seeking to introduce later this evening relates to that question of drought. I will not speak any further on that, Mr Deputy Speaker, given your earlier guidance.

I probably was not aware of these issues and this inequality before I had the opportunity to travel with the irrepressible member for Gregory. The member for Gregory invited me to his electorate. It had been a long time since I had been that far west, since I was a young bloke. You cannot understand the vastness of our state except from the air. We live in an extraordinarily large state and these communities are made up of the most resilient and, in my opinion, remarkable Queenslanders we have.

After I flew into Blackall the member for Gregory and I visited the Union Hotel, where we saw firsthand the challenges that small pubs face. From there we went on to Isisford. I have to say that Isisford has the most amusing welcome to town that I have ever seen. They were quite upset about council amalgamations in 2008 and they posted a sign which reads 'The people of the Isisford shire will never forgive the Labor Party'. I digress. I met the hotel owner there. They rely on small business in that town and on grey nomads. That pub needs a concessional fee as is proposed in this bill. Finally, I spent the night at Yaraka, in far west Queensland. It has a town population of 12 and a catchment of 120 people across the district. It was there that I realised that they pay the same licence fee for a catchment of 120 people as the Breakfast Creek Hotel pays in Brisbane, with a catchment north of two million people. This is why I am keen to support this bill tonight. I look forward to moving my amendment shortly.

 **Mrs STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (6.17 pm): The Liquor (Rural Hotels Concession) Amendment Bill 2018 is substantially the same as the Liquor (Rural Hotels Concession) Amendment Bill 2017. I commend the honourable member for Traeger for introducing this bill and its subject matter. Together with some of my LNP colleagues who represent their outback and rural electorates so passionately, the honourable member understands the exceptional circumstances and hardships endured by the good folk who live in remote and semi-remote towns and regions. As a member of that committee I saw firsthand the trials and tribulations that people who choose the bush as their home and place of business experience on a daily basis.

A number of witnesses travelled hundreds of kilometres to attend our hearings and be given the opportunity to tell us about their difficulties. I thank them sincerely for that. They told us how they juggled their budgets to keep trading through extra lean times, how hard it is to repair and maintain buildings and machinery, and the unfairness of having to pay the same fees for hotel licences as their city counterparts who have access to much larger populations and therefore patronage.

The policy objective of the bill is to change the existing liquor licensing framework to reflect the unique circumstances of licensed venues in very remote communities. In order to achieve this, a concession fee for commercial hotels in very remote communities would be created. This concession fee will be assessed at 10 per cent of the licence fee, which currently costs a minimum of \$3,757 a year, which results in a reduced fee of \$375.70. The contents of this bill had already been well examined, with widespread consultation, as the current chair noted on more than one occasion and when he thanked the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee for its efforts in report No. 19 of the 56th Parliament.

Extensive examination of the 2017 bill included holding a public briefing, the receipt of 19 submissions, roundtable discussions in Normanton, Thursday Island, Cunnamulla, Charleville, Blackall, Longreach and Hughenden and a public hearing in Brisbane. This bill recognises the distinctive character and unique challenges faced by hotels in remote regions. On our committee travels we meet some exceptional people with a love and devotion for the bush and an amazing stamina and a patience that is often regaled only in books and movies. Due to the remoteness, these watering holes are far more than a place to quench a thirst. They play unlimited roles in their communities and the extent of

those roles is remarkable. From post office to pet minding, from meeting place for community groups or just to have a chat, for domestic violence victims, wakes after funerals, vehicle storage and parcel drop-off, the list is endless. Many serve as the local tourism information bureau, with travellers stopping for information and directions and others as the hub for sports groups, sponsorships and more. Ms Janelle Jackson from the Eulo Queen Hotel said—

... I should have a tourist information job because nine times out of 10 people just walk in and say, 'Where's this? Where's that? How do we get there? Who's this? Who's that? Where's that at?' You do not sell them a drink; you spend half your time giving them directions.

Some establishments rely on motel or hotel style accommodation to stay afloat. Others have hot meals on offer. What is patently clear is the fact that they all provide much more than a cold drink and supply many meaningful services that they do not get paid for. Councillor Kate Downie from the Flinders Shire Council and the Great Western Hotel and Royal Hotel in Hughenden said—

We are the fabric of these communities. We are the meeting place. We are the major private employers. We are the community sponsors. We are the people the town turns to for support. It has very little to do with alcohol. Without us, these towns simply do not exist. This bill has much more than monetary value. It is an acknowledgement that, once again, one rule does not fit all and it is a display of understanding from our government that rural and remote Queensland is being heard and understood.

Since the tabling of the report on this bill, Queenslanders in north and north-west regions have experienced unimaginable hardships through severe opposing weather events of fires, droughts and floods. Our hearts go out to all affected and many messages of support and gratitude were expressed in this House earlier today. It is not only pubs and community clubs in very remote areas that will suffer further. Some 58 per cent of Queensland is drought declared. It is for these reasons that the LNP will move amendments to the bill to extend the application of it and give some relief to these hubs that act as the social fabric of their respective communities. The KAP proposal—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Whiting): Order! Member for Currumbin, I have pointed out to a couple of people the need to stick to the debate on the general principles of the bill. Please do not anticipate any future amendments.

Mrs STUCKEY: I certainly am not, Mr Deputy Speaker. The KAP proposal was estimated to capture—


Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hang on. Thank you. You may recommence. I have given you some direction and some assistance and I appreciate you taking that on board.

Mrs STUCKEY: The KAP proposal was estimated to capture 110 hotels and pubs whereas the LNP's amendments, which will be introduced and I hope to get the support of the House later—

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Currumbin. You may take a seat.

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (6.22 pm): I rise to join others in supporting the Liquor (Rural Hotels Concession) Amendment Bill and want to acknowledge the member for Traeger's efforts in bringing this before this parliament and before a previous parliament in a slightly different form. I want to thank the Attorney-General for the way in which she has considered this matter and the way in which this is a great example of how the parliament can come together and see a proposal that does not necessarily come from the government. Unlike the situation, say, in a previous parliament where we had a minority government, a majority government can listen to sensible proposals and look at how they can be improved to deliver outcomes and benefits for the people of Queensland, and I think this is a great example of that occurring.

To that point, like so many other people in this parliament, I have had the chance to visit a great many wonderful hotels that will be impacted upon by this legislation. I do not want to turn this into a long list of the pubs that I have had a drink in—

An honourable member: A pub crawl.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I think we heard a couple of speeches that were effectively pub crawls, but let us come to the point of how vitally important these institutions are to communities right across Queensland and in particular communities in these areas that are classified by the Australian Bureau of Statistics as very remote. We have heard from a number of contributors in tonight's debate how vital and important these hotels—and indeed I make brief reference to something that I will not make mention

of again—and clubs in these communities are in that they provide assistance to the communities. They are the sponsors, they are the meeting places, they are the collecting places for a great many activities in these communities and without these institutions there would be a lessening of community in these remote locations.


I want to give an example in the context of my role as Minister for Racing of how important racing is in country communities. There would be very few—in fact, there are none; I have checked this—clubs that are operated in such a way that they might be caught by something that I also will not make reference to, but they certainly get a lot of sponsorship from the local hotels in those communities. That is a very important part of the lifeblood of these communities in terms of not just the ongoing and day-to-day operations of hotels and other community organisations and community clubs that serve liquor in these communities but also the way in which they help those occasional community events like the race days in these communities. I will mention one pub that I particularly want to highlight. I think it was about 5 July last year when I was on the road in my role as minister for local government. I was travelling on the Mitchell Highway between Cunnamulla and Charleville—

Ms Leahy: The Gladstone.

Mr HINCHLIFFE:—and I called in at the Gladstone Hotel at Wyandra. I note the interjection from the local member. It was great to have a chance to visit the Gladstone and enjoy its hospitality. On that occasion I was driving so it was a double sars for me, but I am sure there will be other opportunities to get back to Wyandra and make sure that we support that vital institution in that local community. I look forward to doing that in the future and I look forward to the way in which this measure can help community hotels in remote communities right across the state.

I make mention of that particularly because I do think it would be great if we could have a method of applying liquor licences that accounted for the volumes or the profit margins of these hotels, but unfortunately it seems that the Australian Constitution, the High Court tells us, does not allow us to do that. That is why we have to come up with more creative methods to resolve those problems and I commend, as I said at the outset, the member for Traeger and the Attorney-General for helping guide this outcome to bring about a good result.

In my final remarks to the House in support of the bill as it is proposed to be amended by the Attorney-General I want to say that other amendments that might be before the House are a real concern. If we had this situation in place back in 2002, it would mean that all of the hotels in Brisbane, which was drought declared, would be covered by those amendments. I encourage people to support the bill as supported by the Attorney-General.

 **Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (6.28 pm): I rise to speak on the Liquor (Rural Hotels Concession) Amendment Bill and I, too, thank the member for Traeger for introducing this bill. It is a good bill but, as the member for Southern Downs, I have to say that it does not go far enough. There has been some variation in the degree of anticipation of amendments allowed today. I will not test you on that, Mr Deputy Speaker Whiting. Suffice to say that I will be very keen to have something to say about the amendment which has been circulated in the name of the shadow Attorney-General, the member for Toowoomba South.


I want to acknowledge some of the small pubs in my electorate that are doing it extremely tough. They do not have to be in Birdsville. A geographic determination is not good enough in the case of some of these pubs. I refer to the Royal Hotel in Leyburn and the Maryvale Crown Hotel run by Mick and Annie, and I have had plenty of beers there. I refer also to the Killarney Hotel, the Blue Cow run by Denise near Allora and the Ballandean Tavern, newly taken over by Naomi and Stephen. They were doing a great job during the fires.

There is also the Oasis Hotel in Yelarbon. Chris and Mick have hosted me there on many occasions. I have stayed the night. There is the Karara tavern, which is run by Peter. There is also the Coronation Hotel at Toobeah, which is run by Michael and Stacy. Michael Offerdahl has had a lot of input into this matter. There is the Talwood Hotel, run by Eric, and the Victory Hotel, run by the Volz family, up at Cecil Plains. I emphasise that these hotels are small businesses that are run by mums and dads who work every hour God sends—and a few besides—to employ people, to make a living for themselves and to provide a vital service in their communities. There is nothing in Toobeah apart from a couple of houses and the pub. That pub is the centre of that district—from the cotton farms in the south to the broadacre grain and cattle producers in the north.

If there is no pub, there is no community. Those pubs face extraordinarily high energy costs. Because of the terrible drought that we are suffering in the Southern Downs electorate, the number of people who are coming in to buy their food, to stay the night and have a drink is down. The same could

be said for pretty much all of these pubs. They are doing it tough. They not should be paying the same licensing costs as the Victory Hotel in Brisbane pays, or even the Birdsville pub which, although in a very remote and dry spot, is probably a tourist attraction and is doing all right on its own. The operators of country pubs are struggling. I would like to see the provisions of the bill expanded to enable smaller pubs that are doing it tough because of the drought to be able to access a concessional rate.

I have been told that some of these pubs are paying \$6,000 per annum in fees. A lot of beer and a lot of Mars bars have to be sold and a lot of people have to stay the night to recoup that money. I think that is exorbitant. It is unfair on pubs that are doing it tough, but provide a community service. Many operators of these pubs see their role not just as small business people but also as providing a vital community service in their community. They are proud of that. We need to get on board with them to make sure that they are not disadvantaged and that we protect rural communities from the loss of pubs. If the pub in Toobeah, or Maryvale, or Talwood, or Cecil Plains is lost, the community is one step closer to leaving. I support the bill. I will certainly have something to say about the amendments. I commend the bill to the House.


 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (6.32 pm): I also support the bill, because it relates to an issue of fairness. These institutions are not just a place where people go to have a drink; in many cases they were the first structures built in a town during the gold rush. They act as a post office, a general store, a community meeting hall, and sometimes as a bush counsellor—a place where people go when they are doing it tough. Heaven knows that, at the moment, people in these rural areas are doing it tough. That is why we should all support this bill. That is why we should also support the amendments proposed by the member for Toowoomba South.

The amount of \$3,757 might not seem a big deal for an operator of a hotel in Brisbane, but it is for a hotel operator in Boulia. When I was growing up I watched my father go to a community club where, after working all day on his farm, he would work pouring beers. I saw the value of this club. It was a place where grown men could go and be listened to, a place where a woman could go with her children and play a game of bocce. It was a great community pub and was the heart of my home town of Ingham. When I travel across Queensland I always find time to go to a regional hotel, whether it is the Nindigully Hotel—the oldest in the state—the White Horse Tavern in Charters Towers, the first tavern in Queensland, or Lees Hotel in my home town of Ingham, which is the original pub with no beer.

I want to conclude by recalling a conversation I had with my best friend on the weekend. I was telling the story of my trips throughout Queensland when I was the local government minister. I ran late for a meeting with only one council, the Quilpie council, because I got stuck at the Toompine Hotel. I met a great Australian by the name of Jonesy. During the course of my time at the Toompine Hotel—where I, in fact, left my jacket behind—Jonesy told me everything about the local area. There are Jonesies right across Queensland.

The member for Traeger made an excellent point about outback hotels. Without outback hotels and pubs, the face for tourism is not there. Without outback hotels, rural towns cannot put on a brave tourism face. Those outback hotels are the places where tourists will congregate at night-time, where they will go for their entertainment, where they will go to meet the true locals.


I support this bill wholeheartedly. I would love to see the provisions of this bill expanded to help communities in their hour of need. I look forward to all 93 members of this House supporting the heart and soul of rural communities.

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (6.35 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Liquor (Rural Hotels Concession) Amendment Bill. Hotels and clubs are often the post office, the weather recorder, the contact point for the RFDS and, as the previous member said, the tourist information one-stop shop. They are the hub of so many communities in my electorate. I am pleased to hear that members from both sides of the House are visiting pubs in my electorate. I say to them to please keep it up as they need your support.


The intent of this legislation is to amend the Liquor Act to financially assist the commercial hotel owners in rural Queensland. The concessional fee will mean that the pubs and clubs in very remote areas will be required to pay only 10 per cent of the licence fee, which currently costs a minimum of \$3,757 per year. As the bill stands, it draws a line from just to the east of Mitchell and Dirranbandi. Those pubs to the west will receive the concession. Under this bill, those to the east of that line will not receive the concession. The pubs in Mitchell will get the concession, but just 147 kilometres down the Warrego Highway the pub at Yuleba will not receive the concession. Both communities are small. The hotels there both have a limited number of patrons. The areas are seriously drought affected and have

rising operational costs, such as the cost of electricity. The only difference in circumstances affecting the pubs in Mitchell or Yuleba, Cunnamulla or Surat is a line on the map from the ABS categorisation. The ABS index is not fixed. For example, in 2011, the index included an area around Injune in my electorate but the updated index in 2016 did not include Injune. The bill in its original form is estimated to capture 110 hotels and pubs. If the bill is to have a positive impact on all pubs and clubs that are doing it tough owing to the drought, its scope must be broadened.

The hotels and community clubs, which also include sporting clubs and RSLs, are vital in so many communities. The operators of these venues are great family run small businesses. They bring communities together. When communities are experiencing tough times caused by the drought and the population drift, these pubs and clubs are pivotal. The LNP and I support not only the drought affected farmers and graziers but also the drought affected small businesses and rural communities across Queensland that have no end date for this relentless drought. I urge members to support the bill and also the amendments that the LNP has foreshadowed to this legislation.

 **Mr ANDREW** (Mirani—PHON) (6.38 pm): I cannot say enough about country pubs. All the time my father owned an ice-cream truck we would leave our ice-cream mix at our local country pub to keep it cold. They were the central point to find out where to find a fish, to find a job, to have your mail delivered to, to have a great time, to meet the local people and to catch up with people you had not seen for years. When I was in the mining industry we used to stay at the pubs. It was great for the town. They have the best meals you would have ever. We do not give them enough consideration. We should be doing everything we can to preserve the pubs in the country. They are the hub of everything we do. Going forward we need to support them.

I have lost Bouldercombe. There was 90 years of having a coldie at the Bouldie. We cannot have one anymore. We have lost Bajool pub. Pubs are going down the chute everywhere. It is sad to see. The communities are feeling it. They do not have anywhere to go. There are no meeting places. There are no more counter meals. A person cannot have a cold one before they go home. It is a sad situation. We need to make sure that we widen the bandwidth on this and look after other pubs. We need to make sure that these pubs stay alive so we have somewhere to go in the future.

 **Mr McDONALD** (Lockyer—LNP) (6.40 pm): As others have said, hotels are the lifeblood of many towns in country Queensland. I congratulate the owners of many of those pubs and clubs for simply being there. They are true survivors, adapting their businesses to cater for a changing demographic. Like many here today I have enjoyed the hospitality of many hotels across Queensland. I can only imagine the grief that many of those hotel owners have been faced with through flood, drought and fire over the last six or seven months. I know I speak for the people of Lockyer when I wish them and their communities all the very best in their recovery.


I would like to thank my colleagues on the current and former Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee for their work on this bill. I also thank the committee secretariat for their tireless efforts in handling the submissions and the evidence. The previous committee travelled extensively during its inquiry into the bill, holding roundtable discussions and informal consultation with hoteliers and publicans and other stakeholders in Normanton, Thursday Island, Cunnamulla, Charleville, Blackall, Longreach and Hughenden, as well as holding a public briefing and a public hearing in Brisbane.

I recognise the time and effort that the stakeholders made to be part of the previous committee's inquiry—in particular, those stakeholders who travelled very long distances. It was because of the efforts made by those stakeholders and the extent and thoroughness of the consultation and the similarities between this bill and the 2017 bill, as well as the fact that the previous committee tabled its report less than a year ago, that the current committee resolved to base its inquiry into the bill on the evidence gathered by that previous committee and not seek further evidence by way of submissions or hearings.


The committee recognises the integral place that a hotel can hold in a very remote community. The hotel is a place where locals and tourists enjoy a meal, a drink or meet with friends. In many communities the hotel performs other functions as well, such as being the venue for council meetings and other gatherings and providing information and a cultural experience for Australian and international tourists.


There will be approximately a \$3,000 a year saving for very remote hotels from this concessional fee. I look forward to further discussion and amendments put forward by our shadow Attorney-General. Hotels in Queensland in areas other than those that are very remote would benefit if there was a decrease in liquor licensing fees, such as hotels in Lockyer and Somerset where we are in drought.

The committee seriously considered Clubs Queensland's submission that 32 clubs would be financially uncompetitive if the bill was introduced. I look forward to speaking to the shadow Attorney-General's amendments. I note that the matter has taken some time to be resolved, with a number of alternative options for inclusion into the concession that ranged from volumetric measures, the number of staff and other demographic controls, a number of which were ruled unconstitutional. However, I believe that the amendments proposed by the shadow Attorney-General will best assist businesses in communities that are financially struggling in drought declared areas. Until those amendments come before the House, I commend the bill.

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (6.44 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the debate on this bill. I support the bill and the amendments as proposed by my colleague, the member for Toowoomba South. When talking about many of these rural pubs and isolated hotels across Queensland and the role that they play in their respective communities, I pick up what the member for Broadwater was saying: they are much, much more than a waterhole for these tiny towns and rural communities—in many cases they are the heart of the community. They are the meeting place in those communities. I have been to hotels where they hold wakes following a funeral. If one looks at the recent disaster that has unfolded, in particular in North-West Queensland, all the vision on the TV was of those affected graziers meeting at the local pub. That became the place where they all mustered. That became the place for visiting ministers and shadow ministers et cetera to go to when they went to those communities to meet and talk with those graziers and affected residents. For that reason it becomes vitally important that we do everything we can to keep these facilities operational and functioning in these little tiny towns.

When I was living in Cape York in a little place called Laura, during the wet season the pub would have been lucky to sell a beer a day because no-one could get in and out of the place. The pub would go for three or four months where their trade was significantly reduced. Reduction in the fees makes perfect sense when you look at some of these tiny little places like Laura which for three months of the year has no income. I support the bill and I support more broadly the role that these hotels and these tiny rural pubs play in our more remote areas of Queensland. Everything that we can do to support these businesses, particularly in times of drought when times are tough, when the money is not flowing through the community, we should be doing.

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (6.46 pm): I support country pubs. I support country clubs. I support the bill. Well done!

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (6.46 pm), in reply: I do not know that I can follow the member for Kawana's contribution. I strive to achieve brevity like that. I thank members for their contributions. I do not think I need to go over the virtues of what we are trying to achieve. Everyone gets the idea. Everyone has their own experiences and relationships with remote and rural pubs and understands full well what rural pubs do. Clearly they mean a lot to many in the House. The member for Currumbin mentioned Kate Downie in Hughenden. She is an outstanding example of someone who gives so much and goes beyond the commercial operation of their enterprise. I mentioned Alan Start had moved out of Einasleigh. I have heard he is back. Welcome back, Alan. I hope he is listening tonight.

I understand the intent of the improvements put forward in some of the contributions. We started from a raw position. It has been five years in the making because we were looking at ways to deliver it into the parliament. I take the criticism, if that is what it is, that there are places that will miss out. There are pubs in my electorate that will miss out. It may be a clumsy vehicle to try to make this policy work. I think we all appreciate that. There is good intent in the amendments. We agree with what we have seen in the government amendments and what the opposition amendments are trying to achieve.

I thank members for their contributions. It is a good night when we can come together on something that will mean a lot to a group of people who feel they are isolated and do not get a lot of help. It is a big move for the Attorney-General and the government to do this. I appreciate the gravity of it. Likewise, I thank the opposition for its support. The members for Gregory and Toowoomba South have been very supportive. I make special mention of Kirstin Payne, who no longer works with us, who worked very hard on this, and Conor O'Brien, who worked on it after that. I thank all those involved. I think we are doing a good thing here.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clause 1, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—



Mrs D'ATH (6.50 pm): I move the following amendment—

1 After clause 1

Page 4, after line 4—

insert—

1A Commencement

This Act commences on 1 July 2019.

I table the explanatory notes to my amendments.

Tabled paper: Liquor (Rural Hotels Concession) Amendment Bill 2018, explanatory notes to Hon. Yvette D'Ath's amendments [254].

This amendment provides that the concessional fee scheme is to commence on 1 July 2019, which will align it with the start of the next licensing period and enable sufficient time for implementation.

Mr KATTER: This tidies up what we were seeking to achieve. We are fully supportive of the amendment.

Government amendment (Mrs D'Ath) agreed to.

Clause 2, as read, agreed to.

Clause 3—



Mrs D'ATH (6.51 pm): I move the following amendment—

2 Clause 3 (Insertion of new s 202A)

Page 4, lines 10 to 30—

omit, insert—

202A Concessional base licence fee for particular licences in very remote Australia

- (1) This section applies in relation to the licence fee payable for a licence for a licence period if—
 - (a) the licence is—
 - (i) a commercial hotel licence; or
 - (ii) a community club licence for a club with 2,000 members or less; and
 - (b) the main premises under the licence are in very remote Australia.
- (2) A fee regulation must provide for the base licence fee to be assessed at the rate of 10% of the base licence fee that would apply if—
 - (a) the main premises under the licence were not in very remote Australia; and
 - (b) for a licence mentioned in subsection (1)(a)(ii)—the licence were a commercial hotel licence.

This amendment omits section 202A(1) to 202A(4) and inserts a revised heading and new subsections. This is about ensuring the extension of the concessional fee scheme to provide reduced base licensing fees for commercial hotels and small community clubs with 2,000 members or less in the area classified by the Australian Bureau of Statistics as 'very remote Australia'.

This amendment clarifies that commercial hotel licensees in very remote Australia areas will pay 10 per cent of the base licence fee, not the risk fee—it is just the base licence fee—and that it does not include detached bottle shop fees otherwise payable by commercial hotels located elsewhere in the state. This means that the base fee for a commercial hotel without a detached bottle shop would be reduced from \$3,757 to \$375.70. In relation to small community clubs, it would be reduced from \$694.60 to \$375.70, based on last year's figures. As I say, it will extend to the 42 community clubs in very remote Queensland.

Mr JANETZKI: I move the following amendment to the Attorney-General's amendment—

1 Amendment to Attorney-General's amendment no. 2

Clause 3 (Insertion of new s 202A)—

Proposed section 202A, from 'base' in section heading to 'were a commercial hotel licence.'—

omit, insert—

fee for particular licences

- (1) This section applies in relation to a licence that is—
 - (a) a commercial hotel licence or community club licence; and
 - (b) for premises in a drought-declared area or very remote Australia.

- (2) A regulation made under section 202(1) must provide for the licence fee payable for the licence for a licence period to be assessed at the rate of 10% of the licence fee that would be payable if the premises were—
- (a) not in a drought-declared area; and
 - (b) not in very remote Australia.

I table the explanatory notes to my amendments.

Tabled paper: Liquor (Rural Hotels Concession) Amendment Bill 2018, explanatory notes to Mr David Janetzki's amendments [255].

As I was driving away from the Yaraka Hotel, heading back to South-East Queensland and my home in Toowoomba, I could not help but think about the drought in the western communities and wonder whether the 'very remote Australia' definition contained in the member for Traeger's bill is not broad enough to capture some of the communities that are struggling with drought. I was concerned about trying to broaden the concessional fee that is proposed by the member for Traeger and supported by the government. I wondered whether it was possible to extend that concessional fee opportunity to drought-stricken communities.

Notwithstanding the events of the past few weeks, drought-stricken communities are spread far and wide across the length and breadth of Queensland: Boulia, Diamantina, Longreach, Quilpie, Bulloo, Paroo, Murweh, Blackall, Barcaldine, Maranoa, Balonne, Goondiwindi, Toowoomba, Southern Downs, Somerset, South Burnett, Lockyer Valley and Cherbourg. Other local government areas are partly drought declared and there are also private properties that are drought declared.

This amendment is all about capturing drought-stricken communities right across Queensland so that they too can enjoy the concessional fees proposed in the member for Traeger's bill. I am also supportive of the proposal that clubs in those drought-stricken communities should enjoy the concessional fees as proposed in our amendments.

Mr LISTER: This is a vital amendment. It is absolutely vital, particularly for my electorate of Southern Downs. I read before a list of pubs such as the Royal Hotel in Leyburn, the Killarney Hotel, the Blue Cow, the Ballandean Tavern, the Coronation hotel at Toobeah and so forth. At the moment, those pubs are locked out of the concession. They are no less deserving of the concession than those located in extremely remote areas. This amendment will enable struggling pubs to get the help that they need and the concessions that they need to continue to provide a vital service to their communities.

Mrs D'ATH: We will be opposing the opposition's amendment. The Palaszczuk government is absolutely supportive of farmers, small and other businesses across drought affected areas of Queensland. This is not the right mechanism to do that. It has not been properly thought out. It has been incorrectly costed. The explanatory notes state that it will cost less than \$1 million, but our very quick calculation is that there will be an almost \$1.6 million hit to the budget by expanding it to those areas.

The amendment will apply the concession to detached bottle shops. What we are seeking to remove, they are putting back in. It will also apply not just to the base fee but also to the risk fee, so we would be rewarding licensees who have had a higher fee attached when they have been in breach of the law. Through this, we would be giving them a 90 per cent discount. It should only apply to the base fee and not the risk fee. It should not apply to detached bottle shops.

I certainly appreciate what the opposition is trying to do. However, if there is one example to explain why the declaration would not work, it is that in December 2002 Brisbane, Redcliffe and Beaudesert were all drought declared areas.

Mr Lister: It is not 2002 now.

Mrs D'ATH: But this definition will mean—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Pugh): Member for Southern Downs, the Attorney-General is not being provocative. The Attorney-General will be heard in silence, as she heard you.

Mrs D'ATH: I am simply pointing out the risks that come with using this definition. The member for Traeger and I have spoken at length about the difficulties in how we define and support those hotels and clubs. We believe we have come up with the best balance of what can be implemented without having unintended consequences, such as for big hotels, pubs and clubs in Brisbane if there was a drought declaration in the future.

Non-government amendment (Mr Janetzki) negatived.

Government amendment (Mrs D'Ath) agreed to.

Mrs D'ATH: I move the following amendment—

3 Clause 3 (Insertion of new s 202A)

Page 5, line 1, '(5)'—

omit, insert—

(3)

This is just a technical correction. I do not intend to speak to it.

Government amendment (Mrs D'Ath) agreed to.

Mrs D'ATH: I move the following amendment—

4 Clause 3 (Insertion of new s 202A)

Page 5, line 2—

omit, insert—

base licence fee, for a licence—

- (a) means the amount included in the licence fee for the licence under a fee regulation because of the licence type; and
- (b) does not include an amount included in the licence fee for the licence under a fee regulation—
 - (i) because 1 or more detached bottle shops are approved for the licence; or
 - (ii) for any other reason.

Examples of other reasons an amount may be included in a licence fee under a fee regulation—

- the licensee holds an extended trading hours approval for the licensed premises
- the licence authorises the licensee to trade after 12a.m.
- an infringement notice for a particular offence under the Act was served on the licensee

fee regulation means a regulation under section 202(1).

main premises, under a licence, means the licensed premises other than—

- (a) for a commercial hotel licence—a detached bottle shop; or
- (b) for a community club licence—premises mentioned in section 77(2).

very remote Australia, in relation to a licence period, means the area that is, on the first day of the licence period—

This amendment inserts new definitions for 'base licence fee', 'fee regulation' and 'main premises' to make clear the clubs and hotels to be covered and the licensing arrangement, and that the Australian Bureau of Statistics will apply from each 1 July each year.

Government amendment (Mrs D'Ath) agreed to.

Clause 3, as amended, agreed to.

Third Reading



Mr KATTER (Traeger—KAP) (7.00 pm): I move—

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

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Long Title



Mr KATTER (Traeger—KAP) (7.00 pm): I move—


That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

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

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Toowoomba South Electorate

 **Mr JANETZKI** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (7.01 pm): I rise tonight to speak about a whole range of wonderful people across Toowoomba who have started off 2019 in fine style. Firstly, I want to acknowledge and congratulate the Toowoomba Citizens of the Year and Regional Citizens of the Year, David and Rhonda Weston who lead U3A. They have led our U3A for a number of years now. They have increased its membership. They have not just increased its membership; they have grown branches right around the Toowoomba region, in places like Crows Nests and Pittsworth. We now have well over 2,000 members. Rhonda and David are admirable Toowoomba people. I am delighted to see that they are our citizens of the year.


I will move on to the leadership instalments at high schools right around Toowoomba. Centenary Heights State High School has some outstanding young leaders in Ingrid, Mitchell, Emily and Andrew. It is wonderful to spend time out at Glenvale State School with principal Dave Saxton and the fine young leaders of that school who stand ready to take on the year as key leaders in their school.

I went to Sports Darling Downs's annual awards night the other night. It is time to acknowledge this wonderful Toowoomba charity which started from the ground up. There are a couple of new life members this year—Neil Brown and Debbie van Achterberg. People like Wayne Beeston and Peter Rookas have built this incredible charity from the ground up. They started with nothing but a pen and a dream to support young sportspeople right across the Darling Downs. I also have to acknowledge longstanding chairman, Mick Smith, who was done an amazing job. He is the father of an Olympian himself, but he has supported a range of other Olympians. I note that Matt Denny, a Commonwealth Games bronze medallist last year, was our Senior Sports Star of the Year award winner.

I want to acknowledge a wonderful woman who has just retired from the Queensland Police Service. Marg van Boven retires after 30 years in the service. She was the first face at the Village Fair Shopping Centre Police Beat. Marg is a really special woman. I will always be thankful for her warmth and kindness. She will be sorely missed by police officers right across the city. I wish her and Lainey well in their retirement.

I want to finish by talking about 2nd Shot. Nat and Tiff Spary have recently overseen the latest batch of graduates. It is one of Toowoomba's finest social enterprises. Nat and Tiff have created opportunities for young people to get work. They are a beacon for community service organisations right across the city.

Mundingburra Electorate, Floods

 **Hon. CJ O'ROURKE** (Mundingburra—ALP) (Minister for Communities and Minister for Disability Services and Seniors) (7.04 pm): To see the impact of the floods on the people in our community has been absolutely heartbreaking. In saying that, it has also been heart warming to see total strangers come together to support those in need. I feel most for the people in my electorate who have been experiencing the impacts of the flood in all aspects of their lives. Not only did some lose their homes and vehicles but also their workplaces and their children's schools went under water.

As Minister Grace touched on today, Oonoomba State School in my electorate was greatly impacted and recovery is underway. I would like to thank the minister for her agency's hard work to get this school back on track.

Ms Grace: It will be gorgeous.

Mrs O'ROURKE: It will be. If members can imagine one metre of gushing water going through that school then they can begin to understand the far-reaching consequences for the students and teachers. Practically every item within the school's operation was affected—books, desks, chairs, electrical equipment, office equipment, paperwork and the tuckshop, just to name a few. I take a moment to congratulate the principal, teachers and staff of Wulguru State School and William Ross State High School for working closely with their colleagues at Oonoomba to make sure the students could get back to school as soon as possible.


Fairfield Central Shopping Centre is another example of where things are just not what they were and will not be for a while. The centre is currently closed and 35 businesses with it. Some businesses are already indicating that they may not reopen due to the flood event and lack of insurance coverage. I spoke to business owner Mikkayla with the Deputy Premier last week. She was devastated when she was informed that her insurance policy did not cover flood damage and is now left with trying to work

out what to do next. We have many people not able to return to work and not knowing when they will be able to do so. We also have many people working together to help our community get back to a sense of normalcy.

The devastation was expansive and driving around the electorate one can see that the local bridges, roads and walkways did not escape damage. Sporting organisations such as hockey, cricket, basketball, AFL, soccer and mountain biking—just to name a few—along with our local community organisations and businesses have been affected deeply. I am working closely with these organisations to identify ways to help so we can ensure they get back up and running as quickly as possible.

I have tried to briefly illustrate the far-reaching nature of this flood event on my community. There is so much to do, but I remain committed to working with the community to help get Mundingburra back on track as soon as possible.

Gamin, Mr P

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (7.07 pm): I rise to express my condolences and pay tribute to former councillor Paul Gamin who for 15 years dedicated himself to serving the community of Burleigh. Paul joined local government and was elected to council as an alderman in 1985. At that time he was 57. He was devoted to Burleigh and Miami. He was elected twice, both times unopposed.


In the mid-1990s Paul even had the opportunity of serving with our colleague the member for Mermaid Beach when Ray was the mayor of the Gold Coast. I am sure Ray has some stories about Paul that he could share, but I suspect he might well say the same as everybody else I have spoken to has said about Paul, 'He was a true gentleman.' Many remember how focused he was on improving his beloved suburbs and how he was always striving for the best for his community.

After his retirement in 2000 Paul continued to live in Burleigh with his wife, Judy—a name many in this place will recognise as the member for South Coast and then Burleigh. Judy was a member in this place for 13 years and Paul was in council for 15 years. I guess they liked politics. More recently they both enjoyed spending time with their four grandchildren—which I assume they enjoyed much more. After politics, Paul was still actively involved in local issues, such as the extension of light rail from Broadbeach to Burleigh Heads. I remember Judy and Paul rang me one afternoon and said, 'What are you doing to stop this monstrosity coming down the esplanade', which is where they lived.

Anyone who knew Paul would agree that he was an exceptional man who was deeply passionate about his community, especially keeping his treasured esplanade clean. He would pick up fallen branches on his daily walk from the poinciana trees he had planted along the famous Burleigh foreshore. He will be remembered fondly for his generosity and kindness to the Burleigh community. I believe his wife, Judy, said it best when she said that Paul was 'the last of his kind'.

Paul passed away in early January aged 90, and a memorial service was held at Calvary Catholic Church in Miami on 21 January. Along with family, friends and Burleigh locals, the service was attended by a number of former and current MPs and councillors from the Gold Coast including both me and the member for Currumbin. On behalf of my family and the people of Burleigh, I offer my deepest condolences to Judy; their children—Elizabeth, Caroline, Peter; their grandchildren—Matthew, Timothy, Madeline and Sophie; and their extended family and friends. Please know that our thoughts are with you tonight. Rest in peace, Paul.

Ferny Grove Transit Oriented Development

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries) (7.10 pm): I would like to report to the House on the status of the Ferny Grove transit oriented development. The development application for the Ferny Grove TOD is currently awaiting final approval from the Brisbane City Council. The TOD has been the subject of many lengthy and careful negotiations involving the local community, Queensland Rail, Treasury, the developer and the Brisbane City Council.

Members would recognise large projects such as this require a considerate touch and a great deal of listening. That is why I am disappointed that the federal member for Dickson, Peter Dutton, has decided to bludgeon our local community with billboards and leaflets about extra car parks in Ferny Grove. He claims he has delivered when in fact he has not even engaged a surveyor to assess the viability of his thought bubble of a plan to build a car park on a flood plain across the main roadway from the existing station.

I am concerned that Mr Dutton wants us all to eat a magic pudding if he thinks this plan will do anything other than to raise people's hopes and deliver a traffic and pedestrian nightmare. I am told by engineers that the money he claims to have delivered for his imaginary parking station probably will not even pay for the foundations.


Increased parking at the Ferny Grove Railway Station has always been a major issue in our community. On taking office in 2015, I was dismayed to discover the previous government had approved construction of the TOD at Ferny Grove without any additional car spaces. I am pleased to report that the Palaszczuk government has funded hundreds of extra car spaces for the TOD in the 2017 budget through a \$9 million allocation to the project.

Mr Hinchliffe: Great decision.

Mr FURNER: I take that interjection. It is a great decision. Not only will this investment provide the parking relief all locals recognise is needed at the station, but it will also provide hundreds of extra jobs—construction jobs during the build and ongoing service and retail jobs—people in my community are seeking.

The money that the Palaszczuk government has invested in this project will deliver the jobs our community desperately needs to prosper and grow. The Palaszczuk Labor government is dealing with this issue in a careful and considered manner after considerable consultation and planning. We, as a government, listen to our community. We, as a government, respond to our community. We, as a government, invest in our community to deliver the infrastructure and jobs in a sustainable fashion. It is only a Labor government—a federal Labor government along with a state Labor government—that will invest in infrastructure, growth, prosperity and jobs in our community.

Child Protection

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (7.12 pm): It was only last week that the mother of Mason Jett Lee was sentenced to nine years in jail after pleading guilty to child cruelty and manslaughter of Mason Jett Lee. I know that I do not need to detail the horrible circumstances around Mason's passing. It is a story that the whole of Queensland has watched unfold in horror since 2016.


No child should suffer the way that Mason suffered, and no person should ever get off lightly for being a part of such suffering. That is why the LNP has introduced the Mason Jett Lee laws, to ensure that child killers will spend at least 15 years behind bars, rather than the current average of less than seven. No child should have to suffer in the first place. When the government fails children, it should be held accountable.

A year ago the Premier refused to release the Child Death Case Review Panel's report on Mason's death. This was reportedly done after the Director of Public Prosecutions advised that releasing the recommendations could prejudice a trial. This secret report remains closed to the public still. The excuses to keep Mason's report secret are running out. The report should be revealed. We know that the failures of this government to protect Queensland's most vulnerable are starting to rise.

The secrecy around the panel's report is just one symptom of a larger crisis in Child Safety under this government. The fact that the last release of Child Safety statistics were done in the twilight days before Christmas last year is truly telling of how this government tries to hide their failures, and the statistics are really damning. According to the latest statistics on Child Safety, notifications of concern that a child needs protection were up to a new high of nearly 25,000. The number of children subject to a notification also skyrocketed to a new high of just over 21,500 in the year up to the September 2018 quarter. The number of children subject to a child concern report rose to just over 62,200, which is up from just over 60,000 in 2017-18. The number of children living away from home has reached a horrifying new peak of over 9,700, which is over 1,100 more than in 2013-14.

Disturbingly, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children make up 53 per cent of the over 1,100 children who have been added to out-of-home care since June 2014. Equally disturbing is that the number of Indigenous children living away from home has jumped by 615 in just four years—a disturbing increase of 17.4 per cent. Not only is the department of child safety being crushed under the weight of Labor's incompetence, putting Queensland children at risk, but the gap on Indigenous disadvantage with Child Safety is also increasing under the Palaszczuk Labor government. It has never been clearer that more needs to be done to keep Queensland kids safe. I am calling on the Palaszczuk Labor government to release the secret report into Mason Jett Lee's tragic death. No more cover-ups or delays. The children of Queensland deserve better. The children of Queensland need better.

Sandgate Electorate, Community Organisations

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (7.15 pm): I am proud to be part of a government that values our not-for-profit community groups as the backbone of our communities. Like many members of the House,

I am always very excited to be able to inform local community organisations when a new funding grant is open for application and to work with them closely to support them through the application process. Of course, it is even more exciting when their applications are successful.

One of those vital programs that provides small grants for community organisations is the Gambling Community Benefit Fund. That is why I am pleased to update the House on eight not-for-profits in my electorate of Sandgate that are benefiting from over \$185,700 in state government funding as part of rounds 97 and 98 of the Gambling Community Benefit Fund. This funding means that these community groups can offer more valuable resources and services for community members, making a direct impact on the lives of some of our most vulnerable and those who just want to enjoy the opportunity for community.


I took great pleasure in catching up with members of All About Living just last week—a not-for-profit group in the heart of Sandgate that provides their clients with high-quality services from in-home care and domestic assistance through to yard care and transportation. It was a great delight to catch up once again with their president Darryl McNamara, who is a great community champion and from a family who have been great contributors to the Sandgate community over generations.

The organisation was successful in receiving \$35,000 under round 97 to purchase a new van to help transport their clients to and from appointments and social events. This \$35,000 grant is a real game-changer for All About Living and no doubt will serve as a great tool to mobilise their organisation as they have been significantly expanding to respond to the needs of our local community.

One of the things that they do over and above those activities that I mentioned earlier is support local jobs. Participants in programs like their Certificate III in Individual Support and Certificate III in Business, as part of the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program—of course another great Palaszczuk government program—will no doubt benefit from the new van in going about gaining their qualifications for work. That is one great example of the many different organisations that have received grants.

I will mention another one very quickly. I had the great pleasure of catching up recently to Penny and Katie from the St Paraskevi Childcare Centre in Taigum to chat about how their round 98 grant of \$22,262.55 will help their organisation provide the right childcare facilities for people in their space, particularly children living with a disability.

Violence

 **Ms BOLTON** (Noosa—Ind) (7.18 pm): How do we end the scourge of violence occurring in our communities and households between neighbours and on the streets including repeat offender dangerous drivers, about which I have spoken before? Currently, in the Sunshine Coast region alone there are over 3,000—yes, 3,000—domestic violence orders in place. Those orders represent at least two residents, often with children. If averaged out at three persons, we are immediately talking about those orders involving at least 9,000 residents. At home in Noosa, over 50 per cent of our police time is spent dealing with violence in our households alone. This is shocking, shameful and preventable. Every single Queenslander needs to take a moment to think about how we are contributing.


Early in March I will be opening and speaking at events in Noosa as part of International Women's Day and Queensland Women's Week where I will be calling out to our men and women to take up the challenge by working together in supporting, educating, collaborating and empowering those within their sphere of influence. We all need to be part of the change so desperately needed to put an end to the physical and emotional abuse, trauma and deaths occurring across Queensland.

How can we make a difference? It is when we commit to make changes within ourselves; if not for ourselves then for others. We can then help our partners, children, parents, grandparents, friends and workmates to do the same. We need women and men working together towards the solution, not separated through labelling or endeavours that create further silos or vilification. We need to relook at incarceration models if our full capacities in prisons are contributing to sentencing that does not meet community expectations.

This cycle cannot be broken without all of us accepting our personal and collective responsibility to each other whether it be how we communicate, what we normalise in our relationships, the types of posts we 'like' on Facebook or by simply remaining silent. The question may be: have we all, including MPs, become enablers? I now ask every single person across Queensland of all ages: will you help put an end to this violence, whether that be by becoming more knowledgeable, by attending any of the events during that week, joining an organisation dedicated to creating cultural or societal change or just by changing one part of your life that will positively impact those around you? If you are involved in domestic disputes, please utilise the many services available or start by just talking to someone.

We cannot do this alone and we cannot continue to expect government, front-liners and our community service organisations to increasingly take responsibility for what is ultimately our behaviours. We must acknowledge and take responsibility for our contributions to this.

West End State School, Expansion

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (7.21 pm): I start by thanking the member for Noosa for her contribution. I thought that was an incredible contribution during the adjournment debate. I want to acknowledge what was quite a thoughtful contribution in this parliament on what is a significant issue in our community.

I rise tonight to talk about the population growth pressures that are currently being experienced in my community. As someone who has lived in the inner south all of my life, it is a phenomena that I am increasingly coming to understand is becoming quite a significant issue for the local population and also for governments and the local council jurisdiction to respond to. I want to particularly focus on the West End State School, which is the local primary state school that my children have attended; my eldest one is now in high school.

Ms Grace: Great school.


Ms TRAD: It is a great school. I take that interjection from the Minister for Education. When my eldest son started at West End State School the school population was around 700 students and today it stands at over 1,100 students, and that growth has occurred in just over a decade. There is no doubt that the population growth in the inner south is contributing quite significantly not only to West End State School but also to Dutton Park and East Brisbane state schools and private schools within the electorate. We are seeing an increase in the number of families who are choosing to call the inner city home and that is putting extraordinary pressure on our public institutions, on our schools and on our public transport system.

That is why I am particularly pleased to report that the West End State School expansion, which was funded in not last year's state budget but the budget of the year before, is moving apace. Cox Architects have been appointed to do the planning and the delivery of the expanded school site. What we know now is that given the rate of growth within the local community and the local school—we saw almost 100 students enrol in the week preceding the start of school—the expansion will be built just in time for this growth. This is emblematic of this government's commitment to meeting the needs of Queenslanders.

Whether it is in disaster affected communities, rapidly growing communities or agricultural primary producing communities, the Palaszczuk Labor government is a government that is absolutely attuned to the needs of Queenslanders because, as the Premier herself has said, we govern first and foremost with the needs of Queenslanders in the forefront of our minds. I am very pleased to report that we will meet this growth with an expansion at West End State School.

(Time expired)

Motorised Scooters

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (7.24 pm): Over the Christmas holidays Surfers Paradise was the place to be for both locals and visitors. We celebrated the carols on the beach and our famous fireworks on New Year's Eve. Surfers Paradise proved to be the best place to play, stay and relax over the holiday period.

I say thanks to the Surfers Paradise Alliance for all of their hard work which has continued with the success of Sand Safari through February, which has been a hit with locals, families and visitors. Events like this attract people, mostly families, to our unique Esplanade. While Surfers Paradise was bustling with people during this time, it is unfortunate that so many pedestrians have contacted me with concerns about an issue I have campaigned about for some time: motorised scooters.

Motorised scooters have been causing angst amongst pedestrians who felt their safety and that of their children and pets was compromised while walking along the Esplanade. This is particularly significant for older people and people with children who are concerned about the serious damage that can be done if they or someone in their care were to be hit by one of these vehicles as well as the injuries suffered by those riding the scooters. We are talking about things that are more like motorbikes than the six horsepower motor scooters they are supposed to be.

For the benefit of the House I would like to read some feedback I have received. One constituent said—

I've recently moved to Surfers Paradise and I walk the boardwalk ... every day.

It is without a doubt one of the best promenades in the world.

However, as a pedestrian (often with a small dog) I would like to raise the issue of electric motorbikes and scooters.

In my opinion it is just a matter of time before there is a serious accident—or worse—caused by these vehicles.

One woman who travels from the northern Gold Coast to walk along the Esplanade with a friend called my office and said that she had witnessed two near accidents. I spoke with a constituent after he submitted a letter to the *Gold Coast Bulletin* about motorised scooters. During our phone conversation he said—

I know this is a terrible thing to say, but it looks like a fatality is required before the laws are changed.

I'm concerned that many people can't hear them and someone will be killed.

It is clear that based on his responses, the Palaszczuk Labor government's Minister for Transport and Main Roads could not care less about this serious safety issue. The Gold Coast mayor, Tom Tate, local councillor Gary Baildon, local business owners, the Surfers Paradise Alliance and residents want these motorised scooters banned from the footpaths. In a reply to a constituent, Councillor Gary Baildon said—

Electric bikes/scooters or any motorised mode of travel on footpaths, this matter has been a thorn in Council's side for some years.

If I had my way I would simply ban the lot—that is not to be.


That responsibility lies with the Queensland Government and enforcement of safe behaviour lies with the Queensland Police Service. This was recently formally confirmed by the Queensland Transport Minister, Hon Mark Bailey MP.

The Mayor has written to the Minister for Transport ... numerous times ... unfortunately to no avail. ...

It is agreed that the situation with such powered vehicles is unacceptable in certain areas of our city, especially on our high profile foreshores.

Stop saying it is a Fair Trading issue. Stop saying it is up to our police. Fix it before someone dies.

Strathpine, Intersection Upgrade

 **Ms BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (7.28 pm): It is a pleasure to update the House on the progress of the safety improvement works at the Gympie Road and Dixon Street intersection in Strathpine. This is long-awaited work for my community that will soon begin to transform the Gympie Road roundabout intersection with Dixon and Hall streets into a signalised intersection. In total, the project will remove the roundabout and two signalised pedestrian crossings, replacing them all with one signalised intersection.

The upgrade is funded under the Palaszczuk government's Safer Roads Sooner program to reduce the number of crashes occurring at this intersection. Some of the key features of the project include an upgrade of the existing roundabout into the four-way signalised intersection, extending the centre median strip on Gympie Road to remove unsafe right turns into and out of Hall Street south—this means access to Hall Street south will be left in, left out only—provide dedicated lanes for all traffic movements from Hall Street north; replace the existing signalised crossings on Gympie Road with staged pedestrian crossings at new traffic signals; install new signalised pedestrian crossings at Dixon and Hall streets; and provide a facility on Gympie Road for traffic to continue to perform the essential U-turn function.

Preliminary works kicked off last week and construction works will commence in March. The upgrade is scheduled to be completed by early December 2019, which will be an exciting development for my community and commuters who use this artery. Over the coming months commuters can expect: lane closures and short-term disruptions, including temporary diversions; a combination of day and night works to ensure the project is delivered as quickly as possible; some construction traffic from the works; and the temporary removal of some on-street parking on Mecklem and Hall streets to allow for traffic diversions during construction and ensure visibility respectively. We have also integrated community feedback into the design that we sought in 2017, including the addition of dedicated lanes for right turns and through traffic movements on Hall Street, providing U-turn facilities on Gympie Road and installing signalised pedestrian crossings at all intersection approaches.

This is the kind of critical infrastructure investment project that the Palaszczuk government is investing in right across our region. While we understand that roadworks can be frustrating for the local community and we endeavour to complete these works as quickly as possible, we also appreciate that the less time commuters spend on the road the more time they have with their families. That is why removing the roundabout on Gympie Road is not our only project. We are also removing the roundabout at Petrie and investing in major planning and upgrade works for overpasses at Strathpine Road and Gympie Arterial Road and Linkfield Road and Gympie Arterial Road. These are all major bottlenecks for commuters in our community.

The House adjourned at 7.31 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, McMahon, 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, Sorensen, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Trad, Watts, Weir, Whiting, Wilson