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FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SIXTH PARLIAMENT

Tuesday, 3 September 2019

Subject	Page
SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS	2545
Regional Sitzings of Parliament, Townsville	2545
Absence of Member	2545
Questions on Notice	2545
School Group Tours.....	2545
PETITION	2546
TABLED PAPERS	2546
MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS	2548
Regional Sitzings of Parliament, Townsville.....	2548
Townsville, Flood Recovery	2549
Burdekin Falls Dam.....	2549
Townsville, Flood Recovery	2550
Townsville, Flood Recovery; Economy	2550
Hydrogen Industry	2551
Townsville Hospital, Renal Services.....	2552
Townsville Schools, Flood Recovery.....	2552
Agriculture Industry; Innovation	2552
Agriculture Industry.....	2553
Townsville, Road Infrastructure	2553
North Queensland, Water Infrastructure.....	2554
Police Resources	2555
HEALTH, COMMUNITIES, DISABILITY SERVICES AND DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION COMMITTEE	2556
Report	2556
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee: Report No. 25, 56th Parliament, August 2019—Subordinate legislation tabled on 30 April 2019.....	2556

Table of Contents – Tuesday, 3 September 2019

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE	2556
Palaszczuk Labor Government, North Queensland	2556
Townsville, Youth Crime	2557
Floods, Recovery Assistance	2557
Coal Industry	2558
Regional Queensland, Jobs.....	2559
Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships	2559
Floods, Recovery Assistance	2560
Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships	2561
North West Minerals Province; Correction to <i>Record of Proceedings</i>	2561
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Media release, dated 3 June 2014, on the website of the Leader of the Opposition, Mrs Deb Frecklington MP, titled 'A strong plan for a brighter future'.	2562
Former Ministerial Staffer, Lobbying	2562
Energy Industry	2562
Townsville, Police Helicopter	2563
Townsville, Community Safety.....	2564
Speaker's Ruling, Question Out of Order	2564
Tinaroo Dam, Water Supply.....	2564
International Education.....	2565
New Acland Coalmine, Approvals.....	2565
Townsville, Community Safety.....	2566
Palaszczuk Labor Government, Register of Members' Interests	2567
Electricity Prices; Water Supply.....	2567
MOTION	2568
Business Program	2568
Division: Question put—That the motion be agreed to.	2571
Resolved in the affirmative.....	2572
PERSONALISED TRANSPORT OMBUDSMAN BILL	2572
Second Reading	2572
MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST	2585
Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance	2585
Townsville, Community Safety	2586
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Report, dated 5 December 2018, by Major General (Retd) Stuart Smith AO, DSC, Townsville Community Champion to the Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk, Premier and Minister for Trade, titled 'Townsville's voice: local solutions to address youth crime—An independent report on the Townsville community's view on youth crime, including an assessment of the effectiveness of current prevention strategies and recommendations for improvements'.....	2587
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Document, undated, titled 'Townsville's Voice brief summary of recommendations implemented and those pending stand up in 2019'.	2587
North Queensland; Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance	2587
Cairns Shipping Development Project	2588
North Queensland, Crime; Water Infrastructure	2589
The Oasis Townsville	2590
North Queensland; Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance	2591
Mackay Electorate	2592
North Queensland, Crime	2593
Townsville Electorate	2594
PERSONALISED TRANSPORT OMBUDSMAN BILL	2595
Second Reading	2595
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Article from the <i>Gold Coast Bulletin</i> , dated 4 April 2019, titled 'Uber Gold Coast: New kids ride-share app Mums Drivers opens on the Gold Coast amid concerns Uber drivers are flouting rules'.	2606
Division: Question put—That the bill be now read a second time.	2610
Resolved in the affirmative.....	2610
Consideration in Detail	2610
Clause 1.....	2610
Division: Question put—That clause 1, as read, stand part of the bill.	2610
Resolved in the affirmative.....	2611
Clause 1, as read, agreed to.....	2611
Clause 2.....	2611
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Personalised Transport Ombudsman Bill 2019, explanatory notes to Hon. Mark Bailey's amendments.....	2611
Division: Question put—That the amendment be agreed to.	2611
Resolved in the affirmative.....	2611
Amendment agreed to.	2611
Division: Question put—That the minister's amendments Nos 2 to 4, as circulated, be agreed to and clauses 2 to 135 and schedule 1, as amended, stand part of the bill.	2612
Resolved in the affirmative.....	2612
Amendments agreed to.....	2612
Clauses 2 to 135 and schedule 1, as amended, agreed to.....	2612
Third Reading	2612
Division: Question put—That the bill, as amended, be now read a third time.....	2613
Resolved in the affirmative.....	2613

Table of Contents – Tuesday, 3 September 2019

Long Title	2613
Division: Question put—That the long title of the bill be agreed to.....	2613
Resolved in the affirmative.....	2614
LEAVE TO MOVE MOTION	2614
Division: Question put—That leave be granted.....	2614
Resolved in the negative.....	2614
TRANSPORT LEGISLATION (ROAD SAFETY AND OTHER MATTERS) AMENDMENT BILL	2614
Second Reading	2614
ADJOURNMENT	2629
Crichlow, Cr D	2629
Vasar; Benson, Ms K; Murugappan Family	2630
Scenic Rim Electorate, Drought	2631
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Article from the <i>Fassifern Guardian</i> , dated 15 August 2019, titled 'Driest Year since the 1920s'	2631
CQ Young Filmmakers Competition	2631
Child Protection	2632
Gateway to Industry Schools Program	2632
Traeger Electorate; Townsville, North West Minerals Province	2633
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Document, 17 June 2019, titled 'Draft First Home Owner Grant (Rural and Regional Areas) Amendment Bill 2019'	2634
Marque Greater Springfield Business Awards; Small Business	2634
Conway, Ms S	2634
Greenslopes Electorate, Community	2635
ATTENDANCE	2635

TUESDAY, 3 SEPTEMBER 2019


 The Legislative Assembly met at 9.31 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.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS

Regional Sitzings of Parliament, Townsville


 **Mr SPEAKER:** It is with great pleasure that we are sitting today in the Townsville Entertainment and Convention Centre and that this parliamentary sitting in regional Queensland has now commenced. The Queensland parliament has always been the people's house, and this is true no matter where it is in this big state of ours. I thank all members for their support of this regional sitting. I trust that all members will act to show our proceedings to the people of North Queensland in the best possible light, especially as our public galleries will be larger than normal. I have been promised that all members will be on their best behaviour.

We got off to a good start with the opening ceremony and the welcome to country, and I wish to place on the parliamentary record my thanks to Brenton Creed for his welcome to country; Ashley Saltner Jr and the Wulgurukaba Walkabout Dancers for their dance and smoking ceremony; and Aicey Day and the Komet Torres Strait Islander Dancers for their cultural dance performance. We are honoured for their contribution to today's opening ceremony and for providing the cultural richness that only comes from two of the world's oldest continuous living cultures.


I also wish to place on the parliamentary record my thanks to the work of the Parliamentary Service in making this regional sitting happen. Logistically, delivering parliament away from Parliament House is a difficult exercise. Despite the challenges, the Parliamentary Service, through its dedication and expertise, has delivered what members see here today. They deserve our gratitude and respect.

I welcome to the gallery today the people of the Townsville and the greater North Queensland region. I hope that this week you find the proceedings of interest. Finally, as a Far North Queenslander myself, I am proud to preside over these proceedings today as the parliament through this regional sitting rededicates itself to representing all Queenslanders.


Absence of Member

 **Mr SPEAKER:** I have received a notification and a medical certificate regarding the absence of the member for Coomera for this week's sitting. The member's notification complies with standing order 263A.

Questions on Notice

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Standing order 114 requires questions on notice to be lodged with the Clerk by the end of question time each day. I remind all members that questions can be emailed to the Table Office. Emailed questions are the most convenient and efficient method for table officers to process, especially in this regional sitting week.

School Group Tours

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Today I wish to advise members that we will be visited in this extended public gallery by students and teachers participating in our regional parliament education sessions. From the electorate of Burdekin we will have students from Bowen State High School. From the electorate of Hinchinbrook we will have students from Bluewater State School, Bohlevale State School, St Benedict's

Catholic School and St Clare's Catholic School. From the electorate of Mundingburra we will have students from Riverside Adventist Christian School, Currajong State School, Holy Spirit Catholic School, Wulguru State School, Mundingburra State School and Vincent State School. From the Thuringowa electorate we will have students from Thuringowa State High School. From the Townsville electorate we will have students from Townsville Grammar Junior School, Townsville State High School, Calvary Christian College and Magnetic Island State School. From the Traeger electorate we will have students from Richmond Hill State School. Members from the local area who would like to know when those schools will be in the gallery throughout the day can seek that advice from attendants.

PETITION

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

Fire Ants

Mr Crandon, from 309 petitioners, requesting the House to do everything in its power to ensure that the clear and present danger of fire ants on our coastal plains that are marching south, is dealt with by a campaign working from the south and moving north, in other words using a similar strategy to that being rolled out in the west, moving east [[1413](#)]

Petition 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—

23 August 2019—

- [1350](#) Innovation, Tourism Development and Environment Committee: Report No. 19, 56th Parliament, August 2019—Subordinate legislation tabled between 1 May 2019 and 11 June 2019
- [1351](#) State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development Committee: Report No. 34, 56th Parliament, August 2019—Subordinate legislation tabled between 3 April and 30 April 2019
- [1352](#) State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development Committee: Report No. 35, 56th Parliament, August 2019—Subordinate legislation tabled between 1 May and 14 May 2019
- [1353](#) Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee: Report No. 45, 56th Parliament, August 2019—Subordinate legislation tabled between 2 May and 11 June 2019

28 August 2019—

- [1354](#) Statement for Public Disclosure: Expenditure of the Office of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly for the period 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019, dated 22 August 2019

30 August 2019—

- [1355](#) Public Report of Ministerial Expenses for the period 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019

TABLING OF DOCUMENTS (SO 32)

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

The following statutory instruments were tabled by the Clerk—

Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994:

- [1356](#) Rural and Regional Adjustment (Taxi and Limousine Business Support Grants Scheme) Amendment Regulation 2019, No. 157
- [1357](#) Rural and Regional Adjustment (Taxi and Limousine Business Support Grants Scheme) Amendment Regulation 2019, No. 157, explanatory notes

Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994:

- [1358](#) Rural and Regional Adjustment (Farming in Reef Catchments Rebate Scheme) Amendment Regulation 2019, No. 158
- [1359](#) Rural and Regional Adjustment (Farming in Reef Catchments Rebate Scheme) Amendment Regulation 2019, No. 158, explanatory notes

Water Act 2000:

- [1360](#) Water Plan (Burdekin Basin) (Postponement of Expiry) Notice 2019, No. 159
- [1361](#) Water Plan (Burdekin Basin) (Postponement of Expiry) Notice 2019, No. 159, explanatory notes

Statutory Instruments Act 1992:

- [1362](#) Statutory Instruments (Exemptions from Expiry) Amendment Regulation 2019, No. 160
- [1363](#) Statutory Instruments (Exemptions from Expiry) Amendment Regulation 2019, No. 160, explanatory notes

Superannuation (Public Employees Portability) Act 1985:

[1364](#) Superannuation (Public Employees Portability) Regulation 2019, No. 161

[1365](#) Superannuation (Public Employees Portability) Regulation 2019, No. 161, explanatory notes

Major Events Act 2014:

[1366](#) Major Events (Motor Racing Events) (Gold Coast 600) Amendment Regulation 2019, No. 162

[1367](#) Major Events (Motor Racing Events) (Gold Coast 600) Amendment Regulation 2019, No. 162, explanatory notes

Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2019:

[1368](#) Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 163

[1369](#) Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 163, explanatory notes

City of Brisbane Act 2010, Local Government Act 2009, Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2009:

[1370](#) Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Regulation 2019, No. 164

[1371](#) Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Regulation 2019, No. 164, explanatory notes

Motor Dealers and Chattel Auctioneers Act 2014, Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2009, State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999:

[1372](#) Motor Dealers and Chattel Auctioneers and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation 2019, No. 165

[1373](#) Motor Dealers and Chattel Auctioneers and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation 2019, No. 165, explanatory notes

Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2009:

[1374](#) Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Amendment Rule 2019, No. 166

[1375](#) Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Amendment Rule 2019, No. 166, explanatory notes

Dispute Resolution Centres Act 1990:

[1376](#) Dispute Resolution Centres Regulation 2019, No. 167

[1377](#) Dispute Resolution Centres Regulation 2019, No. 167, explanatory notes

State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999, Supreme Court of Queensland Act 1991, Taxation Administration Act 2001, Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003:

[1378](#) Uniform Civil Procedure (Fees) Regulation 2019, No. 168

[1379](#) Uniform Civil Procedure (Fees) Regulation 2019, No. 168, explanatory notes

Education (Capital Assistance) Act 1993:

[1380](#) Education (Capital Assistance) (Criteria for Assessment) Amendment Regulation 2019, No. 169

[1381](#) Education (Capital Assistance) (Criteria for Assessment) Amendment Regulation 2019, No. 169, explanatory notes

Education (General Provisions) Act 2006:

[1382](#) Education (General Provisions) (Audit Requirements) Amendment Regulation 2019, No. 170

[1383](#) Education (General Provisions) (Audit Requirements) Amendment Regulation 2019, No. 170, explanatory notes

State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999, Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995:

[1384](#) Transport and Other Legislation (Accessory Plates) Amendment Regulation 2019, No. 171

[1385](#) Transport and Other Legislation (Accessory Plates) Amendment Regulation 2019, No. 171, explanatory notes

Fossicking Act 1994, Mineral Resources Act 1989, State Penalties and Enforcement Act 1999:

[1386](#) Fossicking Regulation 2019, No. 172

[1387](#) Fossicking Regulation 2019, No. 172, explanatory notes

Natural Resources and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2019:

[1388](#) Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 173

[1389](#) Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 173, explanatory notes

Land Title Act 1994:

[1390](#) Land Title Amendment Regulation 2019, No. 174

[1391](#) Land Title Amendment Regulation 2019, No. 174, explanatory notes

Marine Parks Act 2004:

[1392](#) Marine Parks (Moreton Bay) Zoning Plan 2019, No. 175

[1393](#) Marine Parks (Moreton Bay) Zoning Plan 2019, No. 175, explanatory notes

Marine Parks Act 2004, State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999:

[1394](#) Marine Parks and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2019, No. 176

[1395](#) Marine Parks and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2019, No. 176, explanatory notes

Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008:

[1396](#) Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Regulation 2019, No. 177

[1397](#) Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Regulation 2019, No. 177, explanatory notes

Fisheries Act 1994:

[1398](#) Fisheries (Commercial Fisheries) Regulation 2019, No. 178

[1399](#) Fisheries (Commercial Fisheries) Regulation 2019, No. 178, explanatory notes

Fisheries Act 1994, Biosecurity Act 2014, Marine Parks Act 2004, Planning Act 2016, Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994, State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999:

[1400](#) Fisheries (General) Regulation 2019, No. 179

[1401](#) Fisheries (General) Regulation 2019, No. 179, explanatory notes

Fisheries Act 1994:

[1402](#) Fisheries (General) (Vessel Tracking) Amendment Regulation 2019, No. 180

[1403](#) Fisheries (General) (Vessel Tracking) Amendment Regulation 2019, No. 180, explanatory notes

Fisheries Act 1994:

[1404](#) Fisheries Amendment Declaration 2019, No. 181

[1405](#) Fisheries Amendment Declaration 2019, No. 181, explanatory notes

Financial Accountability Act 2009:

[1406](#) Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019, No. 182

[1407](#) Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019, No. 182, explanatory notes

REPORT BY THE CLERK

The following report was tabled by the Clerk—

[1408](#) Report of clerical errors or formal changes to Sessional Orders for the Sitting of the Legislative Assembly at the Townsville Entertainment and Convention Centre, Townsville from 3 to 5 September 2019, adopted by the House on 22 August 2019, viz—

Sessional Orders for the Sitting of the Legislative Assembly at the Townsville Entertainment and Convention Centre, Townsville from 3 to 5 September 2019

Tuesday 3 September 2019

- Amended '11.15pm' to '11.15 am'
10.15 am—11.15 am—
Question Time
- Amended '11.35pm' to '11.35am'
11.35am—1.00pm—
Government Business

MINISTERIAL PAPER

The following ministerial paper was tabled by the Clerk—

Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services (Hon. Ryan)—

[1409](#) Controlled Operations Committee—Annual Report 2018-19

MEMBERS' PAPERS

The following members' papers were tabled by the Clerk—

Member for Buderim (Mr Mickelberg)—

[1410](#) Nonconforming petition regarding proposed bus stop at Wirreanda shops, King Street, Buderim

Member for Gregory (Mr Millar)—

[1411](#) Nonconforming petition regarding road safety conditions at Emerald State High School

Member for Mirani (Mr Andrew)—

[1412](#) Overseas travel report: Report on Parliamentary delegation to Vanuatu (Mr Andrew), 24 June-5 July 2019

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Regional Sitzings of Parliament, Townsville




Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.36 am): It is great to bring parliament back to Townsville. From the port to the pipeline, the ring-road to the Reid Park Ridge, we are investing in this city because it deserves it. We are improving services at Townsville Hospital

and expanding the Pimlico TAFE campus, because these are the things Townsville told us it needs. When the people of this city asked why we should not have a stadium the equal of those in other cities, we listened. The first \$190 million that we are committing into this \$290 million project came from my government. It gives me great pride to see it 75 per cent complete. I am especially proud of the 750 jobs it has generated in construction, with at least 80 per cent dedicated to locals.

The decision to bring this parliament to Townsville is further proof that my government wants to listen to what the people of this great city have to say. Over the course of this week we might have a bit more good news to share as well. I am told, as you said Mr Speaker, that around 2,000 schoolchildren and their teachers will visit this week. I welcome all members of the Townsville community to come and see their parliament in action. Queensland is not one big city; it is one big beautiful state. No matter where we live, we are in everything together. Mr Speaker, I thank you, the Clerk and the parliamentary staff for all you have done to facilitate this sitting, our fifth in regional Queensland. In our democracy, the people are in charge.

Townsville, Flood Recovery

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.38 am): As all Queenslanders know, particularly all Queenslanders who call Townsville and the north-west home, earlier this year the region experienced an unprecedented weather event. This was an extraordinary monsoonal trough, one that saw Townsville receive more than one year of rain—a staggering 1,158 millimetres—over just a seven-day period. The north-west, which had been experiencing years of devastating drought, was suddenly inundated with persistent, unrelenting rainfall which led to devastating floods. The relentless rains and the resulting floods brought extensive damage—inundating homes and businesses, destroying roads and disrupting transport routes and, tragically, resulting in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of livestock.


Unfortunately, Queenslanders have become accustomed to weathering natural disasters. In Queensland we do not do anything by halves—not in the number or size of disaster events or, crucially, in our efforts to respond to help Queenslanders back on their feet and to clear away the destruction caused by Mother Nature. In the immediate aftermath of these floods and ever since, my government has at all times remained focused on taking the crucial steps to ensure affected communities are given every opportunity possible to recover quickly and every affected Queenslander is given the chance to restore their lives.

While the recovery efforts have been ongoing, the personal stories of people whose lives have been upturned by the floods have always been at the forefront of my mind. Today, just six months since the floods, I would like to take the opportunity to provide an update on the North and North-West Queensland flood recovery efforts.

On the ground we have had a community recovery team based in Townsville since February to coordinate efforts. The government's three community recovery referral and information centres continue to operate. Across the 39 communities affected by the historic monsoon flooding event we have fast-tracked disaster assistance, with more than \$245 million in disaster funding already rolled out, including more than \$33 million in personal hardship assistance grants benefiting more than 116,000 people including more than 100,000 people in Townsville alone. Recovery grants and loans of more than \$100 million have been approved for more than 2,300 primary producers, small businesses and not-for-profit organisations, and more than \$115 million has been paid to local governments and agencies on the ground to support the reconstruction of essential infrastructure and other recovery programs.

Queenslanders are resilient. We know, just as we have learned from previous disasters and their recovery, that it will not be easy and it will not be quick, but we also know that we have the spirit, the energy and the determination to get it done. I extend special thanks to all of the emergency services personnel and everyone who assisted with the flood recovery efforts. I also pay tribute to the three Townsville MPs who played a pivotal role—Minister Coralee O'Rourke and the members for Thuringowa and Townsville. I thank them very much for the coordination of the efforts. I pay tribute to the local councils for the role they played. I acknowledge the local members in the north-west and the regions surrounding Townsville who also contributed during this period. I know that each and every day they get up and think what more they can do for the people of this great state to help people to recover.


Burdekin Falls Dam

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.41 am): We govern for every region and community, working with local councils on essential services including water supply.

That is why I am pleased to announce today for the Townsville region that plans to raise the Burdekin Falls Dam wall are progressing to the next stage. SunWater, which owns and operates the dam, will now start a \$16 million detailed business case into the potential of increasing the capacity of Queensland's largest dam. Upgrading the Burdekin Falls Dam is the next step in developing Burdekin Hydro. We have set aside up to \$100 million for the Burdekin Hydro power project, subject to further work being undertaken. We have learned enough so far to know that there is strong interest from farmers and industry for more water.

The Burdekin Falls Dam is at the heart of one of our state's largest agricultural hubs, and the extra water for irrigation could support another 10,000 hectares of production. There is also future urban demand in Townsville. It is also the next step in developing the Burdekin Hydro power project, which is expected to create 200 construction jobs and generate enough electricity to power 30,000 homes. We will continue to update the community in relation to that. I look forward to seeing the business case as soon as it is complete.

Townsville, Flood Recovery

 **Hon. CJ O'ROURKE** (Mundingburra—ALP) (Minister for Communities and Minister for Disability Services and Seniors) (9.43 am): Mr Speaker, it gives me great pleasure and is an absolute honour to welcome you and the Queensland parliament to my home city of Townsville. I am sure you have all appreciated the beautiful spring weather we put on display today to welcome each and every one of you. It is hard to imagine that this glorious city was subject to an unprecedented flooding event that resulted from this year's monsoonal trough. North Queenslanders are tough. We get up, brush ourselves off and keep going every day.


During the past six months we have seen the best of our community come from one of our hardest times. All levels of government have worked together with the business community, non-government organisations and the broader community to get back on our feet. We have seen more than 23,000 visitors at the community recovery hubs established by my department. These hubs have undertaken more than 7,900 outreach visits in the aftermath of the disaster.

To date more than \$30 million has been paid out directly here in Townsville to support some of the people in the worst hit areas. This includes more than 48,700 emergency hardship assistance grants, which have assisted more than 102,900 Townsville residents who experienced genuine hardship as a result of the flooding. Ready reservists were out doorknocking homes and visiting shopping centres in the impacted areas to offer information and support and to help people apply for these grants. Outreach teams have worked with the wonderful staff from key organisations including UnitingCare, Salvation Army and the Red Cross at Heatley, Ignatius Park, Alligator Creek and North Shore evacuation centres. They provide psychosocial support that is absolutely invaluable in times like these.

Community Recovery is here for the long haul, and we will continue to support Townsville as we move forward. A number of longer term grants are still available for individuals and families, including the income tested essential household contents grants, structural assistance grants and essential services safety reconnection scheme grants. These grants are available through the jointly funded Commonwealth-state disaster relief funding arrangements.

I am incredibly proud of the Townsville community's resilience and of the way people banded together during the disaster. For some people and businesses, there is still a long way to go. My message is: we are there with you for the long haul. I encourage anyone who is still requiring advice or assistance to phone our community recovery hotline on 1800173349.

Townsville, Flood Recovery; Economy

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (9.46 am): I acknowledge the absolute enthusiasm of each member of parliament to be here in the north, in Townsville. It is an absolute honour. Following on from Minister O'Rourke, can I say that for the first time since the natural disaster a Queensland government has rolled out specific assistance to small businesses that were hit very hard during the floods. At an event last night that was organised by the Minister for Small Business there was nothing but absolute thanks and gratitude from the small business community for the small business grants and the small business community recovery hub in Townsville. I acknowledge all that the Minister for Communities has said. We acknowledge that there is still a long way to go and that there are many people in

Townsville who have had both their business and their home devastated by the floods in North Queensland. As Coralee said, we are with them all the way.

Although economic conditions globally are continuing to soften and Queensland is not immune to these trends, data released today shows that the Palaszczuk government's economic plan is working and Queensland continues to outperform the rest of Australia. Queensland Treasury State Accounts reveal that Queensland has grown twice as fast as the rest of Australia in the March quarter this year.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

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

Ms TRAD: Trend gross state product rose by 0.4 per cent in the quarter, compared with growth of only 0.2 per cent. Here in Queensland we grew at 0.4 per cent and the rest of the nation grew at 0.2 per cent. Over the year to March Queensland's economy grew by 1.9 per cent, outstripping the 1.7 per cent for the rest of Australia. This is further evidence that the Palaszczuk government's economic plan is working. Household consumption rose by two per cent over the year, in line with our nation-beating retail sales growth. Queensland's annual retail turnover has grown more than 10 times faster than the rest of the country. We know that retail spending creates jobs, but we also know that creating new jobs gives Queenslanders the confidence to spend.


Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members to my left, the Deputy Premier is making a ministerial statement. I am listening to that statement. I ask you to do the same.

Ms TRAD: That is why the Palaszczuk Labor government is backing Queensland jobs. More than 216,000 jobs have been created since we came to government in 2015 and over the past year we have created 1,000 jobs each and every week. More than 90 per cent of these jobs are full-time jobs. Our government's focus on job creation, especially in the regions, has meant that the unemployment rate here in Townsville has fallen by as much under Labor as it increased under the LNP. In the past year alone Townsville's unemployment rate has fallen by 2.5 per cent, but we know that more work needs to be done and this employment is off the back of significant investment—in the stadium, in the Pimlico TAFE, in the pipeline, in the hospital, in schools and in the port and restoring frontline services cut by those opposite.

Today's figures show that Queensland's trade sector is also outperforming the rest of Australia. Queensland's overseas exports of key commodities including LNG, minerals and crops rose again in the March quarter. The value of our overseas merchandise exports is now \$87 billion—a record 12-month figure for Queensland. We know that we are facing a challenging and uncertain economic environment, but the Palaszczuk government has a proven track record of job creation and economic growth. We all know that Queensland is the best state in Australia and today's state account figures are only further proof of that.

Hydrogen Industry

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning) (9.51 am): As today's *Townsville Bulletin* reports, the Palaszczuk Labor government is putting Townsville in the front seat for thousands of jobs in our state's emerging hydrogen industry. Hydrogen holds the promise to help transform our global economy. The great advantage of hydrogen is that it allows for renewable energy to be stored or transported to other locations where hydrogen can then be converted into electricity with zero emissions. There are cities and countries in the world that, because of their climate or geography, cannot produce enough electricity from renewable resources and they will pay top dollar for renewable hydrogen if we can build the systems to export it to them, but most importantly for Townsville it means jobs. Townsville has all of the key ingredients to generate new hydrogen jobs. Townsville has one of the best ports in Australia—safe and secure in public ownership. Townsville, the city in the sun, has enormous renewable energy potential—over 300 days of sunshine each year—and, thanks to our government's investments, Townsville has a secure water supply.


The sky is not the limit for Townsville. That is why I am so pleased the Premier has asked me to convene a hydrogen forum in Townsville so we can help show our global partners and local industry the great potential of this region for new hydrogen jobs.

Ms Palaszczuk: They don't want new industries.

Mr DICK: I take the interjection from the Premier. We are seeing very significant interest from Queensland's major trading partners like Japan and South Korea for renewable hydrogen. I recently


hosted a delegation from Korea which told me that it is predicting that hydrogen will account for 18 per cent of the world's energy needs by 2050, generating US\$2.5 trillion in value-add and over 30 million new jobs, and the Palaszczuk Labor government will work hard to make sure Townsville gets its fair share. I look forward to bringing industry and experts together in Townsville in the very near future to discuss the opportunities the production of renewable hydrogen presents to support the creation of more jobs for this great northern part of our state.

Townsville Hospital, Renal Services

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (9.53 am): I am proud to announce that the Palaszczuk government will almost double the number of acute renal chairs at the Townsville Hospital from 17 to 30. The Palaszczuk government is investing more than \$6 million into expanding renal services in North Queensland. The expansion will increase capacity for haemodialysis and streamline hours of operation for patients. It will also increase the Townsville Hospital's capacity for emergency haemodialysis. Patients with complex renal failure, wherever they live, often require care that can only be delivered from major tertiary hospitals like the Townsville Hospital. This funding will expand the capacity of the unit, which is the referral centre for complex renal patients throughout the north, north-west and gulf communities.

In addition to this major infrastructure upgrade, the North Queensland renal fund has provided \$1.55 million in funding to support increased medical, nursing and allied health staffing for the renal units at Townsville Hospital and Palm Island and the Palaszczuk government has provided \$784,000 through the Advancing Kidney Care collaborative to better support renal dialysis patients. The funding will employ health workers to act as a single point of contact for patients having vascular procedures to help them navigate the health system with ongoing support and monitoring. We are also investing in services for people with advanced kidney disease to improve their quality of life and ensure kidney transplant coordinators are available to give the support kidney transplant patients need. It is part of our commitment to deliver better health services for every Queenslanders no matter where they live, including right here in Townsville.


Townsville Schools, Flood Recovery

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations) (9.55 am): Schools in Townsville and the surrounding areas have bounced back following the floods earlier this year which saw significant damage to homes, businesses and community infrastructure such as schools. A total of 61 state schools were closed, impacting around 22,000 students and their families. Oonoonba State School was the hardest hit in the flooding event in Townsville, with all buildings inundated with floodwater. The school had to be closed from late January, with Wulguru State School and William Ross State High School hosting Oonoonba students until the beginning of term 2, and they did a great job! I was able to visit the school with the Premier immediately after the flooding to inspect the damage and to witness the amazing community spirit that Queenslanders are renowned for. I spoke to the principal of Oonoonba State School last night about the great work she and her team were doing to minimise the loss of learning time for students.

It was so heartening to see teachers, parents and carers, officers from the Department of Education and Department of Housing and Public Works and even the Australian Defence Force working to clean and repair the school. The statistics of the clean-up of schools in Townsville are astounding—2,100 square metres of new carpet was laid and 900 square metres of vinyl and 110 square metres of seamless flooring were replaced. The Department of Education's flood assistance package paid out close to \$1.5 million to families to support the replacement of school resources for some 10,000 students and a further \$215,000 has been paid to around 300 teachers who lost equipment and resources in the flood.

Despite all of the disruptions caused by the flooding, our teachers did a magnificent job minimising the impact on student learning, and congratulations to them for that. Some schools lost up to two weeks of learning time, but the teachers made up ground. Through the hard work and the dedication of these teachers, these students were able to catch up and be ready for annual NAPLAN testing, and I congratulate Queensland's most improved schools such as Townsville Central State School and Thuringowa State High School. Congratulations! I am looking forward to returning to Oonoonba State School later this week with the member for Mundingburra, Minister O'Rourke, to see how the school has recovered as we work towards giving every child a great start.

Agriculture Industry; Innovation

 **Hon. KJ JONES** (Cooper—ALP) (Minister for Innovation and Tourism Industry Development and Minister for the Commonwealth Games) (9.58 am): We know that a strong agricultural industry is crucial for jobs in North Queensland, and that is why the Palaszczuk government is investing in new technological developments to assist cattle graziers to manage their stock. We are very proud to have partnered with James Cook University, Ceres Tag and the CSIRO to develop groundbreaking digital ear tags that are expected to transform Australia's \$17 billion cattle industry. Today I can announce that this homegrown Townsville technology—the digital ear tag—is set to hit the global market over the next year. This product has huge potential not only for Queensland farmers but for exports overseas.

I am also proud to confirm this morning that our government is forging ahead with our plans to unlock thousands of kilometres of publicly owned optical fibre to deliver more reliable internet for hundreds of thousands of homes and businesses in regional Queensland. We will prioritise Townsville in the rollout of FibreCo. By 2020, locals will be experiencing the benefits. This is a huge announcement for local businesses, schools and the Townsville community, because we know that, in this day and age, a strong, reliable internet connection is crucial to doing business and creating jobs in Townsville. This is only possible because we invest in innovation and we refuse to sell public assets.


Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Langbroek interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Surfers Paradise, I had called the House to order. You are warned under the standing orders.

Agriculture Industry

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries) (10.00 am): The beef industry is of prime importance to Queensland in general and North Queensland in particular. When those overseas think of quality beef, they think of Queensland. In 2017-18, the farm gate value of Queensland's cattle industry was worth \$5.47 billion to our state. Recently, times have been difficult for the sector. No-one can forget the devastating impact of the monsoonal event on those producers in the north-west. As everyone is aware, the industry continues to be impacted by drought as producers sell down cattle and pastures decline. Currently, 65 per cent of Queensland is drought declared.

Mr Lister interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, I am sorry to interrupt you. Member for Southern Downs, you are warned under the standing orders. Member for Mermaid Beach, you are warned under the standing orders. I heard your interjection earlier. I have been very clear about the level of interjections, particularly when it is a non-combative ministerial statement being made.

Mr FURNER: My department continues to monitor the drought situation and will act as required to assist. There are many producers who have suffered badly from long-term drought, enduring eight consecutive failed or below-average wet seasons.

Throughout the drought, the Queensland government has been there. This government makes a significant investment of over \$17 million per year in beef cattle RD&E to improve the productivity, competitiveness, profitability and environmental sustainability of our state's beef industry. Frontline agricultural staff are well placed to help create jobs in regional economies through supporting the beef industry and, as a government, we support our hardworking public servants to support our primary producers.

Part of the research and development is conducted at Spyglass station, which is just west of here. Spyglass is a peak location for projects to advance beef breeding and will be a key driver of profitability in the beef industry. I will be heading out to Spyglass this Friday as the work that is being undertaken there will set up the industry for the long term. Spyglass is needed for the future of the sector to advance tropical and subtropical beef production and ecosystem management, as well as hosting development, extension, education and training programs. The Palaszczuk government will always promote the good work being done in the sector, work with the broader industry and highlight the quality of Queensland's produce to the world.

Townsville, Road Infrastructure

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (10.03 am): It gives me great pleasure to join North Queensland for this 2019 regional parliament. Townsville is the country's

largest urban centre north of the Sunshine Coast. As Minister for Transport and Main Roads I can safely say that only the Palaszczuk government is delivering the roads and transport that Townsville's residents, businesses and industry needs.

Since 2015, we have invested more than \$790 million in roads and transport infrastructure for the region, creating jobs, building infrastructure and tackling congestion for North Queenslanders. The Bligh Labor government started planning on the Townsville Ring Road stage 4 and it was the Palaszczuk Labor government that built it. Our government was the first to commit funding for the Townsville Ring Road stage 5 too, and it had to drag the federal LNP government kicking and screaming to put in its share.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr BAILEY: That is a fact. The Palaszczuk government planned, built and completed Riverway Drive without asset sales, without selling off the port, without selling off the rail line, like those opposite—

Mr Powell interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Glass House!

Mr BAILEY: Mr Speaker, thank you. The truth hurts.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Minister, I ask you to resume your statement.

Mr BAILEY: Thank you, Mr Speaker. This government repaired the region's north coast rail line in just three days after the region was battered by floods earlier this year. We have delivered new bridges over the Bruce Highway at Cattle and Frances creeks, thanks in no small part to local workers, businesses and Queensland Rail staff—whom it was an honour to meet and thank this morning for their hard work in 40 degree heat; they did a magnificent job—and our hardworking MPs: the members for Mundingburra, Thuringowa and Townsville. They are all working hard for their communities.

Now, hardworking Queenslanders are building and preparing Townsville for the region's largest ever road projects. Labor's \$1.5 billion, four-year pipeline of roads and transport will create 1,200 jobs. As we speak, crews are putting the finishing touches on upgrades to the Flinders Highway from Townsville to Torrens Creek. We are building new overtaking lanes, worth \$43 million, between Townsville and Ayr. At our port, which we have kept in public hands, we are delivering the shipping—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BAILEY: Which we have kept in public hands—

Mr Powell interjected.

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

Mr BAILEY: We are delivering the shipping hub's biggest ever transformation—a \$193 million channel upgrade that recognises the city's economic potential to get the big ships directly into North Queensland. We are getting ready to build the \$514 million Bruce Highway upgrade at Haughton River. It has already started, with four months of construction already underway.


The key point is this: unlike the member for Broadwater, we will not abandon Townsville. We will back it and we will keep backing it. We will not be cutting and running. The Palaszczuk government knows how important better roads and transport are to the region. We recognise the city's potential, its entrepreneurial attitude, resilience and love for the Cowboys, and we are creating thousands of jobs for local grader operators, steel fixers, diesel fitters, machine operators, engineers and electricians.

Mr SPEAKER: I call the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy.

Mr Janetzki interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Toowoomba South, you are warned under the standing orders. The minister has not even reached the dispatch box yet.

North Queensland, Water Infrastructure

 **Hon. AJ LYNHAM** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy) (10.07 am): It is fantastic to be here in North Queensland. I give a big shout-out to the Lynham clan of North Queensland as well. I am very pleased to be able to follow the Premier in advising the House of

the latest developments in water infrastructure investment for North Queensland. Our publicly owned water authority, SunWater, will now start a detailed business case into the potential raising of Queensland's largest dam, Burdekin Falls Dam.

SunWater will work with Building Queensland to investigate the costs and engineering options for raising the wall. The detailed business case will include analysis of the environmental, economic, financial and sustainability factors and an environmental impact statement. This will be an exhaustive process that will establish all the costs and benefits and determine if it is worth it for our taxpayers. I am advised it will be completed and provided to government in 2024, with a completed EIS.


In the meantime, work will be underway on assessing and then conducting dam improvement works. This work has to be finished before any dam wall raising construction can start. Investigations to date show enough interest from farmers and industry in more water, as well as future urban demand here in Townsville. The dam is at the heart of one of Queensland's largest agricultural hubs and, as the Premier said, the extra water for irrigation could support another 10,000 hectares of production. It is important that we make the right decisions about using taxpayers' funds.

We are asking the Morrison government to contribute its fair share of the costs of this investigation. It has already funded investigations of Hells Gates Dam and the Hughenden Irrigation Scheme. It is critical for both levels of government and the people of North Queensland to have a full understanding of all the water infrastructure options here in the north. Meanwhile, work is nearly one-third complete on the \$215 million Haughton Pipeline Duplication.

The Palaszczuk government is investing \$225 million into Townsville's water security—\$215 million for stage 1 of the pipeline and another \$10 million for Townsville City Council's Water Smart Package to help residents use water sustainably. More than 11 kilometres of piping has now been laid to bring more water from the Burdekin Falls Dam to the Ross River Dam to help secure Townsville's long-term water security.

As well as future water, Townsville's new pipeline is bringing jobs to the region right now. To date, I am advised that more than 900 people and 150 businesses have now directly or indirectly worked on the project. By the time it is completed in March next year, the project will create an estimated 500 direct jobs for Townsville and North Queensland. This is the Palaszczuk government working for the north.

Police Resources

 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services) (10.10 am): More police are coming to Townsville. Yesterday the Police Commissioner and I announced that an extra 53 police officers will be permanently based in Townsville by the end of next year. Twenty-eight of those officers will be here in Townsville by mid next year, with the remaining 25 officers here six months later. This means our election commitment will be delivered 18 months earlier than committed.


I am sure local MPs will be pleased to hear that Assistant Commissioner Paul Taylor has said that the initial allocation of 28 new officers will be as follows: five to Mundingburra station; six to Townsville station; six to Kirwan station; four to the Tactical Crime Squad; four to the Child Protection Investigation Unit; and three to the Domestic and Family Violence Unit. This is our government delivering on its commitment to the people of Townsville and delivering that commitment early. To date we have already boosted Townsville police by 50 officers since we were elected and these extra numbers mean that we will have increased the total number of police in the Townsville policing district by more than 100.

There is more good news: the commissioner and I also announced that the rollout of the latest generation body worn cameras begins in Townsville this week. It is a win-win: more cameras and better technology to deliver significant benefits to police and the community. This new initiative means that all uniformed first responder officers will now have access to two important technologies: the next generation body worn cameras and QLITE tablet devices. The Police Service's early adoption of technology plays a vital role in the way police operate on a daily basis. Not only are there more police in Queensland than ever before, but the Queensland Police Service is now more mobile and more agile than ever before and these new technologies support that policing philosophy. Again, this is an example of our government backing our police—backing our police by investing in the people and the technology that has ensured the Queensland Police Service a reputation as a world-class operation.

I know how important the Queensland Police Service is to the people of Townsville. Earlier this year the city was struck by flooding the likes of which had never been witnessed before. We saw the police here out on the front line, in the flood waters, doing all they could to keep people safe. To the police of Townsville, we salute you and we say thank you for the magnificent work you do protecting and serving your community.

HEALTH, COMMUNITIES, DISABILITY SERVICES AND DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION COMMITTEE

Report

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (10.13 am): I lay upon the table of the House report No. 25 of the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee titled *Subordinate legislation tabled on 30 April 2019*.

Tabled paper: Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee: Report No. 25, 56th Parliament, August 2019—Subordinate legislation tabled on 30 April 2019 [\[1414\]](#).


The report examines the Health Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2019. This is an important piece of subordinate legislation that will help to improve health services in Queensland and also improve the health of Queenslanders. The regulation enables pharmacists to administer vaccines and adrenalin to persons aged 16 and 17. Previously only persons aged 18 and above could receive a vaccine from a pharmacist. This amendment implements one of the committee's recommendations from its inquiry into the establishment of a pharmacy council and transfer of pharmacy ownership in Queensland undertaken in 2018.

The regulation also includes the creation of a further six smoke-free sites in the precincts around government buildings in regional Queensland, including the government office building here in Stanley Street, Townsville. This adds to the Strand Rockpool and the Flinders Street Mall also being prescribed smoke-free outdoor places here in Townsville. I commend our report to the House.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr SPEAKER: I advise that today is the birthday of the Leader of the Opposition. I am sure you will all join me in wishing her a happy birthday. However, there is no special treatment for birthdays, Leader of the Opposition. Question time will conclude today at 11.15 am.

Palaszczuk Labor Government, North Queensland

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (10.15 am): My first question is to the Premier. Given more than 8,000 Townsville locals are without a job, crime is out of control and business bankruptcies are through the roof, will the Premier now admit her dumping of portfolio responsibilities for North Queensland shows she has lost touch with North Queensland?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am more than happy to talk about our record for North Queensland any day of the week and especially right here in Townsville. Where do we begin? There is so much to talk about. Let us start from the beginning, shall we? When the LNP was in government there was not one infrastructure project in this city. Now we see coming out of the ground the brand-new Townsville stadium—built by locals for locals.

Under the LNP we had an unemployment rate that was high. In Townsville we have brought that down to seven per cent and we are investing in jobs. Who can remember what the LNP in government wanted to do to Townsville? It wanted to sell the port. One only has to walk outside this chamber to see the port that the LNP wanted to sell. Not only did those opposite want to sell the port, they wanted to sell the Mount Isa to Townsville railway line. What else did they want to sell? The power assets! They wanted to sell the ports, the Mount Isa line and the power assets. What did the LNP do then? It closed down Stuart State School. The member for Surfers Paradise was responsible. It got so tough during those Newman years that the former member for Mundingburra ran out of Townsville and went to the Gold Coast.

I am proud that every single day my MPs are focused on jobs. There is \$225 million in pipelines to guarantee water security for this great city, there is the expansion of the Pimlico TAFE, the upgrading of the port, we are widening the channel, and we are building new schools. On top of that, we have been working hand in hand with the people of this great region in the flood recovery, injecting money

back into the region. I am happy to stand on my record of generating jobs for this region when those opposite wanted to sell the assets that this region loves.

(Time expired)

Mr Butcher interjected.

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

Townsville, Youth Crime

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: My second question is also to the Premier. Last night here in Townsville, I met with 55-year-old military veteran Kim and his service dog. Due to the youth crime crisis, Kim is so scared to take his dog out at night that he now carries a knife to protect himself. Will the Premier explain why Kim has to live in fear because her government is soft on crime?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition did not read the front page of the *Townsville Bulletin* yesterday, which delivers the news that we are putting on extra police ahead of schedule. Yesterday, with the Deputy Premier and the Minister for Police, I had the great honour of meeting the brand-new recruits who are going through the police academy here in Townsville. I had the opportunity to speak to them. I can tell the House how much they are looking forward to their careers. Indeed, we value those careers too, so much so that we will ensure that we have the police that are needed for this region.

Last night on the Strand, there was also an opportunity for members of the Townsville community to meet the Police Commissioner and the minister, who I think were cooking up a storm on the barbecue. Let us look at the way in which the local police responded in the aftermath of the floods. I was here the night of the flood. In this state I have never seen more dedicated police men and women. Along with the Defence personnel, they put their own lives at risk to help the people of this great region. Even though some of their own homes were being flooded, they went out and helped others. I know that the local members respect the work that they did. We all respect the work that they did.

Mr Mander: What about Kim walking down the street?

Ms PALASZCZUK: We are putting more police on the street. Members opposite could have done that when they were in government, but they did not. The members opposite failed to do that.

Mr Hunt interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Nicklin, I have asked you several times to cease your interjections today. You are warned under the standing orders. As the seating plan has it, the members for Bundaberg, Ninderry and Bonney are a lot closer to me than they are usually.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Let us put some statistics on the table. For the year to 30 June 2019, in the Townsville district youth crime decreased by five per cent compared to the previous year. We know the answer of the opposition when in government. It was boot camps. Do members remember the legendary boot camps? How successful were those boot camps? They were not successful at all! Offenders ran away. We all know who the attorney-general in charge of that program was. My government has taken a very clear position by bringing forward the extra police that are needed for the region. That is being done ahead of schedule. By the end of 2020, a further 53 officers will be stationed in Townsville. I thank the local members for their very strong advocacy.

(Time expired)

Floods, Recovery Assistance

Mr HARPER: My question without notice is to the Premier. What planning and assistance is available for the North and North-West Queensland flood recovery effort?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Thuringowa for the question. A lot of work has been done since the floods of six months ago and a lot more work needs to be done. A key component of that flood recovery effort is the North and Far North Queensland monsoon trough state recovery plan for 2019-2021. The recovery plan underpins the government's commitment to helping communities to recover, rebuild and reconnect. Today I can announce that it features the local recovery plans for 13 councils that were impacted by the event.

As I said earlier, part of the recovery plan includes \$242 million, jointly funded between the Commonwealth and the state, to provide funding for more resilient infrastructure, the beef industry, business and industry support, mental health and tourism. We should always bear in mind that a lot of people went through a traumatic event and it is not going to take weeks or months to recover. Such

life-changing events can take years to recover from. We want to ensure that people get the support that they need, not just in Townsville but also in the north-west.

I had the opportunity to fly into Julia Creek and meet with the farmers impacted in that area. I heard them speak about their personal experiences and that will stay with me for the rest of my life. The only way you can respond is to listen when you hear stories of such personal hardship. The farmers told me how excited they were to hear that they were going to get rain, but when the rains came they had a devastating impact.

Today I can confirm another \$17 million of joint funding has been made available for vital roads and public infrastructure repair. This includes \$14 million in betterment projects on two sections of the Flinders Highway and \$1.8 million for Townsville City Council to repair water and sewerage assets. Townsville will also get more than \$1.5 million for recreational assets, including three new pontoons.

I take this opportunity to thank Major General Stuart Smith for the incredible work that he did during the period. He travelled some 6,000 kilometres, from memory, and visited nearly all of the communities that were affected. I also pay tribute to his deputy, Mark Plath. Major General Stuart Smith consulted with councils and state government agencies to develop the long-term recovery plan framework.

We know that it has been a tough time for Townsville. We are continuing to work with everybody. At the end of the day, this is about people. With Minister Mick de Brenni, I have been to see the social housing that has been rebuilt. Once again, I commend the people who were helping others when their own properties were being impacted by the floods. The region still has a long journey, but we will be with them every step of the way.

Coal Industry

Mr MANDER: My question without notice is to the Deputy Premier. Does the Deputy Premier stand by her previous comments that markets are moving away from coal and that mining communities need to reskill or does she only say those things while she is in Brisbane?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for Everton for his question. There is no doubt that many from the opposite side have decided to take my words out of context. I refer to my budget speech, which was delivered in June this year and in which I spoke very clearly about the ongoing role for coal, particularly metallurgical coal, in our economy. It is one of our biggest exports, making up more than \$87 billion worth of exports from Queensland.

We have seen our export profile change. Once thermal coal was our second largest export, but now it is LNG. That is largely because past state Labor governments opened up the LNG market. While other states refused to open up their gas reserves Queensland Labor governments opened up gas reserves, because we know that it is an important transition fuel for a global economy that is looking for cleaner and greener ways of creating electricity. When it comes to our export profile, this government is singularly ambitious about a new hydrogen industry for Queensland.

Mr Batt interjected.

Ms TRAD: In the same way that it was Labor governments that opened up the LNG industry, it will be this Labor government that opens up the hydrogen industry, creating thousands more jobs and billions of dollars worth of royalties, which will go back into the services and the infrastructure that Queenslanders need. That is Labor's track record when it comes to the resources sector in Queensland. We absolutely support the resources sector, unlike those opposite. Under the LNP, 8,000 jobs were lost. That is their record. We stand by our record.

When we think about the unemployment rate in this state and the huge unemployment rate in regional Queensland, it is those opposite who need to explain to the people of Townsville, the people of Mount Isa and the people of Cairns why their program of cutting, sacking and selling left this economy on its knees.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Ms TRAD: I am very proud of the role that this Labor government under Anastacia Palaszczuk has played in fixing up their mess.

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Bundaberg, given that your interjections were designed to disrupt, I did not want to disrupt the Deputy Premier further. You are warned under the standing orders. Members to my left, the level of interjection is too high. I ask that you dial it back.

Regional Queensland, Jobs

Mr STEWART: My question without notice is to the Premier. Will the Premier detail the Palaszczuk government's commitment to employment in regional Queensland, including here in Townsville?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Townsville for that question. Of course we know how important jobs are for people here in this community. We know that there have been some devastating impacts with the closure of QNI Resources. Hundreds of jobs were lost as a result of that and we know the impact that that had on the people of this region.

Straight after that happened my government put in place an Accelerated Works Program to make sure that we could get people into work as quickly as possible. We also put in place our Back to Work program and our Works for Queensland program. The Works for Queensland program is where we give money to councils so that they can look at key, smaller projects that can make improvements to their local communities and get people into work. Our Back to Work program is going from strength to strength where we give employers money to make sure they employ a young person or an unemployed person to make sure that they get the skills and the jobs that they need.

We know that one of our key infrastructure investments in this region is the Townsville stadium. I was speaking with Erin this morning. Erin said to me, 'As I drive around this city, from different suburbs I can see the stadium from different angles.'

Opposition members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: You may laugh but this is important to the people of this city.

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, you will put your comments through the chair.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Mr Speaker, those opposite may laugh but people living in this region love the fact that they are getting a brand-new stadium built by Townsville locals for Townsville. I know that the Cowboys are pretty happy about that. I am quite sure that there are many school students here today who also support the Cowboys. Do you? Yes, they do.

Yesterday I had the great pleasure of joining three local members of parliament, along with Minister Mick de Brenni and JT—we were there with Johnathan Thurston.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: They do not like it, do they? We were there putting in the very first seat of the Townsville stadium. The first seat has been put in—the first of 25,000. That stadium is going to open next year in February, and I am looking forward to that. Who was the first party who made the commitment to build that stadium? It was Labor. Who is delivering that stadium for the people of this state? It is Labor. We are working collaboratively to make sure that that stadium and jobs are delivered. I remember that the LNP had to be dragged kicking and screaming to put their share of funding into that stadium—kicking and screaming.

(Time expired)

Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships

Mr LAST: My question without notice is to the Premier. Given that more than 8,000 Townsville locals want a job but cannot find one, will the Premier condemn her deputy's out of touch comments to the parliament that a \$7.2 million mansion at Whistler with a sunken hot tub, chef's kitchen, five bedrooms, 4½ bathrooms, suspended fireplace and access to a private gondola service is not luxury?

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members, I am taking advice from the table. I do not need any interjections. Premier, the comments referred to in the question were given at estimates. The question refers to the estimates process, so you can answer the question but I will give you latitude in terms of your response.

Ms PALASZCZUK: First and foremost, I do not control where members go on holidays. That is entirely their business. Unlike the member for Burleigh—

Dr Miles: They come to parliament.

Ms PALASZCZUK: At least they turn up to parliament.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: At least on my side they turn up—

Mr SPEAKER: Members, it is very helpful if you can face the front of the chamber so that you can see when the Speaker is on his feet. Honourable members, this is not the live stage version of the Queensland parliament. There is no extra drama. I ask you to make sure that you are serving faithfully the people of Queensland here in the Queensland parliament in the way that we are conducting ourselves.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Thank you, Mr Speaker. On the government side of the House, we actually turn up to parliament.

Mr Hart interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: On the other side of the House, there was a member who stayed on holiday. I am glad that the member for Burdekin asked a question about jobs. I am always passionate when speaking about jobs in Queensland and jobs in this region.

Mr Hart interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: The contrast could not be more stark between my government's commitment to jobs and job-creating infrastructure and those opposite. I am going to talk about our investment in this region every day of this sitting in this parliament. As I said, the stadium, the pipeline, the roads—

Mr Harper: Riverway Drive!

Ms PALASZCZUK: Riverway Drive—to the students who are visiting us here today, the member for Thuringowa even when he is in Brisbane talks about Riverway Drive. I was very pleased to join the member in opening Riverway Drive. It will mean that people can get to and from their homes and businesses and employment faster.

It gives me a great opportunity to reflect on what happened seven years ago—seven years ago almost to the day. What happened seven years ago to the day? The Newman government was in power and in the *Townsville Bulletin* there was an article: 'Local jobs lost despite Newman government assurances. Public sector cuts hits 550'—550—'having a huge impact in regional Queensland'.

Mr Hart interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I find it incredibly ironic that those opposite can even stand in this House and talk about jobs when seven years ago to the day 550 jobs were cut. Seven years ago those opposite wanted to sell the port, they wanted to sell the line and they wanted to sell the power assets. That is the record of the Newman government. Let me make this point very clear: the Leader of the Opposition was part of the Newman government. The Leader of the Opposition supported those cuts. Shame! Shame!

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Burleigh, you are warned under the standing orders for consistently interjecting.

Floods, Recovery Assistance

Mr RUSSO: My question is to the Minister for Communities and Minister for Disability Services and Seniors. As a lawyer and chair of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee, I know how important it is that Queenslanders have access to justice. Will the minister update the House on how her department is ensuring flood affected Townsville residents receive the legal assistance they require?

Mrs O'ROURKE: I thank the member for the question and his passion for supporting those in need. As part of the Townsville community's long-term recovery, legal and financial advocacy and support services will continue to be available for almost another two years. I am pleased to announce that the Queensland government has approved an additional \$150,000 to continue post-flood legal and financial advocacy support services. This funding will help address the significant increase in demand from the monsoon flood event that hit North Queensland, particularly Townsville, in January and February this year.

We are currently doing a lot of work with the Townsville Community Legal Service which, since 1 July 2019, has already helped more than 230 people with a variety of legal and financial issues. Some of these matters are associated with insurance claims; building contracts; body corporate and rental

issues, including tenancy evictions; financial issues such as repossession; and, unfortunately, financial scams. It has also responded to social issues such as domestic and family violence, elder abuse and neglect, which we know can unfortunately peak after stressful times like natural disasters. This additional \$150,000 means that this much needed support can continue in Townsville. It will help individuals and families who need help with recovery following the floods.

Additionally, applications for long-term assistance grants will remain available for individuals and families affected by the floods. As I said earlier, these long-term grants include: income tested essential household contents grants; structural assistance grants; and Essential Services Safety Reconnection Scheme grants. As many of my colleagues have said this morning, the Queensland government is here for the long haul. We will help affected North Queenslanders get back on their feet. We want to ensure that these communities not only recover but become more resilient moving forward. This funding will be made available through the jointly funded Commonwealth-state Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements, and I truly encourage anyone who needs support to contact us. We will be there to support you and we will be there to help you along the way.

Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships

Mr BLEIJIE: My question without notice is to the Premier. On Saturday the Premier said she would take action against the Deputy Premier for breaching her government's integrity rules. Yesterday it was revealed that the Deputy Premier will be acting Premier at the end of this week. Is the punishment for breaching integrity rules in the Palaszczuk government a promotion?

Ms PALASZCZUK: As I said very clearly, we are waiting for the CCC to report back and, as the Deputy Premier said, if that matter goes to investigation she will stand down. I will—

An opposition member interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Who was that? It was very rude.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Members to my left, the Premier is being responsive to the question asked. I have been very clear about my rulings with regard to that.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I will await the outcome of that report and then I will take action.

North West Minerals Province; Correction to *Record of Proceedings*

Mrs GILBERT: My question is of the Deputy Premier, Treasurer and the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on how the Palaszczuk government's plans to develop the North West Minerals Province will create more jobs in North Queensland and whether there are any alternative policies?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for Mackay for the question. Of course, she is a very strong advocate for the resource sector. Before I answer her question in detail I want to correct the record. I said that those opposite presided over a government that lost 8,000 jobs in the resource sector, but it was actually 8,700.

Under the Palaszczuk Labor government more than 15,700 jobs have been created in the resource sector. We know that a critical part of our resource story is opening up the North West Minerals Province, and that is why we went to the last state election promising more than \$380 million—

Dr Rowan interjected.

CHAIR: Member for Moggill, you are warned under the standing orders.

Ms TRAD:—to improve the rail line between Mount Isa and Townsville. Not only that, but in the last budget—along with the Minister for Transport and Main Roads, Minister Bailey—I was very proud to announce that we would invest more money to offer concessional rates, discounted rates, for those proponents who want to expand their businesses in the North West Minerals Province. It means that they can get their freight to port faster.

While we are on the subject of the port, we had to drag the Malcolm Turnbull government kicking and screaming to invest in the port by widening the channel so that bigger ships can get in and we can get more commodities out. We are providing a multipurpose facility at the port so that those proponents, those miners, can get their product to the port without having to offload 14 kilometres out from the port, pop it on trucks and get it into the port. We are determined to drive economic growth right throughout the state, particularly in the north.

What we do know is that under those opposite all of this would have been lost. They would have sold the port and they would have sold the rail line. If you think this is an idea from the past, you only need to go to the Leader of the Opposition's website where it talks about strong choices. It may not be Campbell Newman and the member for Clayfield, but the new leadership has the same policy to cut, sack and sell. I table a copy of the media release.

Tabled paper: Media release, dated 3 June 2014, on the website of the Leader of the Opposition, Mrs Deb Frecklington MP, titled 'A strong plan for a brighter future' [1415].

I will put money on the fact that by the end of question time it will not be on their website. I will put a bit of money on that, Mr Speaker.

(Time expired)

Former Ministerial Staffer, Lobbying

Mr POWELL: My question without notice is to the Premier. It has been revealed that a former top political strategist in the Premier's office owns a newly established lobbying firm whose first client is New Hope, a company that this Labor strategist dealt with extensively while in the Premier's office. Will the Premier order an immediate investigation by the Integrity Commissioner into this potential breach of the Integrity Act?

Ms PALASZCZUK: My understanding of that issue is that the former staff member is not dealing with New Hope: it is his colleague. It is very clear that is the situation. I assure this House I am advised that the person in question also sought advice when he separated from employment from my office and he also—

Mr Mander interjected.

CHAIR: Pause the clock. Member for Everton, you are warned under the standing orders. The Premier is being responsive to the question asked. I cannot be any clearer than that.

Ms PALASZCZUK: He received that advice from Ministerial Services upon separation. He has also advised the director-general about any work he is doing.

Energy Industry

Mr SPEAKER: I call the member for Maryborough.

Mr SAUNDERS: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker—

Ms Grace interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister for Education, I have asked for silence during questions. You are warned under the standing orders.

Mr SAUNDERS: My question is of the Minister for State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning. Will the minister please advise how his portfolio is supporting the growth of new energy industries in Queensland, and is the minister aware of any other approaches?

Mr DICK: I thank the member for Maryborough for his strong support of renewable energy projects in our state. As I said in my ministerial statement earlier today, a critical ingredient for a new hydrogen industry is renewable power. Renewable power is the reason countries around the world want our hydrogen, because when it is used to generate hydrogen it represents a carbon neutral energy source.

Over the weekend, I was pleased to announce another renewable energy project for Queensland. Through my department, the government has provided planning approval for a new \$128 million wind farm in the South Burnett region, creating 100 new jobs for people living in regional Queensland. This is another great project being delivered in the electorate of Nanango by the Palaszczuk Labor government. It just goes to show that, wherever you live in Queensland—in the great northern part of our state, in the bush, on the coast, in the south-east or even in the Leader of the Opposition's electorate—our Labor government is a government for all Queenslanders.

The reason we have these new renewable energy sources is that the Palaszczuk Labor government has set the energy policy framework for our state—Australia's youngest fleet of coal-fired power stations are safe in public ownership, 50 per cent renewable power by 2030 and power prices coming down—but not everyone agrees with this. I saw the Leader of the Opposition say this week that the LNP plans to bring more competition to Ergon. The people of Townsville know that when the LNP

says 'more competition' it means cuts, when the LNP says 'more competition' it means sack, and when the LNP says 'more competition' it means sell.

The LNP member for Currumbin said on radio this morning, 'I'm not on the ground. I've been dragged up to Townsville.' No wonder they feel that they have been dragged up to Townsville—because Townsville was ground zero when it came to the manic obsession of the LNP when it was in government to cut, sack and sell under Campbell Newman. What did they do on electricity? There were 500 Ergon workers sacked across Queensland. What did it mean for Townsville, the Far North and the North? It meant 880 frontline energy positions in North Queensland were cut. Linesmen, electricians and cable fitters were put on the scrap heap of unemployment by those members opposite. Who sat proudly around the cabinet subcommittee table with Campbell Newman? It was the Leader of the Opposition, who was so proud and agreed with every one of those decisions.

The people of Townsville know what they mean when they say 'competition'. Ergon jobs, QBuild jobs, nursing jobs and teaching jobs will go under the LNP. Only Labor supports regional Queensland and supports Townsville.

Townsville, Police Helicopter

Mr WATTS: My question without notice is to the Premier. Unlawful use of a motor vehicle in Townsville has increased by 52 per cent on the Premier's watch. Given vehicle crime is out of control, when will the Premier adopt the LNP policy for a dedicated police helicopter to be based in Townsville?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for the question. First of all, I will take the member's question on notice and I will get Minister Ryan to check the statistics because we know we do not necessarily have to believe everything that the LNP says. I will come to that in a moment.

When it comes to emergency services helicopters, I want to put something on the record. We have delivered two new helicopters for North Queensland to boost safety, with \$43 million in funding. They have the ability to work with police and all emergency services—

Mr LANGBROEK: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock.

Mr LANGBROEK: Mr Speaker, I draw your attention to standing order 247(1) and ask that you address this matter with the member.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you. I will give a general instruction again to the chamber, appreciating that this is an unfamiliar environment. We have done our best to replicate the chamber. The front of the chamber is here and the rear of the chamber is there. Members should be facing the front of the chamber when directing their comments, and those comments should be directed through the chair.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members to my left, the Premier has the call.

Ms PALASZCZUK: What I have said very clearly is that we have delivered two new helicopters for North Queensland to boost safety, with \$43 million in funding. They have the ability to work with police and all emergency services—

Opposition members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Do you want to hear the answer?

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, your comments will come through the chair. You will not address members with 'you'—

Ms PALASZCZUK: Mr Speaker, I am trying to answer the question.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, Premier. I do not need any guidance.

Ms PALASZCZUK: They have the—

Mr Mickelberg: No respect.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Buderim, I have just called the House to order and you immediately interjected. You are warned under the standing orders.

Ms PALASZCZUK: They have the ability to work with police and all emergency services, including aerial surveillance, search and rescue, and patient transfers. The new helicopters have

forward-looking infra-red camera capability. This gives aircrew members greatly enhanced search and rescue and surveillance abilities. In a three-month period, the new helicopters performed 182 operations, including 150 medical related transfers, 24 rescue operations and eight search and rescue operations.

That is our commitment to North Queensland—two helicopters. I note that the LNP's commitment at the moment is still an unfunded commitment. In fact, I am advised that the total unfunded LNP commitments to date is around—

Ms TRAD: \$11 billion.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I was going to say \$7 billion. I am advised it is \$11 billion. The people of this state need to know very clearly where and how the LNP is going to pay for its unfunded commitments. The LNP's commitment is still listed as \$10 million over four years to provide this helicopter service. I am advised that, with the model they are talking about, the LNP's helicopter would be in the air for less than half an hour and half a day. We will stick with our commitment. We are delivering two helicopters for the people of the north.

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Thuringowa, you were having an interchange across the chamber. I did not see who it was with but I certainly saw you. You are warned under the standing orders.

Townsville, Community Safety

Ms PEASE: My question is to the Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services. I ask the minister: will you please advise of actions being taken to keep communities safe, particularly here in beautiful Townsville for this very special sitting of parliament?

Speaker's Ruling, Question Out of Order

Mr SPEAKER: Member, I have given instructions on numerous occasions. That question was directed at the minister and not through the chair. I will have to rule that question out of order.

Tinaroo Dam, Water Supply

Mr KNUTH: My question without notice is to the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy. The Tinaroo Dam was completed in 1958. The North Johnstone transfer scheme was also designed to meet future water demands. Will the minister commit to construct this long overdue project that will improve water security and supply for all users in the region?

Dr LYNHAM: I would like to thank the member for Hill for the question. It is a very pertinent question about the North Johnstone diversion into the Tinaroo. For those members who are unaware, the North Johnstone diversion is a channel diversion upstream to the Barron River that then follows into the Tinaroo Dam, supplying more water for irrigators in the Tinaroo area—and substantially more water as well, with 30,000 megalitres of water from this diversion. Historically, the diversion was ruled out because of environmental concerns, but SunWater has found a new alignment for the diversion that may alleviate some of those previous environmental concerns. SunWater is presently investigating that option. That 30,000 megalitres is a lot of water. I know the member particularly was disappointed with the Nullinga Dam but that will be held for future use.

Nullinga Dam had something equivalent to Rookwood in terms of the amount of water. If you look at the costings between the two, Rookwood will cost the two governments \$352 million. For the same amount of water Nullinga costs \$1.2 billion, which makes Nullinga water very expensive indeed. It will rely on a large city like Cairns to come in to help fund Nullinga. We are a little premature in terms of Nullinga. That is why we have held Nullinga Dam.

Rookwood is cost-effective agricultural water. I am also very hopeful that the North Johnstone diversion will allow for cost-effective water to be available for irrigators of the Mareeba area. Do not forget the \$28 million for the Mareeba-Dimbulah channel upgrade, representing 8,000 megalitres of valuable water that will be on tap very shortly for those irrigators after the upgrade is completed. It was very pleasing that there was some rain up in that area and that a lot of restrictions were removed. It is very pleasing to see that this area remains a powerhouse for agricultural production in this state. I advise the member that we will not have long in that SunWater is doing its investigations of the North Johnstone diversion. I hope to see some successful outcomes in this regard.

International Education

Ms LINARD: 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 commitment to growing the international education industry throughout Queensland and particularly here in the north?

Ms JONES: I thank the honourable member for the question. As the Premier said this morning, our government is absolutely focused on growing jobs right across our state. That is why, as the minister responsible for international education, I am so proud that Townsville and North Queensland have such a strong story. We have worked really hard with industry on the ground to diversify Townsville's economy. That is why we have seen, as reported in today's *Townsville Bulletin*, our absolute commitment to growing hydrogen, to backing agriculture and to growing international education. In fact, since we were elected we have seen international education grow in value to this local economy from \$57 million to \$87 million. This has created more than 130 new jobs, now employing 350 people in North Queensland.

Anywhere we look in Townsville we see the investment of the Palaszczuk government. We are working hard to create jobs in all fields. This stands in stark contrast to what we saw the LNP leave after its short term in government. We saw the LNP cut over 670 jobs from Townsville. We saw 398 health workers ripped out of the healthcare system in this state. We saw the LNP sack more than 156 nurses and midwives from the Townsville Hospital. We know that they tried hard to sell off Townsville's port and the Townsville-Mount Isa rail line and that they closed Stuart State School. We are a government that is absolutely focused on growing jobs. That is why we have seen the unemployment rate in Townsville go from double digits under the LNP to around eight per cent today.

Ms Palaszczuk interjected.

Ms JONES: Thank you, Premier. It is lucky you are sitting there. We are very much focused on creating those jobs in all industries. The reason we back international education is that it is crucial in attracting tourism. It brings visiting friends and relatives to the town. I bet there is one person returning to town who was a bit scared to see his family and friends back here. No-one will forget how the member for Broadwater cut and run on Townsville. No wonder he is sulking. We already heard that the member for Currumbin was dragged here. I quote her from the radio. The Minister for State Development said the member for Currumbin described the Townsville parliament in this way: 'I am not on the ground. I have been dragged up to Townsville.' If we did not have the Townsville parliament, the member for Broadwater would not have been dragged back to face the music in a community from which he cut and run. This is a man who went to the 2012 election promising after one term more jobs, more infrastructure and more for the Townsville community.

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Ms JONES: Mr Speaker, I take offence at those comments and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Broadwater, I believe the minister found comments personally offensive.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms JONES: A lightweight. I find that offensive.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I withdraw.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Let us bring some civility to this parliament, please. The minister's time has expired.

Ms JONES: We saw his true colours.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister; there is no need for commentary.

Mr Mander interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: No, the member has not been warned and I will be looking at who in this chamber has been warned. I understand that you are on a warning, member for Everton.

New Acland Coalmine, Approvals

Mr WEIR: My question is to the Premier. In relation to delays in approving New Acland stage 3, CFMMEU vice-president Shane Bruncker said the Queensland government's procrastination is another example of how out of touch Labor is with regional Queensland and its traditional voter base. Can the Premier explain why her government has failed to save 150 regional jobs by failing to grant the necessary approvals?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for the question. It is interesting to see that the member for Condamine is supporting the CFMMEU on anything. I did not think I would see that in the House. We know that the member for Kawana likes coming in here and bagging the CFMMEU. Now the member for Condamine is a close friend of the CFMMEU. Let that be noted on the public record. I am more than happy to talk about this issue. Let us put some clarity and facts in the debate in relation to New Acland. It is very clear that there are a number of different interests in that region. They involve community, mining and farming interests.

A government member interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Farmers as well. What we have seen very clearly from those opposite is a different view when it comes to Acland. In fact, the Leader of the Opposition was against the New Acland mine. In the *South Burnett Times* she said—

After months of lobbying by myself, Ray Hopper and Jeff Seeney, the LNP has made clear that it will not support the proposal for Acland Stage 3.

That was the member for Nanango's view. She was against it. Let us be very clear in relation to this issue. We are waiting for the decision of the Court of Appeal. I said that yesterday and I will say it again today. That hearing occurred at the end of February and I think concluded on 1 March. It has been nearly six months in waiting for that decision. I am told that that decision could come down any day. It is called the Court of Appeal. We will await that decision of the Court of Appeal as we know that a number of interests are involved. That is the right thing to do: await the decision of the Court of Appeal.

Whilst on my feet, I am more than happy once again to talk about the record number of jobs in this region. Whilst sitting here, I had the opportunity once again to read the article in which I was quoted earlier. I think everybody in this House should be made aware that the LNP savagely cut over 600 jobs from the Townsville region. This was ground zero for job cuts under the LNP government. Let me quote from the Townsville *Bulletin*—this was seven years to the day—

Another 100 Townsville public sector workers have reportedly lost their jobs.

(Time expired)

Townsville, Community Safety

Mrs McMAHON: My question is of the Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services. Will the minister please advise of actions being taken to keep communities safe, particularly here in Townsville?

Mr RYAN: I thank the member for attending our community barbecue last night with the Police Commissioner. Hundreds of people attended to meet with our local police, to thank them for their efforts and to meet our new commissioner. It followed a very big day for policing here in Townsville, because we were out at the academy that morning talking about delivering our election commitment early. It was quite ironic for us to be there, because this is the very place that those opposite wanted to sell off. They wanted to sell off the Townsville police academy. The Leader of the Opposition forgot that we had a Townsville police academy, so in her mind we had already sold it off. At that academy, the place that they wanted to sell off, we were able to talk about our commitment to policing.

Ms Palaszczuk: Say that again. That is an important point.

Mr RYAN: They wanted to sell it off because privatisation is in their DNA. They want to get rid of public services. They want to cut, sack and sell all the time. The critical thing about the Townsville police academy is that it recruits people locally so that they can serve their community locally. It means that you get local people doing local policing. There are a hell of a lot more police in Townsville under this Labor government. We have already delivered 50 to Townsville and we announced yesterday that we are going to deliver our election commitment 18 months early—53 extra police by the end of next year.

While we are comparing election commitments, I was interested to see what those opposite promised Townsville at the last election. Their plan was called 'Our Real Plan'. I do not know whether there is an alternative called 'The Unreal Plan'. I am waiting for the next one, which might be 'The

Really, Really, Really Real Plan'. I went through 'Our Real Plan', which the LNP had at the last election. At the last election we promised 53 officers, which we are going to deliver 18 months early. How many did those opposite commit for Townsville? I am looking here under the heading 'Resources for police'. I am waiting for the audience, because I know of the rivalry between Townsville and Cairns. The LNP's commitment was zero police for Townsville but 20 for Cairns. They wanted to give the police to Cairns. Our government committed 53 and we are going to deliver them 18 months early.

Those opposite wanted to sell off the academy. They do not commit to policing here. They have zero commitment to policing. That was their commitment at the last election. There was no reference at all in their 'real plan' for resourcing for police for Townsville. We are 100 per cent committed to police in Townsville. Our record shows it: 50 police delivered to date and 53 more to come, 18 months early. That is what our government does.

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: I caution the minister about rivalries between Cairns and Townsville.

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Register of Members' Interests

Mr JANETZKI: My question without notice is to the Premier. Alan MacSparran QC says that a failure to enforce the timely declaration of interests makes the register meaningless. Why is the Premier ignoring this warning from the chair of Queensland's corruption watchdog?

Ms PALASZCZUK: The pecuniary interests register—the member probably already knows this—is a matter for the Clerk of the Parliament.

A government member: And for the individual member.

Ms PALASZCZUK: And for individual members. This is very clear. The pecuniary interests register is an obligation—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Members to my left, the Premier is being responsive to the question asked.

Ms PALASZCZUK:—on every member in this House to the Clerk of the Parliament. As such, the member should raise that issue with the Clerk of the Parliament.

Electricity Prices; Water Supply

Ms LUI: My question is of the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy. Will the minister update the House on the government's policies to bring down electricity prices and deliver water infrastructure, and can he advise of any alternative policies?

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, you have two minutes to respond.

Mrs Frecklington: Go straight to retail competition for the bush.

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for the question. The Leader of the Opposition asks me to go straight to retail competition in the bush, which I will. The energy policy of those opposite in relation to retail competition for the bush is absolute confusion. The federal LNP energy policy can be described as a nuclear sell-off of assets. That is about as far as I can get with that one.


Those opposite have copied their energy policy from the Queensland Productivity Commission. They have copied the policy of applying the community service obligation to the network rather than to retailers. The Productivity Commission, to me, was a warning—a 'what not to do'—but to the LNP it was full steam ahead: 'There's the iceberg. Ramp it up. Here we go.' The Queensland Productivity Commission report said that their policy would either increase prices for every household in this region—\$400 extra on their power bills—or, alternatively, result in \$700 of taxpayers' money being given to private companies with the hope, trust and faith that they will pass it on to families here in Townsville. Gee, that worked well down south for electricity prices!

These are reckless policies that will drive up electricity costs for all regional Queensland families. There is no doubt that their policies, as the Leader of the Opposition just asked me to detail, will drive up electricity prices for regional Queensland.

Mr SPEAKER: The time for question time has expired.

MOTION

Business Program

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (11.15 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 Personalised Transport Ombudsman Bill, a maximum of three hours to complete all stages; and
 - (b) the Transport Legislation (Road Safety and Other Matters) Amendment Bill a maximum of five hours to complete all stages.
2. That, for each bill listed in (1)(a) and (b), the minister be called on in reply by 30 minutes before the expiry of the maximum time.
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, 5 September 2019, Mr Speaker:
 - (a) shall call upon the minister to table any explanatory notes to government amendments to be put;
 - (b) shall then 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.

Today marks a special day. Not only are we here in Townsville for regional parliament; it is 17 years to the day since the first regional parliament was held in this very room—

Ms Bates: Deb's birthday!

Mrs D'ATH: It is the Leader of the Opposition's birthday as well. Regional parliament provides an opportunity for Queenslanders who ordinarily would not have the opportunity to see their parliament in action to see their House—the people's house—live in action firsthand. I am proud that the Palaszczuk Labor government has continued this fine tradition—it was started under a Labor government and continued under a Labor government—to take the parliament to regional Queensland as it is only Labor that will deliver for all of Queensland.

Turning to the bills that are prescribed in this motion, it should be noted that the Personalised Transport Ombudsman Bill commenced debate, albeit briefly, in Brisbane in the last sitting week and therefore it has been allocated a total time of three hours. The Transport Legislation (Road Safety and Other Matters) Amendment Bill has been allocated five hours. Both bills have time prescribed to allow for the minister—in this case Minister Bailey—to reply to any questions and to move any amendments. Upon the completion of these bills, the House will then move on to the next item on the *Notice Paper*. In addition, there will be the usual matters of public interest, private members' statements, ministerial statements, question time and, of course, the private member's motion.

I am looking forward to some robust but respectful debate during this week's sitting. I am sure that the people of Townsville and surrounding communities who have the opportunity to come to see their House in action will not be disappointed. This business motion is about making sure that we engage in our work in this parliament in an efficient and effective way: to debate and vote on bills; to ensure that the work of this parliament continues; and to ensure that we do not see ongoing filibustering, where the opposition feels the need to put every single member on the speaking list for a bill, being repetitive—

Opposition members interjected.

Mrs D'ATH: Those on the other side think they are funny. However, it is our job to represent the people of Queensland. It is our job to represent the people who are here today and not to play games and deliberately delay debate just to make a point and to have stunts.

The statistics have shown us that, despite the rhetoric that we hear from those opposite—and we will hear again today in this business motion debate—more members are speaking now to bills than we have had in quite a considerable period of time over past parliaments. We are having more time for the debating of bills. Those opposite talk about guillotines and they carry on about their rights being impinged. The fact is that the statistics speak for themselves. Members are being heard. Members are

getting the opportunity, but it is important that we get on with the business of the day—that is, we get these bills debated, we get them voted on and we get the job done for the people of Queensland. I commend the motion to the House.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stewart): Order! Before I call the member for Kawana, it might be timely for me to remind you which members have been given warnings: the members for Kawana, Surfers Paradise, Southern Downs, Mermaid Beach, Glass House, Toowoomba South, Gladstone, Nicklin, Bundaberg, Burleigh, Moggill, Everton, McConnel, Buderim and Thuringowa.

Mr BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (11.20 am): I may be accused of many things, but I am not going to cop that I am a filibusterer. I will not cop that. Not once have I filibustered. I have represented my constituents with the determination and the passion for which I was voted for, as each member of this chamber is voted for. It is not filibustering; it is discharging the duties that they are paid to do. That is what it is.

This Townsville sitting has been a shambles in terms of its preparedness by the government. The late notice of a Townsville sitting—the shortest notice in history for regional sittings, of which I have been to one in Mackay—put an immense amount of stress on members of the parliamentary staff to ensure they got here and got it ready. When I asked the Clerk at estimates when he first heard about the regional sitting in Townsville, he said that he read about it in the paper. That is when the government announced it and that is the planning. The only reason the Premier has found regional Queensland is as a result of the federal election on 18 May when she had a wake-up call that regional Queensland exists. We know the Premier spends more time on the tarmac in Shanghai, in Canada, in Paris, everywhere—

An opposition member: London!

Mr BLEIJIE:—London, the UK, than she does on the tarmac in regional Queensland. That is the truth. The Leader of the House wants to talk about statistics. In the last five years the Premier has spent more time overseas than she has in regional Queensland and now those opposite want to put it out there that they love regional Queensland. The LNP has always loved regional Queensland and we will spend more time in regional Queensland than will Labor ministers. In three days Labor members will go from here back to Brisbane—back to their comfort zone—where they can talk down the mining sector, talk down regional jobs and talk about reskilling the mining sector back in their happy place in West End where they do not think anyone in regional Queensland listens. We will remind them.

I spoke to the Leader of the House yesterday at 1.50 pm and she said to me that there would not be a business program motion today and there would be no Business Committee meeting yesterday afternoon. I then got an email at about 4.30 pm saying that there would be a Business Committee meeting. I was at a meeting with some great local teachers who drove from an hour and a half away to meet me because they do not believe the education minister is doing a good job. I sent the member for Mudgeeraba to the meeting on my behalf and then I got an email saying, 'We're now having a business program motion because the government will do in Townsville what it does in Brisbane,' and that is gag debate.

The government is guillotining debate. It is denying members the opportunity to speak. It talks about statistics. Members opposite say that more members have spoken. The reason that statistic is skewed is that members now have to cut their speeches to speak for only a couple of minutes. Why have 10 minutes on the clock or 20 minutes for committee members if the government believes that each member should only be able to speak for one or two minutes? It may be that Labor members can only think of one to two minutes worth of things to say about their constituency, but the crossbench and opposition members can take the whole 10 minutes—can take the time as we are paid to do.

The Labor government forgets what it is here for. When they were in opposition Labor members talked about arrogance and hubris. The first thing they do in government is guillotine debate and stop debate happening. It is their job and I can say that they are spectacularly failing in their job. For goodness' sake, the member for Mundingburra got up here as a minister and answered a question. I think that is the first question I have seen her answer in five years as a minister. I forgot she was a minister.


Government members interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: They are squawking. I look across the room and I do not identify half of them. So bereft of talent is that side of the government, they are unrecognisable both in person and in talent. We will always fight for more time—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stewart): Back to the motion please.

Mr BLEIJIE: Absolutely, Mr Deputy Speaker. We will fight for more time because that is what Queenslanders expect and that is what regional Queenslanders expect. They want us to talk about the issues important to regional Queensland, and I suspect that there are better things to talk about this week.

(Time expired)

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (11.26 am): I rise to speak in support of the parliamentary business motion moved by the Leader of the House. For the benefit of those in the gallery, particularly the students in the gallery, let me talk them through what we are doing here. This is a motion that we move at the start of every sitting week to determine how much time we should spend on each bill. Kids, it is a bit like what your teacher does at the start of every school day. Your teacher decides how much time there is for class work. They think about when the bell will go at the end of the day—take out lunchtime, take out brain break—and then work out how much time to spend on each subject. Kids, imagine there is someone in your class who just does not shut up. Imagine there is someone in your class—

Mr LANGBROEK: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. One moment. Member for Surfers Paradise?

Mr LANGBROEK: Mr Deputy Speaker, I know he wants to be a parliamentary tour guide, but he is actually in the parliament.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: What is your point of order?

Mr LANGBROEK: Standing order 247. Comments should be directed to you.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members! Member for Murrumba, I ask you to direct your comments through the chair please.

Dr MILES: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I am sure every class has a dobber as well. Imagine that person liked to talk so much that they think that you should not be able to go home when the bell rings; you should have to sit and listen to them on and on and on and on and on like we just did. The member for Kawana is that person.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members! Pause the clock. Members, I remind you that several of you are on warnings already. I will not have hesitation in implementing the procedural orders.

Dr MILES: I am sure that to everyone in the gallery five hours to discuss a bill sounds like a pretty long time. It is in fact plenty of time for this place to consider that important bill.

Also for the benefit of those who might not make it along to parliament all of the time, during this debate so far you will have heard the term 'filibuster' and you might not have heard that word before. 'Filibuster' is when a whole heap of members of the opposition get given speaking notes by the opposition leader's office, all of which sound very similar, and they stand up and they read them out one after the other so they can come along next week and complain that they missed out. That is what a filibuster is, kids, and if you hang around for a bit longer today you are about to see some more of it.


Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. With respect to my colleague, before raising standing order 247, there is also convention in the parliament, whether we sit in Townsville or in Brisbane—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stewart): Your point of order, please.

Mr BLEIJIE:—not to address the gallery. The address is to the Deputy Speaker or the Speaker.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you member, for Kawana. Member for Murrumba, I ask you to direct all your comments through the chair, please.

Dr MILES: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. In the interests of ensuring that we have as much time as possible to debate the bills that are on the *Notice Paper* for the week, I will simply endorse and encourage members to support the motion moved by the Leader of the House.

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (11.30 am): I rise to speak in support of my colleague the member for Kawana in opposing this motion. If this government continues on this pathway, we will be starting

parliament at morning tea and we will be gone by lunchtime. We only have to look at this week's agenda: a late start on Wednesday and a five o'clock finish on Thursday. Why are we finishing at five o'clock on Thursday? It would not be anything to do with getting back to Brisbane on Thursday night, would it? Those on this side of the House will stay here until the cows come home, if necessary, to speak to legislation. We are not afraid to roll up our sleeves and work until the debate is finished. I think the members of the public who are sitting in the gallery would have that expectation.

We are paid to be in this place to debate legislation, to have our say and represent our constituents. The average population of constituencies across this state is around 33,000. If 10 of us do not get the opportunity to speak, 330,000 people in this state do not get the opportunity to have their voice heard in parliament. I take my role as the member for Burdekin very seriously. I know that in the gallery this week there will be constituents who have driven from Clermont—a six- or seven-hour drive—to watch this parliament. They deserve the right to hear the debate. They deserve the right to hear all the members in this parliament. They deserve the right for their local member to get up and represent them—to have their say and put forward the viewpoints of their constituents who are raising their concerns. Why should someone who lives in Clermont be treated any differently from someone who lives in Aspley or, heaven forbid, West End in Brisbane?

The Premier said that it was important that people in regional Queensland got the opportunity to see our democratic process in person. This is not a democratic process. The Attorney-General just said that it was much more efficient and much more effective to have our debate guillotined. I bet the people sitting in the gallery do not think that. I bet those students sitting in the gallery cannot believe that we are putting time frames on the debate, that members in this place are not being allowed to get up—

Mrs Frecklington: That's why they walked out on the minister.

Mr LAST: That is exactly right. I take that interjection from the Leader of the Opposition. Those people in the gallery would have the expectation that, when it comes to debating legislation in this place, each and every member would have the right to get up to contribute to that debate. I bet they cannot believe that a large number of MPs cannot get on their feet and have their say this week when we are talking about legislation.

I move now to the subject of what we are debating this week. Would we not think that we would be debating the reef protection bill, or the Galilee Basin bill, which is about the resource sector in Queensland? We back our resource sector and we back our farmers. This morning, there were 500 of them outside here. Did the minister or the Premier go out and address them? Not a chance! We should be debating that bill in Townsville this week, because this reef protection bill will have the biggest impact on our farmers in North Queensland. Those farmers out there this morning, with their backs to the walls, would have relished the opportunity to watch this debate unfold in this place this week, to hear from our side about the impact that this legislation is going to have on their livelihoods.

Instead, the members opposite bury the reef protection bill and they do not want to talk about the Galilee Basin and opening up the resource sector—'Let's not go there in regional Queensland. We might not get a lot of brownie points if we start talking about that.' There is a golden opportunity here in Townsville this week to debate legislation that has a direct impact on this community. If the members opposite want to talk about this community, where is the debate on crime? Where is the debate on jobs? Where is the debate on the cost of living? Where are the debates on the big-ticket items that need to be talked about in this community? We are not interested in the shiny baubles, all the ribbon cutting and all the little functions and events that are going on. We are here to work and we are here to debate the legislation. That is what we are about on this side of the House.

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, 41:

LNP, 37—Bates, Batt, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Boyce, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Hart, Hunt, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McArdle, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O'Connor, Perrett, Powell, Purdie, Robinson, Rowan, Simpson, Sorensen, Stevens, Stuckey, Watts, Weir, Wilson.

Grn, 1—Berkman.

KAP, 1—Dametto.

PHON, 1—Andrew.

Ind, 1—Costigan.

Resolved in the affirmative.

PERSONALISED TRANSPORT OMBUDSMAN BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 22 August (see p. 2537), on motion of Mr Bailey—

That the bill be now read a second time.



Hon. MC BAILEY (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (11.41 am), continuing: I will resume from the last session of parliament. The legislative framework outlined in this bill aims to deliver a cost-effective model, accessible to the industry and customers at no charge.

What does this mean in practice? Firstly, the ombudsman is not intended to be the only way that customers, drivers or service providers can resolve their concerns about personalised transport services. For example, if a passenger loses a personal item while riding in a taxi they should still contact the taxi company. If a driver has issues with their employment arrangement with a service provider they can and should still raise this directly with the service provider and seek to address their concerns in this way. It is anticipated that the ombudsman will be particularly beneficial to the public and industry where a person does not know where to start to resolve their personalised transport problem or where they are unable to resolve an issue through the existing channels.

The scope of issues and complaints that can be made to the ombudsman is intentionally broad. However, there will also be some matters that the ombudsman will not be involved in. The ombudsman will not have a role in investigating offences under the legislation as that will continue to be a matter for the department or the police. Similarly, complaints about legislation or government policy will remain a matter for the department or government to investigate and consider. The ombudsman will also not be able to investigate matters that are within the responsibilities of other agencies.

Further, at clause 36 of the bill, the ombudsman has discretion not to investigate some matters, including where it reasonably believes the complainant does not have sufficient interest in a matter raised in complaint. Clause 36 is relevant to committee recommendation 4 regarding whether industry representative bodies will have access to the Personalised Transport Ombudsman services on behalf of their members. Firstly, as an independent body, it will ultimately be a matter for the Personalised Transport Ombudsman as to whether it investigates or refuses to investigate complaints under clause 36, but clause 36 is intended to be applied flexibly and could be used by the ombudsman to refuse to investigate a matter raised by a representative body.

To put this in context, underpinning the ombudsman's role is a pragmatic aim to help resolve complaints on a case-by-case basis. It is not intended that the ombudsman become a place for complaints in principle or for broadbrush issues to be raised under a claim of group representation. For the Personalised Transport Ombudsman to be able to assist, the complainant needs to be in a position where they can directly participate in any investigation or mediation processes. This ensures the ombudsman can target its services to the needs of an individual. In an evolving industry, the membership of representative bodies may be unclear. Even within a membership group, the individual circumstances of members within the group may, in fact, vary. These factors make it difficult for the ombudsman to provide advice specific to the interests of individuals. However, there is nothing in this bill stopping representative bodies from assisting and supporting their members; for example, by assisting them in preparing written material.

To allow the ombudsman to assess whether it can proceed with investigating a complaint, upon receiving a query or complaint the ombudsman will have the ability to make preliminary inquiries about the complaint to decide how best to deal with the matter. One outcome from this process may be for the ombudsman to provide advice about options available to the complainant to resolve a complaint.

It is not intended for the ombudsman to duplicate functions or services already provided elsewhere and to that end advice provided by the ombudsman may include information about another agency or organisation that is best placed to assist the person. For example, if a complaint relates to

workplace health and safety issues, the ombudsman may decide not to investigate, but may instead advise a complainant how to contact Workplace Health and Safety Queensland. Where the ombudsman decides to deal with a complaint, the matter can be investigated and, depending on the nature of the complaint, the ombudsman may also provide mediation between the parties and make non-binding recommendations to guide the parties towards a positive resolution.

For industry to get maximum benefits from the ombudsman's role, it is important that each party participate in any investigation or mediation in good faith. The bill is also careful to make sure there are protections in place for complainants. Fear of reprisals is a significant issue that has been raised by industry participants. The protections in this bill include offences against those who take detrimental action, as well as provisions to support a claim for damages. This bill also includes the powers necessary to support investigation and enforcement of an offence related to reprisals.

The ombudsman has potential to be more than just a place for complaints. When operational, the ombudsman will be in a prime position to monitor complaints and notice trends and systematic issues that may require consideration by the department or possibly even by the government. The ombudsman will be able to report these types of matters to the minister and that information will become a valuable tool in allowing the department and the government to develop evidence based responses to lead to better outcomes for industry and the community.

In addition to responding to matters raised by the public or industry, the ombudsman will also be responsible for reviewing matters referred to it by the minister. On this point I note that there was some discussion during the committee process querying whether the minister could use this power to refer a matter back to the ombudsman after the ombudsman refused to investigate the matter or had already completed its investigation on the matter. I propose to move an amendment during consideration in detail to clarify that this is not the intention. I cannot reiterate strongly enough that this bill is about establishing a properly independent Personalised Transport Ombudsman, but I would also highlight that, while the legislation ensures the ombudsman must investigate new matters referred to it by the minister, importantly the ombudsman will have the freedom and independence to determine the approach to considering the issues raised by the minister.

The role of the Personalised Transport Ombudsman has been designed to help industry and customers resolve complaints through advice and information and possibly mediation so that mutually agreeable outcomes are achieved. It is about assisting industry to help itself, particularly through this period of significant change. I note that during the committee process some concerns from industry were highlighted regarding the ability of the Personalised Transport Ombudsman to make binding decisions. This was referred to in committee recommendation 3. It was never the intent of this bill to establish another decision-making body. There are already enough courts and tribunals and other regulators.

When developing this model it was clear the actions an ombudsman can take relate directly to the role it is intended to play. For example, the Queensland Ombudsman has functions relating to investigating administrative actions and procedures of agencies and providing advice, but it cannot make binding decisions. The Training Ombudsman has functions similar to the Personalised Transport Ombudsman, including receiving complaints, referring complaints, advising complainants and reporting to the minister about matters. The Training Ombudsman cannot make binding decisions. By comparison, in the Health Ombudsman's role, it may identify a serious safety risk to persons. As a result, the Health Ombudsman can make decisions about a person's registration or issue prohibition orders against health practitioners.

The Personalised Transport Ombudsman will not deal directly with serious safety matters. The department already has a rigorous legislative and enforcement scheme to address unsafe or inappropriate driver or operator behaviour and to ensure vehicles are of a safe standard. For example, all personalised transport drivers must hold a driver authorisation. The authorisation process requires criminal history checking and the authorisation can be immediately suspended if the person is charged with a disqualifying offence. The ombudsman can urgently advise the department if it becomes aware of any safety risk. Giving the ombudsman powers to make binding decisions would fundamentally alter the way the ombudsman is intended to operate, the costs involved and the way it interacts with established bodies like courts and tribunals.

The ombudsman is designed to assist parties to resolve complaints, not to add another layer of legal process or to duplicate the work of existing bodies. While the ability to make binding decisions is not considered necessary for the Personalised Transport Ombudsman, enshrining the impartiality and the independence of the role is necessary.

Regarding impartiality, this bill disqualifies certain people from being the ombudsman, including someone who has a criminal conviction, is insolvent or is a member of parliament. In addition, the bill disqualifies a person who has held a personalised transport licence within the previous five years or is a member of an advocacy group, peak body or trade union that is involved in personalised transport services. I note that committee recommendation No. 2 suggested reconsideration of the exclusion period to exclude only current industry members.

The ombudsman will have the ability to provide advice, mediate between parties and make recommendations to parties, as well as investigate matters on behalf of the minister and make reports about systematic issues to the government. Therefore, it is important that the person who undertakes those activities is able to approach the issues without bias. Personalised transport industry stakeholders include different industry groups with largely differing views on issues affecting their industry. It is imperative to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, that all complainants feel comfortable making complaints and are reassured that their issues will be considered in an objective manner, with no preconceived positions or loyalties. Therefore, it is intended that we retain a disqualification period. However, after hearing the submissions and considering the committee recommendation on this point, I acknowledge that the five-year exclusion for industry members is possibly overly cautious. As a result, during consideration in detail I propose moving an amendment to reduce the period from five years to three years.

Through this bill, my government is providing for a cost-effective personalised transport ombudsman that is accessible to industry and customers at no charge. It will be able to provide advice to help in the resolution of complaints about personalised transport services. I note that committee recommendation No. 6 suggested reconsidering proposed funding arrangements for the ombudsman. This recommendation is supported in principle. However, we cannot predict the number and types of complaints that may be the business of the ombudsman. As such, clause 29 of the bill allows a flexible arrangement to be applied to resourcing. Importantly, the bill also requires the ombudsman to be reviewed within three years to ensure it continues to be a relevant, efficient and effective body.


During consideration in detail I will also be proposing an amendment to support committee recommendation No. 5 and require the Personalised Transport Ombudsman to publicly report on systematic issues and complaints statistics annually. This information and the review will be critical to enable evidence based decisions for the future funding, regulation and operation of the ombudsman. Further, I will also propose an amendment to allow the personalised transport ombudsman provisions of the bill to commence by proclamation instead of on assent. The department will work to progress the appointment of the Personalised Transport Ombudsman as soon as possible, following passage of the bill.

Finally, committee recommendation No. 8 sought clarification during the second reading about clause 87 of the bill. This clause allows a regulation to be made about matters that a court may or must take into account when considering a claim for compensation arising from the exercise of authorised officer powers. As the committee acknowledged, this type of provision is quite common in Queensland legislation. Allowing these matters to be dealt with by regulation complements the provisions in the legislation and ensures that government can respond quickly and flexibly to issues that may arise in complex matters. In relation to protecting the institution of the courts, any matter included in a regulation would guide a court when considering a claim for compensation that would not stipulate the weight a court applies to a particular matter. To protect the institution of parliament, as with any regulation, a regulation made under this provision would be tabled and subjected to scrutiny by the committee and the House.

In addition to the personalised transport amendments, this bill includes amendments to support the transition to new smart ticketing solutions for Queensland Transport. Briefly, through this bill we are making amendments to ensure that the legislation is more flexible and responsive to the introduction of new payment methods, such as contactless debit and credit cards, smartphones and even wearable devices. Importantly, the amendments will ensure fare evasion continues to be enforceable when new payment options become available. The bill contains necessary consequential amendments, as well as amendments to clarify the operation and enforceability of existing provisions. This bill is a practical, forward-thinking bill that is committed to continuous improvement by industry and for customers.

Before I commend the bill to the House, Mr Deputy Speaker, with your indulgence, I acknowledge the contribution to public life of Janice Mayes, whose funeral is today. She is a well-known person to Townsville and Queensland. It is regrettable that, due to the timing of parliament, I and a few other

members cannot attend her funeral. It would be remiss of me to stand in this place in Townsville and not acknowledge such a great Townsville woman. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (11.55 am): I take a great deal of pride in rising to speak on behalf of the opposition on the Personalised Transport Ombudsman Bill 2019 here in beautiful Townsville. The role of the opposition is not to simply oppose legislation for the sake of it. I make that important point up-front. Given the many concerns that we have with the proposed bill, the LNP's position will be to oppose it. When it comes to formulating legislation there is a golden rule, which is around the fact that you do not legislate what you are not prepared to enforce.

I note the committee's position. Although the committee recommended that the Personalised Transport Ombudsman Bill be passed, it is worth noting that it was obliged to make a further seven recommendations. Those include calling on the minister to reconsider several matters relating to the Personalised Transport Ombudsman's ability to make binding decisions, publicly report on systemic issues and complaint statistics, the reporting arrangements for the Personalised Transport Ombudsman, as well as to clarify whether the representative bodies will be able to access the services of the PTO, as I will refer to the role for the remainder of my contribution. The LNP members of the committee provided a statement of reservation regarding these and other concerns, which included the constraints placed upon the new PTO position, the limited investigative powers available to it, which is really the crux of the matter—I will repeat that: the limited investigative powers available to it—the duplication of effort and the adequacy of the measures designed to protect fare revenue.

As outlined in the original explanatory notes, and I will speak to the amendments later in my contribution, the main policy objective of the bill is to establish the position of the Personalised Transport Ombudsman in order to help resolve complaints from anyone relating to personalised transport services. The PTO can also identify and report to the minister on systemic issues arising from personalised transport complaints. The other policy objectives of the bill that we note are, first, to support the protection of fare revenue under the new ticketing solution and, secondly, to clarify and improve the enforceability of existing provisions of the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act, TO(PT)A.

The bill provides for the appointment of the PTO and establishes the Office of the PTO. The bill also outlines the PTO's functions, powers and responsibilities. It is within that detail that the opposition has a distinct problem with this legislation. This action flows from a recommendation contained in the former public works and utilities committee report that an ombudsman or a similar entity be established to deal with disputes in the industry. You would have to have been living under a rock for the past few years to be unaware that some of those issues continue to plague the industry. In fact, last year in parliament I made a speech about how one night, from around 11.40 pm onwards, with representatives from the taxi industry I spent time in Fortitude Valley, as well as the CBD precinct, to try to work out exactly where things were in relation to this particular issue. To be quite frank, in certain ways it has been a complete mess. Therefore, we would argue that there absolutely is a need for someone to intervene with certain issues as they relate to this area of public policy, but we do not believe that this particular bill is adequate or goes far enough.

I note that the amendments in the bill are designed to ensure that the PTO can operate independently in helping to resolve complaints from anyone relating to personalised transport services. I also acknowledge that the bill seeks to protect all-important fare revenue under the new ticketing solution by a range of measures. They include, amongst other things, relocating fare evasion and related offences to a regulation to provide greater flexibility to make changes to the regulation as ticketing technology undoubtedly develops over time; providing continued support for the sharing of information to verify a person's entitlement to a concession—a very important point; providing evidentiary aids for fares and revenue protection devices; and, lastly, making consequential amendments to provide for the continued use of unclaimed credit on dormant passenger accounts. That was in the news a matter of months ago.

There are miscellaneous amendments in the bill. The bill purports to clarify and improve the enforceability of existing provisions in TO(PT)A by clarifying the public passenger services for which operator accreditation, OA, and driver authorisation, DA, are required; providing evidentiary aids for establishing whether, at a particular time, a person holds a category of OA or DA; clarifying an existing power of an authorised person to require information from certain third-party persons; allowing a driving sanction to be imposed when a person driving a taxi, booked hire vehicle or limousine commits an offence against a provision prescribed by regulation; and, finally, making other minor consequential amendments.

Specifically, the advances made possible by technology and the gig economy have been relatively swift and far-reaching for all jurisdictions in the Western Hemisphere. As a result of this new technology and related business models, customer expectations in the personalised transport space have undoubtedly changed over the last five or six years and beyond. This has seen new business models entering the market that have harnessed the technological advances. The power on one's mobile phone now has made the whole gig economy and digital disruption something that has affected not only this particular industry but also many other industries—some of which various governments have struggled to come to grips with. However, their emergence has given rise to a host of operational and enforcement issues that this bill is meant to address.

Furthermore, the impact on the pre-existing models such as taxis and hire cars has been severe and has led to ongoing disruption across the industry participants. In fact, only yesterday, when shadow ministers were taking deputations from different people in the community, I met with a taxi operator who has 30 years industry experience and who has seen the value of a traditional taxi licence plummet from around \$500,000 at the height of the market to now anywhere between \$80,000 and \$100,000. Many members in this chamber would have heard stories from people who have maybe two, three or four taxi licences. In many cases it was a superannuation hedge. They worked hard, they invested and they put money into another licence only to see its value plummet over the last three to four years.

Industry and consumer complaints, along with turf wars, are still occurring and have yet to be fully addressed by the Labor government. As I said earlier in my contribution, I have spent time in the Valley and in the CBD at the height of a Friday and Saturday night where, between Brisbane City Council buses, rideshare service operators—several of them; I am not naming one in particular—and traditional taxi services, I have watched firsthand the squabbles and the turf wars. Sadly, I think they will lead to major ramifications for the entire industry.

It is considered that the establishment of the PTO position is an attempt—and I stress: an attempt—by the government to shift responsibility for settling these issues. However—and this is where the opposition absolutely disagrees with what is being proposed at this sitting of regional parliament today here in Townsville—the limited powers assigned to the position suggest that these issues, including complaints about government policy and legislation or even alleged offences under other relevant transport legislation, will simply not be properly investigated.

In terms of the protection of fare revenue, over the past few years there has been a growing trend in fare evasion, sadly, and associated antisocial behaviour, which both sides of the chamber acknowledge is a real problem. The cost of revenue forgone is estimated to be around \$25 million a year. It could be more. One thing is for sure: fare evasion revenue appears to be well and truly on the rise and something desperately needs to be done about it for all taxpayers. The amendments contained in this bill seek to clarify the enforceability of the existing provisions of TO(PT)A so that they may assist in addressing this disturbing trend. Based on the feedback from those stakeholders who provided submissions to the Transport and Public Works Committee, they see the role of the PTO as being very simply a waste of money and little more than a 'toothless tiger', so there was little, if any, support for the bill.

In 2015, Labor was caught off guard by the disruption occurring in the personalised transport space. As per their usual approach, rather than immediately resolve the issues, they responded by doing what they do best—holding a review. Unfortunately, by the time they eventually released a five-year—2016 to 2021—strategic plan that included measures to overhaul Queensland's personalised transport industry, sadly, the situation had deteriorated even further. Most of their reform measures were implemented through the Transport and Other Legislation (Personalised Transport Reform) Amendment Act 2017. Some three years later, the enforcement issues impacting the industry participants, sadly, largely remain unresolved. The reform package contained only limited compensation to be made available to the taxi industry. In addition, disputes are ongoing and clear lines of responsibility for compliance are yet to be effectively established.

At the end of the day, not only I but, I would argue, many members on both sides of the chamber have had countless taxidriver licence holders come to us—hardworking men and women who have toiled, in some cases for many years, in an industry that was largely, to be frank, heavily regulated by the government of the day. Effectively, a bundle of rights was issued on a piece of paper. Very brutally, and obviously with third-party digital disruptors, that industry underwent massive change in a very short period of time. To see the value of a bundle of rights, issued on a piece of paper, almost dissolve in a matter of months has caused so much angst within the broader taxi industry. Rather than try to work

with the industry to introduce, as much as practicable, a level playing field, what has happened has been an absolute disgrace.

No-one, particularly on the opposition side of the chamber, bemoans the introduction of true competition. That is in the DNA of the LNP—to promote competition in all industry, to bring out the best in pricing and service for the customer, for the consumer. No-one on this side of the chamber for one moment would ever argue that we cannot move with the times and allow new entrants into any existing industry. You must move with the times, but the way that you engage in true reform is by bringing everyone with you. To go from a regulated industry to pretty much open slather overnight and not think that there would be real consequences absolutely defies description.

In relation to the limited compensation made available, we know through the former minister for transport and main roads that it was capped at a minimum of \$20,000 for two licences only. To this day that still causes great concern to many people in the taxi industry. Rather than accept responsibility, Labor now hopes that the creation of the PTO will act as a common voice for accountability. Despite maintaining that it consulted widely on these matters, it is extremely disappointing that all stakeholders have been compelled to speak out about various aspects of the bill. As a consequence, they do not support the bill. Today we are debating the Personalised Transport Ombudsman Bill and one of the great stakeholders in this entire debate, Taxi Council Queensland, simply does not support it.

To a large degree I think that says it all. It underlines the total failure of the minister to bring forward a bill into this chamber—wherever this great chamber may be physically meeting—that will meet the needs of the industry and consumers. As an example of stakeholder feedback, Taxi Council Queensland wrote to the Queensland government saying that the PTO presents as a ‘toothless tiger’ and the idea is simply a waste of money. Even more concerning, they expressed the view that many of the substantive and pressing issues confronting their sector appear to be outside the proposed purview of the role.

The Ride Share Drivers' Association of Australia said that the entirety of the legislation is flawed because the ombudsman will have ‘no real powers to compel parties to be bound to any results’. The minister said that in his opening speech. In its executive summary the Limousine Action Group (Queensland) expressed concern that safety is not a priority of the bill, and I want to stress that. Whether you are talking to limousine drivers, rideshare drivers or taxidriver, a level playing field centred on consumer passenger safety is an issue that comes up time and time again, and that is not adequately addressed in the proposed legislation.

In terms of the new ticketing system, community input has been almost non-existent. This limits the potential for fresh ideas like periodic options to be properly catered for in the new ticketing system. Under the Labor government there has been a surge in fare evasion. On the Gold Coast, for example, the cost of fare evasion button activation during school runs has risen from just over \$402,000 in 2016-17 to approximately \$764,000 in 2017-18. As a result of this avoidance, the value of fares collected on Gold Coast school bus services dropped from around \$908,000 in the 2015-16 financial year to \$436,000 in the 2017-18 financial year. Taxpayers are losing fare revenue week in and week out, month in and month out.


In contrast to Labor's failed approach to the personalised transport space, in 2014 the LNP worked with Taxi Council Queensland on a targeted program to manage enforcement issues while the transition brought about by technology disruption continued. After listening to passengers, drivers, owners and operators, the LNP took fresh policies to the 2017 election to stand up for the taxi and rideshare industry, and we will do that again in 14 months time. Included in these initiatives was the establishment of a statutory personalised transport commissioner—not an ombudsman—with real powers to investigate the issues and a plan to consolidate all personalised transport functions within TMR into a new office of personalised transport, giving it some real teeth—some real legislative power. The LNP also committed to facilitate and improve integration with the public transport network, and we will continue to engage with the industry to ensure relevance and acceptance of its policies. The LNP would listen, plan and act for passengers and the industry to fix the current malaise if we were given the privilege of forming the next government of Queensland in roughly 14 months.

I also note the amendments that are to be moved during consideration in detail by the honourable minister. The explanatory notes state it was intended that the Personalised Transport Ombudsman provisions would commence on assent of the bill; however, in recognition of the fact that potential changes to the legislation could arise through the committee process, recruitment for the Personalised Transport Ombudsman is not planned to start until after the bill is passed. Therefore, it has been identified that once the provisions commence, technically a person will be able to lodge complaints

under clause 31 even though there will not be a Personalised Transport Ombudsman to respond to those complaints.

At the end of the day, everyone on this side of the chamber wants to see the hardworking men and women of the taxi, rideshare and limousine industry make money through hard work, thrift and toil. There is fundamentally nothing wrong with seeking to derive a profit from a legal entity using your blood, sweat and toil. At the end of the day, the entire industry—no matter which stakeholder group you are part of—wants a couple of fundamentally important things underwritten by someone in a position to make a real decision using real clout to bring about some effective change. Whether those people are in the taxi industry, rideshare industry or the limousine industry, they want to work together to create a level playing field. They want to ensure that someone who holds a position of true authority is able to invoke real standards of safety. Sadly, the proposed role is a ‘toothless tiger’.

At the end of the day, no matter what vehicle you get into you want to make sure that you are not being ripped off, the vehicle is safe and secure and that you know exactly where you are should the situation arise that people need to know retrospectively where you are travelling and what you are doing. We support the proposal of a ‘centre court umpire’ for the personalised transport industry. I stress that this is not a case of opposing the bill just for the sake of it. We earnestly believe that, whilst the intent—the goal—of the legislation is headed in the right direction, this particular role does not cut through what the industry and consumers of this great state are looking for. Consequently, we will oppose the bill.

 **Mr KING** (Kurwongbah—ALP) (12.18 pm): I rise today to make a small contribution on the Personalised Transport Ombudsman Bill 2019. The contribution from the previous speaker took me back to when I was the chair of two committees in two parliaments that dealt with this. We consulted widely and I have to say that both committees worked in a largely bipartisan way, so it was fairly disappointing to hear some of that because the previous government did not do anything. We felt the pain and we heard the pain of the taxi industry. We heard the optimism of the rideshare industry. We heard from the limousine industry. A lot of it was tough going. We are trying to do what we can and we are getting there. Give us time. The committee worked together in a bipartisan way, and that should continue. I just want to state that.

This bill has three key policy objectives. The main one, as discussed, is to establish the independent Personalised Transport Ombudsman to help resolve the complaints for the industry. The second is to support the continued enforcement of fare evasion and related offences under the new smart ticketing solution. The third is to improve enforceability which will clarify some existing provisions. Our committee made a number of recommendations, and I will use what remains of my time to talk to those. Firstly, the committee did recommend that the bill be passed, so I was surprised to hear there would be some opposition. I will address the two recommendations we talked about most and they were to do with the personalised transport component of the legislation. The committee recommended—

... the Minister for Transport and Main Roads consider amending the Bill to remove the time period a potential candidate has been absent from the industry and only exclude current industry participants.

That was fairly contentious during all the hearings we had from a lot of stakeholders. The committee report stated—

The committee noted the concerns of stakeholders regarding 5 year exclusion period for employees, members or representatives of an advocacy group, peak body or trade union that was involved in personalised transport services when the person was an employee, member or representative.

We did consider this time period to be unwarranted. We considered that the selection process should seek to attract the best possible candidates, whether they have industry experience or not. We considered the legislation should preclude candidates who were current industry participants and had skin in the game. The minister has considered the arguments raised during the committee process, and an amendment will be moved during consideration in detail to reduce the period in which candidates must be absent from involvement in the personalised transport industry from five years to three years. A three-year exclusion will hopefully be sufficient to build industry and consumer confidence in the impartiality of the Personalised Transport Ombudsman. This period is consistent with the ineligibility period that applies to members of the state or Commonwealth parliament and local government members, as well as office holders wishing to become the Queensland ombudsman.

The committee also recommended that the Minister for Transport and Main Roads reconsider the Personalised Transport Ombudsman’s ability to make binding decisions. This recommendation was not supported as the PTO will be there to assist parties to resolve complaints themselves. The government’s response also advises that allowing the PTO to make binding decisions would duplicate

already existing services provided by other state and federal agencies and bodies. There will be a review of this office within three years of commencement to address any concerns picked up with its operation.

Another function of the ombudsman will be to report to the minister on where there are trends in the complaint data showing systemic issues. I note that the minister has accepted the committee's recommendation and that this data will also be published for the general public to access yearly at a minimum. I thank the minister for that. The data published will include the overall number of complaints, the number of complaints the ombudsman decided not to deal with, the number of complaints that were withdrawn and how complaints were dealt with. That is welcome. This model of PTO is not exactly what was recommended for the industry by the former public works and utilities committee that I chaired last parliament, but I hope the solution does work well. If not, as I said, it will be reviewed and we can continue to work together on that.


On the new ticketing solution, as mentioned earlier, this bill will see the new smart ticketing system being rolled out. The Minister for Transport announced that in June 2018. It will allow commuters to be able to use their contactless debit or credit cards, smartphones and smart watches to pay for public transport trips, in addition to the existing go card and paper ticket system. The rollout of this system will include new readers, quicker fare gates and system equipment, an updated app platform, and real-time and new ticketing equipment on urban buses.

The current go card operator, Cubic, has been selected as the successful tenderer following a competitive global procurement process. The new ticketing system will be implemented in the metropolitan south-east as well as 18 regional areas, which include Cairns, Innisfail, Townsville and Magnetic Island, Bowen, Airlie Beach, Proserpine, Mackay, Yeppoon, Rockhampton, Gladstone, Bundaberg, Maryborough—

A government member: Hear, hear!

Mr KING: I will take that interjection. Also included are Hervey Bay, Gympie, the Sunshine Coast hinterland, North Stradbroke Island, Kilcoy/Woodford to Caboolture, Toowoomba and Warwick. As someone who has a real problem with misplacing go cards, I am looking forward to getting a more tech savvy person to show me how to use this technology, and I say bring it on.

In conclusion, I would like to thank my fellow members of the Transport and Public Works Committee for their work on this bill. I would like to, as always, thank our hardworking secretariat, Deb, Margaret and Amanda, for keeping us honest. I also thank everyone who submitted to this inquiry. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr SORENSEN** (Hervey Bay—LNP) (12.25 pm): Firstly, I would like to thank the Townsville people for having us here. The only reason we are here is the fact that we have a Morrison government in Canberra, so the state Labor Party thought they had better get up here because only one in four voters actually—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stevens): Member for Hervey Bay, could you return to the bill at hand please.

Mr SORENSEN: This bill is a waste of time. Based on feedback to the transport committee—it is a toothless tiger—it really does not do anything. The explanatory notes state—

The main policy objective of the Personalised Transport Ombudsman Bill 2019 ... is to establish the Personalised Transport Ombudsman (the PTO) to help resolve complaints relating to personalised transport services.

Although the committee recommended that the Personalised Transport Ombudsman Bill 2019 be passed, because the government has the numbers it was obliged to make a further seven recommendations. Despite maintaining it consulted widely on these matters, it is disappointing to see that all stakeholders have been compelled to speak out about various aspects of the bill. As a consequence, they do not support it. Most of the industry out there do not support this bill. This highlights the total failure of the minister because he has not brought forward a bill that will meet the needs of the industry or consumers. The problems highlighted include calling on the minister to reconsider several matters. The bill deals with publicly reporting on complaint statistics and reporting arrangements.

The personalised transport industry has disrupted the taxi industry, and this is what it is all about at the end of the day. The rideshare industry has come in with technology and different things like that. It really has decimated the owners in the taxi and limousine industries. There was no real thought put into how to deal with this problem that we have. I talk to the taxidivers, unlike my colleagues who have participated, in terms of what has happened to these taxi people. These people were buying a taxi licence as their superannuation, and I know a couple of people in Hervey Bay have done that. All of a

sudden, the government changed the regulations and let them all in. This caused the industry to crash. This has affected people's livelihoods. The government took no notice of what the industry was all about.

I note the technology. A foreign company has come in from overseas and has done whatever it wanted to do, and this is what the taxi industry was so upset about. This company came in and anybody who had a motor car could just jump in the car and go and pick up people as a service. The taxidrivers and owners had to have a licence, special insurance and the whole works.

A government member interjected.

Mr SORENSEN: This is what the taxi industry is talking about.

An honourable member: Convenient, I know.


Mr SORENSEN: It might be convenient, but it is true. It is devastating for those people. They are still arguing. The other day an Uber driver was going crook in that he could not stay in the taxi ranks—

Government members interjected.

Mr SORENSEN: I did not order an Uber; I was talking to—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stevens): Pause the clock. Member for Sandgate, you have been a repeat interjector all the way through in terms of both speakers. Please cease your interjections. I notice that you are on the speaking list and I look forward to your contribution then.

Mr SORENSEN: In terms of problems, what will the Personalised Transport Ombudsman do? How can he have teeth in relation to an overseas company that just does whatever it wants? Honestly, what are we to do? They just do whatever they want to do. This does not make any difference. When we look at cities around the world, for example New York City, we see that personalised transport, like Uber, is creating more traffic in the inner-city areas, not less. If we want to bust traffic congestion in the middle of a city, I think we need a proper, regulated personal service. Just think about it. How many dollars will we spend increasing traffic capacity to have people driving around the city all the time looking for fares? That is what is happening in New York. Will we give the ombudsman some teeth to do something? Will we fund this properly? These are questions a lot of people have asked. What will we do?

 **Mr MELLISH** (Aspley—ALP) (12.32 pm): I am pleased to speak today on the Personalised Transport Ombudsman Bill. As other members have mentioned, the goal of the bill is to establish a Personalised Transport Ombudsman to provide a complaints resolution function for the personalised transport industry. The PTO Bill implements the government's commitment to establish an ombudsman for this industry.

The bill will also enable the pilot of a new ticketing solution. It will be great to see that rolled out across the state as a result of the state entering into a contract with QBIC to deliver this new ticketing solution for public passenger transport across Queensland. The new ticketing system will be a step up in technology. It will be account based, allowing customers to pay for and access public transport using a variety of payment methods. We see this in other countries and major cities around the world. It will have a real, positive impact, particularly for tourism. It will be much easier for tourists to use their smartphone devices, credit cards or what have you to access the go card network rather than sign up to a formal card.

I also note the proposed minor amendments to existing legislation to improve enforceability, remove spent provisions and provide greater legal certainty for industry. It is good that there are measures to combat fare evasion and to improve enforceability. A ticketing system is only good if it can be enforced. It is good for fare box revenue and those important aspects.

The range of complaints that could be considered by the ombudsman are broad and may include complaints about the safety of a vehicle, individual issues or transport drivers' working conditions, an important aspect. In my maiden speech I mentioned the gig economy and its opportunities and challenges. Any moves by the government to address concerns and to look after the working conditions of emerging industries are very important. Certainly, personalised transport is a growing area. It is positive that the government is intervening where necessary to protect working conditions. The fact that there will be no charge for the ombudsman's services is also a positive measure. It will be free to access, and anyone can do it.


In relation to the committee's report recommendation 4, that the minister clarify in his second reading whether representative bodies will be able to access the services, it was great to hear the

minister's earlier clarification. Organisations such as unions can contact the ombudsman or assist people to contact the ombudsman. That is a positive step in terms of the helpful resolution of issues.

With regard to recommendation 2, that the minister consider amending the bill to remove the time period a potential candidate has been absent from the industry and only exclude current industry participants, it was pleasing to hear that the minister will move an amendment as a result of the committee's examination so that the period of time out of the industry will be reduced from five years to three years. It was good to hear of some movement on that, and that is what we heard from stakeholders.

In relation to recommendation 5 about public reporting, it was good to hear the minister say that this was supported. The more public reporting of issues that the transport ombudsman deals with, the more we help increase transparency and the public's knowledge of what they are dealing with.

It was disappointing to hear the opposition members say that they oppose the bill. Their comments on the report reflect that they are having a bet each way. It is disappointing to hear that they are not supporting the bill as it currently stands. I thank the committee members for the process and for the examination. I thank the witnesses who appeared before the committee. The committee staff, as always, did a great job in examining the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr BOYCE** (Callide—LNP) (12.36 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Personalised Transport Ombudsman Bill 2019. I acknowledge my fellow committee members and once again thank Mrs Deb Jeffrey and her secretariat staff for preparing our papers, reports and meetings. This bill was introduced to parliament on 13 February 2019 and was then referred to the Transport and Public Works Committee for detailed examination. The committee tabled its report on 29 March. It is now early September—eight months later—and this highlights the fact that the curtailing of parliamentary sitting times and family-friendly hours do not get the job done. This is a lazy Labor government.

The bill's main objective is to establish the Personalised Transport Ombudsman to help resolve complaints relating to personalised transport services. Other objectives were to support the protection of fare revenue under the new ticketing solution and to clarify and improve the enforceability of existing divisions of the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act. This bill is a farce and was not supported by any submissions made to the committee. Many submissions identified that the ombudsman's office would be ineffective. Mr Davies, CEO of the Queensland Taxi Council, said—

Give the ombudsman some more teeth. Give them real investigative powers. Give the ombudsman the ability to make binding conditions on mediated settlements and, I would think, expand the role to be able to look at the way the department is administering the compliance scheme.

Mr Johnson, Secretary of the Rideshare Drivers' Association, said—


As you read through the legislation, the reality is that the ombudsman will have no power to compel any parties to do anything, apart from appearing before the ombudsman.

The most startling revelation from the submissions heard by the committee came from Mr Norris, legal officer with the Transport Workers' Union. He said—

... merely another public service SES position for some public servant to fill.

I find this quite incredible. The Transport Workers' Union does not support the Minister for Transport and Main Roads, the Hon. Mark Bailey. The CFMMEU does not support the Deputy Premier, Jackie Trad, and has called for her resignation. This is further evidence of a government in turmoil.

I am glad we are here in Townsville to debate this bill. The people of Townsville now know how the Labor government creates jobs. We will now have another highly paid bureaucrat and another office full of people to add to the already bloated Public Service, costing the taxpayer millions and achieving absolutely nothing. It is typical Palaszczuk government incompetence. I do not support the bill.

 **Mr STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (12.40 pm): It is a great pleasure to speak to the Personalised Transport Ombudsman Bill. Public transport is well supported in Townsville. I thank Minister Bailey for the support he has given not only me as the chair of the public transport committee but also the members for Thuringowa and Mundingburra. We have met many times with the minister with concerns around public transport. This was highlighted by the mayor of Townsville, Mayor Jenny Hill, at the beginning of this year. We spoke with Minister Bailey and said, 'Minister, we would like to develop a public transport committee. We would like to listen to the concerns of people right across Townsville with regard to public transport.' We got two thumbs up from Minister Bailey, and away we went. To our first meeting we invited all of the stakeholders in public transport right around the city. The mayor, representatives from TransLink, officers from the Department of Transport and Main Roads, bus drivers,

taxidrivers and Uber drivers turned up to that meeting. They wanted to tell us exactly what was happening with public transport in Townsville, and we listened. We were then able to report back to Minister Bailey about their concerns.

We knew that we needed to do something about public transport in Townsville so on 13 May this year TransLink was introduced into Townsville, with public transport infrastructure and services featuring the TransLink brand. We rebranded our public transport system in Townsville to show the Townsville public that we were making the changes they suggested. We were not prepared to hang on to the same old brand, trot out the same old behaviours and expect the public to think this was a good thing. We needed to do something different, and we did.

We rebranded. That rebranding has gone over sensationally. The colours on the buses have changed. Public transport users really look for the new buses they see driving through our city. The buses are white with a green front and back. Thanks to the minister three new buses have already been delivered. We are hearing that there is a fight over who gets to drive those new buses because the drivers absolutely love driving them. The customers also love getting on those buses and travelling around our city.

That is not the only thing we have done. We have also introduced a 24-hour-a-day TransLink website and app. That has enabled us to take complaints from people in Townsville about their public transport system. In the first week we received five phone calls about what was happening with public transport. Three of those calls related to changes to the timetable. People in Townsville can report concerns and talk to people in TransLink about what is happening on the public transport system. That is important. The Palaszczuk government delivers for people, particularly the people of Townsville.

The website also provides our customers with greater access to information and allows them to plan their journeys in advance. More and more, Townsville is becoming a tourism destination. Today we heard exactly that from Minister Jones. More international students are coming to Townsville. We need to support their travel across our great city via our public transport system. With the website they will be able to plan their journey in advance and go from there. We were finally able to deliver a \$4 million bus hub in Townsville. That was a long time coming.

Mr Hinchliffe interjected.

Mr STEWART: I take the interjection from the member for Sandgate, a former minister for transport and main roads. We worked together on this. We listened to basically every stakeholder who came along to those meetings. We also listened to the mayor, who said to us, 'We want to deliver this. If you give us the money, we will deliver this fantastic bus hub. It will aptly suit the people of Townsville. It will change and activate Ogden Street.' I invite each and every member of this chamber to go to Ogden Street to see what the Townsville City Council has built with the \$4 million given to it by the Palaszczuk government for this bus hub. It has done a sensational job of transforming Ogden Street, which was an old, derelict, out-of-the-way street. It has activated that CBD area. There are people coming and going quite often from that area.

Most importantly, when we talked to the council about where to locate the bus hub, they said to us, 'Be forward thinking. We want to locate this bus hub as close to the new stadium as we possibly can, because it will be a key, pivotal point for public transport.' I thank members for coming to Townsville. They would have seen the construction of the new Townsville stadium—built by locals for locals. If they have not yet seen it, they have been walking around with their eyes closed. It is a major feature of our city. We located it there to ensure interconnection between the bus hub, our transport system and the new stadium. I thank all of the workers on our great stadium. I look forward to the opening.

We have also been developing new bus routes to make sure we have interconnection with the Magnetic Island ferry. People who live on beautiful Magnetic Island, eight kilometres to the north of us—member for Burleigh, if you turn that way and open your eyes you will see it—use that ferry all the time. People come here for race week. It is a great place for a holiday. A great ferry service runs between Townsville and Magnetic Island, but it was not necessarily connecting with buses. From working with SeaLink and TransLink, we have been able to connect those services. It is absolutely seamless. Customers love using that service to get across to Magnetic Island and unwind.


While I am speaking about Magnetic Island, two of the bus drivers there were nominated for the state's best driver. I say to them: well done. The first impression people get when they come to—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stevens): Member for Townsville, return to the bill, if you would, please.

Mr STEWART: Absolutely. The Queensland government has made changes to our bus timetable to complement this initiative, delivering better reliability and improved connections. The new CBD bus hub is expected to revitalise our city. Some 255 workers have been inducted into the bus hub site.

Townsville mums and dads said to our public transport committee: 'We want to have a go card, like they have in Brisbane. Why can't we have a go card?' We are going one better. We are taking the next step. People will be able to use mobile phones and smart watches to travel on those buses. I say to the parents and kids in the audience watching parliament in action: instead of having a go card like they have in Brisbane, we are going better. That is thanks to Minister Bailey recognising that Townsville is one of the key sites where mobile phones can be used for ticketing. This is a great excuse for a lot of kids to go to their parents and say, 'Mum and Dad, I need a smartphone. If I am going to catch a bus, I need a smartphone.' There you go, kids; there is a Christmas present coming for you.

This is about using the technology. It is about recognising what our future looks like. It is about recognising our future leaders such as our young kids who are sitting in the audience here today. It is about recognising that the technology that they will use supersedes what we have today. It is about making sure that our transport system through being able to use smartphones, Apple watches and the like to buy a ticket to travel on transport not only reassures them that we are catering for the best of their needs but also reassures their parents no matter whether or not they have money in their pocket, because I have stood on bus lines many times where kids have said, 'Sorry, Mr Bus Driver, but I don't have any money.' They will now be able to use their smartphones or their Apple watches to be able to travel on that transport. As a parent, that gives me a lot more security and a lot more peace of mind. I commend the bill to the House and thank the committee for the work it has done on this issue.

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (12.50 pm): As part of the Liberal National Party opposition in Queensland, it is a delight to be in Townsville. This city is very important to our economy in Queensland, as is the broader region.

I rise to contribute to the debate on the Personalised Transport Ombudsman Bill 2019. Noting the explanatory notes, the objectives of the bill are to support the protection of fare revenue under the new ticketing solution and clarify and improve the enforceability of existing provisions of the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994, but today I will be primarily focusing on the main complaints objective of the bill—that is, to establish the Personalised Transport Ombudsman to help resolve complaints relating to personalised transport services.

The relatively recent boom in new technologies, which has also led to new business models, has fundamentally changed the way goods and services can be purchased, delivered and/or provided. The pace at which this transformation has occurred and continues to occur has undoubtedly presented its own challenges, particularly when it comes to not only legislation but also regulation and oversight. Modern history in particular is rife with instances where governments all over the world have failed to adequately respond to the emergence of new and unknown industries and technologies and ensure sound regulation and compliance mechanisms.

In addition, whilst ensuring the consumer and society at large is adequately protected, governments must also contend with ensuring that businesses, be they established or emerging, can continue to flourish as well as ensuring innovation and creativity is not stifled. There can be no doubt that it is a balancing act and, unfortunately when it comes to personalised transport in particular, it is one which the Palaszczuk Labor government has failed miserably. Let us not forget that in 2015, after coming to power, Labor was spectacularly unprepared to deal with the disruption caused by personalised transport and associated systems. True to form, rather than deal with the issue in any meaningful way or make any hard decisions, the Palaszczuk Labor government instead did what it does best and opted to hold a review. As we have seen many times on many critical issues in Queensland, there has been review after review with a lack of action.

Whilst some reform measures were eventually proposed and implemented through Labor's Transport and Other Legislation (Personalised Transport Reform) Amendment Act 2017, nearly three years later this industry continues to be besieged by a host of issues, including enforcement and compliance. It is obvious that Labor believes that with this legislation and through the creation of the Personalised Transport Ombudsman and Office of the Personalised Transport Ombudsman these issues will simply go away or, better yet, that Labor can simply shift responsibility on to this new office. In reality, the legislation before this House is the very essence of what I described earlier—that is, it is the result of a Labor government that has failed demonstrably to grasp the emergence of new technologies and new business models and through failed consultation and failed regulation it simply has not got the balance right. That is not just my view; that is the view of many stakeholders.

Effectively, the same sentiment has been echoed page after page in report No. 17 of the Queensland parliament's Transport and Public Works Committee which was tabled almost six months ago, and we heard the member for Callide, who sits on that committee, outline concerns given the extensive delay. It must be noted that whilst recommending the bill be passed the committee found it necessary to make an additional seven recommendations to address a number of flaws.

The overwhelming feedback from stakeholders to the Transport and Public Works Committee is that, with so many flaws in the vision for a public transport ombudsman and how the Ombudsman looks set to carry out its role, this ultimately is little more than a waste of money and a pointless role. Indeed, in a rather cutting submission, the Taxi Council of Queensland put to the committee a host of issues and offered that—

... the Bill presents as establishing a PT Ombudsman that may become a 'toothless tiger'. With the role being so restricted in scope, it risks being of diminished utility for stakeholders in the Personalised Transport sector. Of concern for TCQ and our members, many of the substantive and pressing issues for the sector appear to be outside the purview proposed for the PT Ombudsman.

That is but one example of Labor's incompetence when it comes to this bill, but really can we be surprised? After all, this bill is the responsibility of Labor's Minister for Transport and Main Roads—a minister who has comprehensively failed to deliver any meaningful relief to the electorate of Moggill and the western suburbs of Brisbane when it comes to improving public transport and addressing the ever-growing congestion on our roads. Report after report issued by respected entities such as the RACQ and Infrastructure Australia continually list Moggill Road and the Centenary Highway as some of Queensland's most congested road networks, with travel times consistently growing longer and predicted only to get worse into the future.

Mr BAILEY: Mr Deputy Speaker, I raise a point of order simply on relevance. He has strayed well off the bill.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stevens): Thank you, Minister. Member for Moggill, I ask you to return to the subject matter of the bill please.

Dr ROWAN: The important point around the Infrastructure Australia report, given that we are going to have more vehicles on roads in terms of personalised transport options, is that Infrastructure Australia has said that there were 100,000 vehicles travelling on the Centenary Motorway and Western Freeway in 2016 and by 2036 that is projected to increase to 150,000 vehicles per day on the Centenary Motorway and the Western Freeway and many of those will be personalised transport options. Unless something is done by Labor's Minister for Transport and Main Roads, it is only going to get worse in not only his electorate of Miller but also the electorates of Moggill and Maiwar and Mount Ommaney. The Labor government needs to work constructively with other levels of government such as with the federal Morrison coalition government through the city deal to ensure that solutions are collaboratively delivered to ease traffic congestion not only in the western suburbs of Brisbane but right across the south-east as well. This is a very important issue for my constituents locally and also for many other local electorates as well.


All road users, be it those who use public transport, prefer to cycle or even use their own car, in my electorate of Moggill have been fundamentally let down by a Labor government that simply refuses to act and plan the required infrastructure. Having failed to deliver for residents who wish to take a bus, a train, a bike or drive their car, I am not surprised that the Labor Minister for Transport and Main Roads has failed to deliver for the personalised transport and taxi industry as well.

Mr de Brenni: It's time for a Labor member for Moggill.

Dr ROWAN: There are so many issues in this bill before us today that we on this side of the House cannot give it support. I hear those interjecting on the other side, but Labor knows that it has failed the personalised transport industry here in Queensland. It has failed our taxidriviers here in Queensland. We know that debt is going to reach \$90 billion by 2022-23. There are a range of other issues when it comes to the Labor government not delivering infrastructure and not delivering a fair and balanced legislative agenda, and this is further legislation in relation to that.

It is important that the Minister for Transport and Main Roads actually listens and works collaboratively with all affected stakeholders. Certainly, a number of the submissions that were in this committee report clearly indicated that more work needs to be done. I would certainly like to acknowledge and thank all members of the committee for the work that they have done and particularly thank my colleagues the member for Hervey Bay and the member for Callide for their work on the committee. I also want to acknowledge the work and the advocacy of the LNP's shadow minister for transport and main roads, the member for Chatsworth, because he has been doing some terrific work

with respect to consulting stakeholders in relation to these matters. I would encourage all members of the House to read the LNP's statement of reservation which clearly outlines a number of flaws in Labor's proposed legislation. As the shadow minister outlined earlier, we will be opposing this bill.

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (12.58 pm): Today I rise to speak about the smart ticketing provisions of the bill, and that is in large part due to my nostalgia and fondness for the current—I call it the blue card—go card system. I was just starting uni when the little blue go cards came out. As a self-confessed Luddite who had only recently learned how to use a computer, I was pretty impressed that someone as untech savvy yet as young as me could work out how to use it. I also remember how excited the newsagent retailers were to be selected to be the go card retailers in their communities. It was a hot topic all over Brisbane and I remember the debate that happened in Oxley.


As I said, go cards were introduced just as I started uni and they gave me and other students independence—independence from our parents and there was no more carrying buckets of change to catch the bus or train. What a time to be alive! It is really funny how memory works, but I have such fond memories of those little blue cards at the start of my time at university, so it really was a funny thing that sticks out to me. In honour of my Luddite ways—

Debate, on motion of Ms Pugh, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.30 pm.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.30 pm): My team and I are thrilled to be here in this great city of Townsville. For five years the Palaszczuk Labor government forgot this city, but I have never forgotten the people of Townsville. My first trip as Leader of the Opposition was right here to North Queensland. That was 21 months ago and since then I have been back here 14 times. I have never stopped listening to the people of North Queensland and, believe me, North Queenslanders have plenty to say. Last night, at a forum here in Townsville I spoke to victims of crime. Their stories were shocking and heartbreaking. There is no other way to describe it: crime in Townsville is simply out of control. Townsville has the highest crime rate of any city in Queensland. Under Anastacia Palaszczuk, Townsville has become the state's crime capital. It is a shame.

Crime is not the only big problem in North Queensland. For years, Townsville has been an unemployment black spot. Under this government, thousands of jobs have been lost permanently. In this region, more than 8,000 people are officially unemployed. Last year, more than 500 Townsville businesses went to the wall. Thousands of families have been forced to live on the breadline because of Labor's failed economic policies. While Townsville has been doing it tough, the biggest job creation project in North Queensland was blocked for five years by the Palaszczuk Labor government. Townsville, Mackay and Rockhampton will never forget that Labor tried to destroy the Carmichael mine to keep green voters in Brisbane on side. That is how much North Queensland matters to Labor.

Labor does not care about this region—or anywhere else outside of Brisbane. As the member for Kawana said this morning, the Premier spends more time in North America than she does in North Queensland. Out of her 18 ministers, just two of them represent regional electorates. Do not expect Labor backbenchers to speak up for the regions, either. Labor has six members of parliament representing areas north of Bundaberg, but the LNP member for Burdekin makes more noise than all of them. He is like a bulldog for North Queensland and they are just Labor lap-dogs. Labor will never solve North Queensland's problems, because Labor is the problem. All North Queenslanders will hear from Labor this week is promise after promise and excuse after excuse.

The LNP's message for North Queensland is simple and straightforward: we have listened to you and we will keep listening. We have a plan for Queensland and this region is at its heart. The LNP will cut crime in Townsville, we will cut unemployment and we will cut electricity bills, too, because we believe that every community in Queensland matters. Our plan to cut crime in North Queensland is not complicated. We will put more police on the streets and we will back them up with tougher laws and longer sentences. We will make breach of bail a criminal offence instead of letting juvenile offenders terrorise our communities. We will close down the bail houses that have caused misery in Townsville suburbs and we will give North Queensland its own police helicopter within six months of the next state election. Under the LNP, there will be no hiding for criminals in Townsville.

The LNP's economic plan will create thousands of new mining jobs in the Galilee Basin. The resources industry is right behind our plan to freeze royalty rates for the next 10 years. They say that

the LNP's plan will unlock mining projects right across Queensland. For the Galilee Basin—right there—there are 15,000 mining jobs in the pipeline. These jobs will not happen under the Palaszczuk government given that it is anti resources, anti regions and anti jobs. Only the LNP will get the Galilee Basin going again.

Just like the Labor Party has done nothing for regional Queenslanders, it has certainly done nothing to cut electricity bills in regional Queensland. Although competition between private electricity retailers has driven down prices for people in Brisbane, Townsville consumers have been stuck with just Ergon. The LNP's plan will introduce competition to the regions and will give Townsville consumers a choice. Our plan will bring down the average bill in the north by \$300 a year. It has worked in Brisbane and it should work for the bush as well.

Queenslanders know that the Labor Party simply will not ever cut crime, because letting offenders get away with it is the Labor way. The Premier will not even discipline her own MPs when they break every integrity rule in the book. The past six weeks have left this government's integrity in tatters. We have seen a dodgy property deal from the Deputy Premier. We have seen state government handouts for a company owned by the Premier's own chief of staff. We have seen the training minister take a secret skiing holiday with a state government contractor. We have seen the Electoral Commission investigate the member for Keppel over her dealings with a Chinese property developer.

There is no longer any doubt: Queenslanders cannot trust Labor. The Premier should have sacked her Deputy Premier and her chief of staff weeks ago but, instead, she has done nothing. This Premier is the weakest Premier that Queenslanders have ever seen. The Premier will not even reprimand MPs who show complete contempt for our anti-corruption rules. While she has been running away from the media, she has also been hiding behind the Crime and Corruption Commission. These Labor MPs have clearly breached the ministerial code of conduct and the cabinet handbook, but the Premier insists that only the Crime and Corruption Commission can judge them. The Premier has a problem, because on 23 August the chair of the Crime and Corruption Commission said that it was not his job to enforce those rules; that is the Premier's job.


An opposition member: No jurisdiction.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I take that interjection—no jurisdiction. Alan MacSporran did not just stop there. He said that codes of conduct are meaningless if there are no consequences for the people who break them—meaningless. Thirty years on from the Fitzgerald report, the integrity framework is at risk of becoming meaningless and all because of this Premier's weak leadership. It is time the Premier got a grip and grew a backbone. It is time the Premier released the secret audit of her chief of staff's business grant, too. Queenslanders have paid for that report and they deserve to be able to see what is in it and they deserve to know how much it cost.

It is time for the voters to see the truth about the Palaszczuk Labor government. I have some advice for the Premier—and she ought to take it on board. Queenslanders want her to stop the cover-ups and they want her to start cleaning up her government. It is time the Premier got on with the job that she was elected to do and that is work for the people of Queensland, not work for her own ministers and her own backbench.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Due to the acoustics of this place it is difficult to hear exactly who is interjecting, but I can hear plenty of interjections and I am looking for who is making them. I have a nice blank sheet here and I want to keep it that way. Let us keep the interjections under control so that we can hear the speaker on their feet.

Townsville, Community Safety

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (2.40 pm): I am proud to talk about our achievements in Townsville. I apologise to the people of Townsville that we have had to drag some members of the opposition here. Previously in the parliament I have discussed all efforts taken by our government to reduce the incidence of youth crime in our great city of Townsville. I will provide an update. The youth crime issue does not just affect our city but cities and towns across the nation. It is a real problem and one that we are certainly not afraid to tackle. We have driven down reoffending rates and we will continue to do that. Yesterday we had the great announcement of the remaining 53 police our government committed to being delivered 18 months early. I sincerely thank the minister and Commissioner Katarina Carroll for hearing the concerns of local MPs. To the people of Townsville, we have your backs on this. There will be 28 additional police officers delivered by June 2020, with the remaining 25 to be delivered by December 2020. Townsville, that means since 2015 we will have delivered 103 police officers to our city by 2020 and we will continue to make our streets safer.

Let me put it in contrast. The LNP abolished 330 police positions. It is in their DNA to cut, sack and sell. That is all they know. Those opposite wanted to sell the Townsville Police Academy. All they had was a failed boot camp and high recidivism rates of up to 70 per cent. The youth justice bill was passed last week. Those opposite need to learn to read the legislation. Those people who pose a serious risk to themselves or the community will not be released on bail. The bill actually strengthens legislation. Some members of the opposition made remarks that the streets will be filled with criminals released on bail. It is a beat up and nothing more than cheap political attempts to try to scare people. We will continue to hold people to account, support victims of crime and help break the cycle of crime by supporting those at risk of entering the youth justice system via Project Booyah and reinstating lost funding under the federal LNP. Did we hear anything from those sitting opposite about losing funding under the LNP? Nothing! Cue the crickets!

Those opposite come to this city and try to tell people they have solutions but they do not. Our government has strengthened the capacity and capability of our police by 103, including 20 more to our police RAP hub that they left half unstaffed. We have built another police station in the Upper Ross. Labor will continue to back the people of Townsville. Yesterday's announcement goes further on delivering our commitment to supporting the people of Townsville.

The LNP set up failed boot camps where offenders broke out and broke into neighbouring properties. It was a \$16 million waste of money which resulted in 70 per cent recidivism. Hang your heads in shame! Labor's Transition 2 Success program has a 70 per cent non-reoffending rate within 12 months of completing the course. That is positive news for Townsville.

I table the major general's plan and 23 recommendations, with six delivered so far.

Tabled paper: Report, dated 5 December 2018, by Major General (Retd) Stuart Smith AO, DSC, Townsville Community Champion to the Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk, Premier and Minister for Trade, titled 'Townsville's voice: local solutions to address youth crime—An independent report on the Townsville community's view on youth crime, including an assessment of the effectiveness of current prevention strategies and recommendations for improvements' [1416].

Tabled paper: Document, undated, titled 'Townsville's Voice brief summary of recommendations implemented and those pending stand up in 2019' [1417].

Those opposite do not have a plan. You come into this place and—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Put your comments through the chair.

Mr HARPER: The members of the opposition come into this place and promise a police helicopter. \$3 million a year would not buy the boom of a helicopter. If members go out to the Townsville base and look at the two AW139s they will see that they are fitted with a FLIR. Members, they are \$1 million each so \$3 million would not get you maintenance, a hangar, a crew 24 hours—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr HARPER: Mate, it would not get you anything. You are kidding yourself and you are kidding the people of Townsville.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member has deliberately disregarded your previous ruling about commenting through the chair and not directing personal comment to the members of the House.


Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member will direct their comments through the chair.

Mr HARPER: I apologise. The opposition come to Townsville and promise things they cannot deliver. They allocated zero police in 2017. Zero police was the opposition's promise for Townsville. They promised 20 for Cairns. The opposition has promised a helicopter that will not even get up in the air. The opposition should put their FLIR on a bunch of balloons or a kite because you will not get an hour and a half a week with the funding they have promised. We have \$46 million for two aircraft.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member, you will have to put your comments through the chair. This is the last time I will say it otherwise I will warn you formally.

Mr HARPER: Labor has a real plan; the LNP has false promises and false hope. Those opposite have nothing.

North Queensland; Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (2.45 pm): Residents of Townsville, that is an example of the representation from North Queensland. Is it any wonder that North Queensland is going backwards when that is the type of representation that it has. It is great to be back in Townsville again. I have been coming to Townsville for decades. In fact, it was great to see last week

the last game played at 1300SMILES Stadium. It has been Dairy Farmers. It has been Stockland. Twenty-four years ago I refereed the first Cowboys game here in North Queensland. I also refereed the first time the Cowboys played in the grand final. I am so happy that the people of Queensland are a gracious people, because they have forgiven me for both those games.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Members, I remind you to act with decorum. There will be no more hand gesturing in the chamber.

Mr MANDER: Forgive me. I occasionally get very excited. It is good to be back here in North Queensland. North Queensland has had enough of Labor. In the last federal election three out of four Queenslanders decided not to give Labor their first preference. It was a rout for Bill Shorten and his federal opposition in North Queensland and in regional Queensland in general. It is no coincidence that straight after that federal election result, which apparently had no impact on Queensland Labor, they announced, with 10 weeks notice, that we are going to have a sitting of parliament in North Queensland. The Premier moved parliament here for nobody else but herself.

The people of North Queensland are not silly and will not get sucked in by the stunts that will happen all this week, the false promises and the reannouncements of promises in the never-never. We know that North Queenslanders can see through that. North Queenslanders have had nothing but five years of failure under Labor. Five years ago the Premier promised jobs, jobs, jobs. What has Townsville got? Dole, dole and dole! Thousands of permanent jobs have been lost in Townsville under Labor—2,000, in fact. More than 8,000 people here are out of work. Business confidence has hit rock bottom. More than 500 businesses have collapsed in North Queensland and across Queensland the total is 5,000. There are more bankruptcies in Queensland than any other state. That is the first time that we have held that shameful record since 2002.

Businesses and workers are being betrayed by this anti-resources, anti-regions and anti-jobs Palaszczuk government. There is no greater example of that than the Carmichael mine. It should be an economic lifeline for Townsville, but Labor has cut that lifeline to get Greens preferences. They sold out the people of North Queensland and Central Queensland. They sold them down the river. They cannot back resources, because they rely on Greens preferences in South-East Queensland, particularly in the seat of South Brisbane. They talk now about being the friend of the resources industry and that they love coal, but what do we see in Oakey? Today, 150 mine workers and their families will be told that they will not have a job and that is because of the inaction of this government. Words mean nothing. You must back up those words with action. This government cannot be trusted on anything that they say.

As the Leader of the Opposition has already mentioned, the integrity crisis just gets worse and worse for this government. There is now a stench about the Palaszczuk Labor government. The Deputy Premier, who despises property developers, has herself been speculating on a bit of property near Cross River Rail. She never should have bought that property. She should have registered that property. She should have sought advice from the Integrity Commissioner before she bought the property. She should have declared her interest in the Cross River Rail and Dutton Park school decisions. She never should have called the CCC chair on a Sunday afternoon on his personal mobile phone number. Meanwhile, a company owned by the Premier's chief of staff is getting a six-figure grant from the government.


This is a government that does not know the meaning of the word 'integrity'. This is a government that Queenslanders cannot trust. They cannot trust the Premier and they cannot trust the Deputy Premier. They have lost confidence in this Palaszczuk government.

(Time expired)

Mr Boyce interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Order! Member for Callide, you are warned under the standing orders.

Cairns Shipping Development Project

 **Mr HEALY** (Cairns—ALP) (2.51 pm): I begin by apologising to the members of the public, as every time that parliament sits we have to listen to such diatribes.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr HEALY: Happy birthday to the member for Nanango. It is good to see that she is happy and that all is going well. That is good work.

I will begin with a couple of facts. The Palaszczuk government's \$127 million Cairns Shipping Development Project is now moving into its final phase. I want to let members now know how the government is delivering on its election promises. Some members have spoken about things relative to south of here, but, as theirs is a party that does not have a member north of Ayr, for them to give us advice is a little bit rich. We know that you judge people by their actions, not by what they say. When you were last in power—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, member! Please put your comments through the chair.

Mr HEALY: Apart from the fact that today they would boo Santa Claus, when Campbell Newman and the LNP were in power, dredging the shipping channel was one of their signature promises to the people of Cairns. However, in their entire time in government absolutely nothing happened. It was impressively disappointing. It took a Labor government to deliver that much needed project to the people of Cairns. We recognise the importance of it and we recognise the importance of its economic potential, yet they delivered absolutely nothing. That was impressive.

Mr Harper interjected.

Mr HEALY: That is right. They offered 20 extra police, but that did not even get them a vote. It was disappointing.

This crucial project will ensure that the Port of Cairns will be well positioned to benefit from the cruise shipping industry and the benefits that it will provide to our region for the future, and not just for Cairns but also for North Queensland. It means more ships, more visitors, more tourism and business opportunities for the region, as well as improved access and efficiency for bulk cargo ships and, just as importantly, visiting Navy ships, even though our federal member still has not done anything about getting Navy ships into the Port of Cairns.


On 25 July dredging work began and it is expected to conclude in mid-September. The dredge *Balder R* and the backhoe *Woomera* are hard at work removing stiff clays from the inner harbour, which are being transported by barge to Ports North's Tingira Street placement site to be reused as part of building the industrial hub. There was a suggestion that we throw out that clay, but it is now being used to expand the commercial and industrial capacity of our port. That is a good reflection of the ingenuity that we have in the north. The dredging decision was made following studies on the existing environment within Trinity Bay to maximise any potential and adverse environmental, social and economic impacts, while maximising the economic benefits. That is also good for jobs, which is something that my friends on the right might not be aware of. I also notice that the Cairns unemployment rate is the lowest in the state at 4.4 per cent—cue the crickets!

Austral Construction has been awarded the contract for the expansion of our port. Last week, Minister Bailey was in town to talk about stage 3. It is a \$30 million contract to modernise our wharves. A little like the policies of my friends on the right, those wharves are over 100 years old. A new concrete jetty will be constructed along the front of wharf 6 to replace the decayed timber wharf structure, with a portion of the old structure to be revealed and retained for heritage and interpretive purposes. Austral Construction has nominated numerous local suppliers. We insisted that any development relating to this particular job needed to use as many locals as possible. A number of local operators have been used, except where specialist items are not available. Austral Construction was previously involved in the Navy works on Sugar Wharf and was a major subcontractor on previous Ports North projects in the marina, which are absolutely essential.

I take this opportunity, on behalf of the people of Cairns, to thank the minister and, more importantly, the government for delivering on this vital project. We make promises to the people of North Queensland, we deliver those promises and that is why we hold seats in North Queensland. We do not sit around whining and carrying on, offering nothing but diatribe. We come up with genuine engagement, we acknowledge and we move forward.

I thank Russell Beer and Chris Boland, the CEO of Ports North, and all their staff who work incredibly hard. I look forward to the next commitment given by this government, which is the \$176 million Convention Centre upgrade. That is another guarantee that will be good for the city and good for jobs. However, there is not much coming from those on the other side.

North Queensland, Crime; Water Infrastructure

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (2.56 pm): I may be the only LNP member north of the Burnett, but I remind the member for Cairns that there are no federal Labor members north of Brisbane.

Mr Harper: This is a state parliament.

Mr LAST: Now we have a point of difference. Those opposite can sugar-coat this all they like. They can sugar-coat what this week is about and their commitment to North Queensland, but I know what the reality is for the north because I live and breathe North Queensland. I travel extensively throughout North Queensland and I talk to councils, industry groups and business owners. In fact, last night the Leader of the Opposition and I attended a crime forum in the electorate of the member for Thuringowa. He might like to say in this place that there is no crime problem in Townsville, but last night at that crime forum without exception every single person talked about the fact that crime is out of control in this city and that they are victims of crime.

This morning our leader mentioned ex-Defence Force serviceman Kim, who walks with a mobility walker and has a service dog. Last night he said something that puts this into perspective. He said that he felt safer walking down the streets of Mogadishu than he does walking down Nathan Street, Aitkenvale. That is a damning indictment on this government.

A government member: Give us a break.

Mr LAST: I hear someone from the other side say, 'Give us a break.' An ex-Defence Force member, who went overseas and put his life on the line for this country, is too afraid to go out at night unless he carries a knife because he fears for his own safety. That is the reality of what is going on in this community at the moment. They might like to say that there is no issue with crime in Townsville, but I can assure members opposite that there is a massive problem with crime in this community. Every single one of those people at the forum last night reaffirmed that they want to see a government that gets tough on crime and that is fair dinkum, particularly with youth offenders.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! We will not have quarrelling across the chamber.


Mr LAST: I turn now to one of the central platforms of my portfolio, and that is water and our commitment to establishing the Queensland Dam Company right here in Townsville. If you have water, you have opportunity. There are a lot of members on this side of the House who appreciate what it means to have water. There are members on this side representing electorates that have no water at the moment. They understand what it is like to have water. We have committed to forming the Queensland Dam Company in Townsville because we are fair dinkum about building Urannah, Nullinga and Rookwood Weir—we are not going to pussyfoot around and delay it by two years and look for excuses—and we are going to raise Burdekin Falls Dam. If you have water, you have opportunity and you have jobs. The last dam built in this state was Paradise Dam near Bundaberg 14 years ago. That is a damning indictment. Now they are trying to drop the height of that dam by 17 metres which will turn that dam into nothing more than a puddle for that community.

We are serious about the infrastructure that this state needs and we are serious about delivering that infrastructure in North Queensland because we see the value in this end of the state. We see the value in supporting the resources sector. It is great to see the Carmichael mine finally go ahead and to see those jobs flowing through in some of the communities I represent—jobs in Moranbah, Bowen and Collinsville. All of a sudden we are now seeing housing that has been vacant for years being taken up in those communities—and hasn't that made a difference?

There are so many gaps through Central and North Queensland. There are gaps in health where we cannot attract doctors to our rural hospitals. There are gaps in teaching stock. It is a shame that the education minister stepped out. I was in Dysart last week where the principal of that school is teaching four subjects because they have a chronic teacher shortage. It is the same at Middlemount. This is the reality on the ground. I do not think there would be a single member in this place who would not put value on educating our children, yet in some of our rural and regional communities we have a massive teaching shortage. That is going to impact on our next generation, and that is a damning indictment on all of us and something that we need to look at.

(Time expired)

The Oasis Townsville

 **Hon. CJ O'ROURKE** (Mundingburra—ALP) (Minister for Communities and Minister for Disability Services and Seniors) (3.01 pm): It has been pretty disappointing so far this morning. What we have heard on this side of the House is all about the infrastructure, the commitment and the investment that have been delivered into Townsville. We still have more work to do, and that is what our commitment is. What we have heard on that side of the House, however, is them constantly talking down Townsville: 'Sorry, but there's nothing good in Townsville. We'll stand beside you and talk to you about how you

should be fearful about walking down the streets.’ We have made a record investment into policing, into addressing crime and into taking the community along with us.

It gives me great pleasure to stand up here and talk this afternoon about one of the really great projects in my electorate. It is a project that is supporting our defence community—the Oasis Townsville. It will be a one-stop shop providing welfare support and employment transition services for our ex-Defence community. It will support those families who want to transition out of the Defence Force and into civilian life. We have about 500 of those each year joining our community. We want them to stay here in Townsville because it is a great place to live.

This particular project, the Oasis Townsville, will provide that opportunity and the support needed to transition. It will also create local opportunities in Townsville and boost our local economy by supporting opportunities with local businesses. It was my pleasure last night to host a town hall style meeting that provided an update to local businesses about how they can be a part of this important project in our region. It gave local businesses, subcontractors and suppliers a chance to ask questions to find out more about how the project is progressing and to hear about procurement opportunities that are expected to arise during construction. It also provided local subcontractors and suppliers the opportunity to meet with the three select tenderers and to ask questions about how they can be involved and also to speak with the directors of the Oasis Townsville and how they can support them.


We had approximately 50 people attend the event representing a very wide variety of local trades which included subcontractors of electrical and solar panel providers, plumbing, painting, concreting and civil works. The chairman of the Oasis Townsville, John Caligari, a retired lieutenant general, gave an impassioned address on the benefits to the former and current ADF staff especially in the area of provision of mental health support facilities which will be delivered by this project.

The event concluded with a firm commitment from my department to ensure local subcontractors and suppliers would be given every opportunity to be involved in this project. I am grateful for the support shown last night by local businesses for the Oasis Townsville in general—for the project’s valuable contribution to Townsville and in particular the opportunities this will afford the wider Defence Force community.

We are absolutely committed to the Oasis Townsville project being built by local contractors to ensure that it generates as many local jobs as possible and ensuring local subcontractors and suppliers are given every chance to be involved. Around 26 full-time-equivalent jobs will be expected to be created during the phase. We know that many more ongoing jobs will be created once the centre is operating and delivering services. Importantly, the three local companies which were recently short-listed as select tenderers for this project—A Gabrielli Constructions, Paynters and Woollam Constructions—are currently working with one another to move forward to the final process.

This is the final stage of the tender to remodel and revamp the Oonoonba site that will become the Oasis Townsville for current and former Defence Force personnel. We know that local contractors can deliver a facility that will respond to the specific needs of veterans and the Townsville defence community. The Queensland government is providing up to \$4.3 million towards the first phase of this project, which includes the refurbishment of the existing building on the corner of Darter and Colvin streets in Oonoonba. I am absolutely delighted to see this project come closer to fruition as I know it will be of enormous benefit to Townsville and to the broader defence community.

North Queensland; Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

 **Mr PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (3.06 pm): It is great to be up here in North Queensland. I want to assure North Queenslanders that, despite the Labor government’s appalling deafness to the regions, you are not forgotten. This morning we saw hundreds of farmers rally outside this building here in Townsville because they are sick and tired of this anti-farmer, anti-regions and anti-jobs Palaszczuk Labor government. They are sick and tired of this incompetent government. The list of grievances against our hardworking farmers continues to grow.

The unfair vegetation management laws that indiscriminately locked up North Queensland’s economic potential has made it harder for North Queensland farmers already struggling with droughts and floods. Now farmers are staring down the barrel of a new wave of unfounded and unfair laws through the reef laws that will impact our canefarmers, horticulturalists and graziers. It is no secret that farmers in Queensland have been doing it tough.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Pause the clock. Member for Thuringowa and member for Gregory, we will not have any quarrelling across the chamber.

Mr PERRETT: It is no secret that farmers have had enough. That is why AgForce has launched the 'standing up for our regions' and 'standing up for Queensland agriculture' campaign in opposition to the anti-regions agenda being run by this state government. This year's floods devastated the north-west and central outback of the state. The recovery continues to be a long road. The role of the government is to support programs that assist farmers and their communities get back on their feet. That is why it is completely disgraceful that the agriculture minister has reneged on his promise to provide much needed funding to fight the outbreak of prickly acacia resulting from the recent floods. This is despite announcing in March a \$5 million contribution with the then federal agriculture minister, David Littleproud. I ask the minister: what has happened to the money? Where is it? Does Labor get a kick out of promising support to drought and flood affected communities only to retract it?

The state government has also announced that it is cutting vitally important freight subsidies for fodder to keep stock alive during drought without announcing any other services in return. This is effectively an overall cut to drought funding going forward to drought affected farmers. Instead of supporting our farmers during drought and flood recovery, Labor continues its anti-regions agenda. The government has again gone missing when it comes to standing up for North Queensland's vitally important cane industry. India's plans to dump a further six million tonnes of subsidised sugar over the next year, in addition to the five million tonnes dumped last year, means that Australian sugar prices will continue to crash—and the Premier continues to do nothing in her trade responsibilities. What does this mean for Australia's largest sugar port right here in Townsville? Will the Premier and Labor have the courage to stand up for real jobs while they are up here in Townsville? Inaction is not an option when communities and their 22,600 direct and indirect jobs across the state are on the line.

The list continues. Labor has not done enough to protect farmers from extremist protests designed to disrupt and terrorise. Why? Are they frightened of the extremists, or in their hearts do they agree with them? The LNP has laws on the table to ramp up penalties for those who commit and organise these terrorist activities. Farmers are the lifeblood of this country. They are not getting the respect they deserve from Premier Palaszczuk, who is hypnotised by the call of the Greens and the far left.

Fishing in regional Queensland, particularly North Queensland, continues to be hurt by unfair and unscientific regulation changes. Labor's unfair fishing regulations, which came into effect on Sunday, will force hundreds of family owned commercial fishers out of the industry. Recreational fishers have also been left reeling. They question the rationale and logic behind bans on fishing certain species and the limitation on how much they can take. The Queensland Seafood Industry Association's message is simple and confronting: multigenerational fishing families are being torn apart by the government's political agenda. These laws are not based on science and are not in the interests of Queensland fishers.

Unlike Labor, the Liberal National Party understands rural and regional Queensland. We understand North Queensland and its vitally important industries such as agriculture and fishing. We stand up for the regions because we represent the regions. North Queensland farmers and communities can rest assured that we will continue to fight this anti-farmer, anti-regions and anti-jobs agenda. The state Labor government is bad for the north and it is bad for the whole state.

Mackay Electorate



Mrs GILBERT (Mackay—ALP) (3.11 pm): It is great to be in North Queensland to talk about my electorate.

Mr Harper: At least you want to be here!

Mrs GILBERT: Yes, it is a great place to be. My electorate of Mackay is surrounded by the wider regions of Isaac and the Whitsundays. Collectively, we are the powerhouse of prosperity for our great state. The Mackay-Isaac-Whitsunday region is one of the fastest growing and dynamic economies in Australia. It delivers minerals, diverse agricultural products and tourism to the world and contributes around \$20 billion in gross regional product to the Australian economy. Our collective region produces coal, sugar, beef, aquaculture, broadacre crops and the best vegetables in the state.

The world around us is changing at a rapid pace. We want to put ourselves in a position to tackle the future head-on so we continue to thrive. We want to educate and train our young people and upskill and retrain our mature age workers so everyone has an opportunity to engage in the employment, career opportunities and prosperity that our traditional industries offer. Businesses in my region have embraced the Palaszczuk government's offer of free apprenticeships for young people under the age of 21, with over 30 signed up already. That announcement was only made a couple of weeks ago. The saving of up to \$3,000 is a huge incentive for businesses to increase the number of tradespeople, and

this is on top of payroll tax deductions. Training incentives for businesses in my region have never been so attractive.

I recently attended Mackay Christian College with Minister Fentiman and spoke to students there. They said they are excited about the additional number of training opportunities that have been advertised since the announcement of free apprenticeships for under-21s. The Palaszczuk government is building a skilled workforce so that our kids have a real future. In my community we want to be ready for change. We want to understand how it will affect our current industries and how to upskill for the new jobs of tomorrow in agriculture, aquaculture, tourism, METs, mining and construction. We need to understand how technology and automation will change the employment opportunities of tomorrow.


To ensure we are game ready the Greater Whitsunday Alliance—we call it the GW3—hosted a Futures Workforces Summit in Mackay for our wider region. Employers, workers, school students and large and small business owners from all areas of our economy were represented and participated in the workshops. Anders Sorman-Nilsson, a global futurist, was one of the keynote speakers. He opened his presentation with, 'Change has never been as fast and will never be as slow as it is now.' Simon Banks also challenged us to take off the blinkers and keep people in the digital process. He said that possibilities are everywhere by delivering a culture of innovation in workplaces and teams can produce great ideas, products and results. We need to understand our core business, be agile and have an edge.

We are a region of many well-developed edges. For my region, one edge into the future lies with the biofutures industry. As a community our future is focused on how biofutures projects can value-add and sustain our existing industries in the future. The Palaszczuk government is increasing its support to accelerate the biofutures industry as part of our government's vision for the diversification of the Queensland economy. The Palaszczuk government has shown its commitment to the biofutures industry by developing a 10-year road map and action plan to assist Queensland industries partner with emerging technology providers to create new value chains and gain alternate and higher-value revenue streams. We are planning a prosperous biofuture for our region, our state and, most importantly, our kids. The Palaszczuk government is looking after North Queensland to ensure Queenslanders prosper now and in the future.

Mr Costigan interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Member for Whitsunday, I would ask you to show some decorum in the chamber, please.

North Queensland, Crime

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (3.16 pm): It is great to be back in North Queensland and here in Townsville. The only problem I have when I come to North Queensland is that I get to meet the people behind the statistics. Every time I come here I meet with victims of crime. I meet with their sons, their daughters and their grandparents. When I meet with them and hear their stories, some of the things people have to put up with are harrowing. Imagine waking up in your own bed, you open your eyes and there are three people standing above you. After robbing you, the last thing they do is move towards the door. They have the keys to your car and they drive off. These are the kinds of stories I hear when I come to North Queensland. The people of North Queensland want to understand why their home and car insurance is going through the roof. I can tell members why, because the statistics are very simple.

Under the Palaszczuk government, across the last five years there has been: a 113 per cent increase in robbery; a 42 per cent increase in burglary; a 52 per cent increase in unlawful use of a motor vehicle; a 35 per cent increase in assault; and a 33 per cent increase in serious assault. These are the statistics that drive me to come to North Queensland to meet victims and listen to what they are telling us. What they are saying is that they want law and order to be a priority for them. What do we see when we look at the budget? What we saw in this year's budget is an average across the five years of 3.98 per cent of the overall take for the Queensland government. That is what Labor has put in.

When the LNP was in government the percentage was 4.39 per cent. It does not sound like a big difference, but let me tell members what the number is. Over five years \$1,173,000 would have been allocated to the police budget if Labor had kept the average of the overall budget that the LNP had. That is one of the numbers that is critical for people to understand.

If it were a priority for the Labor government, it would allocate more budget to it but it does not. It allocates less. In fact, it is \$1 billion less over the last five years. That is damning. I see the heads

drop on the other side because they know the truth and the people of Townsville know the truth because they are the ones who have people standing over the end of their beds and stealing their cars.

Mr Harper interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Member for Thuringowa, you are warned.


Mr WATTS: Another statistic that people should understand and know is that when the LNP was in office there were 245 police officers per 100,000 people. It is now 233. That 12 does not sound like a lot per 100,000, but it works out to be 610 officers who are no longer here but should be here if that same percentage growth was maintained, but it has not been.

In addition to that, what do we see? We see legislation change where breach of bail for a juvenile does not mean they will be incarcerated. When that happens, we see the average number of crimes per juvenile drives up to 6.9. That is how many crimes they are committing. If they cannot get out after bail, they will commit fewer crimes and people will not have them looking at them at the end of their bed. Queenslanders should not have to put up with that.

There are other things as well. People's cars are getting stolen but the police cannot pursue because of the policies. What do we need? We need a helicopter up in the sky. We need a dedicated police helicopter that is designed to be able to track these people through the suburbs as they are driving off in your car, jumping over your neighbour's fence and trying to hide. The forward-looking infra-red camera can pick up where they are and direct the police on the ground to them. That is exactly why we need a dedicated police helicopter here. We need the legislation, we need the budget and we need the boots on the ground. That is why the people of Townsville are living in fear, that is why their house insurance has gone up and that is why their car insurance has gone up—because Labor does not care.

(Time expired)

Townsville Electorate

 **Mr STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (3.22 pm): I take this opportunity to welcome everyone to Townsville. I thank each and every one of you for coming up to God's country, to the capital of not only North Queensland but north Australia. This is the home of the Cowboys and the home of the mighty Townsville Fire, who have won three women's national basketball championships. How good was the welcome to country today! I have to say how proud I was to see two of my students involved in that. It was particularly special knowing that we recognise our Indigenous people and the land we meet on today and the next couple of days. We need to bear in mind that it was Captain James Cook who sailed past here around 249 years ago when he got off the coastline at Maggie Island. His compass went a little bit dodgy, so he called it Magnetical Isle and we now affectionately call it Maggie.

We have been doing it a bit tough up this way. There have been 10 years of drought. We have seen the downturn in the minerals commodity prices, which has led to several mine closures. We used to be the second largest fly-in fly-out mining centre in Australia. We also saw the LNP sack teachers, nurses and teacher aides and that certainly had an impact in our community.

In 2016 we saw the closure of Queensland Nickel, where 800 people lost their jobs in one day and 3,500 people lost their jobs because of the indirect association they had with Queensland Nickel. To this day, those people are still waiting to get paid what is owed to them from the closure of Queensland Nickel. We need to see that coming through. What did we see when Queensland Nickel closed? Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk flew to Townsville with her cabinet team and announced the Accelerated Works Program. She looked for ways to create jobs. She looked for ways to make sure people could get food on their tables and money in their pockets. She looked for ways for local people to retain their employment. We did not want to see people leave town. What happens when people leave town? What happens when families leave? School numbers go down and schools are impacted by that. That has a huge impact on our city.

It is the Palaszczuk government that continues to drive and drive and drive our jobs agenda. The North Queensland Stadium was built by North Queenslanders for North Queenslanders. If people have not seen it, they should have a look. This is going to be the home of the Cowboys and there are 25,000 people who go along to see those games. This is what we have committed: \$225 million for the water pipeline, with 600 jobs in that project; \$193 million for the port channel widening, with 120 jobs in that program; \$7 million for the Reid Park bridge, with 20 jobs in that project; and \$550 million for the Bruce Highway—we want a better Bruce—with 600 jobs in that project. We have seen the announcement

today about raising the wall of the Burdekin Falls Dam. We have a hydrogen future specifically for Townsville.

Earlier this year, we saw the flooding event and a lot of people have heard me talk about this. There are still people living out of their homes. I have heard instances where families have packed up everything and moved 13 times. Imagine the impact on those kids in those schools. We are committed to making sure that we look after those people. I know that a lot of people have had a look through Townsville, and I thank them for doing that. Every time they buy a cup of coffee or a meal at the local shop, they are helping my community.

When you travel through some of the backstreets, look for the shipping containers that are still in driveways. Those shipping containers contain the lives and livelihoods of people who are not back in their homes yet. I want to thank those in camouflage because the army turned out and they helped our community. They cleaned up our community for us. If it were not for those in camouflage, we would be in a tough place.


Let me contrast that with the LNP members who say how committed they are to Townsville. About 12 months ago, the Leader of the Opposition said that she wanted to make Townsville a livable city. What an insult. Townsville is already a livable city. The member for Currumbin said she had to be dragged to Townsville. They want to sell our port, they want to sell our rail line and they wanted to sell Ergon. They sacked teachers, they sacked nurses and they sacked doctors. We heard today how many police they were going to commit to us here in Townsville for crime. How many? None. Absolutely no police. This is how committed the LNP members are to Townsville. Their track record speaks for itself.

PERSONALISED TRANSPORT OMBUDSMAN BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 2584, on motion of Mr Bailey—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (3.27 pm), continuing: Just before we were so rudely interrupted by the lunchbreak, I was regaling the House with tales of my misspent youth catching public transport all over Brisbane with my little blue go card. I was thinking about the young people sitting in the chamber just before lunch and how they too are on the cusp of young adulthood. It is interesting to think what it might look like for them when they catch public transport. As the member for Townsville pointed out before the lunchbreak, the young people of Townsville will also have the opportunity to use these smart ticketing options.

I also mentioned that I am somewhat of a Luddite. I always have been and I think I always will be. I am going to try something new today and I am going to read my speech off my smartphone and see how that goes for me. Bear with me.


A government member interjected.

Ms PUGH: I take that interjection from the minister. The Palaszczuk government has invested \$371 million to deliver the new smart ticketing solution. As the member for Townsville rightly said, it will be for all Queenslanders. This is something to be really excited about in North Queensland as we are here in beautiful Townsville.

The smart ticketing solution will use the most advanced global ticketing technology. It will deliver a more personalised public transport experience for our customers. That is going to make choosing public transport even easier. We know in Mount Ommaney that this is incredibly important. The Darra park-and-ride is getting upgraded and people will be given even more options to catch public transport. Smart ticketing will enable customers to pay for travel with more options like contactless debit and credit cards, their smartphones, their wearable devices—which I am still not on board with—as well as their go card and good old cash.

The overall customer experience also will be improved through the delivery of a new, intuitive customer mobile app—this all sounds pretty newfangled to me—that has a website and access to real-time service information. For the first time, as I said, customers in regional Queensland—so right here in Townsville—will have access to the same ticketing system and its benefits. That means that if, like me, you intend to return to Townsville for a holiday later this year—because, golly gosh, isn't it beautiful up here?—you can take the very same ticketing options and use them in Brisbane, Townsville or anywhere else in regional Queensland that you choose to holiday.

Smart ticketing will also benefit tourism in Townsville. I am sure there are many members who, like me, intend to return for a holiday, because it is just so beautiful up here. As part of the project's development, a series of regional trials are planned for 2019 in Innisfail, Bowen in North Queensland, Minjerribah, or North Stradbroke Island, Maryborough on the Fraser Coast, and Hervey Bay, where I used to holiday as a young lass at the Pialba caravan park—God's own country. Smart ticketing is part of the Palaszczuk government's \$23 billion commitment to roads and transport. It is fantastic to see this investment in public transport. I certainly commend the bill to the House.


 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (3.31 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate of the Personalised Transport Ombudsman Bill 2019. I sat on the committee, so I had exposure to some of the contributions in this respect. I will focus on some particular points. I am fairly ambivalent about the new ticketing system. Ticketing and public transport are important, and I see the value to people in Brisbane in that it gives them connectivity to services in terms of how they get around, but what about applying the same thing to people who live in remote areas? We in parliament are debating and making an effort—and a lot of effort has gone into making that system work better for people—but those in remote areas have been struggling with airfares for the last four or five years. I would like to see the same amount of effort put into improving our connectivity with services.

My second observation in terms of having an ombudsman, personalised transport and the rollout of rideshare—and I watch very closely the growth of that industry and whether you are a fan of rideshare or a fan of taxis—is to park those ideologies aside for a moment and look at how that rolled out. Rideshare services moved into the market. At that point, department of transport officers were issuing fines to operations operating outside of the law. Some operators started blocking the phones of transport officers trying to issue fines. I thought that was pretty rude and pretty bold of any company coming in. When the rideshare representatives fronted the committee they said, 'Well, you had better change the laws to keep up, because we are here to stay.' I thought that was treating our role as legislators with absolute contempt. I apply that situation to an ombudsman where there is a fundamental problem. It is a real problem when rideshare representatives say, 'Look, we know there is a law there, but we are still breaking it. Come and sue us if you like.' That was their attitude. You could put in 100 complaints, and my office could field those complaints every day and feed them to the ombudsman, but nothing was done then about that action and nor would I expect anything to be done with an ombudsman in place now.

I am sure there would be some value in having ombudsmen in other areas. More often than not when we pass something to the ombudsman, there should be more conversation between me and ministerial staff of the department in trying to resolve something in that that is what we are paid to do. That is where we can really provide a good service to constituents—by providing another layer between us and the decision-makers. I do not think that is really helpful or where we want to be. I see this as another cost, another layer of bureaucracy, between us and the decision-makers. I apply it to that scenario with the rollout of rideshare.

When we identify structural problems that will emerge through the rollout of these technologies, I do not think there is the capacity to capture those or, if there are, they are fed to the minister, which seems to me to be a polite recommendation. I cannot demand to see that and there is no other pathway for the ombudsman—after offering that advice to the minister—to say, 'I still need to action this beyond that, because there is no action here.'

I return to the rolling out of rideshare. Thousands of fines were issued to Uber drivers but the ombudsman said, 'Nothing is being done. What do I do with this?' The issue falls dead, in which case we wasted money. I challenge anyone to replay that scenario in terms of how it would be better with or without an ombudsman. I could not think of a better example of why we need an ombudsman than that example. It happened. That is fact: history. I am very sceptical about where it will count in relation to the substantial issues that we are trying to address. Often these can be used as a tool to give someone another door to knock on. They ring an electorate office with a problem. Often if the situation is not resolved by going straight to the department or a ministerial office people will engage and use the ombudsman. Will that resolve things? I hope it does, but I would approach it with a fair level of cynicism based on my experience with the rideshare industry. We have some extreme cynicism about its effectiveness and about whether this is good use of Queensland taxpayers' money.

 **Mr O'ROURKE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (3.36 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Personalised Transport Ombudsman Bill 2019. There are three main components to the bill. The first component is the establishment of an independent Personalised Transport Ombudsman to manage complaints received with regard to the personalised transport industry. The second component is the new smart

ticketing solution about which I am very excited and which also will assist in the continued enforcement of fare evasion and related offences. The third component is to improve enforceability and clarify the operation of the existing provisions. The new charter will encourage innovation and greater choice for customers and flexibility in the industry to ensure services, safety, accessibility, affordability and accountability.

The establishment of the Personalised Transport Ombudsman will provide a reputable and independent regulator. Provisions in this bill will provide for criminal history checks and exclude a person with a potential conflict of interest to ensure there will be public and industry confidence in the integrity and independence of the appointee.


The Personalised Transport Ombudsman will be responsible for helping to resolve complaints received by the personalised transport industry in a timely and cost-effective way. It will be required to perform its functions independently, impartially and in the public interest. Services will be provided to the public free of charge. To reinforce further the independence of the role, the Personalised Transport Ombudsman and its staff will not be subject to direction from outsiders regarding these functions. For example, the Minister for Transport and Main Roads will not be able to direct the ombudsman.

With regard to the smart ticketing amendments, this bill introduces new amendments to existing legislation to support the enforcement of fare evasion and related offences under the new smart ticketing solutions. The new smart ticketing solution will give customers greater choice of payment for public transport use. It will allow customers to use debit and credit cards, smartphones and wearable devices in addition to the existing go card and paper tickets.

This is something that I believe regional Queenslanders will really appreciate. I know that when I have travelled to Brisbane I have found it challenging to use public transport. Maybe it is just my age. You have to find a newsagency or the like to buy a go card and then you are not sure how much money to put on it. Being able to use your debit or credit card will make travel so much easier.

The other part of this bill allows for future advancements as new smart ticketing solutions are developed and rolled out. Another important factor is the continuing ability to recover unclaimed credit on dormant or expired accounts. Customers will continue to be able to claim unused credit on their own accounts through the varied means that are readily available. This bill also facilitates the continued sharing of information so that we can provide customers with the concessions they are entitled to. It is important that we balance customer privacy with provisions that are robust and effective.

This bill also includes some minor amendments to the transport operations act 1994 to improve the enforceability of legislation and provides greater certainty for the personalised transport industry. Minor and consequential changes are also made to other acts. I thank the committee for the work they did on this bill. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (3.41 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the debate of the Personalised Transport Ombudsman Bill 2019. As outlined in the explanatory notes, the main policy objective is to create this office to deal with complaints relating to personalised transport. Why do we see an increase in these complaints? Ultimately, it is because over the past few years property rights have been stripped away from people in the personalised transport industry. Taxidriviers and limousine drivers had their property rights stripped away. Those rights were protected by regulation which is now gone. We now see lots of complaints arising. It is an issue that needs a solution. The question is: is this the right solution?

One of the things politicians should do is listen to people in the industry and in the community generally when forming policy and legislation. As an example of stakeholder feedback, the Taxi Council of Queensland wrote to the government to say that the PTO presents as a 'toothless tiger' and that the idea is a waste of money. Mr Davies, the CEO of the Queensland Taxi Council, said—

Give the ombudsman some more teeth. Give them some real investigative powers. Give the ombudsman the ability to make binding conditions on mediated settlements and, I would think, expand the role to be able to look at the way the department is administering the compliance scheme.

It may be a good idea to listen to the Taxi Council if we are going to bring in a piece of legislation dealing with personalised transport that is there to serve and help people deal with personalised transport issues. Maybe the CEO of the Taxi Council would have something to add. Some people might be of a different view. Let us look at the Taxi Council's main opponent in the personalised transport industry. The secretary of the Ride Share Drivers' Association, Mr Johnson, said—

As you read through the legislation, the reality is that the ombudsman will have no power to compel any party to do anything, apart from appearing before the ombudsman.

We are going to spend taxpayers' hard-earned money that has been put in the charge of the government to create this office, but the two main stakeholders either do not think it is a good idea or, if it is a good idea, think the ombudsman needs powers to do something more than just tell people they must come and have a meeting. I think there are cheaper ways for people to have meetings than to set up an ombudsman's office. This really is just a bit of window-dressing around the issue. If the ombudsman does not have any powers to solve anything, we have to ask ourselves why the government would spend money and spend this parliament's time debating a bill that has this outcome.

Mr Norris, the legal officer with the Transport Workers' Union, said this 'is merely another public service SES position for some public servant to fill'. It does not sound like he is a big supporter of the bill, either. These people out there operating in this industry find it difficult to find things in this bill to support.

Principally, the problem is that this office does not have any power to compel people to do anything. The LNP's alternative is a statutory personalised transport commissioner with some real powers to investigate issues as well as a plan to consolidate all personalised transport functions with TMR into a new office of personalised transport—a department that could have some real power and control and an area where we could solve problems as they came up, as opposed to this piece of legislation, which is window-dressing. It makes people feel good. They can put in a complaint to the ombudsman and eventually they will hear back. The likely outcome will be that the ombudsman, with great regret, cannot actually do anything apart from ask people to come and talk about the problem. Ultimately, I have to ask myself why we are here debating this legislation. If this ombudsman has no power to do very much, why waste time, money, energy and effort on setting up it up?

In relation to ticketing, I think it is high time that Queensland had an updated ticketing system. One of the ministers opposite tells me that Toowoomba is no longer regional; we are part of the great metropolis of Brisbane now. Certainly when it comes to giving us a discount on payroll tax we are now part of the great metropolis. As part of that great metropolis, I have been complaining that Toowoomba does not have go cards. Obviously, everybody else in the great metropolis has go cards. Toowoomba, being no longer a regional town, is looking for the same level of public transport service. I look forward to the fast train pulling into Toowoomba station shortly. If we cannot have those things, then let's be honest: Toowoomba is a regional town—a proud regional town, a central hub for the Darling Downs—and Toowoomba deserves to get the payroll tax discount.

In terms of the technology for ticketing, it will help some of the people I represent. When they travel to Brisbane and catch the bus locally, at least they will be able to use some sort of facilities. That part of the bill has some merit. In terms of the ombudsman, I think we are really kidding ourselves that there is anything worthwhile in this particular office. Unless the government proposes some late amendments to give it some teeth, I suggest it is probably not a great thing to be supporting and I will not be supporting the bill.



Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (3.48 pm): In rising to speak in support of the Personalised Transport Ombudsman Bill 2019 I wish to thank the people of Townsville for their welcome and note the extraordinary feeling of *deja vu*—being here 17 years to the day after what was then known as 'The Swamp' was transformed into the Queensland parliament. My role then was different, but I wish to acknowledge all of the Parliamentary Service team who have achieved the 2019 transformation. Thank you for your indulgence, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Having formerly been the minister responsible for the regulation of the personalised transport industry, it gives me great pleasure to contribute to this debate and I thank the Transport and Public Works Committee for its work in examining the bill and particularly the chair, the member for Kurwongbah. I congratulate the Minister for Transport and Main Roads for continuing the evolution of the regulatory framework for Queensland's burgeoning personalised transport sector begun by me and the member for South Brisbane during our respective tenures as transport minister. When ride-book services were legalised in Queensland in 2016, some saw this as heralding the end of the taxi industry and others said that the requirements on ride-book services were too restrictive. What we sought and continue to seek as a government was a balance between passenger and community safety and choice for the consumer, as always getting the balance right.

Already the advent of ride-booking services has meant greater choice for passengers across many Queensland centres, including those away from the south-east corner including here in beautiful Townsville, and the establishment of the Personalised Transport Ombudsman, or PTO, is the logical next step in developing this evolving regulatory framework. It provides a one-stop shop for people with concerns or issues about the quality of service received by them from a ride-book service. It also is a


point of contact where workers in the industry can address problems with their working conditions. I want to acknowledge the work of Peter Biagini and members of the Transport Workers' Union as well as Rideshire Drivers in Cooperation Queensland, or the RDCQ, for their ongoing advocacy for better rates and conditions for their members. Parts of this bill are in large part thanks to the advocacy of the TWU and the RDCQ.

The PTO will be a well-equipped body that will be able to assess whether complaints received should be referred to the Department of Transport and Main Roads for disciplinary action or prosecution. Furthermore, the PTO will act as a monitor for developments on the ground within the sector, thus being a useful source of advice to policymakers to ensure that the regulation keeps up with the dynamic nature of the industry—an industry and a space that will continue to be very dynamic. We think it has been dynamic over the last few years, but there is far more innovation and change to come in the whole of the transport industry, particularly in the personalised transport industry.

I think it is poignant to contrast this proactive approach by this government and by this minister to dealing with the reality of the likes of Uber, Ola and DiDi alongside the traditional taxi industry with that of the failed Newman LNP government. The two people who were responsible for the mealy-mouthed approach to Uber's arrival in Queensland are no longer members of this place, but who could forget them? In the absence of any attempt at regulatory reform, who could forget what Campbell Newman and Scott Emerson's response was? It was a letter to Uber that said, 'Go away. Please stop,' and that was it. Nothing else—no genuine response, no genuine engagement. That is not what good governments do, but that is what the arrogant approach to policy-making is and, in part, it is part of the reason the LNP lasted only one term in government.

Further, I am very happy to also see important provisions in this bill that modernise public transport ticketing and enforcement provisions through the amendments to the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994 and moving enforcement powers to the 2018 regulation. These measures will ensure that Queenslanders can continue to enjoy quality and reliable public transport services thanks to revenue streams that are protected, including when we move to the new ticketing solution in coming years—new ticketing solutions that will massively improve the accessibility of public transport to people right across this state, particularly to visitors and to people who are occasional users of public transport, and will encourage more use. As we have seen on so many occasions, it is when people use public transport for the first time—maybe they are going to a sporting match or something like that—that they realise how good and how efficient it can be and how useful it can be to them, and that is when they return and become regular users.

This is a very important bill. It is Queensland Labor that brought ride-booking services out of the shadows. It will be Queensland Labor that ensures it continues to create employment across our state within a rigorous regulatory environment, especially as the personalised and public transport industries continue to evolve in response to technology and market innovation. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mrs STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (3.54 pm): The Personalised Transport Ombudsman Bill 2019 was introduced on 12 February by the Minister for Transport and Main Roads and the committee report was tabled on 29 March. The committee made eight recommendations, which is quite unusual and suggests this bill is deficient on a number of fronts. All but one of these recommendations was supported or supported in principle by the government. In the minister's introductory speech he said—

The bill has three key policy objectives. The main objective is to establish an independent Personalised Transport Ombudsman to help resolve complaints for the personalised transport industry. The second objective is to support the continued enforcement of fare evasion and related offences under the new smart ticketing solution. The third objective is to improve enforceability and clarifies the operation of existing provisions.

Let us take a look at the first objective—the establishment of a Personalised Transport Ombudsman who, according to the minister, will be responsible for helping to resolve complaints relating to the personalised transport industry in a timely and cost-effective way. The ombudsman will be required to perform its functions independently, impartially and in the public interest and its services will be provided to the public free of charge. Additionally, the minister cannot direct the ombudsman or staff in the performance of its functions. That is kind of a relief, is it not? Stating that this role operates independently is promoting an unrealistic expectation. The minister continues—

Importantly, the ombudsman's role has clear limitations. It will not investigate certain matters, including a complaint about government policy or legislation or alleged offences under relevant transport legislation.

If this position is supposedly independent, why can it not investigate government policy? If it is bad policy and it affects taxpayers, why should it not be investigated? This Labor government allowed unfair competition to our small businesses in the taxi industry. It did nothing and then offered paltry

compensation. In fact, the taxidriver who drove me in from the airport was very concerned about the emergence of Uber, DiDi and others in Townsville because he said that at the moment they have not had to compete against them. This role is sounding more like the ombudsman that you get when you are not really getting one. There is something very Monty Pythonesque about it. How can this position be effective with such controlled scope and limitations?

Recommendation No. 3 in the committee's report No. 17 to the 56th Parliament of Queensland endorses the Minister for Transport and Main Roads reconsidering the Personalised Transport Ombudsman's ability to make binding decisions. This was not supported, with the government giving the following response—

The PTO—

the Personalised Transport Ombudsman—

will be responsible for helping to resolve complaints relating to the personalised transport industry in a timely and cost-effective way by providing, for example, information and mediation services. It was never intended that the PTO would make binding decisions.

I draw honourable members' attention to the statement of reservation by non-government members, the honourable members for Hervey Bay and Callide, who said—

Our initial concern is that the constraints placed on the newly created position mean that there appears to be limited scope available to the Ombudsman to effectively resolve complaints relating to personalised transport services. It will not investigate certain matters including complaints about government policy, or legislation or alleged offences under relevant transport legislation.

They refer to it as a 'toothless tiger'. The statement of reservation continues—

However, it is our view that these issues should be resolved by the Government agencies working together with the industry rather than attempting to shift the responsibility for finding a solution to the Ombudsman.

In essence, the government is helping to create the very issues that the ombudsman would now be examining. In recent years new business models have entered the personalised transport space and have given rise to numerous operational and enforcement issues. Labor's tardiness in addressing these issues as they occurred has led to friction, conflict and confusion amongst key players. Labor stalwart Dallas Fraser, a prolific letter writer on the Gold Coast, is annoyed at the speed being travelled along shared pathways and the lack of courtesy shown. Another constituent wrote to me, the Premier and the minister earlier this year very concerned about the minister's decision to pass a declaration that limits speed on footpaths rising from 10 kilometres per hour to 25 kilometres per hour just before Christmas last year. My constituent wanted to know how raising the speed limit could possibly be in the public interest.

Mr BAILEY: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance. As fascinating as the member's contribution is, it has absolutely nothing to do with this bill.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr McArdle): Member, the minister has raised a point of order. I bring you back to the long title of the bill.

Mrs STUCKEY: Thank you very much. The minister has responded to my constituent. I think he would be pleased to hear that. Most weeks there are letters in the paper about concerns about speeds on pathways. In July this year road safety experts reported that half of all e-scooter riders in Brisbane were breaking the law, which is a worry.

Mr BAILEY: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. It is the same point—relevance. Mr Deputy Speaker, you have just given the member an instruction and she continues to speak about matters that have absolutely nothing to do with the bill.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Currumbin, I understand that you are talking to issues that fall outside the long title of the bill. I ask you to come back to the long title of the bill.

Mrs STUCKEY: The second objective of the bill is to support the continued enforcement of fare evasion and related offences under the new smart ticketing solution. The minister says that, in terms of the protection of fare revenue, we note the growing trend in fare evasion and associated antisocial behaviour on our public transport system. That is really cute. The minister notes the growing trend. It is not a trend; it is an epidemic.


The Palaszczuk government's track record on fare evasion is woeful. It has done nothing—which is, of course, the Premier's motto—turning a blind eye to fare evasion, which has tripled in the last three years. This Labor government sat on its hands while fare evasion numbers on Surfside buses exploded from 425,000 in 2016 to 1,024,261 in 2017. This cost honest passengers in Queensland over

\$25 million in 2015-16 alone. Each day, 4,000 school students thumb their noses and refuse to pay, taking advantage of a policy that is designed to protect them, yet the government does nothing. The Step Up program, which educates students about acceptable behaviour on public transport, has been delivered to only a few schools. Why the delay? If the minister were committed to reducing fare evasion, that program should have been rolled out to all Gold Coast schools by now.

On 21 June the headline 'Coast worst on bus abuse' appeared in the *Gold Coast Bulletin*, with the Transport Workers' Union calling for more senior network officers—something that I have been calling on the minister to do for several years. Bus drivers tell of being smacked on the side of the head, spat on and treated like garbage, yet still there is no action from the minister. On 4 July, a bus driver was robbed at knifepoint by a male teenager who ran off with his money tin. On 22 August, an article on the *Gold Coast Bulletin* under the headline 'Driven mad by fare evaders' told the story of a grandmother who took her granddaughter on a school bus route and was shocked by the number of schoolkids who were getting on and not paying.

The Palaszczuk government had an opportunity, in association with this bill, to get tough on fare evaders and instil some confidence in a demoralised general public who are paying passengers and who witness these individuals blatantly breaking the law, abusing drivers and other travellers and getting away with it. Those opposite and this minister give lip-service to a growing and serious issue.

The third objective of the bill is to improve enforceability and clarify the operation of existing provisions. This is a token attempt to fix a very serious problem that, left unresolved, will result in more hostile consequences that could have been avoided. Stakeholders do not support this bill and neither does the LNP.

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (4.03 pm): It gives me great pleasure to speak to this bill. Like the member for Traeger, who spoke about the need for new ticketing solutions in his electorate, my electorate of Gregory does not have a public transport system that needs ticketing solutions, but I understand that it could be helpful when people of my electorate go to Brisbane or other major cities so that they can adapt to new ticketing solutions.

Before us we have a bill that creates the Personalised Transport Ombudsman, who will have no power under the law and is a bureaucratic appointment. Stakeholders have said that they do not agree with this bill. Those stakeholders include the Transport Workers' Union, the Taxi Council and even the Ride Share Drivers' Association, which has said that this bill is not good. Therefore, why are we progressing with a bill when the majority of stakeholders who have given input into the consideration of this bill have said that it is not a good bill? This bill needs to be taken back and redrafted. The Personalised Transport Ombudsman needs to have the power to be able to do the job that needs to be done.

I also want to talk about an issue that has been around for quite a few years that has had a major economic impact on small businesses throughout Queensland. In Brisbane, and even here in Townsville, we have seen the taxi industry—mums and dads who have operated a taxi as their business and as their superannuation—decrease in value. To give an understanding of the situation to the House, recently I met with a person who owned a couple of licences. I was asked by Cecilia and Ben Hooper, who operate the taxi industry in Emerald, to catch up with this person because they were worried about him. I took this person for a coffee. To see a man who was quite successful, who had worked hard for a long time, in tears while we were having coffee because his industry had been taken away from him was quite heartbreaking. We definitely need to make sure that, if we introduce bills relating to the taxi industry and the rideshare industry, those bills count. They need to count.


It is considered that the establishment of the Personalised Transport Ombudsman is an attempt by the government to shift responsibility for settling such issues. However, the limited powers assigned to the position suggests that these issues, including complaints about government policy and legislation, or even alleged offences under the relevant transport legislation, will not be investigated. Why are we proceeding with this bill when we have stakeholders, the industry itself, saying that this position will be a toothless tiger?

Taxpayers' money for Queensland is a finite resource. The people sitting in the gallery here in Townsville and listening to us expect us to use their taxpayer dollars in the most efficient and best way possible. They do not want us using taxpayers' dollars for an office that will be a toothless tiger. We have a responsibility to these people in the gallery and other people in Townsville and North Queensland, who work damned hard to provide us with money for the Queensland economy, to make sure that we are spending their taxpayer dollars in the right way. The last thing the people of Townsville

and North Queensland want is someone or a government using their taxpayer dollars on something that is not going to achieve the result it was destined to achieve.

Based on the feedback from those stakeholders who provided a submission to the Transport and Public Works Committee, they see the role of the Personalised Transport Ombudsman as being a waste of money and little more than a toothless tiger. That is damning. When industry stakeholders such as the Taxi Council and the Transport Workers' Union and even the Ride Share Drivers' Association of Australia indicate that the whole legislation is flawed, the government has to go back to the drawing board and start again to make sure that we get this right.

Finally, I commend the remarks made by the member for Traeger in relation to the new ticketing system. It will be of benefit to people in regional Queensland. I would also like the minister to continue to look at regional airfares. That is a big issue here just like ticketing in Brisbane is a big issue. We have to make sure that all Queenslanders throughout this great state have connectivity to make sure that everybody gets a fair go.

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (4.08 pm): I, too, rise to address the Personalised Transport Ombudsman Bill 2019. As outlined by my good friend and shadow minister, the LNP will be opposing this bill. Like the member for Chatsworth, like the minister, like the member for Sandgate, I, too, have had some vested interests in the development of this bill and, indeed, this industry. As a former shadow minister for transport and main roads for nearly the better part of two years, I dealt almost on a daily basis with the peak industry bodies representing the taxi industry as well as rideshare, with individual taxi licence owners and with drivers to try to determine the best way we could regulate the personalised transport industry and deliver some better outcomes for all involved. The short answer is that this bill is not the answer.

As the member for Gregory outlined, this bill sets up a toothless tiger that not one single stakeholder supports. It is very rare, but even the unions are opposing what is being proposed in this bill. I will read the evidence of a number of individuals who appeared before the committee in the public hearing. Let us start with Mr Lee Norris of the Transport Workers' Union who said—

I do not think it can operate effectively.

He goes on to say—

If this particular office does not have the ability to make a binding decision on anyone, you can simply skate through the mediation process by stonewalling and nothing will be achieved through it.

His colleague, Dr John Martin of the Queensland Council of Unions, says—

Both of our submissions have suggested that the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission already exists. It is an independent tribunal that is used to dealing with workplace disputes. It is up and running and has its own administrative support.

We would advocate for that being the body to which complaints of this nature would go.

Straight up we are already hearing that there are alternatives to establishing a new ombudsman for the kinds of complaints being proposed by this bill.

Mr Stephen Lacaze, who I met numerous times during my term as the shadow minister for transport and main roads, said in the public hearing—

It gives you no authority, no power. That was the absolute common theme through all the written submissions and I think we are all very aware of it.

Les Johnson, from the Ride Share Drivers' Association of Australia, again someone I met with on a frequent basis, said that what was actually required was an independent statutory authority or commission. He went on to say—

I have stated publicly elsewhere that this legislation is nothing more than a smokescreen and a waste of taxpayer funds. The person appointed to this role will have no real power to adjudicate a satisfactory outcome, nor will he or she have the power to make persons or corporations comply with the legislation.

If we then move to Jacqui Shephard from the Limousine Action Group Queensland—

Ms Jones: What's your answer?

Mr POWELL: I take that interjection from the member for Cooper. I will come to our answer, one that was actually supported by the taxi industry. Ms Shephard said—

We do not support this bill.

...

We do not feel that this ombudsman bill will address any of the issues that we are actually having. It poses little to no benefit to the limousine industry.

Blair Davies, the CEO of the Taxi Council, said—


As an industry body—I think you heard testimony of this previously—we thought there was an advantage in creating a personalised transport commission and a commissioner or commissioners who would oversee the industry, resolve disputes and lead the industry forward. We understand that the government got re-elected on a different agenda—to set up an ombudsman—and there is a significant difference between the ombudsman and the commission.

It is at this point that I point out that going into the 2017 election it was the LNP that proposed, as per the request by the Taxi Council of Queensland, a personalised transport commissioner, one that would look at resolving disputes, one that would look at overseeing outstanding issues within the personalised transport industry and one that would help that industry move forward. The LNP took that policy forward. It has been reiterated since by the shadow minister for transport and main roads. That is what the industry sought, not an ombudsman. When those opposite, including the member for Cooper, want to harp on about what is our solution, there you have it. You had it going into the last election. It was welcomed by the Taxi Council—indeed, it was their policy—and it has been dismissed and instead we have an ombudsman, the so-called toothless tiger, as those before me have said and as others reiterated during this public hearing that I am referring to now.


I also want to include the comments by Mr Paul Scaini of the Queensland Taxi Licence Owners Association. He said—

I have come here today to try to seek from the committee three things. Firstly, I would like you to do your jobs—not your jobs to your party but your jobs to the people who elected you. Secondly, I would like you to look at this legislation and have the strength of conviction to send it back to where it came from and say, ‘This is a bad bill and we don’t want to make a bad bill a bad law again.’ In the absence of all of that—it is probably not going to happen, but I would like to think you would consider it at least—at the bare minimum I think you need to look at the problems that are evident within the bill and which you guys have already identified,

I cannot say it better than Mr Scaini. This is a bad bill. If we vote for it today we make it bad law. By making it bad law we have not achieved anything. Indeed, we have wasted taxpayers’ dollars and we have wasted taxpayers’ time. We have not resolved anything within the personalised transport industry. We need to go back to what was asked for by those stakeholders and that is to have a look at a personalised transport commission and commissioner to resolve the outstanding issues, to give this industry the focus and the vision that it needs moving forward. I oppose this bill.

 **Mr ANDREW** (Mirani—PHON) (4.15 pm): I rise to speak of my concerns about the deficiencies within the Personalised Transport Ombudsman Bill 2019. While the purpose of an extra ombudsman to provide oversight of the emerging personalised transport industry does have some merit, I am ever cognisant that this additional statutory office will impose a significant cost on every Queensland taxpayer. Is it fair that the people in regional and remote Queensland should be committing their hard-earned tax dollars when the likes of Uber and Lyft cannot be bothered to fund their own human resources and workplace health and safety functions? Whilst hordes of people in Brisbane and the major provincial cities rush to seek out Uber and Lyft, have any of these people stopped to think about what corners have been cut to make their ride a few dollars cheaper than catching a normal taxi—the operators of which have met their regulatory requirements?

Within this same bill, the amendment proposed to clause 91ZW of the Transport Operations (Passenger Service) Act 1994 outlines changes to the security levy payable by the operators of commercial taxi services. This being the case, why are Uber and Lyft not regulated to the same operational and safety standards as traditional public transport operators in Queensland? This amendment bill fails to put in place adequate measures to ensure the emerging personalised transport operators pick up the cost of industry regulation that applies to existing operators of taxis and public transport.

 **Mr O’CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (4.16 pm): I rise to speak in opposition to the Personalised Transport Ombudsman Bill. It is clear from key stakeholders, and even from the committee report, that this bill has major flaws. It will end up being a waste of money to establish such a weak position as the Personalised Transport Ombudsman. The committee’s recommendations include calling on the minister to reconsider matters relating to the Personalised Transport Ombudsman’s ability to make binding decisions, publicly report on systemic issues and complaint statistics, as well as the reporting arrangements for the ombudsman and asking the minister to clarify whether representative bodies will be able to access the services of the ombudsman.

The Ride Share Drivers’ Association of Australia summed it up well. It said—

It is a very poorly drafted piece of legislation. I have stated publicly elsewhere that this legislation is nothing more than a smokescreen and a waste of taxpayer funds. The person appointed to this role will have no real power to adjudicate a satisfactory outcome, nor will he or she have the power to make persons or corporations comply with the legislation.

I could spend my whole contribution quoting the different industry bodies and their negative views about the bill—there are so many to choose from. This shows the resounding negativity to the view that the ombudsman will have no real value to many of the people it is designed to be set up to serve. The bill is designed to address the host of operational and enforcement issues that have emerged in our growing gig economy. With the advances in technology we have seen in the last decade, the new business models—particularly around ridesharing—have brought forward issues that need to be resolved by archaic legislation and regulations.


Industry and consumer complaints, along with the ongoing fights between rideshare and the taxi industry, have yet to be fully addressed by the government. The establishment of the Personalised Transport Ombudsman position with the limited scope it is being given under this bill will not help address these issues. It will end up becoming a scapegoat for the government to shift blame to. The limited powers assigned to this position suggest these issues, including complaints about government policy and legislation, or even alleged offences under other relevant transport legislation, will not be investigated. The changing landscape of transport requires people to be able to bring forward holes in legislation and issues relating to those changes. To not be able to do so is unacceptable.

The Taxi Council Queensland submitted that the Personalised Transport Ombudsman will be a toothless tiger and a waste of money, which is something that many of my colleagues have already quoted. The council also expressed the view that the substantive and pressing issues confronting their sector appear to be outside the purview proposed for the new role. The Limousine Action Group (Queensland) Inc. also expressed concern that safety was not a priority of the bill and that the proposed role of the Personalised Transport Ombudsman posed little to no benefit to the industry. They concluded that the service will be similar to the current ineffective taxi complaint hotline.

If we are going to create this new office and if we are going to spend money to set it up, let us make it effective and responsive to the current reality of the market. Key stakeholders have no faith that anything is going to happen under the ombudsman. An ombudsman needs real powers to investigate issues and for their decisions to be binding. If, as the minister has said, that would be a duplication of scope, perhaps we need to ask whether the office has any purpose at all. I was pleased to hear that at least the minister has heeded the recommendation of the committee to have the reporting of the ombudsman available to industry bodies and the public so that systemic issues can be identified and the government can be held accountable. It is surprising that that was not in the legislation prior to today. Nonetheless, I am pleased that there will be accountability, at least in this respect.

The bill seeks to protect fare revenue under the new ticketing solution. The growing trend in fare evasion is costing the government \$25 million each year. We will face more risk as the government attempts to keep up with the technology that other states are already employing around ticketing. I welcome the adoption of contactless ticketing and the amendments to the existing legislation to allow for that. That change needs to happen and is already being demonstrated in other jurisdictions. Anything that makes using public transport easier will help to encourage people to use it.

I have no faith that this legislation or the government will get fare evasion under control more broadly. The government's record speaks volumes, as fare evasion on buses has jumped significantly in the past few years. Several of my colleagues have already shared some of the statistics and, indeed, found them through answers to questions on notice. On the Gold Coast during school runs, fare evasion has jumped from just over 400,000 in 2016-17 to nearly 800,000 in 2017-18. I see it all the time on my local bus services. I see kids walk straight past the driver and into the bus. Paying for a ticket does not factor into their thinking. Therefore, there is little reason to think that Labor can change that through the bill that is before us today. I believe we need to look at different approaches.

 **Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (4.22 pm): I rise to speak to the Personalised Transport Ombudsman Bill 2019. Along with my LNP colleagues, I will be opposing the bill. I thank the committee for its deliberations. I note that a fair bit of work was involved on what is a relatively straightforward bill, which reveals a lot about the stability of the bill. The bill provides for the appointment of the Personalised Transport Ombudsman and establishes the office of the ombudsman. It outlines their functions, powers and responsibilities. This action flows from a recommendation contained in the former public works and utilities committee report of the previous parliament. That committee recommended that an ombudsman or similar entity be established.

There are also implications for a new ticketing system. A solution is sought by relocating fare evasion and related offences to a regulation to provide greater flexibility, to make changes to the

regulation as ticketing technology develops; providing continued support for the sharing of information to verify a person's entitlement to a concession; providing evidentiary aids for fares and revenue protection devices; and making consequential amendments to provide for the continued use of unclaimed credit on dormant passenger cards. There are some miscellaneous amendments clarifying the public passenger services for which operator accreditation and driver authorisation are required; providing evidentiary aids for establishing whether, at a particular time, a person holds a category of OA or DA; clarifying an existing power of an authorised person to require information from certain persons; allowing a driving sanction to be imposed where the person driving a taxi, booked hire vehicle or limousine commits an offence against a provision prescribed by a regulation; and making other minor consequential amendments.

The key factors here are the changes in our society, economy and technology. We have seen the emergence of the gig economy. In Southern Downs, the 'gig economy' refers to which band is going to be performing at the Maryvale Hotel on a Saturday night. Of course, many people want to work in different ways to move on from their current positions, and technology enables them to do that. Many people want to embark on new businesses, such as driving for rideshare and taxi services. The emergence of rideshare has given rise to a host of operational and enforcement issues in personalised transport, which is what this bill seeks to address.

I was listening closely to the contribution of my honourable friend the member for Chatsworth, who commenced the opposition's response. He summed up a few points very well. He said that you do not legislate what you are not prepared to enforce. When we look at this bill, we have to ask what exactly the ombudsman's office can enforce. It is doubtful that there will be a great deal that the ombudsman will be able to contribute in this space, so it is even going one beyond that.

The LNP members of the committee provided an excellent statement of reservation. They talked about how many constraints there would be on the ombudsman and the limit to the investigative powers of the office, the apparent duplication of roles with existing entities and the inability of the ombudsman to protect fare revenue, which we thought was to be a fundamental purpose of the ombudsman.

The committee made seven recommendations for change. As I said, since it is such a relatively simple bill it is extraordinary to see so many recommendations, at least in my short experience in this parliament. That indicates that the bill has not been properly thought through, which is backed up by the contributions of LNP members. A catalogue of stakeholders have remarked on how the ombudsman will be a toothless tiger, that the office is expensive window-dressing and so forth.

The Taxi Council Queensland summed it up very well. I want to quote from their submission because of the respect that I have for Blair Davies, the CEO of the council. When I was first elected, I made a point of going to meet Mr Davies at the Taxi Council headquarters, because I understand the difficulties that taxi operators face in today's environment, particularly with the rapid change in the regulatory environment for their competition. Obviously, the submission was written some time ago. It states—

The PT Ombudsman won't be appointed before mid 2019 (possibly much later) and so will have missed many opportunities to assist sector participants with transitioning to the new regulatory environment associated with the Government's reform agenda;


- the PT Ombudsman will not handle complaints associated with breaches of legislation/regulation and so will be unable to assist sector participants cope with issues such as illegal activities of booked-hire drivers or overcharging by drivers as these responsibilities will remain entirely with TMR—

Again, we wonder what the purpose of the ombudsman will be. The submission continues—

- the PT Ombudsman will not deal with complaints about TMR or its activities and so responsibility for such matters will remain with the existing Queensland Ombudsman who we understand is already under-resourced and so lacks capacity to deal with extra enquiries and complaints arising in the Personalised Transport sector;
- the PT Ombudsman may deal with complaints from consumers about personalised transport services that are not breaches of regulation—however TMR apparently has no estimate of how many complaints of this kind there may be and TMR expects that complainants will still be required to direct their complaints to the respective taxi booking company or platform for resolution in the first instance and so the PT Ombudsman may only operate as an avenue for escalation of mediation (but not arbitration);
- The PT Ombudsman may deal with complaints between sector actors—however, again TMR apparently has no estimate of how many complaints of this kind there may be or indeed whether there will be any such complaints;
- The PT Ombudsman will not have any real power to compel parties to a dispute to do anything, other than to supply information and attend meetings which presents as potentially challenging, if not unduly limiting.

That is just one example of the litany of adverse comments provided by industry stakeholders.

It is very clear that this aligns with the typical behaviour of this government, which is to take the following approach: there's a problem so let's do something about it; let's pass an act; let's appoint someone; let's have an inquiry; let's get a report done. It is about optics and it is about process, but it is not about outcomes. We see that so often. The only outcome that this is likely to produce is more bureaucracy and higher costs for little if any gain. I oppose the bill.

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (4.29 pm): I begin by also acknowledging the contribution of the shadow minister, the honourable member for Chatsworth, and I acknowledge the contribution of the member for Southern Downs. As the MP for one of the best night-life precincts in Queensland, my constituents and visitors to the electorate regularly use personalised transport—whether it is Uber, Ola, DiDi, taxis or limousines—to travel around. It is not just those who have been partying at Surfers Paradise and Broadbeach using personalised transport; many use it for the convenience.

Whilst I wholeheartedly support competition, it is clear that there are a few issues that still need to be ironed out as the industry changes. I have been in the media speaking about the varied issues constituents in my electorate have experienced, particularly with regard to parents sending their children to school unaccompanied in Ubers. I table a copy of an article from the *Gold Coast Bulletin* by Talisa Eley from the 4 April 2019 edition.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Gold Coast Bulletin*, dated 4 April 2019, titled 'Uber Gold Coast: New kids ride-share app Mums Drivers opens on the Gold Coast amid concerns Uber drivers are flouting rules' [[1418](#)].


There are major safety concerns, and they require parents, drivers and the industry to do the right thing. It was an issue I spoke about three years ago and there were reports of it happening earlier this year. There is no doubt that the gig economy is dynamic and ever changing, and the laws we pass must acknowledge the nature of these new business models whilst protecting users and their drivers.

The main policy objective of the bill, as we have heard, is to establish the Personalised Transport Ombudsman. The function of the PTO is to help resolve complaints from anyone relating to personalised transport services. The PTO can also identify and report to the minister on systemic issues arising from personalised transport complaints. Under Labor it is clear that turf wars within the industry have continued to arise. In typical Labor fashion, as we have heard from this side of the House, this bill appears to attempt to shift the responsibility to another authority—in this case the PTO. It is clear that Labor members have no interest in rolling their sleeves up and fixing these issues. The limited powers being given to the new PTO mean that these issues, including complaints about government policy, legislation or alleged offences under relevant transport legislation, will not be investigated.

At the last election the LNP proposed a comprehensive approach to addressing personalised transport issues. I want to acknowledge the contribution of the former shadow minister, the member for Glass House. We wanted to introduce a statutory personalised transport commissioner and consolidate all personalised functions within TMR into a new office of personalised transport. The new commissioner was to have significant powers and be responsible for the licensing and registration of vehicles, drivers and operators within the personalised transport industry.

It is clear that the bill before us falls short of the LNP's proposal. In fact, stakeholders are less than impressed with Labor's approach. The Transport Workers' Union does not support it, saying that it largely ignores their submission. The Queensland Taxi Licence Owners' Association does not support it, saying that the PTO will not have the power to investigate grievances. The Ride Share Drivers' Association does not support it either, saying that the bill is flawed and that the PTO will have no real powers. The Taxi Council does not support it since it does not address any of the concerns they brought up with the minister and TMR. Finally, the Limousine Action Group says that the bill provides little to no benefit to their association, and the Queensland Council of Unions opposes the section dealing with disputes.

This is clearly an embarrassing outcome for the Labor government. After nearly five years, it clearly still does not have a clue about the industry and the challenges it is facing. Although the amendments contained in the bill attempt to clarify the enforceability of existing provisions in TO(PT)A, overall they will still fall well short of what is needed. As such, the LNP stands shoulder to shoulder with the industry in opposing this ill-thought-out bill.

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (4.33 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Personalised Transport Ombudsman Bill, which we are debating here at this regional sitting in Townsville. It is a delight to be here in Townsville with the people of Townsville who have had more

than their fair share of natural disasters this year. Just before turning to the details of the bill, I would like to thank the parliamentary staff and also the security staff who are here at this regional sitting. I would like to thank the members of the parliamentary Transport and Public Works Committee who reviewed this legislation. Given that I know we are facing the guillotine fairly soon, I will move to some of the main concerns that I have in relation to this legislation.

Basically, this legislation sets up an ombudsman that is really in name only. As we have heard earlier, it will be a 'toothless tiger'. The term 'ombudsman' usually refers to an independent body that can investigate complaints made about government. Historically, an ombudsman represents the interests of the public by addressing the complaints of maladministration or violation of rights.


As outlined in the explanatory notes, the main policy objective of the bill is to establish what we will refer to as the PTO in order to help resolve complaints from anyone relating to personalised transport services—I repeat: anyone in relation to personalised transport. That is not just government; that is a very broad cross-section of people. The PTO can also identify and report to the minister on systemic issues arising from personalised transport complaints. I think there are a couple of important words here—'identify' and 'report'. There is something that is really missing. What happened to the solutions to those systemic complaints? I think the general public want to see solutions and they want to see a better outcome. They do not want to see just another report and identification of the problem. It sounds to me like the Labor government does not really know what it wants, so for convenience sake it is calling it an ombudsman.

I have read the explanatory notes and also the bill, and there is no reference in either the explanatory notes or the bill about the qualifications for this position. There is a list of disqualifications but not a list of what the qualifications should be. You would think that an ombudsman in this area would have to have prior experience in the personalised transport industry. We do not know whether this ombudsman will have any prior experience because it is not specified in the explanatory notes or the bill. You would expect that an ombudsman would have some sort of legal background or some qualifications. We are not told that either. We do not know whether this ombudsman will have any formal qualifications. Basically, this position is going to be set up, and it could be a job for the boys or a job for the girls. Unless there is some reference to prior experience or qualifications in the explanatory notes or the bill, this ombudsman will just become another job for a union mate.

I have outlined those concerns. Regrettably, this bill that has been brought forward by the Labor government is not meeting the needs of the industry or consumers. If we look at the stakeholder feedback, the Taxi Council wrote to the government to say that the Personalised Transport Ombudsman represents a 'toothless tiger' and that the idea is a waste of money. It is very disappointing that we would be wasting money because money is short. Taxpayers' money is something we should have careful regard for. Even more concerning is that they expressed the view that the substantive and pressing issues confronting their sector appear to be outside the purview of the proposed role. That is really disappointing.

The Ride Share Drivers' Association indicated that the whole of the legislation is flawed because the ombudsman will have no real powers to compel parties to be bound by any results. It would appear that the industry believes that the bill has a lot of shortcomings. Regrettably, when submissions about this legislation start with warnings that it will be a waste of taxpayers' funds and that it will not be delivering improved outcomes to consumers, what we have here is a bad bill that unfortunately is going to become bad law.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Whiting): Under the provisions of the business program agreed to by the House and the time limit for this stage of the bill having expired, I call the minister to reply to the second reading debate.

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (4.38 pm), in reply: What we have seen in this debate is a very repetitive bit of posturing from the opposition. There have been some very short contributions from the opposition, I might add, as well as some very repetitive contributions and some remarkably similar contributions. We all know the form of the opposition. What they did around the personalised transport situation when in government was absolutely nothing—zero.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members on my left!

Mr BAILEY: These changes were very clear. Rideshare and personalised transport was happening prominently. What did the Newman government do about it? It did zero, zip-a-dee-doo-dah—absolutely nothing.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Pause the clock. Members, there will be no debate across the chamber please. Member for Maroochydore, I am looking at you there.

Mr BAILEY: The Palaszczuk government grappled with the issues at hand and carefully considered a regulatory model. For two years we have seen the opposition members running around, creating great expectations that they would oppose the bill and support the Taxi Council, but when those reforms came into this place they meekly supported the government's bill. You cannot trust the LNP members: they will posture; they will position; they will prance; but they will not be consistent on anything. The Taxi Council saw the behaviour of the LNP members in relation to that. You cannot trust their position on this or anything else because we know what their form is.

I will address a couple of specific matters. We heard some very short contributions from the member for Callide, the member for Moggill and the member for Toowoomba North. It was good to hear the member for Currumbin—after being 'dragged' up to North Queensland, as she said on radio this morning—make some kind of contribution even though half of the speech was not even on the bill. There were a couple of contributions from those opposite referring to compensation. There has never been compensation. There was a \$100 million assistance package from this government for those in the industry. We have consistently heard the opposition members refer to compensation, which shows that they fundamentally do not understand this issue. They do not understand the provisions that have gone through this House. What we see here is a responsible bill that regulates the industry.

I would like to thank all members for their contributions to the debate. It is great to see this level of engagement, as the bill delivers more important amendments for the personalised transport industry and the people of Queensland. A central feature of this bill is clearly the establishment of the Personalised Transport Ombudsman. Given the nature of the personalised transport framework, the government agreed that an ombudsman would assist this evolving industry in its transition to the new model. The Personalised Transport Ombudsman is founded on principles of independence, impartiality, integrity and the public interest, and no reading of the bill could come to any other conclusion. It is based on working models for similar bodies that are well known. It is disappointing to see the LNP members posture and not support the bill despite their support of it at the Transport and Public Works Committee, their statement of reservation notwithstanding. When the Palaszczuk government established the new legislative framework for personalised transport in Queensland in 2017, the LNP members moved no amendments to that bill. Even though they consistently over time expressed opposition to the new framework, they did nothing about it. In fact, they voted to support the bill.

The LNP members continue to be confused about the regulation of the personalised transport industry. The opposition leader's website, I am very happy to inform the chamber, contains information on their policy relating to a personalised transport commissioner. Today they have expressed their concern about, and lack of support for, an ombudsman, but the opposition leader's website states that their commissioner would—wait for it—'also act as an ombudsman for the industry'. We can play semantics all you like, but those opposite want to see an ombudsman and that is what they are getting with this legislation. Their confused commissioner model also proposes taking on the role of policymaker and regulator.

The licensing and registration of vehicles, drivers and operators and safety across the industry is a role for the Department of Transport and Main Roads. To change this would result in significant duplication and cost for industry and government. It would also create confusion as to how industry engages with government regarding regulation of the industry. The bill currently before the House will not duplicate services provided by other agencies or bodies like courts, but it will be able to provide information, mediation services and individual stakeholder advice on how best to manage issues and adapt to the new environment.

There have been some concerns raised about the Personalised Transport Ombudsman not being able to make binding decisions. Under this bill, accessing the ombudsman is free. If it were able to make binding decisions not only would its operational costs increase but so would costs for industry as they would be more likely to involve legal representation. Further, as I noted in my second reading speech, even the Queensland Ombudsman is unable to make binding decisions. It is therefore inappropriate for the Personalised Transport Ombudsman to have powers that the Queensland Ombudsman does not. In other words, the LNP opposition members are just making it up as they go

along, as usual. There are enough courts and tribunals that can make binding decisions, and the last thing we want to do is add to industry confusion and effectively add another layer of bureaucracy, a layer of blue tape. It seems the opposition members are proposing blue tape—their version of red tape.

The ombudsman is a new concept for this industry. The review in three years will provide information for evidence based improvements to ensure the ombudsman remains relevant and useful. By establishing the ombudsman, this bill has the potential to sponsor ongoing support and improvements for industry and customers and ensure a robust and responsive approach to the provision of personalised transport services into the future.

During the committee process there were queries as to how this legislative framework was developed and why other ombudsman models—like the Training Ombudsman—were used for an ombudsman that will need to deal with issues specific to the personalised transport industry. Put simply, other models were used to help build the framework of core elements essential to this type of role—things like who should appoint the ombudsman and what happens if the role is vacant. These are features needed to ensure the Personalised Transport Ombudsman could operate as a legally valid entity. These other models also provided a starting point for the functions and types of powers that might be needed. Importantly, the final position on its functions and powers was developed specifically for the Personalised Transport Ombudsman based on the roles it was intended to play and the issues it would likely be expected to address.

This bill also makes necessary amendments to support the transition to a smart ticketing solution for Queensland's public transport system. The payment of fares by contactless debit cards, credit cards, smartphones and wearable devices is coming. In the context of rising public transport patronage, we have seen record numbers coming onto our public transport system already over the last two years, with a 3.7 per cent increase last financial year and a 3.2 per cent increase the year before.

Ms Simpson interjected.

Mr BAILEY: I will take that interjection from the member for Maroochydore. There were actually increases on the Sunshine Coast, despite her media releases to the contrary. As new fare payment methods become available we need to ensure that fare evasion is still—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Whiting): Order! Members on both sides, please direct your comments through the chair. There will be no quarrelling across the chamber.

Mr BAILEY: As new fare payment methods become available we need to ensure that fare evasion is still enforceable and legislation is flexible enough to respond. Members raised concerns around the growing issue of fare evasion. Whilst this bill contains some important amendments to assist with this issue, the Palaszczuk government is tackling this issue through a number of measures.

To address a growing trend of deliberate youth fare evasion, we hosted Queensland's first youth fare evasion round table in April 2019. It was attended by representatives from the education sector, youth safety, police, academics, the transport industry and justice sectors, as well as the Daniel Morcombe Foundation. The round table considered potential solutions for investigation in three key focus areas: prevention and education; detection and enforcement; and penalties and deterrence. A list of priority actions suggested by representatives during the round table is being reviewed by the Palaszczuk government, and further research and engagement with teenage public transport users and parents is helping to gain further insight into the issue. This work included hosting a Youth Co:Lab in June, which I was happy to drop in for at the beginning. I would like to thank all of the young people who wanted to directly engage with us on this issue for their efforts and their commitment.

As this is a regional sitting of the parliament, I would like to highlight the regional context of these amendments. The services of the Personalised Transport Ombudsman will be available to any person in Queensland needing assistance to resolve a complaint. It will not matter whether that complaint is in Townsville, Mount Isa or Brisbane.

The smart ticketing related amendments will also generate benefits to customers across the whole of the state. For the very first time whether people are in Townsville, Cairns or Brisbane, they will have the same system everywhere in the state. This is a tremendous outcome for regional Queenslanders. Because of the commitment of the Palaszczuk Labor government, the latest ticketing technology you will find in Vancouver, Chicago or New York City is coming to the whole state of Queensland. That is a \$370 million commitment, and it will be fully rolled out by 2022 to operate in

18 regional areas along the coast and across Queensland. It will be one of the largest geographical areas for such a ticketing system in the world.

In addition to the new payment features mentioned, smart ticketing also provides customers with a new integrated ticketing and journey planning app with improved real-time information. This will mean that for the first time customers in regional Queensland will have such a great system. Tourists will be able to access that one system from any TransLink or qconnect service across the state without the need to carry cash or pre purchase tickets.

A series of regional trials of the smart ticketing system is planned to start in late 2019. Trial sites include Innisfail and Bowen in North Queensland, as well as Minjerrabah, otherwise known as North Stradbroke Island, Maryborough and Hervey Bay. Bus operator partners in trial locations will have access to new tools and reporting, encouraging more efficient operations. The regional trials will provide TransLink with an opportunity to test and refine elements of the smart ticketing system before it is rolled out across Queensland, including Townsville.

I welcome the positive contributions from not just government MPs but a number of opposition MPs in support of the smart ticketing solution. I note the opposition leader has not been supportive in her public comments, but it is good to see that some members of her team are willing to take independent positions on this.

I would like to briefly speak to key local passenger transport projects that will see the benefits here. In terms of local Townsville operators who will benefit, as of last month there were 1,112 rideshare, taxi and limousine drivers registered with TMR for Townsville addresses. Townsville has 110 conventional taxis and 23 wheelchair accessible taxis.

In closing, I would like to thank all stakeholders and members of the community for their engagement in bringing these matters to the House. The amendments in this bill support improved passenger transport outcomes throughout Queensland. Finally, I offer my sincere thanks to our departmental staff and ministerial staff who have worked very hard to develop and deliver this legislation. I commend the bill to the House.

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

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.

Grn, 1—Berkman.

NOES, 42:

LNP, 37—Bates, Batt, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Boyce, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Hart, Hunt, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McArdle, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O'Connor, Perrett, Powell, Purdie, Robinson, Rowan, Simpson, Sorensen, Stevens, Stuckey, Watts, Weir, Wilson.

KAP, 2—Dametto, Katter.

PHON, 1—Andrew.

Ind, 2—Bolton, Costigan.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clause 1—

Division: Question put—That clause 1, as read, stand part of the bill.

AYES, 49:

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.

Ind, 1—Bolton.

NOES, 41:

LNP, 37—Bates, Batt, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Boyce, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Hart, Hunt, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McArdle, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O'Connor, Perrett, Powell, Purdie, Robinson, Rowan, Simpson, Sorensen, Stevens, Stuckey, Watts, Weir, Wilson.

KAP, 2—Dametto, Katter.

PHON, 1—Andrew.

Ind, 1—Costigan.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clause 1, as read, agreed to.

Clause 2—



Mr BAILEY (5.03 pm): I move the following amendment—

1 Clause 2 (Commencement)

Page 8, lines 8 and 9—

omit, insert—

This Act, other than the following provisions, commences on a day to be fixed by proclamation—

- (a) part 7, divisions 4 and 5;
- (b) part 7, division 6, subdivisions 1 and 2.

I table the explanatory notes to my amendments.

Tabled paper: Personalised Transport Ombudsman Bill 2019, explanatory notes to Hon. Mark Bailey's amendments [\[1419\]](#).

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

AYES, 49:

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.

Ind, 1—Bolton.

NOES, 41:

LNP, 37—Bates, Batt, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Boyce, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Hart, Hunt, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McArdle, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O'Connor, Perrett, Powell, Purdie, Robinson, Rowan, Simpson, Sorensen, Stevens, Stuckey, Watts, Weir, Wilson.

KAP, 2—Dametto, Katter,

PHON, 1—Andrew.

Ind, 1—Costigan.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr SPEAKER: Under the provisions of the business program agreed to by the House, the time for debate of this bill has expired. The question is that the minister's amendments Nos 2 to 4, as circulated, be agreed to and clauses 2 to 135 and schedule 1, as amended, stand part of the bill.

Amendments as circulated—

2 Clause 12 (Disqualification as personalised transport ombudsman)

Page 11, lines 22, 24 and 29 and page 12, line 4, '5 years'—

omit, insert—

3 years

3 Clause 21 (Minister may refer matter to personalised transport ombudsman)

Page 15, after line 23—

insert—

- (3) However, the personalised transport ombudsman need not comply with the request if the ombudsman—
- (a) reasonably believes the matter is or has been the subject of a personalised transport complaint made to the ombudsman; and
 - (b) gives the Minister notice of the belief.

4 After clause 95

Page 58, after line 3—

insert—

95A Matters for annual report

The annual report under the *Financial Accountability Act 2009* in relation to the office, for a financial year, must include—

- (a) details of the number of personalised transport complaints received and how the personalised transport ombudsman dealt with those complaints, including—
 - (i) the number of complaints the ombudsman investigated; and
 - (ii) the number of complaints the ombudsman refused to investigate or continue to investigate; and
 - (iii) the number of complaints that were withdrawn; and
 - (iv) the number of complaints referred to the chief executive (transport) under section 38; and
 - (v) the number of complaints for which alternative dispute resolution was used; and
- (b) information about systemic issues, identified by the ombudsman, arising from personalised transport complaints; and
- (c) details of the matters prescribed by regulation.

Division: Question put—That the minister’s amendments Nos 2 to 4, as circulated, be agreed to and clauses 2 to 135 and schedule 1, as amended, stand part of the bill.

AYES, 49:

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.

Ind, 1—Bolton.

NOES, 41:

LNP, 37—Bates, Batt, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Boyce, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Hart, Hunt, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McArdle, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O’Connor, Perrett, Powell, Purdie, Robinson, Rowan, Simpson, Sorensen, Stevens, Stuckey, Watts, Weir, Wilson.

KAP, 2—Dametto, Katter.

PHON, 1—Andrew.

Ind, 1—Costigan.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Amendments agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 135 and schedule 1, as amended, agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr SPEAKER: The question is that the bill, as amended, be now read a third time. Those of that opinion say ‘aye’.

Honourable members: Aye.

Mr SPEAKER: Those against say ‘no’.

Honourable members: No.

Mr SPEAKER: I think the ayes have it.

Mr Bleijie: Divide.

Mr SPEAKER: A division has been called. Ring the bells for one minute.

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

In division—

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. If memory serves me correctly, you have previously ruled under the standing orders that if it is a new question before the House, which the third reading is, then the bells will ring for four minutes unless agreed to by the parties. I have not agreed to that.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you for your point of order. There has been no ensuing debate, which is also a consideration that the Speaker will have when making that decision. I am not aware that there has been any debate. I believe that I would have the consensus of the House to ensure this is a one-minute division.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Members are reminded that standing orders still apply during divisions, particularly when division bells are ringing. Member for Maiwar, did you just take a photograph in the chamber?

Mr BERKMAN: Yes. I apologise. I did.

Mr SPEAKER: It is against the standing orders to do so, member. Consider yourself cautioned. Please delete the photograph.

Mr BERKMAN: I will, Mr Speaker. Thank you.

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.

Grn, 1—Berkman.

NOES, 42:

LNP, 37—Bates, Batt, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Boyce, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Hart, Hunt, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McArdle, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O'Connor, Perrett, Powell, Purdie, Robinson, Rowan, Simpson, Sorensen, Stevens, Stuckey, Watts, Weir, Wilson.

KAP, 2—Dametto, Katter.

PHON, 1—Andrew.

Ind, 2—Bolton, Costigan.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Bill, as amended, read a third time.

Long Title

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

AYES, 49:

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.

Ind, 1—Bolton.

NOES, 41:

LNP, 37—Bates, Batt, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Boyce, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Hart, Hunt, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McArdle, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O'Connor, Perrett, Powell, Purdie, Robinson, Rowan, Simpson, Sorensen, Stevens, Stuckey, Watts, Weir, Wilson.

KAP, 2—Dametto, Katter.

PHON, 1—Andrew.

Ind, 1—Costigan.

Resolved in the affirmative.

LEAVE TO MOVE MOTION



Mr BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (5.19 pm): Mr Speaker, I seek leave to move a motion without notice.

Division: Question put—That leave be granted.

AYES, 44:

LNP, 37—Bates, Batt, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Boyce, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Hart, Hunt, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McArdle, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O'Connor, Perrett, Powell, Purdie, Robinson, Rowan, Simpson, Sorensen, Stevens, Stuckey, Watts, Weir, Wilson.

Grn, 1—Berkman.

KAP, 3—Dametto, Katter, Knuth.

PHON, 1—Andrew.

Ind, 2—Bolton, Costigan.

NOES, 47:

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.

Resolved in the negative.

TRANSPORT LEGISLATION (ROAD SAFETY AND OTHER MATTERS) AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 13 February (see p. 137).

Second Reading



Hon. MC BAILEY (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (5.24 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I want to begin by thanking the Transport and Public Works Committee for its consideration of the Transport Legislation (Road Safety and Other Matters) Amendment Bill 2019. I also want to acknowledge the role of the committee's chair, the member for Kurwongbah, in leading the parliamentary scrutiny of these reforms and I acknowledge the committee's secretariat for its continued support of the important work of the committee. I also want to thank those who made a submission for the time they have taken to examine and comment on the bill. The committee's report was tabled on 5 April 2019. The report recommended that the bill be passed and included one other recommendation for consideration. I have already tabled the government response to the committee recommendations.

I will address the second recommendation made by the committee later in this speech. However, first I will highlight for the House the main elements of this legislation and the benefits that they will bring to the people of Queensland. The bill amends the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995 to introduce several drink-driving reforms. Drink-driving continues to be a significant road safety issue. In 2017, 63 people were killed due to crashes involving drink-drivers or drink-riders. This is

25.5 per cent of the total fatalities. In Townsville alone, there were 39 casualties in 2018 due to drink-driving. In addition, 643 people were hospitalised due to a crash involving a drink-driver or drink-rider. The intention of this package of reforms is to decrease the amount of drink-driving in Queensland. It will also facilitate offenders learning to separate their drinking from driving. There is currently no legislative requirement for drink-driving offenders to complete intervention or education programs as part of their return to driving. Research indicates that brief intervention education programs delivered to first-time drink-driving offenders are successful at reducing the rate of reoffending. Education programs targeted at repeat offenders produced similar successful outcomes.

The proposed amendments will introduce two education programs for drink-driving offenders. All first-time drink-driving offenders will be required to complete a brief intervention education program. This program is designed to educate all first-time drink-driving offenders about how to separate drinking from driving. It must be completed prior to a person reapplying for their driver's licence. If a person commits a subsequent drink-driving offence within five years from conviction of their first offence, they will need to complete the Repeat Offender Education Program. This will be an intensive face-to-face program and it must be completed before a person's interlock condition is removed. This bill also makes a number of amendments to enhance the current alcohol ignition interlock program. This is to encourage increased participation in the program. The amendments also align the interlock program with best practice programs elsewhere. The bill introduces a performance based interlock program so that people must demonstrate they have separated their drinking and driving to successfully complete the program—that is, their interlock cannot be removed until they have had no failed breath tests during the last four months of their interlock use.

To support the performance based interlock program, the current two-year sit-out period that applies to those people who chose not to fit an interlock to a vehicle will be increased to five years. This means a person cannot drive for five years if they choose not to participate in the interlock program. The bill will also expand the interlock program to require mid-range drink-drivers who have a blood alcohol concentration from 100 milligrams of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood to less than 150 milligrams of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood to participate in the program. Mid-range drink-drivers account for more than a quarter of all offenders and have a crash risk 20 times greater than a driver who has not had a drink, and that is a shocking statistic. Mid-range drink-driving offenders who are eligible for a restricted licence, also commonly known as a work licence, will be required to participate in the interlock program while holding their restricted licence. The interlock related amendments are designed to promote increased and more effective participation in the interlock program. This will ultimately increase safety on our roads.

Speeding on Queensland roads also continues to present safety concerns. For this reason, the bill contains amendments aimed at further combating speeding on our roads. Between 2014 and 2018, there were 42 fatalities in the Townsville area as a result of road crashes. Of those 42 fatalities, over 40 per cent involved speeding. Evaluations have shown that point-to-point camera systems promote speed limit compliance over longer sections of the road network more than fixed or mobile speed cameras. They have also been shown to improve traffic flow and significantly reduce road crashes along the lengths of road where they operate. Currently though, these cameras can only be used on stretches of road where the speed limit does not change.

Amendments in the bill will allow the cameras to be used in stretches of road that contain more than a single speed limit across the whole length. These can be changes in the permanent speed limits across the length of road or changes in speed limit due to temporary conditions through the use of variable speed limits, such as in advance of a major incident where compliance with a lower speed limit is critical to the safety of emergency responders and other road users.

The bill introduces the concept of an average speed limit so that point-to-point camera systems can be used in these circumstances. A mathematical formula has been inserted to calculate the average speed limit, as noted by the committee, and the formula includes the summation symbol. The committee recommended that the bill be amended to include a definition for the summation symbol. Advice was sought about this suggestion from the Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel. I have reached the view that it is preferable not to include a definition for the symbol included in the formula. This is because the formula is written in internationally standard mathematical language. That language uses symbols to represent quantities, operations and functions. Each symbol has a precise mathematical meaning and there are rules about how the symbols are to be used. The summation symbol used in the formula in question indicates the addition of an unknown number of values. To attempt to define this symbol in legislation may create a risk of it being misunderstood or interpreted as something other than its mathematical meaning. Defining the symbol may also create a precedent for defining other


mathematical symbols that to date have not needed definition. However, I wish to thank the committee for its consideration of this issue.

The bill also introduces an administrative efficiency for the process that applies when a traffic offence is detected by a camera. Currently, a registered vehicle operator who was not the driver needs to provide a statutory declaration. They must declare that they were not the driver and they must nominate the person who was, if known. The statutory declaration process can be inconvenient. Therefore, the bill introduces the option for operators to use an online nomination process.

Administrative efficiencies are also being implemented by the bill in relation to marine pollution legislation. The bill removes the need for owners or masters of vessels more than 15 metres in length operating in Queensland coastal waters to give notice of and obtain the written approval from an authorised officer to conduct night-time pollutant transfer operations. Many additional measures are in place now that reduce the possibility of pollution during transfer operations at night and improve opportunities for detection—measures such as safety management systems, video surveillance, vessel traffic management and the presence of port security combined with higher levels of supervision and better port operating procedures. Owners and operators are still required to comply with the state's marine pollution and safety legislation.

The bill also allows expenses incurred by different agencies and entities responding to a marine pollution incident to be recovered in a single state-led action. Amendments in the bill streamline existing evidentiary provisions for use in the prosecution of transport matters under the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995 and the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994. The amendments also allow for additional matters to be dealt with by evidentiary certificates. Allowing evidence to be provided by certificate results in cost-effective court processes by reducing the need to call witnesses for matters not in dispute.

The bill also incorporates a range of amendments that clarify existing legislation about drink-driving and drug driving; driver licensing; the restriction on the transport of dangerous goods through tunnels; and, finally, legislation dealing with activities on state controlled roads, including ancillary works and encroachments. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (5.35 pm): It gives me great pleasure to rise for the second time today here in beautiful Townsville to speak to a transport bill. I will say what I said when I began with my previous speech on the previous bill, and that is that it is the role of the opposition to scrutinise every bill that comes before the various opposition spokespersons and to not simply oppose for the sake of opposing. At the outset, I will state that the LNP will be supporting the Transport Legislation (Road Safety and Other Matters) Amendment Bill 2019. Given that the LNP has always advocated for sensible and practical measures that are designed to reduce accidents on Queensland roads, the opposition's position will not be to oppose the bill. However, the opposition questions whether the new arrangements applying to point-to-point speed cameras on stretches of road with multiple speed limits will be clearly signed for road safety purposes and that, indeed, is the LNP's policy.

I noted the Transport and Public Works Committee recommendation that the bill be passed and that no statement of reservation was made by the LNP members of this committee. In terms of the objectives of the bill, it tidies up a lot of legislation that is scattered throughout other statutes including legislation pertaining to the all-important issue of drink-driving. I note that one of the objectives of the bill is to strengthen the approach to drink-driving, which has been shown to be a significant factor in many road crashes.

As all members here would know, whether they are of an age where their hair is starting to recede, as mine apparently has done, or whether they are a relatively new member to this august chamber, we all share a cultural change in attitude over the past three decades towards drink-driving. It is almost hard to believe that when I was growing up in the 1970s it was pretty much commonplace that people would go to a barbecue, or a social function, and drink-driving did not seem to be taken anywhere near as seriously as it needed to be taken. I am so pleased that, through the efforts of men and women on both sides of the chamber over the past three decades, culturally, our attitude towards this all-important social issue of drink-driving has mercifully changed for the better.

Despite the introduction of the alcohol ignition interlock program for high-risk driving offenders with a blood alcohol concentration of .15 or more, along with other road safety measures, including random breath testing, fines and licence disqualification, on average drink-drivers are still involved—and this is an unbelievable statistic—in one in five fatalities on Queensland roads. Despite the best

efforts of good men and women on both sides of this chamber over the past several decades, we still find that one in five fatalities on Queensland roads is as a result of drink-driving.

A further concern is that, in the five years to 31 December 2017, almost 25 per cent of drink-drivers involved in fatal car crashes had mid-range blood alcohol concentration readings, which is deemed to be between .10 and .149. According to research, even drivers in this middle category have a crash risk of 20 times greater than someone who has not had a drink. To address this issue, the amendments proposed in the bill extend the interlock program to include mid-range drink-driving offenders. In addition, international research, including a 2009 World Health Organization paper titled *Evidence for the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of interventions to reduce alcohol-related harm*, highlighted the success that intervention education programs are having in encouraging participants to reduce alcohol related harm. Accordingly, this bill seeks to introduce education programs for first-time drink-drivers as well as for repeat offenders.

It is worth noting that, in relation to drink-driving offences in New South Wales, it has recently been reported that effective from 20 May this year the New South Wales government has introduced a tough new penalty regime that will see first-time, low-range drink-drivers slapped with an on-the-spot suspension for three months and a \$561 monetary fine. In relation to speeding, it is also part of the Fatal Five. Speeding continues to be a significant factor in crashes and it is recognised that speed cameras play a legitimate role in the enforcement of speed limits. Road safety research has indicated that point-to-point cameras, which are part of the Camera Detected Offence Program, CDOP, have been found to be more effective at reducing speed over longer stretches of road than fixed or mobile cameras. Currently, these point-to-point camera systems can only be used on lengths of road where there is a single speed limit. Amendments before us today have therefore been included in the bill that will allow the operation of point-to-point speed cameras on stretches of road with multiple speed limits.

In relation to other issues in the bill before us today, under the existing arrangements a marine pollution incident can involve several government agencies and these agencies are obliged to take separate legal action in order to recover their costs. In view of this, a further objective is to enable the state to, on behalf of prescribed entities, recover costs and expenses incurred in responding to a marine pollution incident. Certain administrative and technical enhancements or clarifications, including restructuring evidentiary provisions and amendments to cater for future uses of transport corridors, are also proposed in this bill before the House.

In relation to other details of the bill, the bill proposes amendments to various transport acts and others in order to achieve its stated objectives which include a range of things which are indeed worthwhile spelling out. In relation to TORUM, the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995, the bill is expanding the existing interlock program to include mid-range drink-drivers; introducing the requirement for first-time drink-driving offenders as well as repeat offenders to complete a brief education program; to allow the operation of point-to-point speed cameras on stretches of road with multiple speed limits, as I said earlier; apply drug and testing regimes for people interfering with the operation of a vehicle; for placard loads that exceed a threshold quantity, to update existing evidentiary provisions; for applying heavy vehicle inspection fees; and driver licence disqualifications. In relation to the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994, the bill is to provide evidentiary certificates to confirm the identity of a toll road operator; and to enable certain exempt activities to be published on the department's website rather than by gazettal. In relation to the Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995, the bill enables the state to, on behalf of prescribed entities, recover costs and expenses incurred in responding to a marine pollution incident.

Specifically, death and serious injury on Queensland roads, as has been alluded to, costs around about \$5 billion every single year. In addition to the devastation for individuals and families, these accidents place a high cost on the community through hospital and healthcare costs, lost productivity and the use of emergency services. As such, improving safety on our roads must be a priority and the Transport Legislation (Road Safety and Other Matters) Amendment Bill proposes road safety amendments intended to reduce these accidents and thereby help meet road safety objectives.

A snapshot of the road accident statistics does indeed bring some chilling figures to light. In 2017 there were 247 people who tragically lost their lives in road crashes, with an estimated 6,462 people seriously injured. Queensland's Road Safety Strategy 2015-2021 has an ambitious target to reduce death and serious injury by 30 per cent by 2020. For this target to even be approached, it is clear that much greater effort by everyone involved is, in fact, required. Although it is well recognised by the general community, two of the contributing factors in many road accidents remain alcohol and speeding. Together, as has been rightly pointed out, they are indeed a deadly cocktail. To gain community

feedback on further road safety initiatives, a range of options were canvassed among stakeholders and the broader community via a discussion paper. The proposals receiving majority support were included in the reform measures designed to improve speed management and safety on all Queensland roads.

In addition to the road safety related amendments, the bill also extends the existing ability of the state to recover the costs and expenses incurred by prescribed entities when responding to a marine pollution incident as outlined earlier. These incidents have the potential to cause a significant risk to the environment and the economy so it is important that their costs are fully recovered by offenders.

Providing they can demonstrate to be a practical measure to reduce road accidents, road safety initiatives typically enjoy bipartisan support, as they indeed should do. Nobody has a mortgage on anyone's life. With respect to speed cameras, all members recognise the contribution this technology can make in this vital area of road safety. Importantly, where the LNP does differ from the Labor government is in the way the approved signage for this equipment is, in fact, to be used. The LNP policy is that these should be clearly signed to promote road safety, whereas the Labor government has supported a less conspicuous and more covert placement. It should be noted that Labor removed the requirement for mobile speed cameras to display 'camera in use' signs to alert motorists to the presence of camera equipment. Unfortunately, such an approach can give rise to a perception—I stress can give rise to a perception—by the public that they are being used for mere revenue raising purposes. I stress for the third time it is the perception. In 2017-18 revenue from speed camera fines was \$160.6 million and under Labor this is forecast to grow to \$237.2 million in the 2021-22 financial year.

One thing I vehemently agree with the minister on is in relation to the whole issue of a third important variable in relation to deaths on the road, and that is pertaining to the use of texting whilst driving. I note that it is in this particular state jurisdiction that we have now some of the toughest laws in the country as it pertains to texting whilst driving. It is quite ironic that, when all of us here speak on bills, some of us speak from past experience, whether it be in the workforce, wherever we have come from. It might be from our days at uni, but it might also be speaking from this common-sense experience doing what every member of the Queensland public does, and in this case it is in relation to being serious about road safety as it pertains to teaching one of your own children as they start to embark upon the journey of having the privilege of holding an open driver's licence.

I am presently, with my second son, undertaking the 100 hours system which I absolutely agree with. It is absolutely amazing that what we are proposing to do here today could not be more relevant or timely when one considers the number of people who appear to be very cavalier when it comes to not taking on board the very fact that when one gets that little piece of perspex card that gives them an open driver's licence the mindset needs to change to that of it is a privilege to be able to drive on our 33,372 kilometres of state controlled roads as well as local roads.

These measures are, indeed, important. There are many things that divide us in this particular chamber, regardless of its physical location. We are blessed at the moment to be having parliament here in the regional city of Townsville. It makes no difference whatsoever where these words are recorded. At the end of the day, when one is teaching a loved one the basics of being able to drive safely on the roads, the expectation is that other people on the road comply with the laws of the state.

We fundamentally agree with what the bill proposes. I urge the minister to take on board the fact that, if we want to be fair dinkum about safety on Queensland roads—and I completely agree that alcohol, speeding, texting and other distractions play an important part—we must consider another very tangible variable, which is quite literally where the rubber hits the road.

Given the importance of well-maintained roads as a key measure to support overall road safety, which is what we are all trying to achieve, it was alarming to read the Auditor-General's report. I have referenced that document in the past and will do so again to highlight the significance of where we are at in relation to making sure that road users are absolutely protected by trying to maintain the best possible road conditions and surfaces. You cannot try to legislate for fools, but you need to govern to protect every single citizen, including when it pertains to the physical infrastructure that people are driving on. Members would be aware of the Auditor-General's report No. 4 of 2017-18 titled *Integrated transport planning*. In particular, I refer to the summary of the audit findings, which indicated that the Department of Transport and Main Roads has calculated a \$4 billion renewal backlog.

Mr BAILEY: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance. The speaker is getting well off the bill topic and making very broad statements that are totally unrelated to the bill.


Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms McMillan): Thank you, Minister. There is some relationship to safety, but I caution the member to come back to the bill.

Mr MINNIKIN: Thank you for your guidance, Madam Deputy Speaker. The relevance is that, if we are serious about overall road safety, as part of the overall kitbag of issues that we need to address,

while the things that have been mentioned—speed, alcohol, texting et cetera—are absolutely vital, so too is the physical condition of the road. That goes to the very core of what it is that a government should be doing to give its citizens, when they leave their homes, the best possible chance of arriving back safely, regardless of whether they are going to the corner store or on a long distance journey up and down or across the width of this great state. I implore the minister to get on top of the ever-growing backlog of maintenance on our road network.

Furthermore, the LNP has a proud record in relation to supporting initiatives designed to make travel safer for motorists. Among other measures, in 1996 the LNP convened the inaugural road safety summit, which brought together a host of stakeholders to assist in forming the road safety action plan. That comprehensive approach helped to form the foundation for future road safety strategy plans, and long should they be refined and reviewed. In 1996, when the LNP was in government, it initiated a popular engagement program that sought community feedback on road safety, including on getting grassroots input into a review of speed limits and grant funding for roads.

I highlight the LNP policy on speed camera enforcement, which is that they should be used in locations of greatest risk and be clearly signed to alert motorists of their operation to avoid, as I have said earlier in my contribution, the perception by the public that they are being used merely for revenue-raising purposes. The LNP opposition also maintains that a high-profile active police presence on our roads remains the greatest deterrent for dangerous driving behaviour. At the end of the day, no-one in this chamber would dispute the fact that, when it comes to issues such as speed, alcohol, texting and the other factors that make up the dangerous five, we all completely support any initiatives that will enhance road safety. I support this legislation.

 **Mr KING** (Kurwongbah—ALP) (5.54 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Transport Legislation (Road Safety and Other Matters) Amendment Bill 2019. From listening to the contributions of other members, I am aware that no-one in this place would ever be against enhancing road safety. I am glad that we all agree that this legislation seeks to make sensible changes to reduce road trauma in our state. Every year, death and serious injury sustained on our roads cost Queensland over \$5 billion and tear apart people's lives. This bill should go a long way to help reduce that. The bill makes changes to a variety of laws, but I will largely focus on the elements that involve drink-driving, interlocks and speed cameras.

The bill will enhance the interlock program for drink-drivers by not allowing a person to have their interlock condition removed until they can show that they are able to separate drinking from driving. If a person has a positive breath test in the last four months of their prescribed period, they will get an automatic extension of a further four months. That will continue until the person can successfully separate their drinking from driving. The current two-year interlock period will increase from two to five years, meaning that a person will not be able to drive for five years if they do not participate in the interlock program. That change is in response to some who, for some reason, have chosen to sit out the existing two-year period. Extending the program will enhance the new performance based approach to the program and will encourage more people to actively participate rather than attempting to sit it out.

The bill will introduce alcohol education programs for drink-driving offenders, including a brief intervention education program and a repeat offender education program. Research has indicated that brief education programs delivered to first-time drink-driving offenders do work to encourage participants to reduce hazardous drinking and engaging in drink-driving. These programs focus on changing the behaviour of the individual drink-driver by providing the knowledge and tools to avoid drink-driving in the future. Repeat drink-driving offenders will be required to complete a more intensive multisession education program. These programs will be undertaken concurrently while the offender is participating in the interlock program and will need to be successfully completed before the interlock condition can be removed from their licence. Additionally, Queensland will be the first Australian jurisdiction to introduce these innovative approaches.


The bill will expand the interlock program to include mid-range drink-drivers. Previously, this only applied to those convicted of high-range drink-driving and repeat offenders. Mid-range drink-driving is a blood alcohol content between .1 and .149. Mid-range drink-drivers account for more than one-quarter of all offenders and have a crash risk 20 times greater than someone who has not had a drink. Access to restricted licences for mid-range drink-driving offenders will be maintained, so a mid-range drink-driver will still be able to get a work licence.

The bill makes some changes to speed camera enforcement. Point-to-point camera enforcement can apply on lengths of road where there are multiple speed limits displayed. Mobile speed camera enforcement can apply on lengths of road governed by variable speed signs. The bill will allow a person

issued with an infringement notice for a camera detected offence to notify that they were not the offending driver and to nominate the actual offender using an online process. The bill will allow a court to sentence a person who has pleaded guilty to a charge of drug driving before the laboratory test results are known.

The bill will clarify that if a person has been disqualified from holding or obtaining a driver's licence by a court in another Australian state or territory their Queensland driver's licence will also be cancelled from the date that the person became disqualified. Lastly, the bill will allow the state, if requested by particular entities, to recover the entity's reasonable costs and expenses incurred while assisting with a marine pollution incident. I think we can all agree that that is a good thing.

I will finish as I started: I do not think anyone would fail to support this legislation when we are talking about drink-driving and the safety of people on our roads. Often we hear of tragic incidents and we should do everything that we can to avoid them. As I always do, I thank the members of our Transport and Public Works Committee for their bipartisan work on our report for this important bill. As always, I thank our hardworking secretariat—Deb, Margaret and Amanda—for their input and help. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr SORENSEN** (Hervey Bay—LNP) (5.59 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Transport Legislation (Road Safety and Other Matters) Amendment Bill 2019. First of all, I would like to thank the committee. I would also like to thank all of those people who put in submissions. Being a member of the Transport and Publics Works Committee, especially when we have inquiries about road safety and road accidents, we do get some pretty emotional people attending our committee hearings, particularly with some of the injuries that happen. The bill proposes road safety amendments that are intended to reduce death and serious injury by 30 per cent by 2020. Therefore, the bill aims to improve road safety. Death and serious injuries come at a great cost to Queensland families, often changing the lives of those touched by such tragedies forever.

Queensland's Road Safety Strategy 2015-2021 aligns with the National Road Safety Strategy 2011-2020. The Queensland strategy sets a target to reduce death and serious injury by 30 per cent by 2020, meaning that we need to reduce road fatalities to under 200 and serious injuries to under 4,700 per annum. When you look at that figure that we are trying to get serious injuries down to, it means that a lot of people get injured and they never get over those injuries. I have seen it firsthand in my own family. My old bloke was in a bad accident and he could never ride a horse again because his hip was injured pretty badly. A lot of those sorts of things happen. It costs the community. It costs the family.

You never forget those accidents. The people who attend those accidents never forget them. I have been to a few. There is a bad corner where I live and a lot of people try to take the corner at a faster speed than they should. When you attend an accident like that and some poor kid is walking around with his bone stuck out and his kneecap showing, you never forget that. You just do not forget it. It is always in your mind.

Another accident I went to one night was when I was coming back from Maryborough. Speed and alcohol killed the driver of that car. Luckily enough, a police officer was there in a private car but he had all of the flashing lights in his boot. He got me to run down the road to put the flashing lights in the middle of the road. That was one of the most horrific experiences I have ever had. Traffic was coming towards the accident, which was spread right across the road, and this police officer was telling me to run down the road. The cars were not stopping quickly. I can tell you that that is the scariest thing I have ever done in my life. When I got back to the police officer who was at the scene of the accident, this gentleman was just lying on the roadside. He did not make it. You never forget it. It is always there. Talking about this bill is bringing it all back to me.

If we can do anything to stop the road tragedies, especially because of texting, then we should do it. When you drive down the road and you see flowers on a power pole because a young girl was texting, it is pretty sad really. We have to work on stopping people using their mobile phones and texting. We have to make the roads safer. If they do not run into a power pole, they might run into a person coming in the opposite direction. When you are travelling at a speed of 100 kilometres an hour, it does not take much to guide you off the road and hit the gravel. I have seen a lot of young, inexperienced drivers hit the gravel and lose control of the car pretty quickly. It is all of those sorts of things.


It costs the state around \$5 billion every year, according to the statistics, in supporting families and improving road safety, but it is paramount because it affects everybody. Drunk drivers also cause a lot of accidents. The bill's objectives include expanding the interlock program to include mid-range

drinkers and introducing the requirement for first-time drink-driving offences as well as repeat offences to complete a brief intervention education program. I think that is a good idea. Drink-drivers really should see the tragedies that they cause on those roads.

The bill will allow for the operation of point-to-point speed cameras on stretches of road with multiple speed limits. We have some concerns with that. At the end of the day, you can have a lot of fun with speed cameras. I had one gentleman who came into the office who kept getting road toll fines and speeding fines sent to him, but they were for somebody in Brisbane. He had changed his numberplates. They could never catch up with this guy. The transport department gave the Hervey Bay resident a new numberplate so that he would not keep getting the road toll and speeding fines. It was a wonder that they could not catch up with him because this guy was getting fined quite regularly. Speed cameras can cause a lot of fun for some people. The vehicle that had the bodgie numberplates on it was a utility and the person in Hervey Bay getting the fines had a sedan. We had to go through a process to get that sorted out.

Speeding causes a lot of crashes as well, especially on some of the rural roads. On the road that I live on people try to take the corner just too fast. Some of the young guys try to take it faster than anybody else, and that is what gets them into trouble sometimes. We have to try to change the speeding culture in the way that the drink-driving culture has changed in our society today. When we were young blokes it was nothing to drive home from a party over the limit. Today we have taxis and in Hervey Bay we have Dial a Driver. There is no need to drink-drive anymore. We need to make sure that people get home safely. That is the most important part about it—to make sure that people get home safe and sound to their wife and kids.

It is really important to change the culture. We are changing that culture by fining drink-drivers, educating them and putting devices on their cars. We really have to change the culture. I do not want anybody to have to attend a car accident and have those scenes become pictures in their memory forever. It is not very nice. I thank all of the police officers and ambulance officers who turn up to those accidents. Sometimes they see some horrific things. Let's do our best to avoid those accidents from happening because they do affect people.

 **Mr MELLISH** (Aspley—ALP) (6.09 pm): I am pleased to speak to the Transport Legislation (Road Safety and Other Matters) Amendment Bill. There are a range of measures aimed at road safety, but I will largely address the sections concerning interlock programs and point-to-point speed cameras.

It is good to see that education programs will be introduced and extended for drink-driving offenders. First-time drink-drivers will be required to complete a brief intervention education program prior to being re-licensed. This program will be delivered online. It will give people strategies to separate drinking and driving and outline why it is important. Repeat offenders will be required to complete a more intensive multisession education program. The program will be undertaken while the offender is participating in the interlock program and will need to be successfully completed before the interlock condition can be removed from their licence. To successfully complete the program people must demonstrate they have separated their drinking and driving. It is about culture change.

The bill will also introduce measures to increase the current two-year sit-out period to five years where people have refused to participate in the interlock program. It is good to see that we have bipartisan support for that and other measures in the bill. The interlock program is also being expanded to include mid-range drink-driving where there is a blood alcohol between .1 and .149. Mid-range drink-drivers account for more than a quarter of all offenders and have a crash risk 20 times greater than someone who has not had a drink, so it is good to see measures that cover mid-range drink-drivers and not just high-level drink-drivers. Other amendments include that, where a defendant pleads guilty, a court will be allowed to deal with a charge of drug driving before the laboratory test results are known. That will get rid of a bit of red tape.

Other amendments clarify that, if a person has been disqualified by the court of another state, their Queensland driver's licence is cancelled from the date the person became disqualified. There are also measures that ensure that driver licensing decisions are subject to internal review before proceeding to QCAT. The bill also covers infringement notices for camera detected offences so that, in a situation where you were not the driver but you receive the photo in the mail, you do not have to complete a statutory declaration. There is an online method of passing that on to the real offender. That is useful in a work situation where a work vehicle may be licensed to one person but they are not the one driving it on the day, or if your spouse was driving and you were not and other situations such as that. That is a good, sensible measure that the bill addresses.

Speaking more generally with regard to road safety in my electorate of Aspley, late last year it was good to see the minister visit the electorate to announce new 'hold the red' traffic light technology.

Good technological changes like that combined with good legislative changes are really a combined approach to reducing the road toll. This technology has been introduced in Aspley at the Gympie Road and Robinson Road intersection. If a car is going through a red traffic light, it will not turn green in the other direction for the cross-intersection until the car has gone through. This technology will prevent T-bone collisions where someone has gone 80 kilometres an hour and they clean someone up who just accelerates normally when a light turns green. This is a really good measure. As Minister Bailey stated—

Hold the Red is an active collision prevention system using radar to detect vehicles that are about to run a red light.

When the danger is identified the opposing traffic lights are held on red to halt drivers waiting for their lights to change to green. It is good to see this technological approach go hand in hand with a legislative approach to address these issues.

The committee consulted fairly thoroughly. Consultation with all interested relevant parties was very positive. The only issues related to more information being sought, which was provided to the satisfaction of groups such as RACQ, Queensland Law Society, Transurban and the Queensland Council for Civil Liberties. It is good to see bipartisan support for a bill such as this, which will go a long way to changing the culture of drink-driving even more. Amongst offenders it will really separate the drinking from the driving and break that link amongst repeat offenders in particular. I commend the bill to the House.



Mr BOYCE (Callide—LNP) (6.14 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Transport Legislation (Road Safety and Other Matters) Amendment Bill 2019. Once again, I acknowledge my fellow committee members and thank Mrs Deb Jeffrey and her secretariat staff for their help and guidance in preparing our papers and reports.

This bill was introduced to the House on 13 February this year and the committee reported back on 5 April. Again, this is a similar time line to other Transport and Public Works Committee work where, six months after tabling our report, we are now debating the bill. This is more evidence of a lazy government implementing so-called family-friendly hours at the cost of getting the work done.

The objectives of the bill are to further enhance road safety measures in Queensland. The bill covers such topics as drink-driving, speeding and other matters. Drink-driving has been shown to be a significant factor in many road crashes, despite the introduction of the alcohol ignition interlock program. On average, drink-drivers are still involved in one in five fatalities on Queensland roads. The current interlock program is aimed at high-risk drink-driving offenders with a blood alcohol content of .15 or more. This bill will extend the ignition interlock program to include mid-range drink-driving offenders with a blood alcohol content of .1 to .149.

Speeding continues to be a significant factor in many road accidents. Speed cameras play a significant role in the deterrence of speeding and the enforcement of speed limits. According to research, point-to-point cameras have been found to be more effective at reducing speeding over long distances. Currently, point-to-point cameras can only be used on lengths of road where there is a single speed limit. Amendments to the bill will allow point-to-point cameras on roads with multiple speed limits. I have some concerns with this part of the bill and worry that they should be signed properly to alert drivers of point-to-point cameras. I have concerns that the general public will ultimately perceive these cameras as a revenue-raising tool rather than an effective speeding deterrent.

Other matters in this bill include marine pollution incidents. The objective there is to enable the state to recover costs on behalf of its entities for expenses incurred in responding to marine pollution incidents. This makes those responsible for marine pollution fully accountable for their actions.

In closing, I support the intent of this bill to make our roads safer and the other matters covered in this bill.



Ms PUGH (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (6.17 pm): Despite our best efforts, the road toll is still too high. It is too high for families, for communities and for Queensland. The economic cost to Queensland is \$5 billion per year, but you cannot put a price on the grief of a family and a community. The Queensland strategy sets a high bar to clear: to reduce road deaths by 30 per cent by the year 2020. This is an incredibly ambitious target, but there are significant challenges to meet this goal. Despite our best collective efforts to cut the drink-driving rate, in the five years to 31 December 2017, 25 per cent of drivers involved in fatal crashes had a mid-range blood alcohol reading. Currently, this significant cohort of drivers is not subject to alcohol interlock devices. I am pleased to say that this legislation fixes that.

The current legislation does not require people convicted of drink-driving offences to complete an intervention or education program. Research has shown that brief intervention programs delivered to first-time drink-driving offenders are successful; furthermore, so are long education programs targeted at repeat offenders. Amendments in the bill aim to enhance road safety by increasing participation in re-education programs, improving the outcomes of the alcohol interlock policy and, ideally, playing a key role in reducing the rate of alcohol fuelled car crashes.

It is worth framing these important changes in the context of the bigger picture and our national conversation around alcohol. We need to examine why, despite significant education programs, we as a country and as a state still have such a large problem with drink-driving and drinking in general. Every weekend our emergency rooms are filled with people injured while drinking, injured while driving, injured while fighting and succumbing to alcohol poisoning, not to mention its terrible social impacts.

Despite the significant damage we know alcohol does in our community in many different ways, the Morrison government has recently released a watered-down version of the draft national alcohol strategy. The Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education has released a report into the National Alcohol Strategy and has raised some serious concerns. Their concerns run to the fact that the alcohol lobby have had significant input into the strategy to the point where their report is called *Alcohol industry fingerprints: analysis of modifications to the national alcohol strategy*. I want to read from their report about alcohol in the Australian culture. The report states—

The strategy has been modified to re-frame alcohol consumption as a positive part of Australian culture. This is closely in line with alcohol industry rhetoric, but is at odds with the objective of the strategy which is to minimise harm from alcohol.

The revised strategy says—

Alcohol is an intrinsic part of Australian culture and it plays a central role in most people's ... lives. Research clearly illustrates that whether people are celebrating, socialising, networking, relaxing, commiserating, or rewarding themselves—alcohol plays an integral role.

The report talks about 'the framing of alcohol consumption'. It states—

The alcohol industry deliberately uses positive and pro-drinking terms that are strategically ambiguous and avoid discussion of the actual amount of alcohol being consumed. Classic examples of this are 'moderate drinking' and 'responsible drinking'. The revised strategy includes a new sentence: "According to the Guidelines, many drinkers consume alcohol responsibly". References to 'responsible drinkers' and the 'responsible majority' are made frequently, and almost exclusively, by the alcohol industry. The Guidelines do not use this terminology; in fact, they refer to the fact that 'responsible drinking' means different things to different people. Indeed, evidence shows that the majority of people who drink above the Guidelines consider themselves 'responsible drinkers'.


What is really concerning is this part in the report that states—

The alcohol industry relies on its heaviest consumers for the vast majority of its profit; 20 per cent of the adult population (nearly four million Australians) drink 74 per cent of all the alcohol consumed in Australia. These 'super' consumers are drinking on average 4.21 standard drinks a day, which is twice the maximum amount listed in the Guidelines to reduce long term harm. If these people consumed within the Guidelines, it would equate to a 39 per cent reduction in alcohol production and sales.

Madam Deputy Speaker McMillan, I do not know about you but that last statistic—that 74 per cent of alcohol is consumed by 20 per cent of drinkers—seems to me to be the Pareto principle with a cruel twist. We know that excessive alcohol consumption contributes to diabetes, many different kinds of cancers, sleep problems and so much more. There are few health conditions that it does not contribute to. We as a community and as a government need to have the courage to be clear with the community about what constitutes a safe level of alcohol consumption. That means numbers, that means data and that means normalising safe levels of drinking and even abstinence.

I am a product of my generation and I vividly remember the campaign from the early nineties: 'If you drink and drive, you're a bleep bleep.' The last two words are unparliamentary, I am afraid, but I think all members know the campaign I am alluding to. I grew up understanding that it is unsafe to drink and drive. In this job, I am offered a lot of drinks and I also have to drive.

This year I made the decision not to drink at all so I have not had a drink in eight months. What I have really noticed is people's reactions. I have noticed that it is far more notable to abstain from alcohol than it is to overindulge. Also, I have never been asked so much in my life if I am expecting. I am expecting to set a good example for my kids, to make sure I am never over the limit when I drive and to help be part of a new and positive discussion about what safe and healthy drinking looks like. I know that there are many of us in the House today who would know somebody who fits in the 20 per cent of people who consume 70 per cent of all alcohol consumed in Australia. This legislation creates a vital intervention point for those people, and I commend it to the House.

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (6.24 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Transport Legislation (Road Safety and Other Matters) Amendment Bill 2019. There were five

submissions on the bill which were mostly supportive of the bill. The intent of the bill is to reduce road traffic deaths and serious injuries, and that is something no-one could complain about. I think it is good that the government has tried to address these things in line with the National Road Safety Strategy.

I would like to bring an issue in relation to this to the attention of the House. It is timely that we are in Townsville so we can look at the intent of the bill and how it applies to different areas of the state. I think the intent of the bill is good, but there are some unintended consequences and impacts on rural and remote areas that are not necessarily taken into consideration, and one of these is speeding.

I noticed that Derek Barry from our local newspaper was in the public gallery. He beats me to just about every event out in the west. I could be driving from Normanton to Karumba on a weekend to go to an event, and that is a 700-kilometre drive one way or a 1,400-kilometre return trip. If people are driving in the suburb of Aspley or Wilston at 60 kilometres per hour in a 40-kilometres-per-hour zone, they should not be speeding. That is dangerous in the city; there is no question about that. Is it the same if I am doing 130 kilometres per hour in a 110 zone going to Normanton? All of that is called speeding, but it has a different meaning to people in a remote area.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr KATTER: You will hit wallabies and you will hit a lot of things out there. I am trying to make a point about spending 30,000 kilometres a year in the car and the impact of cracking down on speeding. I could drive from the Northern Territory back into my electorate in Camooweal at 130 kilometres per hour but then I have to go down to 110 kilometres per hour, but there is no discernible difference in the road, the number of people on the road or the traffic. We are saying that that is all terrible, but I think it has a different meaning. Once I get down through Camooweal or Cloncurry, then fair enough and that is an issue if you are speeding through there. I do not believe what we call speeding on these remote open roads has the same risk and impact as it does in the city.


I think the speed limit on some of these remote roads is something to contemplate. I could drive to Birdsville for eight or nine hours at 110 kilometres an hour battling fatigue. That is a big issue for me, and the member for Gregory would battle the same things. It is very difficult. Spending all that time in the car is a large impost on your life. There is a temptation to do that. That is being cracked down on. That is very good in the city and those built-up areas, but I do not think it has the same need in remote areas. That is something I am concerned about. There is also the point-to-point. I am not sure we are doing a great job for people with the point-to-point between Birdsville and Bedourie and whether that will help reduce road fatalities. I do not think that is where the effort should be.

The other issue is interlocking devices. I think the intent is really good and it is trying to discourage people from drink-driving, but I have concerns. For example, it could be in a car in Doomadgee and it is the only car that someone in the family uses to get to work and there could be a problem with servicing or credited servicing. That proposition is a lot different from what someone in the city could face. That could be an issue.

They are the concerns I have. Obviously, I am not going to stand here and say that we should be allowed to speed. That is a silly proposition, but I am just saying that the word 'speeding' means different things in remote areas compared to the city. A lot of people in those remote areas would agree that it is not as concerning for them on those open roads as it is once you get to those built-up areas and environments. They are the points I would like to make.

I agree with the intent of the bill and I see what the minister is trying to do. That is worthwhile but I would ask the minister to be mindful of how that impacts those areas and to watch closely the rollout of the interlocking device in places like Doomadgee or Mornington. We need to try to get people back into jobs and to get their licences. That is a big challenge.

I ask that we watch that space, how it rolls out and its impact. We need to try to marry it with those other issues out there as it is not just about speeding and associated issues. There are a lot of other social issues and impacts that we need to consider at the same time to see if all the interests in all those areas are being served.

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (6.30 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Transport Legislation (Road Safety and Other Matters) Amendment Bill 2019. The issue of road safety is something about which I am extremely passionate, particularly in my home town of Townsville and the surrounding areas of North Queensland. Given that last week was National Road Safety Week, how fitting it is that we speak to this bill today. I say this after witnessing firsthand the tragic results of drink-driving and drug driving, speeding, not wearing seatbelts or being fatigued or distracted on our local roads and highways across the region.

I saw this over 28 years of working with the Queensland Ambulance Service as a critical care flight paramedic regularly called to those scenes, either as a first responder or backing up the rescue helicopter. I would not even guess at the number of road accidents I attended over the two and a half decades in my work as a paramedic, but in the 1990s alone I was based on a highway station north of Townsville and attended around 12 motor vehicle accidents per month. Those scenes of carnage will stay with me forever—some being multicase scenes, people torn apart, drivers or their passengers entrapped, children killed and so many others seriously injured. They were harrowing scenes. Therefore, I applaud any steps taken by our government to reduce the number of people killed or injured on our Queensland roads.

This year alone, 30 people have lost their lives on North Queensland roads. The impact of these accidents runs deep not only for the immediate families affected but also for the emergency services workers who respond. I take my hat off to them all—the nurses, doctors, surgeons, physiotherapists and all members of the health system who help put people back together again and get them back into society after they sustain injuries.

Death and serious injuries on Queensland roads continue to cause significant devastation, costing the Queensland government over \$5 billion every year. Improving safety on our roads must be a priority. The Queensland Road Safety Strategy 2015-2021 aligns with the National Road Safety Strategy and has a vision of zero deaths and serious injuries. The Queensland strategy sets the ambitious target to reduce death and serious injury by 30 per cent by 2020, meaning we need to reduce road fatalities to under 200 and serious injuries to under 4,700 per annum. In 2017, 247 lives were lost and 6,462 were seriously injured on our roads. Just pause for a moment and reflect—6,462 people were seriously injured on our roads. The bill proposes road safety amendments intended to help achieve that 2020 target.

In regard to drink-driving, the alcohol ignition interlock program commenced in Queensland on 6 August 2010 to help convicted high-risk driving offenders separate drinking from driving as they return to licensed driving. A person is subject to the interlock program if they have been convicted of a driving offence under the influence of alcohol, a driving offence with a blood/breath alcohol concentration, BAC, of .15 or more or failing to provide a blood/breath specimen for analysis, dangerous driving while adversely affected by alcohol, or two or more drink-driving offences within a five-year period. To complete the program the participant must hold a valid driver's licence with an 'I' condition—that is, interlock—and have an approved alcohol ignition interlock fitted to a nominated vehicle for a minimum of 12 months. If the person chooses not to have that interlock fitted, currently they are unable to drive a motor vehicle legally for a two-year period after their disqualification period ends, unless they have an exemption from the program.

Despite the introduction of the program and other road safety measures such as random breath testing and the imposition of fines and licence disqualifications, drink-driving continues to be a significant road safety issue, with drink-drivers on average involved in one in five fatalities on Queensland roads. Further, in the five years to 31 December 2017 almost 25 per cent of drink-drivers involved in fatal crashes in Queensland had a middle range BAC reading and 30 per cent of drink-drivers involved in hospitalisation crashes had a middle range BAC reading. In addition, more than a quarter of drink-driving offences were middle range offences. That means drivers over the middle alcohol limit but not over the high alcohol limit. They are a significant group of offenders who currently are not subject to the interlock program.

Cameras can be installed inside tunnels or at entrances or exits of tunnels. Some cameras record in colour; some record in black and white. The cameras are limited to the extent that they can capture an image of a single vehicle or a vehicle combination. The bill addresses these issues by providing evidentiary provisions to ensure offences relating to dangerous goods in tunnels are enforceable.

Before I go to other matters, I commend the Minister for Transport and Main Roads on his work in improving significant infrastructure on our North Queensland roads. Of course I will mention Riverway Drive. It was a very congested road in my electorate on which I attended many an accident. The road carries 20,000 cars a day. It is now duplicated with stage 1, thank you very much to the Labor government. It was promised under the LNP if the port were sold, and of course voters rejected that. We have more work to do. Townsville Ring Road stage 5 is a significant investment. Our money is on the table, ready to go. We are ready to crack on with that road project, with the federal money promised in the 2018 election. Down south, the Haughton bridge upgrade, worth over \$500 million, is creating jobs for locals as well as—


Mr MINNIKIN: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order under standing order 236, relevance to the bill.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stewart): Order! Member for Thuringowa, can you return to the bill.

Mr HARPER: Yes, certainly. It is always good to talk about road infrastructure and road safety, and that is what I am talking about. It is about reducing the incidence of accidents on our road and it is certainly relevant to this, because speed continues to be a significant factor in crashes.

Earlier I spoke about point-to-point cameras. They have been more effective in reducing speeding over longer stretches of road than fixed or mobile cameras. Current point-to-point camera systems are only able to be used on lengths of road where there is a single speed limit, restricting the ability to apply them on roads where there is a known crash risk. The bill aims to ensure point-to-point speed camera systems can be deployed on stretches of road with multiple speed limits. This bill will address speed limits for camera enforcement on lengths of road where there are variable speed limit signs installed.

Under section 328A of the Criminal Code, it is an offence for someone such as a passenger to interfere with the operation of a vehicle driven dangerously. The maximum penalty for this offence increases if the person was adversely affected by an intoxicating substance such as alcohol or drugs at the time of the offence. I put on record that we should be doing all we can to better educate new drivers—all drivers—wherever possible. That is why I have been a longstanding and passionate supporter of DriveIt in Townsville. This unique driver education precinct in Townsville will be a massive asset to help better deliver driver education. I look forward to continuing to work with all ministers in our state government to see what role we can play in helping deliver safe driving practices through DriveIt, which I remain confident will assist in better educating all road users on our North Queensland roads. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (6.39 pm): I, too, rise to speak in support of the bill before the House. As others have said, you would be hard-pressed to find a member in this House who does not support road safety initiatives, particularly initiatives that look to drive down what is a devastating road death toll each and every year. I try to be a very supportive member for all of my constituents, but if a constituent comes to me trying to get out of an infringement for speeding or drink-driving they get pretty short shrift. My reasoning is: if you do not want the fine then do not speed or drink-drive. Until last year I was able to say that I had a perfect record. Sadly, on a recent visit to Townsville I was negligent and was not concentrating on the road. I was on the V8 track and shortly afterwards got a ticket in the mail. I, too, have fallen prey to not being aware of my surroundings and the environment I am in as a motor vehicle driver.

Sadly, we have had a spate of accidents and fatalities on Glass House roads in recent times. I extend my sympathies to the families of those who have lost loved ones. However, I also must express an incredible amount of frustration, as do the local police, that what we are increasingly seeing are motorcycle accidents—motorcycle accidents caused by speed, lack of rider experience, rider error, visibility or collisions. I am not sure if others have mentioned it, but motorcycles make up only five per cent of registered vehicles in this state yet they featured in 20 per cent of the 247 deaths on our roads last year.

When this occurs, often the constituents in Glass House call for a lowering of speed limits. As I mentioned, frustratingly a lot of these accidents are caused by individuals who are not abiding by the existing speed limits, so lowering them is not going to make the situation any better. In fact, we have some truly imbecilic behaviour on our local roads, particularly at Ocean View. I was recently contacted by the Channer family—probably the southernmost constituents in the electorate of Glass House—who witness on an almost weekly basis motorcyclists using a turnout that was used by TMR to reconstruct Mount Mee Road following the floods. They set up marquees, put photographers on particular bends in the road and then block all traffic while they do speed time trials up and down Mount Mee Road. We have had similar behaviour at the northern end of Mount Mee Road, between Mount Mee and Delaney's Creek. We have had cars hooning on a Friday night/Saturday morning, Saturday night/Sunday morning and Sunday evening up around Flaxton and Montville, we have had bikes at Boorobin on Maleny-Stanley River Road and we have had hoons doing crazy burnouts out on Beerburrum Woodford Road, out the back of Glass House Mountains.

I am incredibly frustrated, because it ties up the resources of the Queensland police. I make no excuse for the fact that they should be able to use any tactic possible to stop these kinds of behaviours. I recently saw one motorcycling group decrying the sneaky activities of the Queensland Police Service


in trying to catch them. I am sorry: police should have every ability to stop that kind of behaviour. We are talking about groups of riders who are sending drones ahead of them to scope out whether there are any radars traps or police and who are using social media to convey what roads the police are on. If the police have to get sneakier to catch that kind of behaviour, then so be it. Do not be idiots. Do not speed. Do not put the lives of my constituents at risk. If you do that, you have nothing to worry about.

Often the resources of the Department of Transport and Main Roads are also used in responding to these kinds of behaviours. Recently we saw an extensive amount of money spent on putting guardrails down Mount Mee Road north of Mount Mee. That is money that I would much rather see put towards improvements on roads where law-abiding motorists are getting frustrated because of increased traffic or because of lack of overtaking opportunities—on roads such as Maleny Kenilworth Road, Landsborough Maleny Road, Steve Irwin Way or Beerburum Road. All of those could well and truly use the investment—rather than putting road improvements in place to try to stop idiotic behaviour.

I want to acknowledge a couple of recent wins when it comes to road safety in the electorate of Glass House. After many years of asking the Minister for Main Roads to install flashing school zone lights at Glass House Mountains State School and Peachester State School, the lights have literally just been turned on at Glass House Mountains State School and we have had word that Peachester State School will have lights in place before the end of the financial year. Both of those communities—the P&Cs and the teachers—are ecstatic that that is occurring. There are a couple more to be done, particularly Mooloolah State School on Kings Road. A number of developments have gone in up the road from the school, so we are looking to get flashing school zone lights there.

There has been an announcement that a further \$12 million will be spent on the D'Aguiar Highway to improve safety. When I was first elected—members can read my maiden speech—there had been an unnecessary number of deaths on that road. A \$16 million investment from the federal government through the then member for Longman, Wyatt Roy, saw the implementation of a number of overtaking lanes and a one-metre visible divide down the middle of the road. We have seen a significant reduction in the number of deaths on that highway. I understand that this \$12 million will look at the highway between King Street at Caboolture or Moodlu and Wamuran itself and will install that one-metre divide. I know that will go a long way towards improving road safety, but \$12 million does seem like an extraordinarily large amount to do that for what is only a four-kilometre stretch of road. We are looking for more details on what those designs will include. If the minister is looking for further road safety improvements on that stretch of road, I suggest providing an on ramp to the D'Aguiar Highway at King Street and installing traffic lights at the intersection of the D'Aguiar Highway and Campbells Pocket Road.

Those are wins for the community. We would love to see more in terms of improving road safety and improving the roads around the electorate of Glass House. Again, I clearly support any initiative that improves road safety not only in Glass House but also across the state. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (6.46 pm): I rise to speak in support of this bill. I note and welcome the broad support from across the chamber. It is probably fairly rare that I agree with the member for Glass House, but there were many things in his speech that I think are commendable. I certainly take a unity position with the member in relation to people who approach my electorate office seeking relief from speeding or drink-driving fines. It is certainly not something that will get much of a sympathetic ear from me.

I pick up on some of the commentary from the member for Thuringowa, particularly the concerns he raised about the impacts on our emergency services personnel. That is certainly the perspective I bring to these bills. Based on my nursing experience, I have witnessed the impact of motor vehicle accidents—probably picking up at the point the member for Thuringowa left off, at the hospital door. I have seen what motor vehicle accidents do to people. I have seen the journey people go on: through the emergency department, through operating theatres, through ICU and then care in orthopaedic units, burns units or the head injuries clinic.

What brought it all home to me in terms of what motor vehicle accidents mean for people was my time spent in the rehabilitation areas of the hospital. When someone with an MVA comes in to emergency or through theatre they are there for not a particularly long period of time. Similarly in those other areas, you are generally not in those wards for a very long period of time. People recovering from a motor vehicle accident are often in a rehabilitation unit for a period of months and sometimes up to 12 months. I have certainly looked after people in those situations. That is where you really see the impacts on the individual. Bear in mind that we are dealing with people who survive; we do not get to see those other impacts.

The impacts are absolutely devastating. They end people's dreams, they end their careers and they can have massive impacts on people's families. They can destroy family life. If you have been in an accident where you have been drink-driving and you have injured other members of your family, it can have absolutely shocking impacts. Those impacts on families where people have loss of career and loss of income are often multigenerational. They put stresses on families that take several generations to recover from.

I want to touch on some of the issues that the member for Traeger raised in his contribution. I can appreciate what he is attempting to say, but I look at this from the perspective of a nurse when I nursed people who had been involved in motor vehicle accidents. Being based at the royal Brisbane hospital rehabilitation unit, we were picking up people from right around the state, so it did not matter whether it was from an accident in Coorparoo or Cloncurry because the impacts were the same.


The things that I picked up listening to the member for Traeger's contribution was that if someone is on a country road and they are speeding and they are tired they are already ticking two of the Fatal Five boxes and that needs to be something that they should be very concerned about. I understand the difficulties of the distances, but still the advice is there. That is not a wise situation for someone to put themselves in. The people in my electorate are very supportive of road safety. It is one of the more common issues that is raised with my electorate office. A lot of it concerns local roads and issues around our local area, but we get people returning from longer journeys contacting the office with concerns about various roads and I am always happy to pass those on to the minister.

We in this chamber should all be extremely proud of what we have achieved in relation to road safety. I can remember that when we first introduced alcohol blood tests I was a young person in a particular town and I guess the kindest way I could put it was that the attitude towards drink-driving was somewhat cavalier. We have significantly changed the attitudes and the behaviour of the majority of people in this state for the better. That has taken a long time to do, but this bill is a continuation of that important public health initiative.

Road accidents really are a public health issue and we have to tackle them in a public health manner. That is what I particularly like about this bill. If we look at some of the provisions of this bill, the issues around driver education are really important. We know that if we are going to change people's behaviour around any public health matter we have to start with education, and this bill takes a graduated approach to that in that it recognises that for first-time offenders a shorter, sharper course will deliver a good outcome. In fact, the World Health Organization has recognised that as the most effective tool from a clinical perspective but also the most cost-effective evidence based approach that can be taken in this instance. If the World Health Organization is pushing this as an evidence based approach, then there is a lot of merit to it. I note the RACQ's support as well.

The changed approaches in relation to the interlock device will ultimately get more people participating in the interlock program and ultimately that will mean fewer people drinking and driving on our roads, particularly those people who have a serious problem with drinking and driving. The more of those people we can help and the more of those people we can take off the roads or put them on the roads in a sensible and safe manner, the fewer motor accidents we will have. Those provisions are well worth supporting. As I said, the people in my electorate are fully supportive of road safety initiatives and I certainly support them from the perspective of representing those people and from my own experiences as a nurse.

I also want to thank the minister for not just the work on this bill. This week the local south side command decided that for road safety it would launch Operation Wake Up, which is a campaign aimed at the Fatal Five and educating the public about the Fatal Five. Senior Sergeant Dave Stafford from the Coorparoo police asked me to come down fairly early one morning to help with that process at the Woolworths and Merlo in Coorparoo and I asked the minister the night before if he would be available to come down. I am sure that he probably had other plans like sleeping in after a week in parliament, but he pulled himself out of bed and came down and helped to spread that word around the Fatal Five. I thank the minister for that and I thank the officers from the Queensland police for the work that they are doing in relation to Operation Wake Up. With those few words, I commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (6.54 pm): I rise briefly to speak to the Transport Legislation (Road Safety and Other Matters) Amendment Bill 2019. The bill is a very sensible bill and, obviously, I will be supporting the bill. I worked for a number of years at a university and one of the terrible statistics to come out of working at the university was the number of funerals of young people I had to go to. Nearly all of those funerals were from people who had either been speeding or drink-driving, so anything that we can do to reduce either of those activities on our roads makes our

roads safer for not only individuals but also every other road user who finds themselves facing a car coming at them at an excessive speed or on the wrong side of the road or in an out-of-control manner.

In a town like Toowoomba pretty much everybody has to drive long distances at some point. Whether they are heading north, south, east or west, there is travel involved. I am a father of four who has watched his children get their licences and get on the road. There is no doubt that your heart skips a beat when they first start driving on their own. Combine that with coming of age, there is always a concern that they might be tempted in that they might contemplate having a drink and thinking, 'I've only had one,' or 'I've only had two.' We spent a lot of time talking about that in my family to make sure that they never did and, hopefully, never will.

In Toowoomba there have been some serious tragedies from parties that have been held out of town where kids have then jumped in cars. These are 19- or 20-year-olds who have then jumped in cars. The argument has been, 'Well, I was the least drunk,' or 'I was the person who everybody thought would be the best person to drive the car.' My advice is do not drive the car. Instead, just sleep where you are or make better arrangements or do whatever. From a drink-driving perspective, obviously everybody can support the objectives of the bill. When there is a serious accident, obviously the first responders do not get away scot-free once they have attended that accident. It is something that will haunt them. We have had a situation in Toowoomba where there were nine people in a car that was involved in a serious accident through speed and other causes. One young fellow was in the boot. It was a pretty torturous scene, so I think we can all support those measures.

With regard to point-to-point speeding, I would encourage the minister to look at the new range crossing as a road that could be used. It will be a great thing for our region and for the people west of us and may be a good candidate to have point-to-point cameras fitted to ensure that people who are going along there do it in a safe and sensible manner. I also want to thank the minister for some flashing school signs to increase road safety around the schools in Toowoomba, but hopefully we would do a little bit more maybe around Toowoomba North State School and maybe a little bit more around Mater Dei going forward. They would be two schools that would very much appreciate some signs on other roads that are around them. However, both the existing Toowoomba range crossing and the new road present an opportunity to ensure that people are driving safely.

Over many years the existing road has seen many accidents on it, and people do go down it fast. It is easy to be tempted, particularly since it was improved when the LNP was in government. People do not necessarily follow the speed limits and they get around a corner and see the back of a big truck moving much slower than they were anticipating.


I would very much encourage the minister to have a look at both of those roads but also the roads to the west, north and south. I would like to see everybody who lives in my electorate return safely from a journey and make sure that they are following safe practices on the road and not speeding.

Certainly, as a former publican, I have been involved in a lot of public safety—talking about drink-driving and trying to discourage it. Anything that we can do in that space I think is very worthwhile. With those few short words, I support the bill.

Debate, on motion of Mr Watts, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Crichlow, Cr D


 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (7.00 pm): This accolade may come as a surprise to many on the Gold Coast, but I have always been a believer and practitioner of giving credit where credit is due. This councillor of the City of Gold Coast deserves great credit for her long and devoted service to the people of Southport on the fabulous Gold Coast. Councillor Dawn Crichlow has announced that she will not be contesting the March 2020 local government election and it is appropriate that I recognise her long and diligent service to her constituents of the Gold Coast dating back to 1991 before she abdicates her Southport throne. Let me be clear that Dawn and I may not have always seen eye to eye on several issues and, at best, we could be described as having a professional relationship. Dawn's cosy relationship with the press on the Gold Coast led to some heartburn for me when I became mayor of the Gold Coast, but that is history and takes nothing away from her stellar career as a councillor for 28 years.

Dawn's endearing and greatest attribute as a public representative was to understand the feeling or, as Dennis Denuto so aptly put it, the vibe of her constituency. When council bureaucrats made ridiculous and unworkable decisions for Gold Coast residents, Dawn's voice was the loudest and most vocal in voicing protest on behalf of her community. She called a spade a spade and whether it was keeping chickens in a residential area, parking matters in Southport, or the behaviour of hoons in Southport, Dawn was front and centre in leading the charge to right the wrong on behalf of her community. Dawn's constituents recognised that she was their warrior and returned her election after election. I have no doubt that, if she wanted to contest the next election, she would win that too.

However, Councillor Crichlow was not always the goody-two-shoes councillor and certainly got up to her share of vendetta-seeking activity to justify her arguments and political persuasion. Spying on rubbish tip activity in the old Gold Coast City Council area, providing the then mayor with a pet pig for his home on the Isle of Capri, and finessing a freestanding office in Southport, which no other councillor was entitled to at the time, were just some of the antics that meant that Dawn Crichlow was cut from a cloth different from that of most other councillors.

Dawn's greatest legacy is the pursuit of the Southport parklands area as a focal point for community usage on the Gold Coast. The swimming area, the parklands auditorium and outdoor entertainment venue are all a testament to her determination, dedication and longevity in her role. She has left Southport and the Gold Coast a better place to live in. We had a wonderful Gold Coast Show on the Southport parklands area. It has found a great home there. Dawn has seen that area develop over her 28 years as a councillor and she has been a great supporter of that area. Thank you, Dawn, and enjoy your retirement.

Vasar; Benson, Ms K; Murugappan Family

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (7.03 pm): For the past 10 years the St Nicholas church of Woolloongabba in my electorate has hosted the Serbian festival, better known as Vasar. It is a wonderful opportunity to share the culture, food, hospitality, music and dance that the Serbian people have to offer. I have attended most of the festivals during the last decade and every time it gets bigger and better. I certainly want to put out a call to the St Nicholas church of Woolloongabba, to their committee and all of the volunteers who spend so much time pulling together this wonderful festival and opening it up to local residents to come and enjoy.

Woolloongabba and the inner south have been home to many Serbian refugees during and in the aftermath of the Yugoslav wars fought from 1991 to 2001. I am very proud of the role that the South Brisbane electorate has played in welcoming and settling refugees and new migrants for more than a century—from the Greeks, to the Lebanese, to the Vietnamese, to the Russians and the Serbs. These are all different cultures I remember growing up with as a young person in the South Brisbane electorate.

I would like to take this opportunity to also put a shout-out to the CEO of the Multicultural Development Association—or MDA—Kerrin Benson. Late last week Kerrin announced that she would be stepping down after 16 years of serving in the role as CEO. In that time Kerrin has led the expansion of one of the best Queensland grown organisations that seeks to support new migrants and resettle refugees in Queensland. MDA has done a magnificent job and expanded many of its wonderful programs and wonderful events, such as the lantern parade. I think it is a beacon of welcome and one that we should always look to when we are talking about refugees and migrants and how we can be a more inclusive culture.

That is why it is so deeply disappointing to see the Morrison LNP government turn its back on the Biloela Tamil family.

Mr Hunt interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Pause the clock. Member for Nicklin, you will get in your own seat if you would like to make an interjection and then I will ask you to cease your interjections.

Ms TRAD: Priya and Nadesalingam and their Australian-born daughters have all been deported to a detention centre on Christmas Island and it is shameful. On the weekend I listened to one of the Biloela residents during their rally, trying to get the heartless Morrison government to change its mind. She said, 'We are in Australia and in Australia we fight for our friends.' We stand with them in their fight to make sure that this wonderful family returns to their rightful home in Biloela, Queensland.


Ms Farmer interjected.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The Minister for Child Safety and members to my left will cease their interjections.

(Time expired)

Scenic Rim Electorate, Drought

 **Mr KRAUSE** (Scenic Rim—LNP) (7.07 pm): The drought that is now affecting 65 per cent of Queensland or more is biting hard in the Scenic Rim electorate that I represent. It is a tragedy unfolding for many families and their businesses that rely on rain for stock water and for feed for their stock. In many parts of the region, it is the driest period on record for generations. I table an article from one of the local newspapers, the *Fassifern Guardian*, about how this is one of the driest periods on record. They reckon that it is the driest year since the 1920s.


Tabled paper: Article from the *Fassifern Guardian*, dated 15 August 2019, titled 'Driest Year since the 1920s' [[1420](#)].

The big dry is really taking its toll on the wellbeing of our farmers. Everywhere I go I hear harrowing accounts of the emotional and mental toll that the drought is wreaking on our farming families—the devastation for farmers who are being forced to sell stock into a depressed market because they simply cannot feed them and, in some cases, they cannot get water for them either, such as the lack of stock water in many places. The impact that this has on families on the land, their family relationships and their ability to keep food on the table and to pay all of their household bills is tremendous—the heartbreak endured by people who are forced to sell breeding stock that has been built up over years or decades, or even in some cases across generations because there is no feed and the capacity to buy feed is just not there anymore. Then there is the impact on small businesses in town as well owing to all of this financial pressure. It is heavy.

Unfortunately, parliament cannot make it rain where it is so desperately needed. However, as this drought drags on we should not forget the very real impact it has on affected individuals, and not just financially. The never-ending barrage of red tape and regulation imposed on farmers by Labor governments and their comrades in the Greens strips profitability out of farming bit by bit and the result is that, when tough times come, there is less ability to see them through and we are seeing that now. The government's decision to cut subsidies for freight in future droughts is a cruel kick in the guts, showing what this mob in government really thinks about our men and women on the land, not to mention the ridiculous \$3,600 fine that was recently handed to a local farmer because their chemical register was not up to date while people who superglue themselves to streets or invade farms offend with fear of no penalty. It is a disgrace.

We need a strong farm sector in Queensland, one that is respected by government. I will always hold their interests close to my heart because farmers feed us all and they also generate so much wealth for our economy through exports, not to mention being incredibly adaptable and innovative. Our farmers are certainly among the best, if not the best, in the world. We in this place should never forget that and we should support our farmers through good times and through bad.

CQ Young Filmmakers Competition

 **Mr O'ROURKE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (7.10 pm): I had the pleasure of supporting a young filmmakers competition, which aims to influence teenagers and the broader school community in a positive and creative way to quit or never start smoking. The young filmmakers competition is an initiative of CQ Health's 10,000 Lives stopping smoking project. CQ Health partnered with Rockhampton Rotary Club and with community stakeholders who provided \$3,500 worth of prizes.


Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death and disease in Australia. I had the pleasure of meeting up with the team from Rockhampton Headspace. As quoted in the Rockhampton *Morning Bulletin*, one of the lead actors in the film said his love of Headspace and the important message behind the film inspired him to be part of the team. He said—

I love what Headspace does for everyone around the community and I just wanted to help out as much as I could and put my footprint on the earth. We have a lot of smokers here in Rockhampton. We want to cut down the smoking, we want to cut down the smoke in the atmosphere, we want to cut down the sickness and we definitely want to cut down the cigarettes littered in Rockhampton.

The team was thrilled when they found out they had placed second in the competition. What a great team they are at Headspace Rockhampton. They decided to put their \$500 prize towards a table tennis set to be used by everyone who attends Headspace, a youth mental health organisation.

I congratulate the team at CQ Health for their 10,000 Lives initiative, which aims to save 10,000 lives from smoking related deaths by 2030. This competition really focused on our younger community members and helped them spread the word on this important health topic. Being a Rotarian myself, I know that Rotary has been helping young people for a very long time, and I would like to acknowledge Wal Taylor OAM from the Rockhampton Rotary Club for all his hard work in promoting this very important issue. I would also like to acknowledge Brittany Lauga, the member for Keppel, for her contribution and other donators, JB HiFi, Rebel, Kmart, Frenchville Sports Club and Birch Carroll and Coyle cinemas. Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service has involved the community, non-government organisations and businesses in a range of health improvement campaigns as part of its Destination2020 strategy.

Child Protection

 **Mr PURDIE** (Ninderry—LNP) (7.13 pm): In my previous career I witnessed tragic cases of child abuse, cases that drive me to change our laws to protect the most innocent and vulnerable in our community, our children. This week is National Child Protection Week and I would like to use this opportunity to reflect on a system that is broken and legislation that simply does not go far enough to protect children and fails to meet community expectations. This government and our current laws are failing young people. In contrast, an LNP government will strengthen legislation and make our communities safe.

There is no excuse for killing a vulnerable, innocent and defenceless young child. Our society expects and demands that governments will enact laws that provide the greatest protection and strongest sentences for those who commit such heinous crimes, yet in Queensland this is currently not the case. Earlier this year the Palaszczuk government tweaked the legislation after the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council found that sentences for the manslaughter of a child were inadequate and did not meet community expectations. The report found that offenders guilty of child manslaughter receive on average a sentence of only 6.8 years in prison. The LNP has proposed much tougher child protection laws that will essentially fill a big gap between mandatory life for murder or 6.8 years for manslaughter. The LNP's proposed new child homicide offence will mean—

Mr BROWN: I rise to a point of order. There is a private member's bill before the House on this matter.


Mr SPEAKER: I was looking at that myself in terms of the *Notice Paper*. Member for Ninderry, I ask that you cease speaking directly to the bill and related matters. If you could try to round your comments out in terms of being more general and principles based that may assist.

Mr PURDIE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Our laws must serve not only to punish those convicted of crimes against our most vulnerable, they need to go one step further and act as a very strong deterrent. Also in this state there are around 2,800 registered child sex offenders at large in our community who are being monitored by only 33 police officers. Right here in Townsville right now there are around 170 registered child sex offenders being monitored by only two dedicated CPOR officers. One of these officers has been reassigned to other duties due to stress, leaving just one officer to try to monitor around 170 paedophiles.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Ninderry, I am listening to the contribution and I think you are straying towards the bill again. The member for Toowoomba South is better placed than me with regard to the bill and its intent, however, as I understand it, I think you may be anticipating debate on the bill. As I said, if you can talk about general principles as opposed to matters that are dealt with directly by that bill it may assist.

Mr PURDIE: I appreciate your guidance, Mr Speaker. I could go on, but they are just two examples of where a generation of soft-on-crime, Labor governments in this state are failing to protect our kids. We are continually seeing overstretched, underfunded and underresourced police officers. The thin blue line in this state is getting thinner and it is continuing to get thinner particularly in places like Townsville.

Gateway to Industry Schools Program

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development) (7.16 pm): Last week I joined the Premier and some of my parliamentary colleagues, Melissa McMahon, the member for Macalister, and Minister Grace Grace, at the annual Beenleigh State High School Paddock to Plate. There we announced an expansion of the Gateway to Industry Schools Program. This program is inspiring schoolkids across the state by


providing a taste of what a future career in an industry would be like and at the same time they are gaining invaluable skills and experience. There are 11 schools in Logan that are current participants in the program, including Loganlea State High School in my electorate. Loganlea State High School participates in the food, wine, tourism and agribusiness gateway programs. Students have access to a 40-hectare farm on the Logan River which is home to a variety of animals, including horses, sheep, goats, cattle and poultry.

Our expansion of this program means we are doubling our funding to \$2.7 million in total. It includes four new projects. These are the first changes to the successful program in over a decade. Importantly, we are doing this in industries that we know will be growing: health; screen and media; information and communication technology; and community services. It is crucial that we support our students in industries with growing career opportunities.

This is in addition to our free apprenticeships for under-21s. Just last month at Marsden State High School I was very pleased to announce that initiative with the Premier. We are providing opportunities for young Queenslanders to gain valuable qualifications across 139 courses so they can have the skills they need to get a job now and into the future. Since 1 July we have seen 55 young people in Logan start an apprenticeship for free. Last month I met 16-year-old Bailey at Bayer Smash Repairs in Loganholme who has turned his passion for car racing into a career path. He is six months into his automotive spray-painting apprenticeship. The remainder of his apprenticeship training costs will now be fully covered and this means Bayer Smash Repairs, like many other small and medium businesses, can afford to take on even more apprentices and trainees.

The Palaszczuk government is absolutely backing apprentices like young Bailey and backing businesses like Bayer Smash Repairs to take on more apprentices and provide lifelong skills for a successful career. Queensland leads the nation when it comes to school based apprentices and trainees and we want to go one step further by expanding our Gateway to Industry Schools Program. We are looking forward to seeing many more young apprentices and trainees right across the state.

Traeger Electorate; Townsville, North West Minerals Province

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (7.19 pm): Recently I attended a Townsville Enterprises event to discuss the link between the North West Minerals Province and Townsville, which has been a special subject for me for a number of years. The other week in parliament at a meeting on CopperString, a Townsville businesswoman said that Townsville's prosperity actually runs east-west, not north-south, which I thought was a profound thing to say. Townsville residents should recall the impact that the development of Phosphate Hill, Century zinc and Cannington had. That created an explosion of growth in this area. I was living here around that time. It was notable that the prosperity that is enjoyed out there feeds back into this economy.

It is hard to estimate the number of Townsville workers in the North West Minerals Province. The number is not accurate. It is estimated to be around 1,500 to 2,000 people. To put some context around that, there has been a lot of talk in town around Queensland Nickel, the Adani coalmine and the jobs that they can produce. I would argue that the North West Minerals Province is a lot more relevant to Townsville in terms of creating jobs.

Mr Harper interjected.

Mr KATTER: It is interesting that the member for Thuringowa interjects, because I have been the lone ranger talking about this for four years. While I welcome the announcement that was made the other day and I welcome your support, I have not heard from you for the past four years. It has just been me.


Mr SPEAKER: Through the chair, member for Traeger.

Mr KATTER: My apologies, Mr Speaker. It was good to hear the announcement from the state development minister the other week. He gave some positive news, but still there is a lot more to be done. None of that is really relevant until things start to get built. On the HIPCO development, we have \$180 million for a dam in Hughenden, but until we see that water storage being built any plans are meaningless. Until we see CopperString being built, connecting us and reducing the price of power, nothing is meaningful. Until we see the Big Rocks Weir project approved by the state government and work started on the Hells Gates Dam to provide water storage for Townsville, this is all meaningless. We need to remember that, with the increase of FIFO in the regions, there is a proportional benefit for Townsville: as things grow out there, they become better here.

I want to touch on a bill put together by the member for Hinchinbrook, the First Home Owners Grant Amendment Bill, to expand the grant to rural and regional areas. The member could not table the bill because it would require amendments to the Appropriation Bill. However, I put it before the House for the consideration of members, because I think it is important to consider how relevant the first home buyers grants are to people who live in rural and regional areas. We are here in Townsville talking about these things. If there is a desire to expand and stimulate activity, while there would not be a huge number of people who would apply for the grant, it would be a great thing for the government to consider in order to try to inject some investment into the development of housing in rural and regional areas. I table that bill.

Tabled paper: Document, 17 June 2019, titled 'Draft First Home Owner Grant (Rural and Regional Areas) Amendment Bill 2019' [1421].

Marque Greater Springfield Business Awards; Small Business

 **Mrs MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (7.22 pm): Last weekend I attended the inaugural Marque Greater Springfield Business Awards, which is an initiative of the fantastic Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce. The awards are quite significant for Greater Springfield, as they are an important recognition of a maturing small business sector in our region. It was really pleasing to see nominations across so many different businesses, from those that have been long established with decades-long history in the Greater Ipswich region to new fledgling businesses that have been established only in the past few years.


On the night I was very proud to sponsor the professional services category. I congratulate McNamara Law on winning the award, which was hotly contested by many great local professional services in our community. I was also happy to see local businesswoman Kath Manby of VM Family Law take out the Business Person of the Year award. Kath is well known within Greater Springfield for her legal work, which is primarily focused on matters involving domestic and family violence. She works closely with domestic violence support services and legal partners to undertake an extensive amount of Legal Aid and pro bono work. Kath is also one of the 100 Faces of Small Business in Queensland, which is an initiative of the Office of Small Business that showcases the human stories behind our state's diverse businesses.

I congratulate all of the nominees and the winners of the inaugural awards, including the Small Business of the Year, P&L Accountants. That is another fantastic small business in the Jordan electorate that is worth mentioning. The business was started by Paula Rizqallah. Paula has really grown the company by being extremely hard working and dedicated to her profession. Importantly, Paula believes that a healthy work-life balance is of the utmost importance. She employs a group of women accountants who are also mums, and ensures that they never miss after-school extracurricular activities with their children. This ensures she has a company that is productive, a great place to work and clearly very successful.

I thank the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce for all their work in bringing these awards to life, particularly President Neil Coupland, the executive and the wonderful Leila Stewart, who does much of the organising behind the scenes. I am always happy to support our local chambers of commerce in the Jordan Electorate, Greater Springfield and Logan Country.

In my electorate people know it is small business that is the lifeblood of their local economy, generating employment for a growing number of local residents. In fact, in the Jordan electorate 98 per cent of all businesses are small businesses. That is why I am so proud that our government is committed to making it easier for those business to employ staff, particularly apprentices and trainees. Whether it is our \$885 million of targeted payroll tax initiatives to support businesses or our recently announced free apprenticeships for those under 21, where the cost of training will be covered by the government and not the employer, we recognise the importance of small business in our communities and are doing all we can to help them grow, create employment and boost the Queensland economy.


Conway, Ms S

 **Mr BOYCE** (Callide—LNP) (7.25 pm): In rural Australia, mental health is a really big problem. Of the eight million Australians living in rural and remote areas, almost one million will suffer from poor mental health each year. Today I give credit to and acknowledge an inspirational young woman who is tackling the problem head-on, raising money the best way she knows how, that is, on the back of a horse. Twenty-two-year-old Sally Conway, born and bred in my home town of Taroom, has just tackled the longest and toughest horserace in the world, the Mongol Derby. Sally's quest is about starting conversations, changing attitudes and getting treatment and tools for people in rural Australia.

There is nothing else in the world like the Mongol Derby, riding semi-wild Mongolian horses. Changing horses every 40 kilometres, riders spend up to 14 hours a day in the saddle. If they do not reach their stations at night, they camp out with their horses, facing the elements and wild animals. It is impossible to train for the event. There are mountains, river crossings, wetlands, plains, sand dunes and feral dogs. The weather is extreme—anything from 40-degree heat without a breath of wind to arctic winds and sleeting snow. In Sally's words, if that sounds tough it is nothing compared to what thousands of rural men and women are battling with their mental health every day.

To survive the race, riders need skill, confidence, grit and determination, all of which Sally has in abundance. Arriving at station 18, in the lead, Sally suffered a severe dehydration event and was forced to make the decision to continue or lose her life. She sought medical attention and spent many days in hospital recovering, before rejoining the ride to complete the challenge. Sally's campaign, Ride with me—ride for Lee, aims to change the attitude towards mental health in Australia. All moneys raised go to the Royal Flying Doctor and the Rogue and Rouge Foundation. Well done, Sally Conway—a fantastic young Australian.

Greenslopes Electorate, Community

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (7.28 pm): It is lovely to be here in Townsville. The acknowledgement of country was a great way to start the parliament today. For me it was very nice to meet Ashley Saltner Jr, because I went to school and played Rugby League with his father and his uncle.

An honourable member: You are a young man.

Mr KELLY: I am a young man. It does not surprise me that Ashley Jnr is giving back to his community and supporting not only his culture but also young people who have disengaged from schools, all as a volunteer. This was a great community to grow up in the 1980s and it is still a great community. Through schools such as Magnetic Island State School—the students from that school were in the gallery today—and Ignatius Park College, I learnt the importance of community.

Something that I have committed to in my electorate of Greenslopes is to build community. You do not build community on your own; you look for people and organisations to work with. I have found that many people and organisations want to help to build our community. I have found some interesting allies in building community in Greenslopes and they do it without saying so much as a word. Of course, I am talking about the pets that some people have that become the property of the entire community.

Every week Sydney Dyson brought his dog, Mate, to the start of the Stones Corner parkrun. People would gather around the little dog. Later in the day, Sydney and Mate would sell raffle tickets to raise money for the Amputees and Families Support Group in Stones Corner. My nextdoor neighbours, John and Nesha, have a cat called Storm. Every student at the Greenslopes State School knew Storm. He brought our community together. Little Chopper belonged to Geoff Renowden, who is a dedicated volunteer at the Greenslopes Bowls Club. Chopper was a great dog and a great friend to many people in the community. Everybody knew Chopper, everybody knew Storm and everybody knew Mate.

It is my sad duty to report to the House that recently those three animals passed from our community. We are all very sad about that. We know how important pets are to individuals, but some pets become the property of the entire community and they bring us together in ways that perhaps humans cannot. There is a happy ending, of course: Syd now has a new friend to help him raise money for the Amputees and Families Support Group, Matai or, as I like to call him, 'matey'. Matai is a good friend and Syd is on the road to recovery.

The House adjourned at 7.31 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Andrew, Bailey, Bates, Batt, Bennett, Berkman, Bleijie, Bolton, Boothman, Boyce, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Costigan, 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, Simpson, Sorensen, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Trad, Watts, Weir, Whiting, Wilson