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FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SIXTH PARLIAMENT

Wednesday, 16 October 2019

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WEDNESDAY, 16 OCTOBER 2019



The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

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

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

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

School Group Tour



Mr SPEAKER: I wish to advise honourable members that we will be visited in the gallery this morning by students and teachers from Nerang State School in the electorate of Gaven.

SPEAKER'S RULING

Conduct in Chamber



Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, on 5 September 2019 I received correspondence from the Deputy Premier regarding the conduct of the member for Kawana at the sitting of the House in Townsville on 3 September 2019 during a division on the second reading of the Personalised Transport Ombudsman Bill. The Deputy Premier alleged that the member for Kawana made a number of offensive, derogatory and misogynistic comments about the Deputy Premier which were unbecoming and not fitting of the institution of the parliament. The Deputy Premier cited standing order 234, members' ethics committee report No. 41 and the Code of Ethical Standards about the standards expected of a member of parliament.

Because the comments were made during a division, they were not recorded in *Hansard* and the Deputy Premier could only relay her recollection of the comments. The Chief Hansard Reporter was after instruction able to compile a transcript of commentary made from the ambient microphones for my consideration. The transcript does confirm the comments recollected by the Deputy Premier. However, the transcript also reveals that there was considerable banter by a number of members from both sides during the division, of which the member for Kawana's comments formed but a part.

I wish to make a few matters clear to all members. Firstly, the conduct of members in divisions should be no less than the conduct when debate is occurring. I know that at times divisions may feel somewhat routine. The House is required to be in order at all times, whether or not the bells are ringing and whether or not counting is in progress. Speakers can deal with issues of order immediately after the division is complete by asking for withdrawals or disciplining members.

Secondly, a member who feels aggrieved or personally offended should raise the matter at the time to allow the Speaker to deal with the issue in accordance with standing order 234 or another appropriate standing order. Those matters of order should be dealt with in the House at the time and not be escalated to the Ethics Committee, which should be dealing with much more serious matters.

Thirdly, if a member feels that a personal reflection has been made and takes objection at the time, the Speaker will ask the offending member to withdraw. Whether something is a personal reflection is subjective to the member complaining. There is no debate on that issue.

I will not be referring this matter to the Ethics Committee. However, I will be including consideration of matters exactly like this in respect of the general review of rules relating to conduct and language that I have committed to take to the Committee of the Legislative Assembly.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

Register of Members' Interests, Complaint



Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have been advised by the registrar of interests that a complaint by the Leader of the House about the member for Broadwater's registration of interest was received in accordance with schedule 2, section 14 of the standing rules and orders. A complaint in accordance with this section is required to be forwarded to the Ethics Committee by the registrar. Given the current sitting schedule and the risk that the matter may be raised in the House, it is appropriate that the House be formally advised. I draw to the attention of members of the House that standing order 271 now applies to this matter.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS



Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I wish to acknowledge the presence in the gallery this morning of a delegation from the Saitama Prefectural Assembly in Japan. The ten-member delegation is led by the assembly Speaker, Mr Takayoshi Kamio. The relationship between Queensland and Japan is a warm and enduring one, and the relationship between Queensland and our sister state of Saitama is characteristic of the goodwill that our two jurisdictions share. On behalf of the Queensland parliament, I warmly welcome Speaker Kamio and his delegation to Queensland's Parliament House.

PETITION

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

Russell Island to Pimpama Island, Cable Ferry

From 366 petitioners, requesting the House to support the development of a vehicular cable ferry link between Rocky Point on Russell Island and Little Rocky Point North, Woongoolba on Pimpama Island [\[1836\]](#).

Petition received.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Premier's Export Awards



Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.35 am): Trade means jobs—it is that simple—and Queensland is doing record amounts of trade. In the year to August, our merchandise exports grew another \$10 billion to \$87.4 billion, which is more than New South Wales and Victoria combined. However, those numbers tell only part of the story.

Last week I was delighted to present the Premier's Export Awards. There were a record 90 nominees. Winners included Gold Coast pilot Chris Ryan. Chris wanted to learn how to fly a helicopter but discovered that there were no simulators, so he invented one. In the past year he has sold 35 of them to the US Army and the US Navy, and is rapidly outgrowing his Gold Coast factory. How about Charters Towers farmers Rob and Krista Watkins? Sick of wasting their ladyfinger bananas, they invented banana flour and the world's first banana-peeling machine. They sell 150,000 tonnes of that product to buyers all over the world and are branching out to more products and other locations. Fifth-generation company Trisco Foods started life as Tristrums soft drinks and now exports specialised food and health products all over the world.

Those are just a few of our home-grown success stories and Queensland has 7,300 more just like them. That is how many goods-exporting companies there are in Queensland. I am particularly proud to say that 40 per cent of them are based in regional Queensland. We have 12 trade commissioners and 16 offices around the world, all focused on turning local businesses into global ones.

I congratulate all of this year's finalists and winners. I look forward to hearing about more success for Queensland companies when they compete in the national awards to be held in December.

Capricorn Highway, Upgrade




Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.37 am): Motorists in Central Queensland will be delighted to hear the news that this month work will begin on another major road upgrade. Crews are now busy preparing to move on site to start duplicating the Capricorn Highway. I see that the member for Rocky is very happy about that.

Ms Jones: High five!

Ms PALASZCZUK: He is a bit too far away to do a high five. This is a \$75 million jointly funded project that will widen more than five kilometres of the Capricorn Highway from two to four lanes. Intersections will be redesigned to cut down on congestion and make travel times shorter. That will improve safety for the 18,000 motorists who drive between Rockhampton and Gracemere every day. We all know how important that road is, especially given the evacuation of Gracemere due to the bushfires. Importantly, the upgrade also means 180 more construction jobs for the region, which adds to more than 400 jobs being supported by the \$157 million jointly funded Rockhampton Northern Access Upgrade project now underway on the Bruce Highway.

Of course, that is not all. There is a roads construction boom happening in Rocky right now, because my government is committed to creating a pipeline of investment. We are also advancing planning for the \$1 billion Rockhampton Ring Road. Funding is locked in to duplicate a part of the Rockhampton-Yeppoon Road. I know that the Minister for Main Roads will have more to say about those and other significant regional road projects over the next fortnight.


Apprentices and Trainees; Skills Strategy

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.39 am): There is no better place than Queensland to get an apprenticeship. This year alone we welcomed more than 37,500 new apprentices to join our 60,000 flock of budding students willing to learn new trades. We have some outstanding apprentices and trainees, and tonight there is a special reception for them. They include Aman Meles, winner of QTA Trainee of the Year and Equity VET student, and Ellie Farrington, winner of QTA Apprentice of the Year. Congratulations to them.

Queensland is leading the nation with more than half the number of school based apprentices and trainees. We are not only boosting numbers, we are helping to ease the cost burden too with our free TAFE and free apprenticeship initiatives. We also have vocational education and training as a great choice for secondary school students, leading to strong employment opportunities and improved earning potential in a wide variety of occupations. VET provides the important link between theoretical learning and on-the-job training. Of the almost one million new jobs to be created by 2022, about half will require a VET qualification. It is one of my government's main priorities.


We are investing nearly \$1 billion through our Skills Strategy to address current skill shortages, new skills for existing jobs and emerging opportunities. That is to help individuals get jobs, keep jobs and improve their jobs. My government is working to give more young people every opportunity in life, no matter what educational pathway they choose.

Bluey

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.40 am): A big congratulations is in order for a little Queensland animation company that created a cartoon of a loveable blue heeler from Brisbane that is now loved and watched by families in lounge rooms all around the globe. Logie award-winning animated series *Bluey* is written, animated and post produced in Brisbane by the Ludo Studio and has now added to its international success with an Emmy nomination. It is in the final four in the kids preschool section of the International Emmy Kids Awards with winners revealed in March next year.

The show has had more than 100 million views alone on ABC TV plus iView in Australia. Earlier this year they signed a distribution deal between the BBC and Disney to take *Bluey* globally, which started last month. The success of *Bluey* is made possible by the 40-plus people who work on this series out of the Brisbane studio. I want to congratulate them all on creating a show that is now loved by so many. My nieces make me watch it as well. Through Screen Queensland, my government is proud to back *Bluey* because we are backing Queensland jobs made possible from yet another homegrown, locally based Queensland success story.

China, Trade Mission

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (9.42 am): Last night the IMF released its World Economic Outlook. The IMF slashed its forecast of Australia's economic growth to just 1.7 per cent for 2019, down from a forecast of 2.8 per cent a year ago. The IMF expects Australia's jobless rate to remain above five per cent.

We know the global economy is weakening. Australia's major trading partners, including China, have seen their growth forecasts slashed, while global trade growth has fallen to one per cent. That is why it is critical that we maintain strong and constructive relationships with our trading partners. Trade is important to Queensland because we are an outward-looking, export focused state.

The Palaszczuk government recognises the vital role that foreign investment plays to our state's economic growth and employment, especially in our regions. China is our largest trading partner—the value of our exports to China is nearly as great as our next three largest trading partners combined—and those exports to China grew by over 24 per cent in the last year. Those exports translate to skilled jobs across Queensland in traditional and emerging industries.

That is why I was honoured to represent the Premier on a trade mission to China last month to commemorate the 30th anniversary of Queensland's sister-state relationship with Shanghai. This longstanding agreement has encouraged closer ties in education, science, technology and the arts. China's growing middle class represents a rich source of inbound tourism for Queensland and is an important part of the Palaszczuk government's long-term plan to grow our state's tourism industry.

While in Shanghai I witnessed the signing of a partnership between Tourism and Events Queensland and Alipay—the world's largest online payment platform, and a part of the Alibaba group. When Chinese tourists visit Queensland they want the convenience and confidence of using the Alipay app on their phones without having to worry about cards or currency. After all, there are more than 900 million unique users on Alipay—it is China's payment method of choice. This partnership will make that process easier for even more businesses on top of the over 400 that have already signed up to Alipay—most of them in tourism hotspots like Cairns and the Gold Coast.

While all economies around the world are dealing with the challenges of an ageing population, the scale of that issue in China is extraordinary. By the middle of this century, the number of over 65s in China will top 400 million people—16 times Australia's current population. Queensland company Bolton Clarke is at the forefront of addressing this issue. With the assistance of Trade and Investment Queensland, Bolton Clarke has signed a joint venture agreement with Chinese venture capitalists Yango Group to develop residential aged-care facilities in China, and in time to undertake staff training for those facilities here in Queensland.

Queensland is also facilitating inbound investment in China, through the establishment of the Queensland Investment Corporation Ping An China Corporate Bond Fund. This is a great example of Queensland taking the lead globally in the financial services industry. The fund aims to give global investors the opportunity to participate in the growth of the Chinese economy by investing in China's bond market—the second largest in the world.

Our relationship with Shanghai has deep cultural roots as well. Our 30-year relationship was pioneered by Queenslanders like Mike Ahern and Tom Burns, who is much admired and revered in Shanghai. Together with members of a parliamentary delegation comprising yourself, Mr Speaker, and the members for Hinchinbrook, Mackay, Gladstone, Gympie, Kawana and Kurwongbah, it was a pleasure to attend a performance of the Queensland Youth Orchestra and witness the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the QYO and the Shanghai Young Philharmonic Orchestra.

The QYO performed at an Australian owned restaurant overlooking the world famous Bund. I put on record my personal thanks to Michelle Garnaut for her hospitality extended to all Queenslanders at M on the Bund. The Palaszczuk Labor government will ensure that we maintain very strong relationships with our major trading partners, including China, so that Queenslanders can continue to enjoy the mutual benefits of a strong trading partnership.

Air New Zealand




Hon. KJ JONES (Cooper—ALP) (Minister for Innovation and Tourism Industry Development and Minister for Cross River Rail) (9.46 am): Following on from the Deputy Premier, I point out that we are growing our relationship with not just China. Today I can announce that the Palaszczuk government has secured a new deal with Air New Zealand that will see more Kiwi tourists flying direct to Queensland. As part of this latest airline contract, 21,000 extra tourists will touch down on the Gold Coast over the next two years, generating \$28.7 million for the local economy. Some 9,000 extra tourists will touch down on the Sunshine Coast over the next three years, generating \$11 million for the local economy.

I can also confirm that from April 2020 Air New Zealand will fly a new fleet of aircraft into Cairns more frequently than ever before. I knew you would like that news, Mr Speaker. This will open up the market to more American tourists and improve the experience for Kiwi visitors, encouraging more

New Zealanders to choose to fly directly into Cairns. This creates a vital link for thousands of American tourists who already fly with Air New Zealand to now have more of an opportunity to stop in Cairns on their way home.

When it comes to new flights, the Palaszczuk government has the runs on the board. We have already restored the \$188 million cut to Tourist and Events Queensland. The first thing our government did after being elected was to increase funding for new direct flights to Queensland. This is paying off. Since 2015 we have secured 2.4 million extra airline seats worth around \$1.8 billion to Queensland. We will continue to invest in this sector to create tourism jobs and build trade links.

Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day; Chroming


 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (9.48 am): I want to thank you, Mr Speaker, for lighting up the House last night in honour of Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day. It was a kind gesture that I know meant the world to parents who have had to deal with the pain of losing their baby whether through miscarriage, stillbirth or newborn death—so thank you again, Mr Speaker. Thank you to Vicki Wilson, Emma Holmes and Aleece Thompson from Angel Gowns Australia for meeting with me recently and sharing your stories. Also thank you to Samantha Payne of the Pink Elephants Support Network. In fact, to all the brave women and families who shared their stories yesterday, please know that you are in our thoughts.

I want to address the issue of inhalant abuse—sometimes called ‘chroming’. We have all heard the devastating stories recently of mostly young people using regular household products to get high and ending up severely injured. Chroming is a serious issue affecting some of the most vulnerable people in our community and, heartbreakingly, it disproportionately affects young people. Last financial year, 98 people were admitted a total of 141 times to our hospitals due to volatile solvent misuse. While this might be a very small percentage of the drug related presentations in our hospitals, it remains worrying. Sadly, of those 98 patients, 45 were aged between 10 and 19, and a further 27 were aged under 29.

It is important that manufacturers who know their products have a high risk of being misused change their formulas where they can. Unilever, to their credit, contacted me recently and acknowledged that one of their aerosol deodorant products is being misused by young people for the practice of chroming. I very much welcome their cooperation. I have asked Queensland’s Chief Health Officer, Dr Jeannette Young, to convene a round table of industry, retailers, and community based services and clinicians to discuss potential responses. I have asked Unilever to participate in that round table. Inhalant abuse is a complex social problem requiring support from government, industry and the community based sector. Just like with petrol reformulation, it may be possible for manufacturers to change their products to make them less intoxicating. Most importantly, we need to support these young people.

Every year the Palaszczuk government invests almost \$112 million into drug and alcohol treatment services for Queenslanders. Queensland Health’s specialist youth statewide support service, Dovetail, has developed and promotes a range of inhalant resources including fact sheets on effective responses and a retailers’ guide to help manage access to inhalants. Dovetail provides training and assistance to workforces, communities, service providers and other groups. This year they have run training workshops for shopping centre security and retailers at Chermside and Helensvale Westfields, as well as training staff from residential care services, youth justice, child safety and staff from emergency departments on how they can best respond to patients who have used inhalants. In the 10 years that Dovetail has operated, they have assisted six communities to develop action plans to better respond to inhalant use. I look forward to hearing the outcomes of the Chief Health Officer’s round table.

African Swine Fever

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries) (9.51 am): African swine fever is a serious disease impacting pork production worldwide. Although there are no human health risks, pigs themselves are vulnerable with no vaccine and no cure. The outbreak has seen 25 per cent of pig numbers worldwide wiped out. Australia is free of African swine fever and, with good biosecurity at the border, it is hoped that Australia will continue to escape this disease.

The greatest risk of introduction is from people illegally bringing pork or pork products into Australia from overseas and these being fed to or eaten by pigs. The announcement yesterday that the proportion of pork seized at Australian airports, including at Brisbane Airport, contaminated with African


swine fever fragments has increased from 15 per cent in February this year to 48 per cent in September is additional cause for concern. I welcome the Commonwealth government putting a detector dog at Darwin, as ports and airports are the front line of defence against this disease.

Today I have arranged an African swine fever awareness and action forum to be held with representatives of the Queensland pork industry to identify key action areas to ensure Queensland is well positioned to prevent and respond to this threat and to ensure a continued coordinated effort from government and industry. If African swine fever or any other exotic disease makes it across the border, Biosecurity Queensland will actively work with industry, other states and the Commonwealth on the response.

The best way to protect our industry is to ensure African swine fever does not make it through the border. I encourage all Queenslanders to make sure they are not bringing anything back, or ordering from overseas, any product that could constitute a risk. Never feed swill to pigs. Not only is it unlawful; but the biosecurity risks place multiple industries in danger. Pig owners must be registered as a biosecurity entity, and I recommend that they check the DAF website to ensure their registration details are up to date.

Queenslanders, our pork is safe to eat, and by putting pork on your fork we are supporting jobs and our farming sector. Make sure for your next shopping trip Queensland pork is on your shopping list.

Safe Work Month

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations) (9.54 am): October is Safe Work Month—a time to shine a spotlight on safety and wellbeing in the workplace, and I encourage Queenslanders to get involved. I also acknowledge national Dyslexia Awareness Day today.

One of the highlights of the month is our Safe Work and Return to Work Awards, held on Wednesday, 9 October in Brisbane. I was incredibly impressed by all finalists and the contribution they have made to the health and safety of their workplaces. The stories and triumphs of the finalists, particularly those who have been injured at work, remind us all that work safety should never be compromised because everyone has the right to a safe workplace.

Mackay's Jordan Williams is an undisputed champion of rehabilitation and return to work, taking out one of the injured worker achievement awards. I know that the member for Mackay was particularly pleased to see that. While he was repairing a conveyor, Jordan suffered horrendous injuries and was told he would never walk again. Jordan refused to accept this outcome, overcoming setbacks and endless rehabilitation. Sadly, Jordan could not return to work as a boilermaker but, with the support of his employer, he is now training to become a draftsman. It was an incredibly emotional moment when he walked up on stage to accept his award.

Safe Work Month kicked off two weeks ago with a community breakfast in King George Square which I was pleased to host with our safety ambassadors—the wonderful Libby Trickett and the ever vivacious Shane Webcke.

Honourable members interjected.

Ms GRACE: He is! We also held a Mental Health Forum on 10 October at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre at South Brisbane. Also, the Injury Prevention and Return to Work Conference is being held today in Brisbane.

Honourable members interjected.


Ms GRACE: I think he would love me saying that, to be honest with you. Breakfast forums are taking place in nine regional centres and our safety advocates are also hard at work speaking to workers at nearly 100 sites across Queensland.

I was also pleased to join Minister Anthony Lynham and the Collinsville and Scottville communities on Sunday at the Collinsville Miners Memorial Day. I believe that the member for Whitsunday was there as well. This year marks the 65th anniversary of the tragic mining accident in 1954.

This government will continue to work hard to ensure every worker goes home to their loved ones at the end of the day, including workers on our farms and rural properties who are required to use quad bikes as part of their jobs. The Palaszczuk government is leading the nation in responding to the issue of quad bike deaths and injuries through a much broader, comprehensive strategy including the launch of our 'Ride ready' website and an ongoing safety awareness campaign, with new regulations due for public consultation in early 2020.

I thank the quad bike safety advocates Jodie and Mario Cocco from Atherton, whose son Domenic suffered life-threatening injuries in a quad bike accident, for sharing their story. I would also like to acknowledge our other safety advocates: Julie and Don Sager, Debbie and Dan Kennedy, Lee Garrels, Bill Martin, Jed Millen, Gavan McGuane and Garry Nichols. It does not matter where you work—in the city or on the land, in an office or at a construction site, in a factory or in hospitality: workplace safety should never be compromised.

Correctional Centres


 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services) (9.57 am): The vast majority of Queenslanders will never set foot inside a prison—and that is a good thing. There is one important thing about our correctional centre network everyone should know. Our prisons are powering regional economies right across the state. Two weeks ago I visited the Capricornia Correctional Centre at Rockhampton. It is undergoing a \$241 million expansion. Everywhere I looked there were cranes and tradies going about their work. Rockhampton businesses are benefiting big time.

It is not just the construction jobs and the economic stimulus for local suppliers that is making a difference. I was also in Rockhampton to help kick along a recruitment drive by Queensland Corrective Services. This financial year Queensland Corrective Services is looking to employ hundreds of new staff. This means more jobs, more careers and more opportunities for Queenslanders. With correctional centres based in Atherton, Townsville, Rockhampton, Ipswich, the Lockyer Valley, the Scenic Rim and the Gold Coast hinterland, all areas of the state will benefit.

Here is a snapshot. Across Queensland, Queensland Corrective Services generates significant economic benefits for local communities by investing in important infrastructure projects. Queensland Corrective Services employs more than 5,000 staff and operates 11 high-security and six low-security prisons and 13 work camps across the state. It continues to be an economic powerhouse for regional Queensland with not only the \$241 million expansion of the Capricornia Correctional Centre but also the planned \$618 million construction of stage 2 of the Southern Queensland Correctional Precinct in the Lockyer Valley, which is to be completed in 2023.

Queensland Corrective Services supports local jobs and businesses by using local, regional and statewide contracted suppliers for the provision of food services and other services in correctional centres. In 2019-20 external services investment is estimated at \$91 million. This supports the Queensland economy. Queensland Corrective Services not only makes Queensland a safer place; it also makes Queensland a more prosperous place.

Coalmine Workers, Health and Safety; Collinsville Miners Memorial Day

 **Hon. AJ LYNHAM** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy) (10.00 am): I am pleased to advise the House that the Palaszczuk government continues to drive measures to protect the health and safety of our mine workers. Expressions of interest are to be called next month for expert providers to deliver a health service on wheels. This service will provide vital medical checks to coalmine workers throughout regional Queensland. This mobile unit will be equipped, staffed and on the road in regional communities by late next year. This is about providing an important service to our thousands of current and retired mine workers where they live and work. This is just another measure in this government's suite of reforms to better prevent and detect mine lung dust diseases, including pneumoconiosis.

This year's budget provides \$1.21 million over two years for a mobile screening service. This comes on top of the nearly \$25 million committed in 2017 to black lung health and safety reforms. After three years of reforms under this government, Queensland coalmine workers now receive free respiratory health checks when they start in the industry, when they leave and while they are working. Free checks are also available for retired or former coalmine workers, and more than 100 retired workers have applied for this service to date. All doctors and radiologists who offer health services receive specialist training and are registered, as are the X-ray imaging clinics.

More broadly, under this government Queensland has set in place the toughest mining health and safety laws in the world. We gave extra powers to the mine safety regulator to issue fines without going to court for mine safety and health breaches; we increased maximum court penalties to \$4 million; we have legislation currently before parliament to establish a new independent resources safety and health regulator; and a safety reset has seen tens of thousands of mine and quarry workers and employers statewide attend safety reset sessions. Recruitment is underway for more mines inspectors and another chief inspector. We continue to work with industry, companies and mine workers' representatives on further reforms, including adding industrial manslaughter as an offence.

The importance of measures like these was again driven home over the weekend. As the minister said, I attended the annual Collinsville Miners Memorial Day with the Minister for Industrial Relations and the member for Whitsunday. With other community and industry members we remembered the nearly 1,500 miners who have lost their lives since industrial mining began in Queensland. Twenty-six of those lost mine workers were from the Collinsville and Scottville region. This year this region commemorated 100 years of industrial mining. That is a century of contributing to the prosperity of Queenslanders past and present. I pay tribute here in this House today to past generations of Queensland miners. I commit to doing everything in my power to protect the 1,000 Collinsville coal workers who are following in their footsteps today.

Regional Queensland, The Arts



Hon. LM ENOCH (Alger—ALP) (Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for the Arts) (10.04 am): The Palaszczuk government is ensuring Queenslanders have access to vibrant arts and cultural experiences no matter where they live in our great state. The North Australia Festival of the Arts, hosted in Townsville in July this year, was an incredible example of exciting arts events taking place in regional Queensland. The Palaszczuk government's \$200,000 investment in the festival for this year and next year demonstrates our commitment to bringing the arts to Queenslanders right across the state.

We are also redefining support for the arts. In its first year of operation the new Regional Arts Services Network continues to go from strength to strength. Our government is investing \$6.5 million over four years to establish local arts service providers in eight regions across Queensland, offering a new approach to delivering regional arts and cultural initiatives while also boosting local jobs. The eight local arts service providers are run by local organisations to promote artistic development and support social and economic outcomes in each region.

In the past year we have seen arts providers working collaboratively with local councils to maximise benefits across various regions. For example, synchronised art trails are being created that tell the stories of their region through water tower murals, painted silos and other public art commissions. One of these arts trails, called Trailblazing the West, is transforming water tanks into public art in nine locations across Western Queensland, including Mount Isa, Charleville and Cunnamulla. These trails will do great things to promote and increase tourism, supporting local jobs and local economic investment. That is the great contribution the arts can make in regional Queensland.

We are also supporting job-generating infrastructure projects, including a new \$150 million theatre to be constructed at the Queensland Performing Arts Centre here in Brisbane that will deliver a new world-class facility for our state. We are also investing in the refurbishment of the Centre of Contemporary Arts in Queensland. In consultation with the local arts community and traditional owners, the venue will feature a redesign of the building's façade and entry to reflect the building's focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander performing arts. The Palaszczuk government recognises that our local communities know their regions best, and that is why it is vital we have programs that promote the role and value of regional arts and cultures as key drivers of inclusive and strong communities.

Bushfires, Southern Queensland



Hon. CJ O'ROURKE (Mundingburra—ALP) (Minister for Communities and Minister for Disability Services and Seniors) (10.06 am): Queensland continues to face the dangers of devastating bushfires that have threatened communities across the state for more than a month. Just last week we saw bushfires once again threaten southern Queensland communities, forcing more evacuations and sadly destroying a home in Laidley. The devastating blaze that burnt so close to dozens of homes in Laidley was fast moving, unpredictable and unprecedented. Sadly, fires like this are likely to arise again with a hot and dry summer predicted ahead. I must commend the efforts of firefighters not just in Laidley but right across the state. Thanks to these efforts dozens of homes have been saved from the flames. The Queensland government will support communities as they recover from these devastating blazes, just as we did when fire tore through communities in the Scenic Rim, Southern Downs and Sunshine Coast last month.

Since the southern Queensland fires started in early September we have received more than 4,240 applications for financial assistance from bushfire affected residents, including 3,823 applications for emergency hardship assistance. To date almost \$1.5 million in financial assistance has been provided to bushfire affected Queenslanders, benefiting nearly 8,000 people. Our Community Recovery hotline has received close to 1,200 calls for assistance since the bushfires began, providing support with grant applications and information for bushfire affected Queenslanders about the services and supports they need.

Our support on the ground continues. We still have a few ready reserves on the ground in bushfire affected areas, and outreach activities will continue to be available to people seeking assistance. Uninsured low-income earners affected by the bushfires can still apply for financial assistance to contribute to the repair and rebuild of their homes on the Community Recovery website or by phoning the Community Recovery hotline. Not-for-profit organisations can also still apply for disaster assistance and essential working capital loans of up to \$100,000 under joint Commonwealth-state funding arrangements.

The generosity of Queenslanders cannot be understated either: St Vincent de Paul has received approximately \$113,000 via their disaster appeals; the Salvation Army has received more than \$24,000 in public donations; Givit has received donations of more than \$81,000 and more than 11,400 donated items; and Queenslanders can also donate to the Queensland Fires 2019 appeal on the Givit website.

We face a long, challenging disaster season ahead in which bushfires, severe storms and cyclones may threaten our communities. The Queensland government will be ready to respond, help communities recover and build their resilience wherever and whenever disaster strikes.

Road Infrastructure



Hon. MC BAILEY (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (10.10 am): I am pleased to follow the Premier's statement made in the House earlier today about the start of duplication works on the Capricorn Highway from Rockhampton to Gracemere. There is a great roads construction boom happening in Rockhampton right now because our government, which is strongly supported by the member for Rockhampton, is committed to creating a pipeline of investment and Central Queensland jobs. Construction businesses have opened new offices in Rockhampton because they know that there is plenty of road work around.

One of those businesses told the Rockhampton *Bulletin* last month that Central Queensland was enjoying a purple patch of infrastructure investment. Those businesses are moving to Rockhampton because they know that there is more work coming in the next few years with the Rockhampton Ring Road project and upgrades on the Rockhampton-Yeppoon road after strong representations from our member for Keppel.

Central Queensland is not alone in enjoying this boom. Projects with combined values of almost \$1 billion are driving a construction jobs boom in Cairns and Far North Queensland. Contracts are signed for a major Bruce Highway upgrade between Gordonvale and Edmonton that will start early next year—something, Mr Speaker, that I know you are very supportive of and interested in. The contract to design and build the jointly funded \$481 million project was recently awarded to John Holland Seymour Whyte AECOM Group, otherwise known as the HSA Group. The HSA Group will oversee the duplication of a 10½ kilometre stretch of the Bruce Highway and the relocation of a 4.7 kilometre section of the North Coast rail line. Importantly, this project will support more than 460 Far North Queensland construction jobs.

It joins two other major road upgrades currently underway in the Cairns region, including the \$152 million Smithfield bypass, which the member for Barron River advocated very strongly for, and the \$104 million Bruce Highway upgrade through Cairns's southern suburbs, which is strongly supported by the member for Cairns. The \$127 million Cairns Shipping Development Project is also a major employer. Massive half a billion dollar regional road projects like the Haughton River flood plain upgrade on the Bruce Highway south of Townsville and stage 1 of the Mackay Ring Road—the largest infrastructure project in that region's history—are doing the heavy lifting in our North Queensland economy as well as improving road safety.

The Palaszczuk Labor government is committed to investing \$23 billion in Queensland roads and transport infrastructure over the next four years—our fourth record roads and transport infrastructure commitment over five budgets. More than \$14.5 billion of that commitment will fund regional projects to drive economic growth and create more than 13,500 jobs. We will ensure that investment continues to give regional communities confidence and economic certainty well into the next decade.

ABSENCE OF MINISTER



Hon. YM D'ATH (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.13 am): I wish to advise the House that the Minister for State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning will be absent from the House for question time today. The Premier and Minister for Trade will take questions for this minister during question time.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Paradise Dam, Parliamentary Inquiry



Mrs FRECKLINGTON (Nanango—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.13 am): I give notice that I will move—

1. That the State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development Committee investigate the Paradise Dam's design, construction and operation; and the Palaszczuk government's decision to lower the dam wall by five metres.
2. The committee should consider:
 - (a) the design of the dam and whether it was appropriate;
 - (b) how the dam was constructed including under a competitive alliance contract, the impact of Walter Construction Group going into receivership halfway through and the use of roller compacted concrete;
 - (c) how the dam has been operated;
 - (d) how the permanent reduction in the capacity of the dam will impact the region's water security and agricultural production and the flow-on effects to the regional economy and jobs;
 - (e) why the Palaszczuk government has decided to lower the dam by five metres, releasing 105,000 megalitres of water in just 10 weeks; and
 - (f) whether a claim could be made against those who built the dam or under Sunwater's insurance arrangements.
3. In conducting the hearing, the committee is asked to:
 - (a) conduct hearings in the Wide Bay region; and
 - (b) order those involved in the design and construction of the dam to appear at the inquiry.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr SPEAKER: Question time will conclude today at 11.14 am.

Member for Toohey



Mrs FRECKLINGTON (10.14 am): My first question is to the Premier. When the House considered the Court and Civil Legislation Amendment Bill 2017, which amended the Legal Aid Queensland Act 1997, *Hansard* recorded that the member for Toohey voted on the bill but did not disclose that his firm received payments from Legal Aid Queensland as a preferred supplier. Will the Premier tell the House if it is acceptable for the Palaszczuk government's preferred suppliers not to comply with all of their disclosure obligations, including the standing orders of this House?

Mrs D'ATH: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. That is an extraordinarily long question and preamble, and I ask that you rule on that question.

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the House, I have heard the question. I believe it is lengthy without being one that would be ruled out of order. I ask the Premier to answer the question.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. As everyone in this House knows, the member for Toohey stood in this House and made a very comprehensive explanation yesterday. Once again, those opposite want to come in and use smear and innuendo. If they have concerns about the standing orders of this House, it is a matter to be referred to the Speaker.

Member for Toohey

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: My second question is also to the Premier. At estimates this year—

Ms Palaszczuk interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, I ask that you, like all members, cease any interjections and hear questions in silence. Members, I will not issue further warnings on that matter today. Please restart your question, Leader of the Opposition.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: My second question is to the Premier. At estimates this year, the member for Toohey directly questioned the Legal Aid CEO while his firm, Russo Lawyers, was a paid preferred supplier of legal aid, a fact the member for Toohey did not disclose at the committee hearing. Will the Premier tell the House whether the member for Toohey's failure to declare his pecuniary interest is acceptable conduct by a preferred supplier to Legal Aid Queensland and the Palaszczuk government?

Ms PALASZCZUK: The member for Toohey has made that disclosure in relation to—

Opposition members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: No, he made it in the House, Mr Speaker. He talked about it in the House. It is on his register.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Please resume your seat, Premier. Members to my left, the Premier is barely 10 seconds into her response. She is being responsive to the question asked. I have been clear about my guidance in that matter.

Ms PALASZCZUK: It is on his register. Furthermore, as was stated very clearly, he has received legal advice as well. That has been tabled.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: There is legal advice that has also been provided.

Mr Powell interjected.

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

Ms PALASZCZUK: So rude. It is so rude.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Just rude.

Mr SPEAKER: Through the chair, Premier.

Ms PALASZCZUK: They asked the question. I am trying to provide the answer and I am constantly interrupted—constantly. They do not care about the answer.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Premier, you have the call.

Ms PALASZCZUK: As was stated very clearly, the Attorney-General makes the decisions about the funding. Making decisions around funding has nothing to do with the committee.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

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

Rookwood Weir

Mr O'ROURKE: My question is of the Premier and Minister for Trade. Will the Premier update the House on what funding has flowed from the federal government regarding water infrastructure projects like Rookwood Weir?

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Before answering that question, Premier, Leader of the Opposition, I have just cautioned the Premier about speaking during questions. It does not matter whether it is a government question or an opposition question. You are warned under the standing orders. I have made myself clear. There will be silence when questions are put, members.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am more than happy to talk about this question in the House because we know how important the Rookwood Weir is for the community of Rockhampton and how there has been a constant fight with the federal government in relation to the Rookwood Weir. Let me make it very clear: this government has put our first tranche of money on the table. They have called for expressions of interest. That money is directed to SunWater and early works will commence very shortly.

How much has been deposited by the federal government for Rookwood Weir? Zero! It has been an absolute debacle by the federal government. I can remember going down to the Northern Australia meeting in Hobart where Barnaby Joyce and the then prime minister, Malcolm Turnbull, said to me, 'Premier, what we will do is we will build and operate Rookwood Weir.' I said, 'Do you really want to do that?' Then they left the room and were briefed by their Commonwealth departments. Then they said, 'No, no, no. We do not want to do that. No, no, no. We do not want to build and operate.' Finally, they have been dragged kicking and screaming to the table and not once—

Mr Lister: No-one believes that.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Well, it is true. I was there and I have witnesses.

Then the Prime Minister and I had a conversation and I said, 'Is there any appetite for any increased funding for Rookwood Weir?' Not one dollar more! We are yet to see one single dollar.

Mr Bleijie: Polling in Rockhampton must be bad.

Ms PALASZCZUK: They are good about talking up the federal government, but when it comes to delivery we get absolutely nothing. Who are they letting down? They are letting down the farmers and the irrigators of this state.

Ms Jones: Oh, he's fine.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I will back our member for Rocky any day and the member for Keppel.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Order, members! Three times, members, I have called the House to order. It did not come to order. I like the free-flowing debate, but please, I must be able to hear the speaker on her feet.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I have some good candidates coming soon to take them on.

Honourable members: Margaret Strelow.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Absolutely! They are hardworking candidates. Just watch this space. What is very apparent is the federal government's inaction when it comes to dealing with dams, water infrastructure and drought. There is a \$5 billion fund, but where is it? The farmers are crying out for it and all we see from the federal government is a lack of understanding and a lack of commitment to the people who are doing it tough in this state—seven years of drought.

(Time expired)

Member for Toohey

Mr MANDER: My question without notice is to the Premier. What action will the Premier take against the member for Toohey for not disclosing to the House that his law firm, Russo Lawyers, was a paid preferred supplier of Legal Aid Queensland, voting on a bill while he had a pecuniary interest in matters subject to debate, communicating with other members about Legal Aid without disclosing his interest and having a preferred supplier contract with the state?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Perhaps the opposition was not listening. I will say it for the member for Everton once again. The member for Toohey stood in this House and made a fulsome declaration and it has been declared on his pecuniary interest register. He has a letter from the Clerk and he has absolutely complied with that. Let me say this—and I take the fact that it is the member for Everton raising this question—when is the member for Everton going to pay back taxpayers' money for allegedly going down to Sydney with his spouse to talk about drought? When is the member for Everton—

A government member interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I take that interjection. 'I can't remember if I went to Luna Park or not.' A number of MPs including the Deputy Leader of the Opposition used taxpayers' money. They went down to Sydney with their partners—

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order under standing order 118(b), relevance. The question was with respect to the government member for Toohey, Legal Aid and preferred supplier contract lists, not what the Premier is speaking about.

Mr Bailey interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister for Transport and Main Roads, you are warned under the standing orders. Premier, I ask you to come back to the question asked, under standing order 118(b).

Ms PALASZCZUK: As I said, the member for Toohey has made a fulsome declaration. It is about time those opposite look at themselves in the mirror and provide an answer to Queenslanders as to why they have not paid back taxpayers' money.

Renewable Energy

Mr BUTCHER: My question is of the Premier and Minister for Trade. Will the Premier update the House on the government's progress towards a 50 per cent renewable energy target by 2030?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Gladstone for that question. Of course, we had the great news the other day that yet another wind farm is going to be built in Queensland under this government. That wind farm will support 150 construction jobs. It is the new Banana Range Wind Farm near Biloela, south-west of Gladstone. It will generate around 180 megawatts at capacity and will power 120,000 homes, which is great news for the region. There will be 50 turbines, but I want to talk about our policy of 50 per cent renewable energy by 2030.

I can say that under this government we have increased it and we will be at 21 per cent by 2020. That is great progress when we consider there was virtually no renewable energy construction in this state before we were elected.

Ms Trad: Because they don't believe in climate change.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Just recently I opened the Mount Emerald Wind Farm. What is even more important is that this construction—

Mr Hart: The wind wasn't blowing. No power was coming out.

Ms PALASZCZUK: We know they do not like renewable energy because there are jobs in regional Queensland. We know they do not believe in climate change: all these natural disasters are happening just because they are happening. We have David Littleproud, the federal minister for agriculture saying, 'No, we don't know about climate change. No, we don't know anything about that. We don't believe in the science.' The member for Callide does not believe in the science.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order.

Ms PALASZCZUK: When I go and meet the farmers on their land they tell me they believe in climate change. That is why we are committed to helping our farmers. An amount of \$740 million has been delivered since 2013, over the seven years of the drought, as well as an extra \$70 million from last year's budget, making sure we can help our farmers who are struggling. What do we hear from the federal government? Absolutely nothing! What do we hear from those opposite? Absolutely nothing!

A government member interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I take that interjection; they have been told to leave the land: pack up and leave their homes. Where is the caring nature there?

So far 2,620 megawatts of large-scale renewable energy projects have been delivered and around 18,000 megawatts more of large-scale renewable capacity is currently at the early stages of development. These projects represent more than \$5 billion worth of investment in Queensland, which means jobs for regional Queensland. If those opposite do not believe me, they should go and speak to the mayors in regional Queensland because they talk up their projects; they know how important they are. We are on track to deliver our 50 per cent renewable energy target by 2030 because policy gives certainty to investment.

Russo Lawyers

Mr JANETZKI: My question is to the Attorney-General. Yesterday the Premier refused to tell the House how much taxpayers' money has been paid to the member for Toohey's law firm, Russo Lawyers, by Legal Aid Queensland since he was elected in 2015. Will the Attorney now tell the House how much taxpayers' money has been paid to Russo Lawyers by Legal Aid Queensland since 2015?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. Firstly, can I correct the record for the member. The member should be correcting the record, because the Premier did not refuse to answer the question yesterday. The Premier provided—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members to my left! The Attorney-General is being responsive to the question asked.

Mrs D'ATH:—information in relation to these issues continuously for the last two days. When it comes to Legal Aid, as the member should know, I believe the member for Scenic Rim recently asked a question on notice in relation to the breakdown, the types of matters and the costs in relation to Legal Aid. That answer was given on 5 September. The question was—

Will the Attorney-General detail the total amounts paid to preferred supplier firms by Legal Aid Queensland, broken down by area of law and firm for 2012 through to 2018-19?

As the relevant minister, that answer was provided with a breakdown of all the areas of law and service types, but Legal Aid made it clear that it could not give individual breakdowns because of the amount of work required in relation to the information being sought. The only reason the opposition is able to ask these questions is that the member for Toohey—

Mr Janetzki interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Toowoomba South is warned under the standing orders.

Mrs D'ATH: The member put on his register his relationship with his law firm, the income from the firm, and Legal Aid fully disclosed the information in its annual report—all public records. In terms of these allegations of cover-up and everything else, it was so covered up that it was in the public register, in the public annual report of Legal Aid and in the member's disclosure! The member also had clarified by the Clerk that his disclosure is in accordance with the standing orders. In every parliamentary term those opposite keep slandering members on this side, making allegations and wasting resources of the Electoral Commission of Queensland in terms of the member for Keppel having to go off and prove false these allegations time and again. It is about time members of the LNP put up the evidence on which they rely.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Speaker, I rise to two points of order. The first is relevance under standing order 118(b) with respect to the question asked concerning a figure of money paid to Russo Lawyers by Legal Aid, for which the Attorney-General is responsible. The second is: if the attorney is unable to provide the answer to the House, I ask that she take the question on notice pursuant to the standing orders and come back to the House after discussing it with Legal Aid.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Kawana, I have been listening to the response from the Attorney-General. As I outlined much earlier in her contribution, I believe that she is being responsive to the question asked, even pointing to previous questions on notice. As I have heard the answer, I believe that she is making a very considerable effort to answer the question. There is no point of order.

Mrs D'ATH: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Once again, in answering their question, I refer them back to question on notice No. 1373, asked on 5 September 2019. On the point that the member for Kawana just made, I do not decide for Legal Aid Queensland their preferred suppliers. That is a decision made by Legal Aid Queensland, separate to me. Maybe the member for Kawana might have interfered with Legal Aid, but I do not.

Federal-State Funding Arrangements

Ms LUI: My question is of the Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on domestic economic conditions and the importance of state and federal financial relations in maintaining economic growth?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for Cook for the question. I know that the member for Cook is passionately interested in improving economic conditions in her community. As I reported to the House yesterday, the economic conditions in Far North Queensland have improved. It is on par with other areas of the state and has one of the lowest unemployment levels in Queensland. I commend the members for Cook, Cairns and Barron River and you, Mr Speaker, for being great local advocates for the Far North community. Of course, the member for Cook actually engages with the whole of her community. I know that when she goes to Mossman, it is Mossman in her electorate. It is not Mosman in New South Wales to sip champagne and to talk about the drought in Queensland, in Murgon, Miles or Mundubbera. The member for Cook, like every single member on this side of the House, knows that if you want to be a champion for Queensland, if you want to advocate for Queenslanders during their time of need during the drought, you have to engage with them here in Queensland.

I confess that I did have the opportunity recently to share a meal with my New South Wales Liberal counterpart in Canberra during the Board of Treasurers meeting at CFFR. At that meeting I made clear to the New South Wales Treasurer, who was heading up a renewal of the asset-recycling program, that Queensland vehemently opposes any asset-recycling scheme that the federal government resurrected. I made that abundantly clear. We did have a unity ticket in making clear to the federal government that we want more action to stimulate the Australian economy. In light of the figures out of the IMF overnight, they need to listen. I am sick and tired, as are other Treasurers, of going to the CFFR meeting and listening to the experts say that we need to do more. The RBA, the IMF today, Queenslanders and Australians are saying, 'We need to stimulate economies,' but what we have is a lot of hand-wringing and no plan from the federal government. To add insult to injury, the federal Treasurer comes to CFFR, does a lot of hand-wringing and talks about how bad the drought is, but there is not one single cent from the \$5 billion that they already allocated. It is time for more action and less talking.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Southern Downs, you are warned under the standing orders. Member for Nicklin, you are warned under the standing orders.

Lady Cilento Children's Hospital, Name Change

Ms BATES: My question without notice is to the Premier. To justify changing the name of the Lady Cilento children's hospital, Labor's health minister said that the change would improve donations, but in the last year donations decreased by more than \$2.1 million. Does the Premier finally concede that wasting taxpayers' money in changing the name of the Lady Cilento children's hospital was the wrong priority?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Mudgeeraba for the question. My understanding is that in the past a large amount of money was given to the hospital through wills—two deaths where money was bequeathed. The issue is that that has not happened since.

Dr Miles: General donations are up.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is right. My understanding is that general donations are up. Of course, the Children's Hospital appeal is coming up very shortly, Minister?

Dr Miles: That is right.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I urge everyone to give generously and continue to support our state children's hospital, our premier Queensland Children's Hospital, that is doing absolutely vital work for young people across our state. Having visited the Queensland Children's Hospital on a number of occasions, I know of the great work of its nurses and doctors. There is a school there. It is of course Queensland's premier children's hospital. Local donations are up. The Minister for Health advises me that the growth in investment in the Children's Hospital has increased. There was 50 per cent growth from 2016-17 to 2018-19. I will table that document for the House.

Tabled paper: Chart, undated, titled 'Growth in investment in children's health' [1837].

Interruption.


DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

Mr SPEAKER: Before calling the next questioner, I jumped the gun a bit earlier in acknowledging guests in the gallery. I want to acknowledge formally that we have a delegation from the Satami Prefectural Assembly in Japan with Mr Takayoshi Kamio. Thank you and welcome to Queensland Parliament House.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Resumed.

Political Donations

 **Ms PEASE:** My question is to the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice. Will the Attorney-General please provide an update on political donations and real-time disclosures in Queensland?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for Lytton for her question, because those on this side of the House understand the importance of transparency and accountability. We maintain—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mrs D'ATH: When it comes to political donations, the people of Queensland want to know where those donations are coming from, who they are being paid to and how much. They have woken up today to find out that the LNP has had to pay back over \$500,000 to developers. There was another \$500,000 pledged from developers—\$500,000 that it cannot collect now—so there is a million dollars. In fact, it has now disclosed over \$3 million on our real-time disclosure. We are very proud of our real-time disclosure system which requires disclosure within seven days. I have no less than three court decisions—the Supreme Court in March 2018 said that it must disclose, the High Court in April this year said that it must disclose and the Court of Appeal here in Queensland in September said that it must disclose.

Honourable members interjected.

Mrs D'ATH: On that same page we have the opposition criticising the member for Toohey, questioning his legal advice and saying it has its own, but it says that it received its own separate legal opinion several weeks ago. If this is such a major integrity issue—

Ms Jones: Why'd you sit on it?

Mrs D'ATH:—why did those opposite sit on it until this week? Would it be because they wanted to hide the \$3 million that was going to drop in the real-time disclosure? Was it because they did not want to be talking about their MPs going down to Luna Park—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Everton!

Mrs D'ATH:—to talk about the drought in regional Queensland, and not just them but their spouses as well, using taxpayers' dollars? They talk about transparency—taxpayers' dollars on a trip to Sydney to talk about drought in Queensland and \$3 million—yet they have the nerve to come in here and criticise members on this side because they are appropriately disclosing things on their register and they are discovering things in public annual reports. What a joke! The LNP has a lot to answer for to the people of Queensland—\$3 million. This should have been disclosed in March last year at the very least.

Honourable members interjected.

Mrs D'ATH: Why has it taken six months since the High Court decision in April—six months since the High Court decision to disclose \$3 million? It is disgusting. You should be ashamed and you have a lot to answer for.

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Broadwater and member for Gympie, I believe your interjections were designed to disrupt. I did not want to interrupt the member. Member for Broadwater and member for Gympie, you are warned under the standing orders.

Lady Cilento Children's Hospital, Name Change

Dr ROWAN: My question without notice is to the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services. The minister promised Queenslanders that changing the name of the Lady Cilento children's hospital would increase fundraising, and I ask: given that the recent annual report proves that fundraising has gone backwards since the name was changed, does the minister now admit that he got it wrong and Queensland's medical research outcomes and patient care are poorer as a result?

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

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is a point of order, members. Before hearing your point of order: members to my right, I could not discern which member it was, but I could hear three distinct voices. I have asked for silence when questions are being asked. The time to respond to the question is after the question has been asked. What is your point of order?

Mr BLEIJIE: My point of order, Mr Speaker, is with respect to your ruling just now. The member for Mundingburra is certainly one of the ones who was interjecting and speaking throughout the entirety of the question despite your earlier rulings.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, member.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have just said that I was not able to discern it. I am not going to rely on individual members to do my job for me. However, I will ask members to ensure they are silent when questions are asked. I call the—

Ms Grace: Minister for Health.

Mr SPEAKER:—Minister for Health. Member for McConnel, I ask that others not do my job for me.

Dr MILES: One does have to feel a bit sorry for the member for Moggill. He is trotted out as the understudy for the shadow minister for health when everyone knows that he is really the only one over there who knows anything about health and really should be the shadow minister for health. That is the job he wants and that is why they keep giving him the second health question of the day. It really is a bit of a set-up—a question about donations—in the week when the High Court finally made the LNP admit where its donations came from.

Let me go to the specifics of the member's question. For the benefit of the House, I outline the fact that, thanks to the fantastic work of the Children's Hospital Foundation, it hit record levels of donations last financial year and it has set a goal to increase that record again this year. That has

allowed it to invest record amounts into the services that it delivers in support of the hospital. Those opposite are picking two figures across two annual reports. First of all, the name change happened halfway through that financial year of that annual report, so there is that issue. Then there is also the issue that the year those opposite choose as the benchmark included two big bequests. I will do a lot of things to raise extra funds for the Children's Hospital Foundation, but I will not make people who have put the foundation in their will die. We are not going to make them die.

The foundation itself goes from strength to strength and I am very proud to continue to support it. I was there just last week to launch the Channel 9 telethon which raised a record amount last year and has a goal to raise even more this year, and I believe it will reach that goal thanks to the support of all Queenslanders. I hope those opposite can put their crazy campaign aside for at least one night on 16 November and, in a bipartisan way, support the children who receive services from Children's Health Queensland, support the Channel 9 telethon, post about it on your Facebook pages and make a donation, because the work of the Children's Hospital Foundation is too important for your sad, petty politics.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister for Health, I remind you to put your comments through the chair.

International Education

Mr PEGG: My question is to the Minister for Innovation and Tourism Industry Development and Minister for Cross River Rail. I am proud to represent the most multicultural community in the Queensland parliament, with many international students. Will the minister please update the House on how the federal government is failing to stand up for Queensland in this vital industry?

Ms JONES: I thank the honourable member for his question and his genuine interest in growing international education in this state. He knows from his own community that this is a sector that is now worth more than \$5 billion to the Queensland economy, and that is because when we came into government we put in a plan to grow it. It supports around 38,000 jobs across our state. What is so exciting is that it has grown by 15 per cent since we have been in office, but it is something that is benefiting and flowing right through the economy—from Cairns in the north right down to the honourable member for Stretton's electorate. In fact, it is a very vital sector of the Gold Coast as well. That is why I want to acknowledge in the parliament the great work of Meaghan Scanlon, the member for Gaven, who has been champing at the bit and taking the fight up to the federal government to get the Gold Coast treated like every other regional city in Australia when it comes to international students.

Ms Grace interjected.

Ms JONES: They do nothing; I take that interjection. What we know is that the federal government is trying to discriminate against the Gold Coast by treating it the same way as Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane, yet somehow the Gold Coast is not a region but Adelaide is. That is how the federal government and the LNP are treating it, which is a direct attack on international education on the Gold Coast. To add insult to injury—

An opposition member interjected.

Ms JONES: Does the member want a donation? Is he going to declare it?

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, could you please come back to the question, which I think you were being quite relevant in answering?

Ms JONES: To add insult to injury, last week we heard the federal tourism minister—and he is a fair enough decent bloke—refer to the Gold Coast as regional Queensland when it came to tourism data. He just will not treat the Gold Coast as regional Queensland when it comes to supporting the international education sector.

I support the member for Gaven in her fight. She is the only member representing the Gold Coast who is standing up for international education on the Gold Coast. Once again, we have seen a failure on all fronts—a failure to stand up for the Gold Coast, a failure to stand up for drought victims—

Mr Mander: You should see our candidate.

Ms JONES: I take that interjection from the member for Everton—

Mr Mander: You should see our candidate.

Ms JONES:—who is standing in this parliament today—

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

Ms JONES: The member for Everton has been interjecting all morning. He will not front the cameras on why he has spent so much time interstate—in Sydney—trying to talk about drought in Queensland. The member for Everton will not front the cameras to explain why the LNP went all the way to the High Court of Australia to hide its political donations. I say to all the Queenslanders in the gallery today that the LNP went to the High Court of our country to hide its donations from the people of Queensland. It is a disgrace that a major political party in our state would go to great lengths, at taxpayers' expense, to hide from those very same taxpayers its political donations.

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: Again, I ask ministers to make sure they are being responsive to the question asked and are not straying in terms of relevance.

Crime and Corruption Commission, Use of Survey Results

Mr BLEIJIE: My question without notice is to the Premier. Given the Crime and Corruption Commission made recommendations to restrict multiple voting from the same person on a government website survey in June following Labor's dodgy Lady Cilento children's hospital poll, why were the CCC recommendations not fully implemented before the aborted bunting poll?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am happy to take that on notice. I do not have the information on me at the moment. In relation to both of them, it is seeking people's opinions. It is never going to be foolproof. It is about comments. It is a tool that is used in other jurisdictions and is used by the federal government.

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, can I ask that you are taking that under standing order 113?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Yes.

Redlands, Health Services

Mr BROWN: My question is to the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services. Will the minister outline to the House how the Palaszczuk government is keeping up with demand for health services in the Redlands?

Dr MILES: I would like to thank the member for Capalaba for his question. Recently, it was great to visit Redland Hospital with the member for Capalaba, the member for Redlands and the member for Springwood and with them see firsthand the fantastic work that the staff do there in delivering world-class health services to the residents of the Redlands. We also had a chance to inspect the expansion work that we are doing at the Redland Hospital. We are investing \$1.73 million to expand the emergency department and the birthing suites.

The emergency department at Redlands is busy. Last year, it saw 54,000 people. The extra four short-stay beds, which have almost finished construction, expand the number of short-stay beds to 14. They will assist the hardworking doctors, nurses and health staff of that emergency department to see even more people faster.

Every single year the birthing suites deliver 1,800 young brand-new Queenslanders. Construction has just started to add an additional birthing suite as well as three new birthing pools, which I know the women and expectant mums of Redlands are very excited about. The midwives at the hospital are very excited. They are doing their training now in how to support water births. For the first women time will be able to have water births locally. Those who do not want to use the baths for a water birth can use them for pain relief.

This government is delivering services, particularly these birthing services that people are asking for, closer to home. It was great to meet Tinneke, her three-day-old daughter and her partner. Tinneke is from Mount Cotton. She has had babies in three different countries and was stoked with the services that she had received at Redland Hospital. In fact, she said that they were the best that she had experienced in those three countries. Tinneke was so excited about the water birthing suite that she said she might come back for a fourth. The look on dad's face suggested that maybe he was not as stoked about our investment as she was and we are. I am incredibly proud of the services that we deliver right across this state, but I am particularly proud of the work of our midwives at Redland Hospital.

Electricity Prices; Water Prices

Mr ANDREW: My question is to the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy. Pursuant to section 129(4) of the Government Owned Corporations Act 1993, can the minister advise whether national tax equivalent payments are submitted to Treasury and, if so, what is preventing these funds from being used to offset the rising cost of electricity and water?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for the question. The first thing that I can tell the member is that we have the lowest power prices on the eastern seaboard because we have public ownership. There is no doubt that the Palaszczuk Labor government is doing the right thing about electricity prices right across this state. I am happy to get back to the member with further detail about the question that he asked me.

While I am on my feet, I will talk about the benefit of having assets in public hands: the lowest power prices on the eastern seaboard, the most reliable network on the eastern seaboard and a 50 per cent transition to a renewable energy future. How wonderful it is to be here on this side.

Mr Saunders interjected.

Mr McArdle interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Pause the clock. Member for Maryborough and member for Caloundra, you are warned for quarrelling across the chamber. The minister has the call and only the minister.

Dr LYNHAM: While I am on the issue of public ownership, I will address the issue of the Callide B power station. Callide B power station was reported in the press as closing in 2028. As members are aware, power stations in this state have a nominal life of 50 years. CS Energy, as the owner of Callide B, reported that, due to the specific characteristics of this plant, the expected closure date is 2028. That is on specific technical characteristics.

Can I make it absolutely and abundantly clear that we own Callide B. We will decide when Callide B closes. We own all our power-generating assets—the 10 youngest of the fleet in Australia. We own those and we will decide when they close and how they will operate. As I said before, because we have public ownership we can have the lowest power prices on the eastern seaboard for Queensland families. As we said before, we can determine when transitional tariffs go off—in 2021. We are looking after our agricultural sector in their time of need.

Mr Hart interjected.

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

Dr LYNHAM: As I said before, we are proud of our electricity generating assets. Our network costs are coming down. We have delivered time and time again. In the last two years in a row we have been decreasing power prices, as distinct from those opposite—and I hate to mention the percentage figure again; I have forgotten it—

Government members: Forty-three.

Dr LYNHAM: Forty-three per cent from over there. For two years in a row, there are further lower power prices for the people of Queensland.

Electricity Prices

Mrs MULLEN: My question is also to the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy. Will the minister provide some further advice on the latest information regarding energy prices in Queensland and whether he is aware of any threats to lower energy prices?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for Jordan for the question. This gives me the opportunity to again rise in the House to correct some of the at best mistruths from those opposite. Yesterday the member for Burleigh had a go, with a very clumsy attempt, at turning a lowering of power prices story into the worst piece of power bill news since 2012 apparently. Let us be clear: the AER made a draft determination for five years on network prices from 1 July 2020. They proposed that prices would reduce for the average household initially by \$102 and by \$131 for a small business. This is good news for Queenslanders. In fact, everyone can have their say on the AER's draft proposal. This is another example of price reduction under the Palaszczuk Labor government.

Let us be clear: the final determination will result in lower power prices for all Queensland families. On what planet is this not good news? The biggest threat to power prices, and there is a threat to power prices in this state and in this nation, is three letters—LNP. In 2016 Campbell Newman was still arguing for privatisation of Queensland assets even after he was turfed out by the people of Queensland. Even then Labor was pushing down prices in Queensland's publicly owned electricity network.

The member for Nanango is sitting over there like a leopard with privatisation in her DNA. She cannot change her spots any more than the shark of Broadwater can hide his teeth in the LNP party room. Another esteemed expert in LNP incompetence once said 'the Liberal Party has just proved itself

incapable of dealing with the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in any sort of systemic way' and went on, 'The consequence is, without question, that we are paying higher prices for electricity and having higher emissions.' Who is this expert? Is it the head of Greenpeace? Is it GetUp!? No, it is the former prime minister, Malcolm Turnbull. He knows better than anyone that those cut from the LNP cloth are the greatest risk to power prices in this state.

Shark Control Program

Mr PERRETT: My question without notice is to the Premier. I refer the Premier to reports today that numerous Queensland beaches have already been forced to close because of shark sightings after Labor removed shark drum lines. Will the Premier stop playing politics and back the LNP's plan to keep swimmers safe and protect tourism jobs by getting drum lines back in the water now?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Gympie for that question. There has actually been a decision that we need the federal government to fix because it is a federal law. Perhaps the member for Gympie might want to consult with his federal counterpart. If we left the drum lines in there we would be breaching the law. As the minister said, it would mean that we would have to employ a vet every time a person was taking the sharks off the drum line because, let us be clear, it is not a fish that you can kiss and throw back in the water; it is a man-eating shark. Perhaps the member for Everton can pick up the phone and ring his federal counterpart to fix the law. I am at my wits' end trying to work out why the federal government will not fix the law protecting human safety and making sure we protect our beaches for tourism. Those opposite sit there and do absolutely nothing. They are weak, weak, weak.

Whilst I am on my feet, I say to the member for Gympie perhaps he might want to speak to his federal counterpart as well about why they want to build a nuclear power station in Gympie. They might also want to ask why their federal counterparts are going around the globe asking questions about nuclear power. These are two issues for the federal government.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order on 118, relevance. The question was about the important issue of public safety and shark drum lines.

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, can I ask that you come back to the question as asked. Also, I believe there may have been some unparliamentary language used in triplicate.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I withdraw. Queensland's No. 1 priority is protecting human life. I would like those opposite to also back human life and human safety by appealing to the federal government, as we have done, to make sure they change the laws. They could have had that legislation introduced into parliament this week. The failure to do it is putting at risk our tourism industry and public safety.

Whilst I am on my feet, in response to a previous question about the CCC recommendations on polls, can I add that two have been actioned and three are in progress. I am happy to outline that with further comments later.

Training

Mr STEWART: My question is to the Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development. Will the minister update the House on the Queensland government's investment to encourage more young people into training and if there are alternative approaches?

Ms FENTIMAN: I thank the member for Townsville for his question. I know what a huge supporter he is of this government's investment in TAFE and training, particularly the \$35 million redevelopment of the Pimlico TAFE campus.

The Palaszczuk government is absolutely focused on making sure young Queenslanders have the skills and training they need to fill the jobs of tomorrow. It is absolutely vital that we get more young people into training to give them the opportunity to take up a job. We are doing this through a range of fantastic initiatives: of course, free TAFE for year 12 graduates in high priority courses where industry are telling us there will be jobs; free apprenticeships and traineeships for those Queenslanders under 21—60,000 places; and, of course, we are investing in school based apprenticeships and traineeships, a fantastic way for young people to get a head start on a career whilst they are still at school.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. I apologise for interrupting, Minister. Member for Surfers Paradise, there is a time and place and I ask that you take that behaviour outside.

Ms FENTIMAN: Unfortunately the federal government seems to take a very different approach. At a time when the nation is crying out for more skilled workers, we have seen \$3 billion in cuts to TAFE and training from the Morrison government. While we lead the nation with school based apprenticeships and traineeships and initiatives to get more young people into training, they are ripping billions out of

TAFE and training. The federal minister for skills, Senator Michaelia Cash, has a new policy. She has come out from behind that white board. She has a new solution for the skills that this country needs. She wants students to leave school in year 10. That is their policy to get more young people into an apprenticeship. It feeds in to that absolutely false narrative that apprenticeships are just for those kids who cannot finish school, who are not good enough and do not want to go to university. Contrary to the LNP view, the world has moved on since the 1950s.

Young people can get a head start by starting their apprenticeship and finishing year 12. If we look at the sorts of skills that industry are telling us they need in engineering and aviation, strong numeracy and literacy skills which students get in senior school are absolutely needed for the apprenticeships and traineeships of the future. It is not just about leaving school at year 10. Scott Morrison also has a great new plan to get more skilled workers. He has hired celebrity Scott Cam from *The Block* to get us more apprentices. I am sure he is a really great bloke, but what we need is investment, not cuts in TAFE and training or a celebrity to go around and tell kids they need to leave school in year 10. We absolutely are desperate for investment in this state from the federal government. We need to reverse their cuts to TAFE and training and do what the Palaszczuk government is doing to encourage more young people into apprenticeships.

Fire Ants

Mr CRANDON: My question is to the Minister for Agricultural Industry Development. The minister's department has told my constituents that South Australia and New South Wales are no longer accepting property freedom for red imported fire ant certification, RPF-01. I table a copy of the most recent letter.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 26 September 2019, from the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries regarding loss in acceptance of property freedom for Red Imported Fire Ant (RPF-10) to South Australia [1838].

How will the minister protect the many jobs that rely on Queensland producers' ability to export their products from red imported fire ant infested areas to New South Wales and South Australia?

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Coomera, I will allow the question although it is bordering on being too lengthy a preamble.

Mr FURNER: I thank the member for the question and acknowledge his ongoing interest in red imported fire ants. Certainly most members in the House would be aware that this is a national program that is funded throughout all states and territories. It is the largest pest eradication program managed by my department, with a total joint government investment worth \$411 million over 10 years. The program involves intensive bait treatment in a staged program, moving progressively from the Lockyer Valley in the west to the Redlands in the east. Less than three years into the 10th year of the South-East Queensland fire ant eradication program, more than 150,000 hectares in the western part of the fire ant infestation have been treated multiple times to kill fire ants. The treatment season for 2019-20 has commenced and reports from landholders are that the efforts are paying off.

Mr CRANDON: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. My question is very specific.

Mr SPEAKER: Please do not repeat the question, member. Is your point of order related to relevance?

Mr CRANDON: Yes, it is on relevance. I am specifically asking how the minister will protect the many jobs that rely on Queensland producers—

Mr SPEAKER: I have asked you not to restate your question. Please resume your seat, member for Coomera. The minister has one minute and 45 seconds remaining. I believe that is ample time to provide an answer that may be satisfactory.

Mr FURNER: On this side we certainly understand the importance of jobs, not only in this sector but right across Queensland, whether it be in terms of biosecurity or protecting farmers from drought. We have had many question times but we have not had one question from the opposition about the drought. It is alarming that those members come in here and question the government about the appropriate consideration of jobs. As I have been explaining to the member, the National Red Imported Fire Ants Eradication Program is a national program that we are concentrating on. The jobs involved are very important, as is the eradication program. A new-generation, state-of-the-art remote sensing system has been developed and was trialled over South-East Queensland in August and September.

I am happy to elaborate and assist the member by providing further opportunities to explain the program and its benefits, particularly in terms of his question, should the member seek a further briefing. I know that the member has done that in the past. My understanding is that he has appreciated the

briefings provided by my office and department. Once again, I ask the member to take that opportunity to understand the breadth and the coverage of the program, as well as the success of what it is delivering in terms of protecting not only primary producers but also the people who reside in the containment areas and the areas that are being considered for the eradication of that imported pest.

Police Service, Technology

Mrs McMAHON: My question is to the Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services. Will the minister please update the House on steps taken by the Queensland Police Service to ensure that they remain at the cutting edge of police technology and recent instances where Queensland police have been called upon to show their expertise in the international arena?

Mr SPEAKER: The period for question time has expired.

MOTIONS

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders



Hon. YM D'ATH (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (11.14 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That, notwithstanding anything contained in standing and sessional orders, the Premier and Minister for Trade be permitted to immediately move a motion regarding the drought with the following time limits to apply: three minutes for all members; total debate time before question put, 30 minutes.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Future Drought Fund



Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (11.15 am): I move—

That this House calls on the Morrison government to back Queensland's drought-affected farmers and communities by immediately letting the \$5 billion Future Drought Fund flow.

I will put a clear fact on the table: 66 per cent of Queensland is currently drought declared. This is the seventh year that Queensland has gone through drought conditions and it is very clear that our farmers are doing it tough. The Queensland government is doing everything we possibly can to listen to and deliver for our farmers. We attended a national drought summit, which was very important. A lot of the stakeholders also attended, including the drought commissioners. We want to ensure that we do everything we possibly can.


The federal government has announced that it has a \$5 billion drought fund. It is important that that money gets to farmers now. I am incredibly frustrated. I wrote to the Prime Minister on 21 August. I asked for assistance in responding to the worsening drought conditions in Queensland. I asked him to accelerate the commencement of the \$5 billion Future Drought Fund from the current start date of 1 July next year.

I received a response from the Prime Minister on 16 September 2019. The Prime Minister thanked me for my letter and said that the \$3.9 billion investment in the Future Drought Fund would grow to \$5 billion over the next decade. We do not have the next decade. That \$5 billion needs to go out now. In his letter to me, the Prime Minister said that he would shortly be setting up an independent consultative committee to guide our investment. He said that that committee will undertake a public consultation process to ensure that key stakeholders and experts can have their say to make sure a coherent and consistent approach is undertaken when providing funding for drought resilience projects and to ensure that the money is well spent on priority projects.

This House calls upon the Prime Minister to release the \$5 billion now. I believe that every single member of this House should support this motion. Sixty-six per cent of Queensland is going through tough times.

I will put on the record some of the key facts in terms of what my government is doing to help Queenslanders. We know that Stanthorpe and Warwick are going through tough times. We will not let them run out of drinking water. We will pay for that drinking water. We have put our money on the table for Emu Swamp Dam. We have put our money on the table for the Rookwood Weir. Not one dollar is coming from the federal government. We are helping with freight subsidies to move fodder and water to drought impacted producers. We have \$496 million out in concessional loans. I call upon each and every member to stand proudly in this House and support my call for the release of that money.

(Time expired)

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.18 am): What an absolute joke! This shows that the Premier is under pressure. It shows that the Palaszczuk government is so extraordinarily out of touch that they have to come into this House and cover up their own incompetence. Right now, 66 per cent of the state of Queensland is in drought. Who is in government in Queensland? That would be the Palaszczuk government! What have they done for the past five years? Not one thing to help regional Queensland!


We had to call upon this incompetent minister for agriculture to get the drought committees together. An area around Kilkivan in the north-western part of the Gympie shire is screaming out to get its drought committee together. Where is the minister for agriculture? He is completely missing in action! Where is this Premier when farmers are struggling and children do not have enough water to shower before going to school? Where is the Palaszczuk government? It is missing in action!

Which governments have had to look after water for Stanthorpe? That would be the Berejiklian government in New South Wales and that would be the federal Morrison government. We have the Morrison government standing up when it comes to the drought and filling in the gaps. It is doing the heavy lifting because the Palaszczuk government is completely out of touch with regional Queensland.

What are its plans for dams in Queensland? Let us talk about the Rockwood Weir. Annastacia Palaszczuk thinks the best idea is to make it a puddle—to reduce the size of it because apparently concrete costs. That is not giving confidence to rural and regional Queensland. The Palaszczuk government is completely missing in action. They are anti regions, they are anti dams and that means they are anti jobs.

Let us remember the unemployment rate in rural and regional Queensland. Where has the Palaszczuk government been? Completely missing in action when it comes jobs, the infrastructure spend and helping out people in regional and rural Queensland. They have been missing in action. We know that they are anti regions, they are anti dams and they are anti jobs. It is only the LNP that has a plan for rural and regional Queensland.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Before I call the next speaker, it might be opportune to remind members of those who are currently on a warning. There is a fair bit of feeling in this debate. Those members on a warning are the members for Glass House, Kawana, Nanango, Miller, Toowoomba South, Nicklin, Southern Downs, Broadwater, Gympie, Everton, Caloundra, Maryborough and Burleigh.

 **Mr MADDEN** (Ipswich West—ALP) (11.21 am): I am pleased to rise to speak in support of this motion. For those who may not know, I studied horticulture and agriculture at UQ Gatton when it was known as the Queensland Agricultural College. I subsequently worked as an agronomist both in Australia and in Israel. In Israel I learnt about the importance of water and water security.

I went on to study law and bought a law practice in the small country town of Lowood where most of my constituents were farmers and graziers. Soon after I was elected to state parliament I was pleased to be appointed to serve on the Rural Debt and Drought Taskforce that was chaired by the member for Traeger. The representative from the opposition on that task force was the current opposition leader. Consequently, I have a particular interest in supporting our farmers and graziers, particularly those who are going through this seemingly endless drought.

It does not give me any satisfaction to see the Commonwealth, with all its resources, not acting on this very important issue. As Australia grapples with extended drought across this country, the coalition has been talking up its drought package. Sometimes it is \$5 billion and sometimes it is \$7 billion. My federal colleague Joel Fitzgibbon, the federal member for Hunter, said that this \$7 billion drought fund is the 'most audacious lie' he has ever heard in politics and said that very little of the \$7 billion is actually hitting the ground in drought-affected communities.


After initially refusing to provide a breakdown of the figure, the government finally provided figures to the *Guardian*. I thank Sarah Martin, chief political correspondent with the *Guardian*, for pursuing this issue. She found that most of the \$7 billion has not been spent. Spending will not begin until July 2020 and when it is spent it will be capped at \$100 million a year.

Drought is something that can be prepared for and planned for, but unless people have lived through it it is impossible to understand its effect. It is hard to understand what it is like to off-load stock that someone has bred for decades—vital blood lines—or to see a ploughed field where someone cannot grow that one crop that they have grown each year because of a lack of soil moisture.

Being on the Agriculture and Environment Committee and now proudly serving on the State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development Committee it has given me and other members of those committees, including the member for Bancroft and the member for Mount

Ommaney, the opportunity to see what great assistance the Queensland government is providing to our drought-affected farmers and graziers. We should be proud of the Drought Relief Assistance Scheme, otherwise known as DRAS, that has been in place in Queensland.

(Time expired)

 **Mr PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (11.24 am): I rise to speak on this motion. In doing so, I note an interest in this issue. I have lodged an individually droughted property declaration for my property. Pursuant to the standing orders, I declare that before this House so that there is no ambiguity.

Drought is something that needs to be handled by all levels of government. It disappoints me today to see politics being played when it comes to this issue. I welcome the federal government's commitment of \$5 billion. We need to remember that in the past there was never anything put in place by previous Labor governments. The \$5 billion commitment to the Future Drought Fund is important when it comes to the management of drought across the state.

What disappoints me is the situation we see in this state where the minister has pulled funding and changed the arrangements with no announcement of what is going to happen in the future. He promised to work with industry groups. This House has heard nothing about the progress of those discussions. All the while, we see drought starting to take a grip on additional areas across the state. Minister, you know that I have written to you.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Direct your comments through the chair.

Mr PERRETT: I have written to the minister recently about the electorate that I represent, and particularly the worsening conditions in that area. There has been no response back from the minister with respect to my call for the local drought committee—presumably it still exists—to consider my request.

The issues that farmers face across this state are broad. Given the continuing drought across this state—the member for Gregory will probably touch on this; seven years of continuous drought—there is the need for support from all levels of government. I acknowledge the hard work that has been done by the federal government, particularly with regard to the household income support that has been provided. That puts food on people's tables and was never provided by federal Labor governments in the past. It was a difficult thing to get them to understand.

The state cannot abrogate its responsibilities in and around these issues. I call on the Premier to work with everyone. She is calling on the federal government to do the heavy lifting, but the state also needs to do some heavy lifting and announce the new measures it is going to put in place.


Ms Palaszcuk interjected.

Mr PERRETT: Premier, you have removed the freight subsidies. Anyone who applies for that now is not eligible. What is going to be put in place in terms of drought subsidies, Premier? You tell us. You tell this House.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Direct your comments through the chair, member for Gympie.

Mr PERRETT: Perhaps when the minister for agriculture gets up to speak he will tell this House what new measures are going to be put in place to replace what has been axed or pulled. Farmers are hurting and if we do not get this right we will have serious issues.

(Time expired)

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries) (11.27 am): What a load of hogwash. What we have heard about drought from those opposite today is absolute nonsense. The Leader of the Opposition could not even mutter the word drought in her budget reply speech. This shows how incompetent and out of touch this leader, who purports to represent primary producers, is.

If anyone in this House needs any reminding how distant the federal coalition is from the impacts of drought in Queensland, the Prime Minister's contribution in parliament this week highlights that. The Prime Minister remarked—

We learnt in Queensland today, in the minister for drought's electorate, that it's been going for eight years.

He continued—


... the Future Drought Fund is not to provide direct financial assistance payments to farmers.

This is the position that this federal government takes when it comes to drought.

I do not need to travel to Sydney, I do not need to travel to Margaret River, like the member for Gympie does, to learn about drought. I get around the regions and talk to farmers. I talk to them on a weekly basis and get an understanding and appreciation of what they are feeling when it comes to the drought. That is why in this year's budget the government committed over \$74 million over four years for drought. That is why this government commissioned an independent drought review by a representative of QFF and AgForce. They handed down their report and we provided our response, and we will continue to support farmers until this drought is over.

Let us have a look at the comments from the drought envoy. He is on the record in newspapers saying recently, 'Get a job.' He is saying that to our primary producers, to our farmers who are doing it tough. 'Get a job,' he tells struggling farmers. He goes on to comment, 'What are you doing with your life? What are you doing on the land?' This is the drought envoy who purports to represent primary producers right across this nation.

This mob opposite should be ashamed of themselves when it comes to drought. They should be ashamed of themselves when it comes to supporting primary producers and the people who are struggling on our land and who are doing it tough. We know for a fact that the government has cut more than 200 farmers from the farm household allowance in the middle of the drought. We are committed to our drought funding right through until this drought is over. That is the commitment from the Palaszczuk Labor government who knows where support for farmers is required and who knows what farmers need through the copious trips not only taken by me as minister for agriculture but taken by every other minister, including the Premier, in our travels right across the regions. We have an understanding of what our farmers need. We know what they need. That is why we are supporting them through and through.

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (11.30 am): In accordance with standing orders, I declare that my partner has a drought-declared property in the Blackall-Tambo shire. I just want to be very clear about that. I am really disappointed in what the Palaszczuk Labor government is doing in relation to drought assistance. The Palaszczuk Labor government, in response to their drought review, is removing fodder and water subsidies from drought assistance. Those drought assistance measures have been in place for a long time in Queensland. In their response they say, 'DAF to consult with industry on transition with transition arrangements to commence from 1 July 2019.' That was months ago and there has been absolutely nothing.

It is the same when it comes to the freight subsidy. They say that when the freight subsidies cease on the revocation of drought declarations they will commence consultation with industry. They say 'transition arrangements to commence from 1 July 2019'. We have seen absolutely nothing as to what those transition arrangements are. My entire electorate is drought declared. I challenge the minister to come out to places like Nindigully.


Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Order! Member for McConnel and Leader of the Opposition, stop quarrelling across the chamber.

Ms LEAHY: I challenge the minister to come out to places like The Gums, where there is not a single tuft of grass left on properties out there. Those people are surviving because they are getting assistance from the Morrison government. They are getting drought communities assistance. They are on farm household support. They are receiving that assistance. They are not getting assistance from the Palaszczuk Labor government because that assistance has been taken away by the Palaszczuk Labor government.

The Morrison government are providing \$13 million for the extension of the Drought Communities Program. That is there to help support local governments. I have seen absolutely nothing from the Palaszczuk Labor government when it comes to supporting drought-affected local governments. They have done nothing for rate relief and nothing for small businesses—absolutely nothing. They have been called on by David Littleproud, who is the minister for drought, to help with council rates, and they have done absolutely nothing. They never even replied to his correspondence. How disappointing is that!

The Morrison government is delivering a \$5 billion Future Drought Fund. They are also paying lump sums of \$12,000 over two instalments to farmers who are on the farm household allowance. That is a massive help to those people who are out there who are really struggling. That money goes back into the small businesses and drought-affected towns across my region. Those people appreciate that assistance. We have lots of people who are on the farm household allowance. It helps them manage through this situation.

We are not seeing the commitment from the Palaszczuk Labor government. They are phasing out drought assistance from the state government. It is absolutely shameful. It is absolutely disgraceful. We have not heard anything from them. They put out a report and they do absolutely nothing. It is so disappointing.


 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (11.33 am): I rise today to support the Premier's motion. It is great listening to the opposition trying to defend the indefensible with zero dollars coming from the federal government. With 66 per cent of Queensland in drought, as we have heard today, it comes as quite a shock when the self-proclaimed party for the bush over there appears to be trying to pull the proverbial wool over Queensland farmers' eyes.

We have heard today the talk and the chatter about how they believe they are the champions for regional Queensland and for the country. Today shows that they are not. It is obvious that Queensland is experiencing two droughts here in Queensland. The first is affecting our farmers in regional communities, and that has been highlighted so far by the media here in Queensland. The second, lesser known drought is the drought of policy and original thought that is affecting those opposite.

The LNP on that side of the House need to come clean today. Do they back our farmers here in Queensland or do they back their federal counterparts in Canberra? It is quite simple. Those opposite have form on selling out Queenslanders. They have form. Just look at their position we have heard today on the Shark Control Program. They are Canberra's lapdogs and they know it.

After six years of inaction from the Morrison government, it has tried to delegate its responsibility for developing a national, comprehensive drought policy to the National Farmers' Federation. They have handed that over. Those opposite have also taken the 'don't worry about that too much' approach, as we have seen. They have not even bothered to write their own drought policy or an overall agricultural policy here in Queensland. Instead, they have taken to writing petty media releases attacking our government, which this year committed \$74 million to respond to the worsening drought conditions here in Queensland. On the ABC *Insiders* program last Sunday, Fran Kelly asked federal drought minister, David Littleproud, 'Where is your long-term drought strategy? You seem to have sanctioned it off to the NFF to give you one.' They are still pursuing that.

Most of the federal government's \$7 billion, as we have heard today, has not even been spent. The bulk of the figure is attributable to the government's \$5 billion Future Drought Fund, which was established with \$3.9 billion and will grow with earnings reinvested until the balance reaches \$5 billion, which is not expected to be achieved until 2028-29. Nothing has been spent from the \$5 billion fund to date. It starts making disbursements from 1 July next year, with \$100 million being paid each year to support Australian farmers and communities to become more prepared for, and resilient to, droughts. Those opposite should grow a backbone and support this motion to stop the farmers being denied support in the middle of the worst drought that we have seen here in Queensland.

 **Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (11.36 am): I will not sit in this House and be lectured to by a dodgy Palaszczuk-Trad Labor government about drought support for our farmers. They obviously have not been speaking to the farmers in my electorate. The Premier talked in her contribution about Emu Swamp Dam. They had to be dragged kicking and screaming to build Emu Swamp Dam.

Ms TRAD: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member has used unparliamentary language. I ask him to withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): The member's language was unparliamentary. I ask that it be withdrawn.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. For one to have a matter withdrawn, one would have to find the matter personally offensive for which the member would have to be personally referenced, and the Deputy Premier, as I understand it, was not.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will take some advice.

Mrs D'ATH: Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to speak to that point of order on the basis that the Deputy Premier did not rise saying she took personal offence. She said that it was unparliamentary language. On the basis of it being unparliamentary language, you, as the Deputy Speaker, can ask that the member withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I did not hear the unparliamentary language. We will move on. I will have to ask the Speaker to review the transcript later.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. If it is the word 'dodgy' that the member used, I used that word in questioning the Premier this morning and the Speaker allowed it this morning.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have made the ruling. We will move on. I call the member for Southern Downs.

Mr LISTER: The government had to be dragged kicking and screaming to the table to build Emu Swamp Dam. They provided less money than they should have in the first place and they are going slow now. The minister said there would be a letter of agreement provided to the company by the end of August. We are getting to the middle of October now. The government is already going slow on Emu Swamp Dam.

Despite the disingenuous criticism that they throw at us, this is the side of the House that looks after farmers. We heard about water for the town. That is great, Premier. I appreciate the water for the town. What about the water for the farmers outside of town? I wrote to the Premier asking for support, asking for trucks to deliver water to those who live outside the town. The farmers are on tank water. I got a haughty reply saying no, because she had been listening to the toxic mayor of the Southern Downs Regional Council who said that the farmers did not need it.

Government members interjected.

Mr LISTER: I am prepared to stand by that. Our farmers outside the town need water and the Premier denied them the chance to transport it.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Pause the clock. I remind the member to put his comments through the chair.


Mr LISTER: I take the fact that I have been interrupted by the Labor Party as proof that what I am saying is true. How can the government say they are looking at—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, member! Pause the clock. I will take some advice. Member, that was very close to reflecting on the chair.

Mr LISTER: How can a government that says it is looking after farmers ignore the comprehensive scientific advice tendered by my constituents to the environment minister? It states that the blue dots that apply to their properties, which prevent them from farming, should be removed. But they have not been. It is not just about the cash; it is about the complexion of the government and the way it treats farmers that is the point here. This state government is in no position to lecture us about support for farmers. The horticulturalists in my electorate, those who grow tomatoes, fruit trees and so forth, have asked time and time again for state government support to get water trucked to their properties and for the state government to match the federal government's contribution of 25 per cent for desilting dams for farmers.

I have spoken to the minister about this. I believe that he wants to do something, but as a government they cannot because there is no money left in the bank because, in contrast to the federal government, they have blown it all. When the Prime Minister talks about \$5 billion in drought relief, that is responsible economic management because that is a fund to contend with future drought situations. It is typical of a Labor government that they want to blow it all now. It gives no lasting response; it is all about a sugar hit right at the moment.

The federal government is pulling its own weight. There is a farm household allowance. They are providing income support to farmers who need support, including up to \$12,000 in a lump sum. The 25 per cent contribution towards desilting is really going to help farmers in my electorate. That is real drought relief. Why will the state government not match it? The federal government has provided \$33 million for drought-affected communities. That is making a real difference in my electorate. We are talking about a federal government that understands and a state government that does not, and never has, pulled its weight when it comes to drought, so do not come into this House and criticise the LNP. This Labor government has no idea how to look after farmers and no idea how to look after agriculture.

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (11.42 am): If ever there were a reason the LNP cannot attract women candidates, that would be it. The member for Southern Downs—that was disgraceful. To come into this place and reflect on a very hardworking—

Mr LISTER: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I find that personally offensive and I ask that the comments be withdraw.

Ms TRAD: I withdraw. I know the mayor that he is reflecting upon and can I say that she is a very hardworking and courageous leader for her community. I do not subscribe to those views, and the Leader of the Opposition should come out and say whether she endorses the views of the member for Southern Downs in relation to that mayor. That is an outrageous slur and it should be withdrawn.

Those opposite have made a number of assertions in this debate; firstly, that the drought and freight subsidies have been withdrawn. That is not true, and I will be writing to the Speaker because those opposite have been misleading the House. They will not get away with misleading the Queensland public, because on this side of the House we know that 66 per cent of the Queensland population is suffering drought.

The Queensland land mass is in drought, and it is the Palaszczuk Labor government that is responding to people in their time of need. As the agriculture minister said, we have had two independent reviews. We have drought commissioners in this state—who are not to be confused with that joke of an envoy, Barnaby Joyce—telling everyone to pack up and leave the land. We have conducted a review and we have pumped additional money into our drought relief efforts. We will not abandon Queenslanders in their time of need—unlike the federal government ministers, who like to pose for media photos on drought-stricken land looking very concerned, but when it comes to opening up the wallet and giving taxpayer funds to help farmers in their time of need they say, ‘Sorry, the bank is closed. The federal government no longer wants to hear from you. Thank you for the pretty picture with us looking very concerned, but we are not going to help you in your time of need.’ That is an absolute disgrace.

What is more disgraceful is those opposite spending Queensland taxpayers’ funds to fly down to Sydney to talk about the drought but not going to a drought-affected community in New South Wales. New South Wales is suffering drought as well as Queensland. It would make sense if they were thinking about doing something specific, positive and proactive—to maybe move a motion asking Scott Morrison to let the \$5 billion flow through to farmers immediately. No, they were too busy sipping champagne at Luna Park. Those opposite are a joke. The LNP in Canberra is a joke. It is only the Palaszczuk Labor government that stands up for farmers.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): The time being 11.45, the time for debate has expired.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before I call the Clerk to read the next order of the day, I believe the term used was ‘dodgy’. In the context it was used, that is not unparliamentary.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL (IMPLEMENTING STAGE 2 OF BELCARRA) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

ELECTORAL AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading (Cognate Debate)

Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 2 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill resumed from 15 October (see p. 3175), on motion of Mr Hinchcliffe, and Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill resumed from 15 October (see p. 3175), on motion of Mrs D’Ath—

That the bills be now read a second time.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Ninderry, I would ask those leaving the chamber to do so quietly.



Mr PURDIE (Ninderry—LNP) (11.46 am) continuing: We can all now breathe a sigh of relief knowing that the Labor Party has now ditched its cynical plan to force CPV on councils. Last night I spoke of how Winston Churchill famously said that preferential voting had the potential to make winners out of losers. He was also wise enough to warn of the perils of ignoring the mistakes of the past. His sage advice about learning from our mistakes has clearly been lost on this government.

At the 2017 state election when the Labor Party introduced compulsory preferential voting the rate of informal voting more than doubled to 4.34 per cent. As we all know, this major voting change was made in an arrogant and deceptive way: late at night with only 18 minutes notice and no public consultation or consideration whatsoever. In stark contrast, in 2010-11 the British government held a national referendum to change its first-past-the-post voting system to a preferential voting system. The UK media and political experts at the time cited Australia as an example and condemned our CPV voting system as corrupt. UK voters overwhelmingly rejected the change.

A review instigated by a key recommendation of the Fitzgerald report also raised concerns about CPV. If Labor had progressed its ill-thought-out plan to reintroduce CPV in this bill, the cost of upcoming local government elections would have skyrocketed from \$17.2 million to \$27.4 worth of taxpayers' money as a result of the unnecessary reform. How could Labor even consider such an expense, which had no direct benefit to taxpayers?


We know that taxpayers want investment in education, policing and health services. They want jobs, safe and livable communities, better roads and public transport—not millions wasted on changing the voting system for the sole benefit of one political party over another. This begs the question: what was the reason for imposing these unwelcome changes? No reason has come from any camp advising on reform, including the CCC or the Soorley report—just a Labor camp hell-bent on winning council wards in Brisbane with the help of its mates, the Greens. Speaking of their Labor mates, we know that Labor would not subject their union comrades to CPV because most unions adopt an optional preferential voting system. If optional preferential voting were currently a threat to the integrity and transparency of local government elections the Belcarra report would have recommended that change.

I understand that the conflict of interest provision was removed from this bill yesterday, so basically the two major reforms initially outlined in this bill have now been removed. I look forward to further recommendations in relation to Belcarra coming before the House in the next few months.

Another concern raised by the Queensland Law Society and shared by the LNP is that the revised legislation reverses the onus of proof with the presumption of knowledge of particular gifts or loans. The new Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 proposes changes to the time provided for postal votes, which extends the time limit from an unrealistic two days to 12 days, which is more than the recommendation in the independent panel's report. This bill also opens up voting to prisoners who are serving a sentence of three years or less. The LNP does not support this. Once again, this is a Labor construct and one that has not been recommended in any integrity report.

I note a number of anomalies in changes to the relationship between the bureaucracy and elected representatives that apply under these new laws to local government and not the state—for example, requests for information, the overreach of powers afforded to the Office of the Independent Assessor, and changes to caretaker provisions impeding councils from adopting their planning schemes, placing strain on all involved.

Creating legislation does not automatically result in a fair and transparent process. The Office of the Independent Assessor is under-resourced and unable to clear the current councillor complaint workload. In the spirit of integrity, I ask this government to just get on with doing its job in implementing all of the Belcarra recommendations so they can be understood and implemented by March 2020. I believe the only ideology that should be compulsory and preferential is for us to work together with our local governments and taxpayers to ensure we have a clear, fair local election process for March 2020.

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (11.51 am): I rise to speak in support of the legislation before the House. These bills are the next step in implementing the recommendations of the Crime and Corruption Commission's Operation Belcarra report. Operation Belcarra was initiated following the 2016 local government elections to examine practices that may undermine public confidence in the integrity of local government, with a view to identifying strategies or reforms to increase public confidence. In the Belcarra report, the CCC made 31 recommendations to 'strengthen equity, transparency, integrity and accountability in local governments throughout Queensland'. The government has supported or supported in principle all the recommendations, and we have already implemented our response to five of them. We have done this because we believe in transparency, integrity and accountability.

As a former councillor on the Brisbane City Council of nine years, I take particular interest in these matters. The reputation of local government has no doubt been tarnished in recent times. This is due to the unfortunate actions of a very small minority of councillors and staff, but it must be addressed. Doing nothing is not an option. As representatives of our communities, we alongside our counterparts in local and federal government have a responsibility to uphold the highest standards of integrity, accountability and transparency. This legislation enforces those standards.

The laws in relation to state and local government elections are currently disparate and confer different obligations on candidates, electoral groups and voters. This legislation fixes those discrepancies. Allegations of misconduct and corruption in the Moreton Bay Regional Council, the Ipswich City Council and the Logan City Council shocked many Queenslanders who demanded action.

This legislation takes that action. On this side of the chamber, we know the value of local government. We do not exploit loopholes to pay for our taxi fares to Cher and Keith Urban concerts and we do not describe watching *The Bachelorette* as a 'work commitment'. We take local government seriously and that is why we are getting on with the job of implementing these reforms.

One of the major areas of reform in this legislation is in relation to donations and the obligations surrounding them. This legislation introduces real-time disclosure of expenditure and strengthens the disclosure requirements for gifts and donations. This measure certainly assists voters. The government is also reforming the way that groups of candidates and councillors campaign and operate together. The changes in this legislation will mean that a group is defined by the behaviours of the group, not the purposes for which it was formed. This too makes our electoral system more open and more democratic.

This legislation will also require anyone who intends to stand as a candidate in local government elections to undergo training in relation to their obligations as a candidate, including around disclosure, and as a councillor if they are elected or appointed. This is a common-sense measure aimed at ensuring candidates and councillors cannot claim ignorance of their obligations. Finally, campaigns will be obliged to use dedicated accounts for expenditure to prevent candidates using their credit cards, which can lead to difficulties in reconciling individual purchases against campaign expenditure. This change also improves transparency in local government elections without imposing onerous requirements on candidates and their campaign teams.

Beyond the Belcarra report, this legislation implements a number of recommendations of the Soorley report, which reviewed the conduct of the 2016 local government elections, the referendum on fixed four-year terms for the state parliament and the Toowoomba South by-election. The inquiry that led to the Soorley report was launched in response to 'the large number of complaints following the elections and referendum which were managed and implemented by the Electoral Commission of Queensland'. It is vital to our democracy that our electoral processes are sound and that the public has confidence in these procedures. The implementation of these recommendations is another part of the government's commitment to transparency and accountability in the democratic process.

As part of the government's response to the Soorley report, we have undertaken a comprehensive review of early voting processes, such as postal and pre-poll voting. Under this legislation, postal vote applications will need to be received by the returning officer by 7 pm two Mondays before polling day. This will mean that everyone who applies for a postal vote will have the highest possible chance of receiving and returning their ballot paper and having their vote counted.

By changing the donation disclosure requirements for sitting councillors, we are bringing the legislation in line with community expectations. It cannot stand that sitting councillors are not required to disclose donations between their election and the receipt of their nomination for the following election. We do not want to have a situation where political parties or electoral groups exploit loopholes and rely on technicalities to undermine transparency and trust in the electoral process. Political parties cannot be allowed to hide \$3 million of donations from the public for five months. That is not what integrity and accountability look like. That is something that those opposite still have not addressed, and they still have not apologised to Queenslanders for hiding that level of donations.

Governments at all levels, whether it is federal, state or local, are based on trust and that trust comes from representatives conducting themselves with transparency, accountability and integrity. The Palaszczuk government is committed to ensuring that Queenslanders can trust their local governments, returning faith in the sector. This legislation is an important step in that and it is by no means the last.

I look forward post this legislation and past the next round of local elections to seeing an improvement in the faith that people have in local government in the South-East Queensland sector. It has taken a battering in recent years. This is very strong legislation that addresses that. I look forward to the confidence in local government representatives returning as a result of these reforms, as a result of the elections next year and as a result of further reforms in the future.



Mr BATT (Bundaberg—LNP) (11.58 am): I rise to contribute to the cognate debate on the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 2 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 and the Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019. In light of recent integrity concerns at Logan and Ipswich councils, the government has introduced the Belcarra reforms in an attempt to minimise corruption, improve transparency and toughen rules within the local government sector. Stage 1 of the Belcarra reforms saw political donations from property developers banned. The second stage is what we are debating today.

The LNP team in Queensland is made up of several MPs who have decades of experience in local government, including me. As a former councillor of 10 years at Bundaberg Regional Council, including four years as deputy mayor, I acknowledge the need for increased community confidence and improved transparency at all levels of government, but I think many of Labor's proposed changes go too far and are based on the actions of a small minority of elected representatives.

For some perspective, if the Deputy Premier were a councillor she would have broken local government laws by failing to declare ownership of her Woolloongabba property, but because she is an MP there is no specific state government rule applicable to the wrongdoing and there have been no repercussions. Regardless of the loophole, Labor are still looking to further regulate councillors instead of dealing with their own constant spiral of integrity crisis after integrity crisis.

From the outset I would like to make my position clear. I am supportive of those sections of the bill that relate directly to recommendations contained in the Belcarra report but oppose the most contentious amendments that fall outside of the Belcarra and Soorley reports. The LNP has a proud history of working in partnership with local governments. We know councils work best when they are empowered to stand up for their local area and have the tools they need to respond to the requirements of their communities and the challenges these present. I do not deny that there are tweaks that could be made to local government regulations, but a number of Labor's amendments would restrict and negatively impact local government councillors and staff right across Queensland when, instead, the state government should be enabling them to get on with their job.


Local governments have demonstrated a preparedness to do what is required to build confidence by implementing these recommendations and reforms flowing from the Belcarra report. However, on top of these stage 2 recommendations, the government has flagged its intention to bring forward another bill later this year to address issues such as expenditure caps for candidates and public funding of candidates. Under the guise of integrity, the bill will also introduce other significant reforms guided by Labor's policy agenda.

A fine example of Labor's agenda is its plan to mandate full preferential voting prior to the March 2020 local government elections which, despite fierce backlash from the Local Government Association of Queensland and local government leaders, had been in full swing right up until this week. The minister's last-minute decision to ditch the cynical, forceful plan is good news for local government democracy. If it had gone ahead, the voting reforms would have resulted in significantly higher council rates and electoral confusion right across the state, all in a bid to shore up Labor's vote in the Brisbane City Council elections. I congratulate the LGAQ and council leaders who stood up to this arrogant Labor government on this important issue.

On top of changes seeking to improve the level of local government integrity, under the Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 the government is also moving to allow prisoners serving a sentence of less than three years the ability to vote from prison. At present, under the current laws prisoners are not entitled to vote, and I think that is the way it should stay. Those who break the law should not have the right to participate in deciding who makes the law. A person serving a sentence of imprisonment, no matter the length of sentence, is not a law-abiding citizen and there should be no discretion for those who are serving shorter sentences.

When the LNP was in government our approach was to listen to local government and provide support for their endeavours. We know they want the same thing as the LNP do: to create jobs and provide safe and livable communities. We also have a tough stance on crime and would not allow criminals to have the ability to vote from prison. For a change, Labor should spend more time consulting with the community instead of rushing through new laws just because of a few bad eggs.

In conclusion, in general terms I support both of these bills but cannot agree with clause 27, entitling prisoners serving a sentence of less than three years a vote at any election.

 **Mr RUSSO** (Toohey—ALP) (12.02 pm): I rise in the House to support the passing of the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 2 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 and the Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 as amended. As the minister outlined in his second reading speech yesterday in the House, Operation Belcarra resulted in 113 criminal charges being laid by the CCC against councillors or council employees, and two of the four councils investigated have had to be dissolved or placed into administration. I intend to deal with several areas that are covered by the bills but not all of them.

I agree with the minister's comments that there are many councillors across Queensland doing a good job. I had the pleasure recently of meeting one of the hardworking mayors in Richmond. Richmond is home of Kronosaurus Korner and I had the pleasure of a coffee and a chat with the mayor, John Wharton, and the hardworking volunteer firefighters when I went to Richmond on behalf of the Minister for Fire and Emergency Services to open Richmond's new fire station. This is just one of the many mayors and councillors from the region who have real pride in the areas they look after. A visit with Kerri and the boys is on the cards next winter. I should add that I had the opportunity to view the impressive display of fossils exhibited in the museum.

One of the important aspects of the report by the committee that I will now turn to is that the CCC highlighted a lack of awareness amongst candidates of their obligations including electoral funding and financial disclosure obligations. The bill implements the government's response to Belcarra recommendation 12 by providing that the completion of a mandatory training course in the six months before the nomination date will be a condition of nomination. The committee's report notes that this aspect of the bill was widely supported by stakeholders. In relation to the training course, it should be noted that the department has developed an online course and regional workshops for candidates who cannot access or use the online course. The course will be rolled out in the coming months. All candidates, including sitting councillors and mayors, wishing to nominate for the 2020 local government election must complete this training before they can nominate with the ECQ.

A particular area of interest to me in relation to the amendments and something that has been raised by some of my constituents is the need for something to be done to ensure consistency between the Local Government Act and the City of Brisbane Act as well as improved access to information for councillors. It does this by providing that the information that councillors can request under the City of Brisbane Act is to relate to the council and that a Brisbane City Council councillor can request advice or information across all wards of the Brisbane City Council, as occurs in every other local government area in the state. The process that will be in place, once the bill is passed, will be that the chief executive officer must comply with a request for advice or information within 10 business days, or 20 business days at the latest. These amendments reflect the importance of councillors having all the information needed to carry out their responsibilities and make informed decisions in the interests of the people of Brisbane.

The Right to Information Act 2019 exempts information relating to Brisbane City Council's Establishment and Coordination Committee from right-to-information requests for a period of 10 years. The amendments in the bill in relation to this important function of a councillor's work in their ward improves transparency and will be welcomed.

The stage 2 Belcarra bill is the second of three bills designed to implement the government's response to recommendations of the Crime and Corruption Commission's report on Operation Belcarra, which has been described as a blueprint for integrity and addressing corruption risk in local government, as well as seeking to continue a broader, rolling local government reform agenda guided by four key principles of integrity, transparency—reflecting electoral diversity—integrity and consistency as appropriate state and Commonwealth electoral and governance frameworks.


The objectives of the bill as explained in the explanatory notes are to implement the following: the government's policy in relation to several remaining recommendations of the Belcarra report following the enactment of the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Act; the government's response to a number of the recommendations of the inquiry report of the independent panel, titled *A review of the conduct of the 2016 local government elections, the referendum and the Toowoomba South by-election*, referred to as the Soorley report; and other significant reforms to improve diversity, transparency, integrity and consistency in the local government system, decision-making and local government elections.

I will now address the objectives of the Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019, as these bills are being debated in cognate. As I have already stated, the objectives of the bill: improve the integrity, transparency and public accountability of state elections by implementing the further legislative stage of the government's response to certain recommendations in the report of the Crime and Corruption Commission titled *Operation Belcarra: a blueprint for integrity and addressing corruption risk in local government*; facilitate operational improvements and support efficiencies in the state electoral system by implementing the government's response to the report of the independent panel chaired by James Soorley titled *A review of the conduct of the 2016 local government elections, the*

referendum and the Toowoomba South by-election; ensure that provisions of the Electoral Act 1992 and related legislation reflect the adoption of four-year fixed terms in Queensland; achieve improved consistency across the electoral system, including better alignment between state and local government elections and referendums; and make other minor improvements.

In advancing my argument for why the bills should be passed, I now turn to the report on the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 2 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and deal with the Soorley recommendations as mentioned in the report to which I have just referred. In October 2016, an independent panel was established to undertake an inquiry into the performance of the ECQ's conduct of the 2016 local government elections, the referendum on fixed four-year terms and the by-election for the state seat of Toowoomba South. The Soorley report outlined a range of issues from the administration of the three polls including problems with postal voting and the organisation of the ballot process on the ground leading to reduced voter participation and delays in vote counting and the finalisation of the election results. To address these issues, the independent panel made 74 recommendations including recommendations relating to operational matters for the ECQ and recommendations of a policy and legislative nature for the government's consideration.

In conclusion, I turn my attention to prisoner voting. Members opposite seem to be saying that it does not matter what the High Court says, that we will do whatever we think and totally disregard the constitutional validity of our laws. That says the opposition is not capable of responsible governing. That is arrogant and ill informed and shows how out of touch with reality are opposition members. As noted by the committee, the existing provisions make Queensland the only Australian jurisdiction that does not provide for some level of prisoner voting. I commend the bills to the House.

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (12.13 pm): I rise to contribute to the cognate debate on the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 2 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and the Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. At the outset, let me be very clear: I and the LNP fully support the Queensland community's need and right to have confidence in their mayors, councillors and councils. As such, we support the amendments in this bill that implement the recommendations of the Belcarra report. We also believe that there needs to be a consistent degree of transparency and integrity at all levels of government, a view we thought the Premier shared because, to use her own words—

Queenslanders should have confidence and integrity of all levels of government ... I will not make rules for local councils that I am not prepared to follow myself, so any changes we make will apply to state as well as local government.

Had the Premier discovered that the proposed integrity laws contained in this bill applied to her government, the Premier would be down a Deputy Premier, two ministers and a committee chair. It is widely known that if the Deputy Premier were a mayor or a councillor she would be facing charges. If a mayor or a councillor failed to disclose the purchase of a property, then failed to declare a conflict of interest when sitting around the cabinet table and making decisions about Cross River Rail and the South Brisbane new high school, both of which had a tangible and real benefit to the value of that property, they would be at least under ongoing investigation but more likely charged.

Rather than applying those same standards to her Deputy Premier, yet again the Premier squibbed it and called on the Minister for Local Government to pull those amendments from this bill—or perhaps it was the Deputy Premier herself, because we all know who really calls the shots on that side of the House. Whoever it was, it is abundantly clear that, whilst the Palaszczuk Labor government is embroiled in integrity crisis after integrity crisis, they could not look themselves in the mirror if they had further upped the ante on mayors and councillors. It is back to the drawing board for those integrity amendments. That brings us to some of the other amendments brought in under the guise of integrity that have no connection whatsoever to the Belcarra report. They were all about political opportunism. Of course, I am referring to the introduction of compulsory preferential voting to council elections.

Again, let me be clear: the LNP does not support compulsory preferential voting; we support optional preferential voting. We believe it is the fairest form of voting. We believe voters should have the right to indicate an alternative preference, but we also believe that they should not have to if they do not want to. Sadly, only one other party in this chamber appears to be consistent in its position on compulsory preferential voting, albeit that they are for it—and that is the Greens. We know why the Greens support compulsory preferential voting. It is because they hold all the cards in their deals with the Labor Party when it comes to elections because the Labor Party desperately needs Greens preferences to win state seats. Whilst we disagree with that self-serving position, at least the Greens

are consistent, because the Labor Party definitely is not consistent on this matter. With 18 minutes notice, it was the Labor Party that introduced compulsory preferential voting into state elections. Let me quote the current Attorney-General from that debate. She said—

What we are putting forward today is reasonable and sensible and deals with that confusion that the community is talking about after each election about why there is compulsory preferential voting at one election and optional preferential voting at the next election. This is an opportunity to address this issue.

Not now, because when Queenslanders have had more than 18 minutes to consider their preferred means of casting their vote, what do we hear from the minister? Just yesterday, in this chamber—

Government members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Pugh): Order!

Mr POWELL: When Queenslanders have had more than 18 minutes to consider this, what did the minister say? He said—

Over the last few months it has become clear that the majority of mayors, councillors and the LGAQ do not support the introduction of compulsory preferential voting for local government elections. During the committee process mayors or councillors representing 28 councils made submissions opposing the introduction of CPV.

The Premier, in particular, has been very receptive in listening to the feedback from the local government sector. As a result of the feedback, I will move amendments to the bill during consideration in detail to remove the provisions relating to compulsory preferential voting.

The message is clear: Queenslanders want optional preferential voting, be it for their state or local government elections. The message is also clear that the Labor Party manipulates the voting laws to benefit its election chances. It did it with compulsory preferential voting in 2016, and that helped it deliver the 2017 state election. This time it worked out that compulsory preferential voting would cost it wards in the 2020 Brisbane City Council election and would lead to a concerted campaign against the Palaszczuk Labor government in the lead-up to the 2020 state election. What has it done? It has run away. The Palaszczuk government is not guided, as the minister would have us believe, by the four key principles of integrity, transparency, diversity and consistency. It is guided by one principle: self-preservation.

Before moving on from compulsory preferential voting, I must ask where the Katter party stands on this matter. It was with the Katter party's support that compulsory preferential voting was added, at 18 minutes notice, to state laws. Where does the Katter party stand now? I suspect—in fact I know—that, like the Labor Party, it has only one interest in this matter, and that is self-interest.

Honourable members injected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Glass House, I can afford you as much protection as you deserve when you do not provoke members in this House.

Mr POWELL: In the time remaining to me I will briefly refer to the Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, particularly as it relates to prisoner voting. My colleagues have declared our position on this aspect of the bill. I have a number of questions that I would like the minister to address—in particular, what address prisoners who are serving less than three years will be voting from. The Labor Party has tried a few things to try to remove the LNP from the seat of Glass House, including introducing compulsory preferential voting and getting preferences from One Nation, but it would be a really interesting move if suddenly all of the prisoners in the Woodford Correctional Centre started voting for the Labor Party! To be fair to the minister, I know that there are very few prisoners in the Woodford Correctional Centre who are serving terms of less than three years, so it is not about self-interest; I am genuinely inquiring about which electorate the prisoners will be voting in. I think that is a fair question to ask when considering this bill.

I return to where I started. The minister wants us to believe that the Labor Party acts with consistency and integrity in this matter. What we have seen by the amendments that the minister has foreshadowed he will move in consideration in detail today is that there is no consistency or integrity in this matter. They are doing this to preserve the electoral opportunities of the Deputy Premier and ensure she remains the powerbroker she is within the Palaszczuk Labor government cabinet. They are doing this to ensure the Labor candidates at the Brisbane City Council election do not lose seats to the Greens. They are doing it because they did not want to face a backlash from mayors, councillors and councils right across this state who know what we know—that is, optional preferential voting is the fairest form of voting.



Mr WHITING (Bancroft—ALP) (12.22 pm): I rise to speak in support of these bills. I support the Belcarra bill because it will help us rebuild the faith of Queenslanders in local government. The faith of Queenslanders in local government, in my area at least, is currently pretty low. Their first assumption about a contentious or large decision of any kind is that councillors have been influenced, that perhaps their decision has been bought. Members can understand why people may think that. For example, Brisbane residents have seen their local plans being ignored in recent years. They see developments that do not fit within the local plans being approved all the time. You just have to look out the window over the river to the south and see these jarring monstrosities to wonder how they were ever approved.

It is no wonder that Queenslanders' faith in local government is currently low. This bill helps us rebuild it. It lays out a path that will increase the confidence of Queenslanders over coming years, but it will be a long and slow process. Only Labor can do it. It is only Labor that can drive integrity in local government. It is only Labor that will deliver the protections people want to see in local government. The LNP will always allow big donors to get their way. Only Labor will drive transparency. The LNP will always try to pull the curtains around who is trying to influence decisions.

Let us start with the issue of real-time disclosure. It used to be that only after a local government election would you get the real story of who made donations or gave money to candidates. Sometimes it would be months afterwards. By then it would often be too late to do anything about it or to influence a vote. The reforms in this bill will allow residents to track in real time who is making donations. This is crucial to rebuilding confidence.

Secondly, there will be the identification of teams in local government elections. This is important for residents. When people look at candidates across the board, they want to see who is working with whom, who has done a deal with other candidates, who is running together and what they really believe in. You cannot really call yourself a true Independent if you are one of a bunch of candidates who are sharing resources and sharing how-to-vote cards. This is important because in my community there has been a history of this in recent elections. These reforms will allow greater transparency, because voters will know for sure who will be working together as a team if they are elected.

Thirdly, there is a section amending the power of mayors when it comes to setting budgets and employing a CEO and senior executives. This is crucial. Currently the mayor is the person responsible for delivering the budget and appointing senior staff and the CEO. We have seen that this gives them enormous power. Mayors decide what goes into the budget and, crucially, what does not go into the budget. The CEO and senior staff are often reliant on the goodwill and support of the mayor. All of that real power is centralised into the mayor's office, leaving individual councillors very little power to effect change. These reforms will bring greater democracy and shared power to the council chamber and greater transparency.

Fourthly, the disclosure elements are critical. The banning of donations from developers is vitally important. It is here that we see the greatest difference between the LNP and Labor. The LNP will never be rigorous in enforcing this kind of transparency. It does not want people to know the true identity of its donors. Look at its track record today and this week. It has tried to hide the identity of people who gave it about \$3 million. It has had to return \$300,000 or \$500,000 in donations from developers and the like. Even after all this time, it keeps taking their money. It keeps taking money for state and council candidates and keeps forgetting to disclose it.

I looked at some of the exhibits tendered during the Belcarra hearings. I see on exhibits 13 and 14 that an LNP aligned candidate on the Gold Coast, Ms Boulton, received \$1,500 from the member for Southport. I do not know if our colleague revealed this in the register of interests. I table exhibits 13 and 14 from the Belcarra hearings along with an extract from the *Twenty-ninth report on the register of members' interests*, where the candidate lists the donations from the member, and the place in the register where it should be recorded.

Tabled paper: Document, undated, titled 'CCC Exhibit' [1839].

Tabled paper: Extract from the Twenty-Ninth Report on the Register of Members' Interests relating to the member for Southport, Mr Rob Molhoek MP [1840].


I note in these exhibits that there is \$15,000 from Stuart Robert and the Fadden Forum to this candidate. I could have run two local government election campaigns in my area with that kind of money. Ms Boulton got \$30,000 in total, I believe, from Stuart Robert and the Fadden Forum. I believe that another candidate got \$30,000 as well from Stuart Robert. That is \$60,000 from one LNP fundraising vehicle going to just two council candidates. This same fund received \$100,000 from a Gold

Coast lobbyist who worked for developers and resource companies. We see that the LNP has a stream of donations going to local LNP candidates. It comes from—we do not exactly know where. The LNP does not think it is a priority for people to know where this money comes from. We do.

Debate, on motion of Mr Whiting, adjourned.

TRANSPORT LEGISLATION (DISABILITY PARKING PERMIT SCHEME) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

 **Mr DAMETTO** (Hinchinbrook—KAP) (12.29 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Traffic Regulation 1962 and the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995 for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Transport and Public Works Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Transport Legislation (Disability Parking Permit Scheme) Amendment Bill 2019 [\[1841\]](#).

Tabled paper: Transport Legislation (Disability Parking Permit Scheme) Amendment Bill 2019, explanatory notes [\[1842\]](#).

Firstly, I want to acknowledge those who deserve credit for this bill. The primary credit should go to those vision-impaired individuals and their families who have been screaming out for changes to the parking permit scheme for a long time. Their lives will be made a little bit easier and safer through these changes that I am putting forward in this bill. I also thank Justin Hugget for connecting me with the Brown family in Townsville and Hailey and Chayd, who are the proud parents of Aryliah and Mackenzie who were born with albinism, rendering them legally blind from birth. Credit should also be given to the organisations that advocate on behalf of the vision-impaired in Queensland. I also want to acknowledge the hard work of my KAP colleague Shane Knuth for the work he has done. He started this fight long ago and this bill reflects on the work that he has put in.

Mr Katter: Hear, hear!

Mr DAMETTO: Hear, hear! This bill sets out to expand on the current Queensland disability parking scheme criteria to include those persons with vision impairment. These amendments will make sure the scheme is fairer and more inclusive by enabling persons with specific types of sensory impairments access to disability parking zones. Under the current scheme in Queensland, if a person is vision-impaired or legally blind they do not qualify for a disability parking permit.

In 2010 a national review was conducted of disability parking schemes across all states and territories. This review resulted in the introduction of a nationally recognised disability parking permit and minimum standards for disability parking concessions. National eligibility criteria for permits were also created, known as the Australian Disability Parking Scheme. This is a scheme around mobility and assessment for this permit is focused on an applicant's functional ability to walk and excludes sensory impairments. Eligibility in Queensland remains exclusively focused on the applicant's ability to walk, which I strongly believe discriminates against those with visual impairment or those who are travelling with someone with a vision impairment in a vehicle.

The safest place for a person to park with someone who is visually-impaired in the vehicle is as close to the front door of the building as possible in a disability parking space. Currently, vision-impaired persons living in New South Wales, Tasmania, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory are able to apply for a disability parking permit under those state and territory schemes. This bill amends the Traffic Regulation 1962 and the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995. These amendments are necessary to achieve the Katter's Australian Party policy objective by expanding the criteria for those eligible to apply for a disability parking permit to those persons with a total loss of vision, permanent severe visual impairment or a temporary severe visual impairment that will last more than six months. This criteria would be assessed by a doctor. The bill also amends the Traffic Regulation 1962 by expanding the eligibility criteria for a disability parking permit to individuals who have either had a total loss of vision or impairment.

This bill is a practical way to expand the eligibility criteria and it is not anticipated that this bill will draw on any additional funds from the government's consolidated revenue. However, I note that there may be some additional costs to departments due to processing applications. This bill is consistent with the fundamental legislative principles as defined in section 4 of the Legislative Standards Act 1992.

One of the key elements of those principles is a requirement that legislation must have sufficient regard to the rights and liberties of individuals. The provisions in this bill give additional rights to those persons with a visual impairment by enabling them to apply for a disability parking permit, removing the previous restriction that only recognises an individual's ability to walk. The amendments do not restrict or compromise any existing rights for individuals who are currently eligible to access the scheme.

During the drafting of this bill we engaged in a consultation process with all stakeholders around the fundamental principles contained in this bill. We worked with families of persons as well as persons who are visually-impaired and Guide Dogs Queensland, an organisation that provides vital support to help people who are blind or have low vision to experience the freedoms and independence they deserve. Guide Dogs Queensland provides personalised training and support programs to help Queenslanders who are blind and vision-impaired and is supportive of the provisions outlined in this bill.

It is Guide Dogs Queensland's position that the application of the Australian Disability Parking Scheme in Queensland to only the minimum standards does not meet the community's needs or expectations and nor does it provide a broad enough scope of inclusion with the notable exclusion of people in the community who are living with blindness or who are vision-impaired, even though they experience widely recognised mobility impairments due to their lack of vision. New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory and Tasmania already recognise the impact of blindness and vision impairment and how that affects mobility and recognise the rights of vision-impaired people to access a disability parking permit. This allowance builds confidence and independence for these constituents, providing them with a much safer ability for them to be able to access shops, shopping centres and navigation points at locations near those shopping centres and community facilities, greatly reducing the risk of injury.

The more inclusive scope of the Australian Disability Parking Scheme eligibility in these jurisdictions highlights a serious inequity for blind and vision-impaired Queenslanders as well as anyone who moves to Queensland because they cannot access the same support in the parking scheme offered in the locations they have moved from. This also works against the intentions of the Australian Disability Parking Scheme, which was designed to simplify and standardise access to permit holders moving between states.

In a recent Guide Dogs Queensland survey of the blind and vision-impaired clients in February 2019, 93 per cent of respondents believed their mobility and the ability to walk are impaired by their blindness and low vision. This sentiment is largely shared within the community, with over 2,300 Queensland residents signing an e-petition before the Queensland parliament which was tabled by David Batt MP on 12 February 2019. On a Facebook survey conducted by Guide Dogs Queensland, the main comments received during the time that post was up was a disbelief that blind and vision-impaired people in Queensland did not already have access to disability parking in Queensland.

Mr Knuth: Shame!

Mr DAMETTO: I take that interjection from the member for Hill. The reason for inclusion is simply that the state's definition of 'ability to walk' is too narrow and excludes a class of people who meet the criteria and intent of the scheme for those who live with blindness. This should improve their ability to be mobile within the community. A person's ability to walk and their functionality are determined by their ability to see and move freely. For a person to 'move freely', they must be able to walk in a way that is free from harm and obstruction. Sight is absolutely critical to the mobility of a person if they are to navigate their journey in a safe way. When a person loses sight, their ability to judge and evaluate risk within an environment is largely removed, impairing their ability to move freely and vastly increasing the likelihood of harm.

Guide Dogs Queensland has also said that it is essential for people who are blind or vision-impaired to use mobility devices. In this case, that may mean a walking stick. It also could be a human guide or a guide dog. While negotiating a car park, when people have been given the opportunity to learn different ways to negotiate things, they use their hearing. When you are in a car park there are multiple noises, including noises from stationary or moving vehicles, bicycles and other people. It becomes very daunting for anybody who is trying to negotiate that car park.

The impact of this environment on the confidence of blind and vision-impaired persons is profound. A survey done by Guide Dogs Queensland in February 2019 showed that 92 per cent of respondents reported that they do not feel safe in car parks, with 58.5 per cent responding that they do

not feel safe at all and either avoid carparks altogether or will not move through carparks unassisted. Seventy-two per cent of respondents said that they required a sighted guide, which would be a guide dog or a person, to feel safe enough to move through a carpark.

Some of the problems they faced were travelling two abreast. As members would understand, if a person has a guide or a guide dog, they need to travel two abreast. It is very hard for a person who is blind or visually-impaired to walk in single file. If the sighted guide is distracted at any time, that can become a huge hazard. It has resulted in a blind or vision-impaired person being led into obstacles or even oncoming traffic because of the confusion of the guide. Travelling with children can also be very unpredictable and add stress to the parents who are trying to work in that situation. That stress is amplified by having to care for children as well as work as a guide for the person who is blind or visually-impaired.

Travelling with groceries can be very difficult as well for a person who is operating as a guide for a blind or visually-impaired person. Usually, people will drop off their blind or visually-impaired passenger at the front door of a building, or a shopping centre, and then go to find a park. That leaves the blind or visually-impaired person standing there waiting for some time, which makes them very vulnerable to being exposed to people who may rob them or have an accident while their guide is not there, which is quite humiliating. That has been reported by some people who have been put in that situation.

Other hazards that have arisen in consultation has been the width of regular car park spaces, making it near impossible to close doors or open doors wide enough to get a guide dog in or out. Narrow car parks, when a blind or visually-impaired person is trying to travel two abreast with their guide, could result in mobility devices scratching or denting other cars, which can also be quite humiliating to the blind or visually-impaired person who is doing the damage. As well, blind or vision-impaired people could be injured by car mirrors as they try to pass through car parks. The final point that was noted in the consultation was the burning of guide dogs' feet as they had to travel long distances through hot car parks during the summer months. Including a person who is blind or visually-impaired in the state's definition as a person whose ability to walk is impaired or a person with a disability as outlined in Chapter 5, titled 'Road use', section 111 of the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995 would greatly assist blind or vision-impaired people who want to access the Australian Disability Parking Scheme in Queensland.

The view of Guide Dogs Queensland is that providing access to disability parking for the blind or vision-impaired members of our community would go a long way towards achieving the Queensland government's policy objective of its All Abilities Queensland: Opportunities for All program. It would also help people who live with this disability if they undertake interstate travel or wish to travel or engage in recreational sports throughout the state.

This is a non-contentious bill. It has been put forward with one simple objective in mind: to give blind or vision-impaired people the right to park in a disabled parking space. Being closer to the entrance of a shopping centre or the entrance of a building makes the daily journey for people who are blind or vision-impaired safer and more dignified. Every day these people have to deal with their impairment. We in this House have the opportunity to enact this bill to make their lives a little easier.

Mr Knuth: Hear, hear!

Mr DAMETTO: I take that interjection. I thank the member. As legislators, every now and then we get to do something great. We also get to do things that I consider to be a little bit of soul food. This bill has the ability to change people's lives for the better.

First Reading

Mr DAMETTO (Hinchinbrook—KAP) (12.45 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.


Referral to Transport and Public Works Committee

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Pugh): In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Transport and Public Works Committee.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL (IMPLEMENTING STAGE 2 OF
BELCARRA) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL****ELECTORAL AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL****Second Reading (Cognate Debate)**

Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 2 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill resumed from p. 3234, on motion of Mr Hinchliffe, and Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill resumed from p. 3234, on motion of Mrs D'Ath—


That the bills be now read a second time.

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (12.45 pm), continuing: I want to emphasise again that Queenslanders want to know about the money that is flowing to their candidates in local government elections. This bill ends the lack of transparency that exists currently and allows that information to be available for people who want to know about the candidates and where their money is coming from. This lack of transparency is what the LNP has wanted to preserve. Without real-time disclosure, without all the changes that we are bringing in, we will never know about these donations in a timely fashion, or perhaps never truly know where they come from.

Local government elections are around the corner. I know that in my area—the Moreton Bay area—some people are cynical. In talking to people, some of them assume the worst in a council's motivations and perhaps in the candidate seeking election. As someone who served for many years in that council area, I hope that cynicism and that assumption of the worst can be reversed in the years to come.

I know that many fine people, whether they are employees, or councillors, love being in local government and truly want to be part of building a better community. They want to see that rebuilding of confidence as well. The employees of councils want to create confidence in their councils and end the cynicism. If we do not bring in these Belcarra reforms, the current attitude will get worse. Cynicism will rule the roost. I already see some potential candidates in the Moreton Bay council area who want to mine that seam of cynicism and who are appealing to that cynicism in their election platform. They are only making the situation worse.

I loved my time in local government and I truly loved being able to change my community for the better. I do not want to see my local government constantly overshadowed by distrust and cynicism, by a debilitating lack of faith in its motives. These bills must be passed to rebuild confidence in our town halls and city halls. I commend these bills to the House.

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (12.48 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the debate on the bills before the House. I would like to take the debate in a different direction. Firstly, I acknowledge some of the points raised about donors. Who could argue about having transparency of donations? I get it.

The member for Glass House made an interesting contribution about compulsory preferential voting. It is not a one-dimensional issue. Compulsory preferential voting has a different meaning at a local level than it does at a state or federal level. In response to some of the assertions made in that earlier contribution, I think who is for compulsory preferential voting depends on the politics of the day. I know for a fact that, in the last parliament, a lot of people in the LNP were certainly excited about it when One Nation was on the rise and their preferences were looking to come their way.

It can be a matter of timing as to whether or not people choose to support compulsory preferential voting. Those comments are in response to comments on compulsory preferential voting, but if we are going to have a mature debate about it, compulsory preferential voting is a very different proposition in Boulia, with councillors who have no party affiliation, to a state government where there is a much broader array of issues and a much more sophisticated political infrastructure built around parliament. I do not think it is as simple as saying what is your position on compulsory preferential voting across all levels of government. I think it is important to make that distinction.

Mr Powell: So you can get consistency.


Mr KATTER: I take that interjection. The member for Glass House keeps piping up about this. He talks about consistency. I have just tried to explain—perhaps he did not understand—that there are nuances between state and local government. If he is going to stand by the position that a similar system should apply to Boulia as should apply to the state government, I am happy for him to take that position, but I certainly would not have that position.

It has appeared that the government has listened to stakeholders when it comes to compulsory preferential voting, and good for them. Local government certainly did not want it, and good for them. It is important to make that distinction. From a political point of view, it seems to be convenient for governments, both Labor and LNP, to back compulsory preferential voting at different times depending on the prevailing political winds of the day. Personally, I think it is important to acknowledge in relation to compulsory preferential voting that point of forcing people to think and consider their vote, to try to get people a bit more engaged in the process so that fewer people would see their vote not exhausted so fast. Whilst it has its faults, it is not a perfect system and can deliver some bad results, I think by and large, certainly at the state level, it delivers a more robust system.

What is missing from this debate is that there seems to be a growing appetite to legislate good government at local government levels. I do not have a wealth of experience in local government, but I do have experience. I was in Mount Isa City Council for four years. I was really disappointed in my time there insofar as it was very difficult to try to engage in the process. It applies more in the smaller more rural councils where you are a lot more on the ground at the coalface with the issues. In a place like Richmond you would know the roads there, you are constantly being batted up against the roads and you take to it the council and you are told that is operational, stay away from it, wait until you have your quarterly works meeting and you can address it then with the engineer. It may be a consulting engineer who you do not see again. It becomes very hard to take those concerns from the public and action them because you are supposed to be involved in a policy level. I get why there is a process but I think the equilibrium has been disrupted and I think it has gone too far. We have tried to control too much at the local government level and we have lost our autonomy.

I think I can speak with authority on those rural and regional areas. It is nice to have scrutiny and try to keep people in check, but there is a cost to that. I think we have severely lost autonomy and the ability for councillors to inject themselves at that local level. There are always theories—conspiracy theories if you like—that governments at the state level want more control over local governments. Whether it is done intentionally or not it does not matter; I think it is a very real thing. There is a cost to sometimes not having as much scrutiny and legislation. In the last few years there have been some highly evident bad outcomes in local government, but there is that saying that you cannot always legislate for idiots. There will always be people who come into these roles who do not do the right thing, but there are a lot of councillors out there who are doing the right thing and want to get involved and who are heavily constrained by the limitations that are put on their ability to get involved. It always comes back to them only involving themselves at a policy level, not at an operational level. I think it is a big issue that is confronting councils.

The way I see it, quite often councillors are feeling constrained or that it is difficult to engage in the process and they are copping a lot of criticism from their constituents in town. They just do not have the grunt they used to have to have a greater control over the outcome. There is more and more legislation shrouded around that activity. It is perhaps done with good intent, but I think we need to call it for what it is and recognise there is a problem with autonomy in those local councils. Bringing in more legislation will contribute to that. I raise that as a deep concern of mine. I could not say that there is a lot in this bill that heavily impacts in that space, but I have had a lot of complaints about the previous legislation, which has people walking out of the room all the time. That is probably more acute in the small towns when you are a part of every club and it is pretty hard to not be involved. Usually, people get voted in as councillors by virtue of the fact they are involved in the clubs and groups in town. If there is a problem with the mayor or if there is a rift in the council they can start playing games and getting them to stand out for everything. I think that is at risk of being exploited. I think there are problems and we have to be really careful about applying more and more legislation in these areas and reacting to the poor behaviour of a select view.

 **Ms McMILLAN** (Mansfield—ALP) (12.56 pm): In respect to the member for Traeger's comments, one must understand that with greater autonomy comes increased accountability. One cannot have increased autonomy without increased accountability. I rise today to make my contribution to the debate on the Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 and the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 2 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Bill, hereafter referred to as the bill. The bill was made in response to the Crime and Corruption Commission's report titled *Operation Belcarra: a blueprint for integrity and addressing corruption risk in local government*. This report was informed by numerous complaints received regarding the conduct of the candidates for the Gold Coast City Council, the Moreton Bay Regional Council and the Ipswich City Council. Importantly, the bill contains significant reforms informed by the report's recommendations that seek to improve the integrity, transparency and


public accountability of the state's electoral system. Building on the Palaszczuk government's strong record of enhancing electoral integrity, transparency and accountability in Queensland, the bill aims to further strengthen public confidence in our electoral system which, as we know, is a key democratic institution.

I commend the government for implementing these measures and make comment particularly on the bill's reflection of the Belcarra report and its inclusion of recommendation 31 and recommendation 6. Primarily, recommendation 31 expands ECQ's statutory functions to include administering and promoting compliance with the election funding and financial disclosure provisions of the Electoral Act 1992 and corresponding provisions of the Local Government Electoral Act 2011. This recognises the critical role of the ECQ in monitoring and enforcing compliance with the election funding and financial disclosure requirements, which are key to the integrity, transparency and accountability of the electoral system. Furthermore, this measure will be complemented by the amendment of existing and the introduction of new offence and penalty provisions. These reforms will improve consistency among our state electoral laws and will promote compliance.

In particular, this bill creates an offence where a person knowingly publishes false information about gifts made to a candidate in an election, a registered political party or a third party with a maximum penalty of 20 units. In addition, the bill increases the penalty applicable to third parties who knowingly lodge a false return about donations given to candidates from 50 penalty units to 100. These penalty reforms are particularly crucial to reducing corrupt behaviour within the state's electoral system as they disincentivise unethical behaviour by Queensland representative candidates and associated third parties.


Secondly, recommendation 6 of the Belcarra report is implemented in the bill through the insertion of new section 260B. New section 260B requires an entity making a gift or loan to a registered political party or candidate over or equal to \$1,000 to notify the recipient of the true source of the gift or loan.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.00 pm.

 **Ms McMILLAN:** Failure to comply with this requirement is an offence with a maximum penalty of 20 penalty units. This requirement also applies to an entity making a gift to third parties who incur expenditure for political purposes. As a result of this new section, intermediaries will be prevented from circumventing existing disclosure requirements, which play an important role in ensuring the transparency and accountability of Queensland's electoral system. This higher threshold requirement means that corrupt behaviour, such as political figures accepting bribes, will be addressed.

Lastly, I turn to the aspect of the bill that addresses the completion of a mandatory training program prior to nominating as a candidate. One cannot be expected to be paid as a professional, to be addressed as a professional and to be respected as a professional if one does not possess the required education, skills, knowledge and understanding of the responsibilities and accountabilities that come with that role. There is no other role in the Public Service where a highly paid employee is not required to follow clear processes and standards associated with expenditure, budgeting and acquittal, that is, to be accountable for their decisions and their actions. It is high time that those opposite moved into the 21st century and acknowledged that selflessness, service, integrity, capacity and competency are highly advantageous qualities in a leader. Interestingly, much research over many decades has debated whether those qualities can, in fact, be taught or nurtured.

The Palaszczuk government strongly believes that the promotion of transparency within the electoral system is vital to our democracy. The key to any efficient and effective democracy is its ability to disincentivise blatant corrupt behaviour. Through its implementation of recommendations 31 and 6, the bill achieves this objective through introducing higher threshold requirements for financial disclosure and donation disclosure respectively. I congratulate the minister and thank the staff of the local government department. I commend the bills to the House.

 **Mr McDONALD (Lockyer—LNP) (2.03 pm):** Members opposite may want to listen to these words of former US Senator for Wyoming Alan K Simpson, who said—

If you have integrity, nothing else matters. If you do not have integrity, nothing else matters.

As recent events have shown us, integrity is something that this government is desperately short of and is failing to regain. I believe they are now creating another distraction from Labor's own integrity issues, hoping that those integrity issues will just go away by focusing on past problems affecting local government. The opposition will not let the government forget their failings. We will continue to hold them to account.

Nonetheless, this government sees fit to push forth with its agenda of reinforcing integrity, transparency, diversity and consistency within local government. On this side of the House we support any attempts to do that, even if it is a little hypocritical of this government to be promoting integrity. Queenslanders deserve honest and accountable governance at every level. Sadly, some of our state's local governments were not upholding the standards that our communities set for us. However, the majority of local governments have been upholding those standards and have been doing nothing wrong.

The bills I stand to speak to today, the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 2 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and the Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, are the second in a series of bills aimed at forwarding this agenda. Across their combined 315 pages, the bills aim to implement further recommendations of the Crime and Corruption Commission's report *Operation Belcarra: a blueprint for integrity and addressing corruption risk in local government*, as well as promoting other agenda related reforms and implementing recommendations of the Soorley report. As I said earlier, in the interests of ensuring transparency and integrity at all levels of government, the LNP will support the government's implementation of the recommendations of the Belcarra report. However, we will be opposing the components of the bills that are simply designed to promote the Labor Party's horribly flawed policy agenda.

Before I delve deeper into the bills, I thank the Economics and Governance Committee, the secretariat and submitters, and special mention must go to the members for Mermaid Beach, Bonney and Ninderry for their statements of reservation, particularly regarding the proposed amendments that fall outside of the recommendations of the Belcarra and Soorley reports and concerns raised by submitters. Like many others, my main concern is that the bills are brought forward under the guise of integrity, when these aspects have no direction relationship to the Belcarra report.

Disappointingly, the bills recommend a piecemeal approach to 16 recommendations of the Belcarra report and just a handful of the Soorley report. Worse still, on top of those stage 2 recommendations, the government has flagged its intention to bring forward a third bill later this year, causing even further implementation grief and confusion. Why are not all the recommendations delivered first up? Again, I strongly believe that the parts of the bills that were ready have been rushed in as a distraction to take the focus off Labor's integrity crisis, leaving other work to come later.

The LNP acknowledges the need for the community to have increased confidence in their local government and their local government representation. While I am sure that the LGA conference would have appreciated the minister's announcement this week regarding removing compulsory preferential voting because Queensland councils voted overwhelmingly to reject it, I take the time to recognise the Lockyer Valley and Somerset regional councils, which are the local governments that make up the Lockyer state electorate. From speaking to my local governments, I know that they appreciate that they will no longer have to share the proposed increase in election costs that compulsory preferential voting was going to deliver, which was an increase from \$13 million to over \$26 million, with Queensland ratepayers being required to pick up the tab at the expense of roads and other important infrastructure.

The Belcarra report and its recommendations are broadly supported by both state and local governments in Queensland. Ever since the release of the report, Queensland's local governments have repeatedly shown themselves to be prepared to work collaboratively with the state government to implement the recommendations made in the report and to begin rebuilding some of the confidence lost. Under the guise of restoring integrity—a term many of those opposite might struggle to define—these bills will attempt to ram legislative changes through this House that could not be less about restoring integrity. Indeed, over 50 per cent of the clauses outlined in the local government electoral bill contain no relationship to recommendations in the Belcarra report. They are nothing more than proposals cooked up by Labor Party powerbrokers and strategists in order to give them a hope at upcoming elections.

The Brisbane City Council noted this in its submission on the bill. The Brisbane City Council was not alone in its questioning of additional reforms. In fact, the Local Government Association of Queensland also revealed the truth about this Labor government's deceitful claim that it had engaged widely with councils regarding these reforms. In a survey conducted by the Local Government Association of Queensland it was discovered that 70 per cent of respondents did not wish to see the changes proposed by this government.


Indeed, it seems that, bar the Labor Party whose crafty strategists developed these proposals, the group happy to see these reforms is the Greens. It is concerning to see that the Labor-Greens alliance is still going strong, even in the wake of the government's Adani backflip. Unfortunately for the Deputy Premier, though, the Greens partnership might not prove quite strong enough.

Local government electoral rules are not the only ones this government is looking to overhaul through this cognate debate. The Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill seeks to place similar levels of integrity, transparency and public accountability on state elections that the bill I have previously mentioned would see applied to local government. Given its introduction alongside the previously mentioned bill, I would say that this bill was hastily developed after someone realised that the former might seem hypocritical in light of the Premier's October 2017 statement that she would not make rules for local councils that her government was not prepared to follow itself. If the standards of integrity for local government were in place for her government, the Deputy Premier would be in jail.

The Office of the Independent Assessor is a key component of the councillor complaints system, but the workload of the office was grossly underestimated, leaving hundreds of complaints for investigation. This has the potential to put councillors with outstanding investigations under a question mark leading up to the elections early next year. It seems that, although Labor is happy to recruit thousands of public servants, it will not be allocating additional resources to assist the Office of the Independent Assessor. This is another example of this Labor government's priorities being wrong.

Another concern I raise with this bill is clause 27. If introduced it would amend the Electoral Act to allow anyone in Queensland serving a prison sentence of at least three years to vote in state elections. It is the LNP's view that no-one convicted of a crime and serving a prison sentence in Queensland should be given the right to vote. This right should be the exclusive right of those who follow the law. Anyone who is in prison for breaking the law should not get any say in how or who develops the laws they have broken.

Unfortunately, this Labor government is out of touch. Should they decide to continue with this plan then those opposite do so at their own risk. Queenslanders will not be taken as fools. They will not sit back and watch the Labor Party strategists attempt to undercut their freedoms. Queenslanders will fight back and will do so on 31 October 2020 when they elect a Deb Frecklington led LNP government.

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (2.13 pm): I rise to speak to the Belcarra bill. In doing so, I would like to speak about the postal voting provisions and the importance of these changes. In the last 10 years or so the nature of voting and how we vote has fundamentally changed, largely with the advent of pre-poll.

I recall as a young shiftworker who worked every Saturday as an apprentice hairdresser that the only option my little sister, Genevieve, had was to vote via postal vote. It was a real nuisance according to Gen. There were several bits of paper that had to go backwards and forwards. She was trying to fit this in around her busy full-time work schedule. She worked a full day every Saturday without fail. She could not risk trying to vote on election day and either being late back from lunch or get to the polling booth after she finished work and missing out because clients were running late. Every election she had to apply for a postal vote.

Thankfully, times have changed. I know that the many shiftworkers and FIFO workers in Mount Ommaney are grateful for the introduction of pre-poll. It gives a more convenient option to those people who are capable of leaving the house to vote but have very busy schedules on election day and who might not have the time to keep an eye on the letterbox every day.

It is amazing to think that only fairly recently in our history postal voting was the only genuine alternative a lot of people had to voting on election day. I know that most of Gen's co-workers at Bach Hair were young, fit tradies who could easily have attended a polling booth if one were open. That was back in the day when people had to provide a proper reason for applying for a postal vote in the first instance.

We know that at every election more and more Queenslanders and more and more Australians vote at pre-poll. As a result, the need for postal voting for people like my sister and her tradie mates is reduced. I know she is very grateful for the introduction of pre-poll. She has often commented to me that, because she still works every Saturday, she loves the fact that she can vote at a time that is convenient to her and her family.

It is with these fundamental changes in mind that the Belcarra bill makes changes to the postal vote rules. Changing the deadline for the receipt of postal votes by the Electoral Commission, the ECQ, to 7 pm on the day that is 12 days before polling day places more responsibility on voters to request their postal votes in a timely way. This is really important. The 12-day cut-off for postal vote applications implements Soorley report recommendation No. 41, which was for applications to be submitted no later than 10 working days prior to the election. This bill is a bit more generous and provides for 12 days. This includes weekends.

These changes will mean that there is a reasonable prospect of the postal ballot being received before polling day. In fact, the committee noted in its report that some stakeholders considered that the bill's proposed deadline should be extended even further back from polling day, but we have chosen to go with 12 days to allow plenty of time for everybody to get all important applications in.

There are alternatives in place for some people who miss the postal vote deadline. An elector whose address is more than 20 kilometres from a polling booth may apply to be included on the register of special postal voters. Electors in many local government areas have access to pre-poll voting. Telephone voting is also available. The proposed time lines align with the proposed amendments to state election processes. As noted by the committee, they are supported by the ECQ.

It is worth noting the increasing importance of getting all of our polling results back in a timely manner. For example, in the 2015 election in the seat of Mount Ommaney we waited 10 days for the result while those postal votes trickled back, little by little, in the days and weeks after the election. The community were understandably anxious to know the outcome of the election and due to the nature of the election so was the state of Queensland. After the 10-day wait just 126 votes decided the result in Mount Ommaney. Those postal votes were crucial.

Close contests are not unusual in politics. They happen all the time. These changes to postal votes allow those critical postal votes that need to be counted to be received in a timely manner by the voters and then posted back. It is also pertinent to note that, due to the fact that local government elections are fixed date elections, we know today when the next local government election will be. It is easier for voters to remember to request that postal vote early. It can be as simple as setting a diary reminder or popping it in one's calendar.

I am pleased, as are many people in my community, that we have at the state level also adopted the four-year fixed terms after the referendum. Many in my community appreciate certainty on this matter. Schools, churches and community groups can better plan their calendars, specifically their fundraising opportunities. There is nothing more aggravating for a hardworking P&C that has scheduled its school fete than to find out that it has been gazumped by an election. All of their plans are thrown in the air with just a month's notice. This gives them this certainty. We know that P&Cs are big businesses these days. They work hard. Those school fetes are critical to their fundraising calendar. I think it is wonderful we have provided that certainty.

The end result of these changes is that the final result for elections will be known sooner. I think everybody can agree that, with the advances we have seen in other methods of voting, these updates make the legislation very sensible.

I want to finish by reflecting on the excitement and interest that accompanies an election in the community. I know some people say that voters have never been more disengaged, but I have to say that that has not been my experience. As I said, for many schools and community groups, state, local and council elections are a highlight in their fundraising calendar. It is an opportunity to build community capacity. This year during the federal election the iSEE Church at Seventeen Mile Rocks had a bountiful bake sale. Sausage sizzles have their own hashtag and they have their own online following. All of this is to say that polling day itself is very important in our national culture. I hope it is always as important, but so too is postal voting.

Last week I went to Corinda State High School to talk about our government's 60,000 free TAFE places for school leavers. I was there to speak to the next generation of tradies—those men and women who will be working on Saturdays and who will need those additional voting provisions. There were 600 kids there all keen and eager to learn about great jobs in trade. This strong interest in trades into the future shows me that there will always be a need for us to have robust processes in place for people who cannot cast a vote on polling day. That is why these provisions are so important. There are many other provisions that I can speak on, but that is one that I am particularly passionate about. I commend the bills to the House.



Dr ROWAN (Moggill—LNP) (2.20 pm): I rise in this cognate debate to address the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 2 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and the Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. In any democracy and within its associated system of government, and in fact with any public office, transparency, integrity and trust are all fundamental tenets that must be protected. It is an unfortunate reality that in Queensland's recent history these tenets were breached by some governments and certain officeholders as we have seen through the Crime and Corruption Commission's Operation Belcarra report.

Following the complaints, investigation and revelations concerning the conduct of certain candidates contesting the then 2016 Queensland local government elections, it became incredibly important that Queenslanders have their confidence restored in certain local governments and local government representatives, particularly as we approach the 2020 council elections. That being said, it is incredibly unfortunate, and remains concerning, that the reputation of local government in Queensland has been tarnished due to the actions of a small minority of elected representatives. That is why the Liberal National Party will be supporting those amendments contained within the bill that stem directly from the recommendations of the Belcarra report.

As has been articulated in detail by my colleague the Liberal National Party shadow minister for local government and member for Warrego, this legislation aims to implement a number of remaining recommendations of the Belcarra report, as well as certain recommendations from the Soorley report—but that is not all. Concerningly, this legislation also attempts to implement a number of changes supposedly under the guise of integrity, when in reality such changes have no relationship to the Belcarra report. It is incredible, perhaps even ironic, that on a bill aimed at restoring and improving integrity and transparency the Palaszczuk Labor government has apparently chosen to play politics and pursue its own political agenda to the detriment of good government and public governance.

That is the view which was echoed by the Brisbane City Council, the largest local government in Australia, which stated that there are ‘significant aspects of the bill that have no relationship to the Belcarra report but instead are calculated to provide significant partisan political advantage to our political opponents within Brisbane City Council’. In fact, Labor’s brazen partisan manoeuvre was all but confirmed by the *Courier-Mail* in February this year when it was reported—

The CCC did not recommend overhauling the voting system to bring in CPV, however, nor did former Brisbane lord mayor Jim Soorley’s council elections inquiry.

Labor’s Brisbane councillors have been lobbying the State to bring in compulsory preferential voting for council elections.

Labor’s Council Opposition Leader Peter Cumming previously told *The Courier-Mail* Labor could have picked up two extra wards at the last election if CPV had been in place.

At the proverbial eleventh hour, the Palaszczuk Labor government yesterday had an epiphany and scrapped their plans to introduce compulsory preferential voting for local government elections. This is a humiliating backdown for the Labor Minister for Local Government. This is a great win for democracy. There can now be no excuse for Labor to not support the LNP’s bill to abolish compulsory preferential voting in Queensland for state elections. This would be in line with the long-established and accepted Fitzgerald principle.

Quite simply, there remains more than a hint of scepticism to the Palaszczuk Labor government’s efforts to restore integrity and transparency to government. Labor’s track record when it comes to good local government and local government reform has been nothing short of abysmal. Who can forget the Palaszczuk Labor government’s complete incompetence in addressing the serious allegations levelled at the Ipswich City Council where it took 15 people on 86 charges, via the Crime and Corruption Commission, before Labor finally intervened and dissolved the Ipswich City Council last year? The delays and inaction were nothing short of a protection racket for Labor and its Labor aligned council members and candidates at that time.

Specifically, concerning the Ipswich City Council election, the Belcarra report listed damning allegations regarding the perception of a number of Australian Labor Party aligned candidates operating as an undeclared group, given a number of exhibited behaviours including the use of volunteers and questionable donations and management of campaign funds. Whilst Labor did finally act, there were significant delays in the action that they took particularly within this place.


As the Liberal National Party’s state member for Moggill, I have seen firsthand the issues stemming from poor local government and public management at Ipswich City Council. Trust and faith in the Ipswich City Council, particularly among some of my constituents, has been and continues to be badly eroded. That is why I believe it is vitally important that trust and integrity is restored to local government following the Belcarra report and why I support the implementation of many of those recommendations that come directly from that report. It remains an incredible shame, however, that Labor seeks to harm this restoration by virtue of its own conflicted political ambitions.

In my remaining time I would like to briefly turn my attention to the Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Again, while the Liberal National Party will not be opposing this bill, we must take issue with clause 27, granting prisoners who are serving a sentence of less than three years the right to vote. To say that such a change to the Electoral Act is concerning is to put it mildly. No prisoner should have

the right to vote. If you break the law, you forfeit the right to participate in deciding who makes the law. There can be no sound justification whatsoever for such a proposal and fundamental change to our electoral law. Those opposite will argue that this amendment will bring Queensland in line with other jurisdictions in Australia, but that is simply misleading. A simple scan of other jurisdictions shows that this is simply not the case.

Concerns must also be articulated with regard to this bill's intention to change the deadline for postal vote applications from two days prior to the election to 12 days prior to the election. Notwithstanding that the two-day deadline can create inadvertent consequences, the extension of another 10 days is simply excessive. Not only is it excessive, but it goes beyond what was recommended by the Soorley report and again raises questions as to the state Labor government's intent in drafting these two bills and exceeding the scope and recommendations provided in both the Belcarra and Soorley reports.

To conclude, as I have said today, it is crucial, particularly as we approach the local government elections in March 2020, that trust, integrity and accountability are restored to our local government system—a system which has been terribly let down by the partisan and delayed efforts of the Palaszczuk Labor government. Labor has been slow to act and the motivations of many of Labor's actions are at the very least dubious, particularly in the context of Labor's consistent gagging of debate in the 56th Parliament and Labor's record of introducing electoral voting changes for state elections with just 18 minutes notice.

 **Hon. DE FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety, Youth and Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (2.28 pm): I rise to give my support to the cognate debate on the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 2 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and the Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. These bills continue the Palaszczuk Labor government's commitment to local government and other reform. We know that the absolute majority of our councillors and mayors run for office because they want to serve their communities. They do so because it is an honour and a privilege to serve one's local community as an elected official. It is something that we all are so conscious of. It is a really powerful way to do good for your community.

The late well-known and well-loved author Douglas Adams once said, 'To give real service you must add something which cannot be bought or measured with money, and that is sincerity and integrity.' In speaking to these bills, I do wish to acknowledge the many mayors and local councillors I have had the great privilege of meeting as I have travelled around the state as a minister—people who display just those qualities of sincerity and integrity. Their commitment to their local communities is without doubt. I thank those in particular who have taken on board some of the pressing issues that fall within my portfolio. Even though they are not within their local government purview, they are nevertheless key issues that affect their communities—issues such as youth, youth justice, child safety, gender equality, domestic violence and those other issues which we cannot escape if we are really the stewards of our local communities.

I want to acknowledge a few mayors in particular: Mayor Mark Jamieson, Sunshine Coast Regional Council; Mayor Jenny Hill, Townsville; Mayor Karen Williams, Redland City Council; Mayor Dereck Walpo, Aurukun; Mayor Joyce McCulloch, Mount Isa; Mayor Greg Campbell, Cloncurry; Mayor Arnold Murray, Cherbourg; Mayor Keith Campbell, Murgon; Mayor Greg Williamson, Mackay; Mayor Bob Manning, Cairns; Mayor Ross Andrews, Yarrabah; Mayor Vonda Malone, Thursday Island; and Mayor Graeme Schue, Goondiwindi, where I was only a couple of weeks ago. I know it is a great sadness to many of those mayors that some of their former local government colleagues have tarnished the reputation of local government by their actions and diminished some of the trust that the community has in the local government system.

The Palaszczuk Labor government's reform agenda is guided by four key principles: integrity, transparency, diversity and consistency. Serving as an elected official is a huge responsibility at any level, whether it is local, state or federal government. Legislative and policy decisions are not just words on a page or debates had within the four walls of parliamentary or council chambers: they are meaningful, sometimes profound decisions which shape our communities. Councillors elected to local government authorities especially have an enormous ability to affect the lives of everyday Queenslanders. It is far, far more than roads, rates and rubbish, though those things are also important.

The decisions made by local government authorities reach into our homes, workplaces and public spaces and they directly affect the way we conduct our everyday lives. The people most affected by their decisions are often those whose participation in public life is precarious and who have the least

power to directly influence those decisions. That is why it is not simply incumbent on individual politicians to personally commit to integrity. It is also our responsibility to ensure that our local governments operate within a framework which supports, encourages and in fact mandates integrity and transparency and that the community knows that to be the case and that they believe that to be the case. Integrity and transparency must be built into the local government system just as it must be built into the systems surrounding state and federal systems.

We know this is especially true when it comes to elections. We have an expectation as consumers that when we buy a product it matches the description on the packaging, and if we buy a product that does not conform to our expectations we can take it back to the shop for a refund. Unfortunately, there are no refunds on elected officials. If, after the election, the community finds out we did not get what was advertised, there is nowhere to return them or exchange them for something more like we were after.


Our electoral system is a key democratic institution, and every citizen who votes has the right to know who they are voting for. They have a right to know who is funding them and whose interests they are representing, which is why I feel very strongly about the measures in the Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill to increase integrity, transparency and accountability in terms of electoral donations. This bill expands the statutory functions of the Electoral Commission of Queensland to administer and promote compliance with the financial disclosure provisions of the Electoral Act 1992 and corresponding provisions of the Local Government Electoral Act 2011. The bill contains provisions and penalties to counter practices where donations are funnelled through third parties in order to obscure their source.

Queensland has the most transparent political donation system in the nation and we are continuing to improve it. Unfortunately, despite these reforms there are some who are still not prepared to do the right thing and in fact have fought tooth and nail to cement their wish to not do the right thing. They have thought of every trick in the book to try to get around the measures our government has put in place to ensure transparency. Of course, the people we are speaking about are the LNP. We brought back the disclosure threshold of \$1,000 that the LNP challenged in the Supreme Court and lost, so they came up with their diamond memberships with a fee of \$990—just under the \$1,000 disclosure threshold. We led the country in creating a real-time disclosure system for political donations and we banned property developer donations. We did that because the Crime and Corruption Commission found they posed a clear and genuine corruption risk. The LNP voted against these crucial reforms.

In contrast to our agenda regarding donations, the LNP wanted to keep their donations a secret. In fact, they have done everything they possibly could to keep them a secret, including using the Commonwealth parliament and going to the highest court to hide donations. In July last year Mr Gary Spence, the then president of the LNP, instituted High Court proceedings against the state of Queensland challenging the validity of recent amendments to the Electoral Act 1992 to prohibit political donations from property developers. On 16 April the High Court ruled that the Queensland legislation was valid and the Commonwealth's was not. Mr Spence was ordered to pay all legal costs, and the Electoral Commission of Queensland has determined that the LNP should pay donors back.

We are talking here about now introducing a framework to instil community confidence in local government. The LNP has singled-handedly redefined 'tricky' to the Queensland community. This government will continue to do what it takes to ensure that our electoral system is as robust, transparent and accountable as it can be and that, when it comes to elected officials, what you see is what you get and there are no hidden surprises. In the words of another author, CS Lewis, 'Integrity is doing the right thing, even when no-one is watching.'

The Palaszczuk Labor government broadened the very definition of corruption and gave us the CCC. The same independent umpire, then known as the CMC, saw 26 staff sacked under the LNP's administration. We gave the CCC stronger powers to investigate. That ability is critically important so that Queenslanders can have confidence in the systems and processes around government in this state. We are committed to integrity, transparency and accountability in all that we do. These bills build on our record and I commend both to the House.

 **Mr KNUTH** (Hill—KAP) (2.36 pm): I rise to speak to the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 2 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019. This is a huge bill that relates to implementing stage 2 of Belcarra. We have already dealt with stage 1. I acknowledge that the minister was in Cairns yesterday or the day before speaking with councils and listening to some of their concerns, but I believe this bill would have been much smaller had the minister listened to councils beforehand.


We have to be careful with regard to the layers of bureaucracy and putting all of that pressure on councils. I know of at least two or three people who wanted to run for council or who were on council who said that as a result of the scrutiny and all the bureaucracy they are not going to run again. We need to encourage good people to put themselves forward to represent their communities. We do not want layers of bureaucracy and scrutiny to the point where councillors cannot make decisions for their constituents. In some of the smaller communities people are all related to each other and they all know each other. If a mayor or councillor cannot make a decision or vote on a decision because of a conflict of interest, there is no point in him standing. This is where we need to be careful about the level of scrutiny of councillors and mayors in those smaller communities so there is not too much pressure placed on them.

I am not sure how many councils there are now. I remember when Peter Beattie first introduced legislation to force councils to amalgamate. I believe that was probably one of the greatest attacks on rural and regional Queensland we have ever seen. You could not hear a pin drop in the House because no-one believed it, not even the backbenchers of the Labor government. The member for Bundamba was there at the time. Prior to that councils could make decisions with their local communities. They participated with their local communities and they ran the Christmas breakups. They provided the chairs. They did a lot of things to support those communities. A lot of this was taken off us. I am not saying that councils are not given that opportunity, but councils had a huge involvement in those communities before that forced amalgamation.

In relation to compulsory preferential voting, there is no doubt that parties will support it. It depends on the political environment at the time. I go back to the former premier in 2001, Peter Beattie. There was a perception that they were going to lose government, particularly with the roting issues where a number of ministers had lost their jobs. The former premier pursued the 'just vote 1' policy for the Labor Party and that saw the Labor government returned. There was a lot of frustration at the time because of One Nation and the splitting of the vote between the Liberals, the Nationals and One Nation and it brought about a Labor government with a majority of 66.

That is where the coalition were passionately pushing for changes and wanting to see compulsory preferential voting in Queensland. It was not until they amalgamated, as they are now, and after the 'vote 1', but it also favours the federal Liberal coalition. I do not think they are going to change compulsory preferential voting because they have governed 17 out of the last 25 years so that compulsory preferential voting suits them. I do not even think the Labor Party in the federal sphere would want to change that as well. With compulsory preferential voting, they will jump this way or that way; it is about what suits them at the time.

I am concerned about the high levels of bureaucracy within council. We need to ensure that councils have that autonomy. We want to ensure that councils make decisions and do not have the big brother state government or federal government standing over the top of them and overruling them. We need to ensure that those communities have their say by electing local councils that represent the communities. That is very important, and I wanted to bring that to the attention of the House.

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (2.42 pm): I rise to speak in support of the cognate bills before the House today. All members of this House have a solemn role in safeguarding our democracy, and all around the world we are seeing what happens when trust in our democratic institutions diminishes. It is worth reminding the House just how much work needed to be done to reform our electoral system when the Palaszczuk government first came into government. This work was required due to the concerted efforts of the Newman government to undermine and water down Queensland's electoral integrity laws.

Despite the efforts of the Newman acolytes opposite, the Palaszczuk government has proved that we are up to the task. Elements of the cognate bills build upon some of the very first actions of the newly elected Palaszczuk government in 2015. In particular, I am very proud that we were able to lower the disclosure threshold for political donations back down to \$1,000 after the Newman government raised it to \$13,500. We have heard today how far those opposite are prepared to go to keep their information about donors from Queensland voters—hiding \$3 million worth of donations. That is shameful.

The Palaszczuk government has also implemented a property developer donation ban which was recommended by the CCC in the Belcarra report. The Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill builds on these accountability measures. In order to retain the integrity of Queensland's disclosure regime, the bill will impose an obligation that entities disclose the true source of a political gift or loan. This obligation applies to the intermediary entities who are required to inform a gift or loan recipient the true source of the political donation.

Similarly, the ultimate recipients of donations will be required to disclose the true source of the gift or loan in their disclosure documents. These provisions will prevent both donors and their recipients circumventing our disclosure laws as well as our prohibited donor legislation. One could imagine a scenario where a prohibited donor would seek to filter a donation to a political party through an entity that was not a prohibited donor. This bill will curb any such possibility.

Under the new legislation, financial records relating to electoral funding and expenditure will be retained by parties, candidates, third parties and the ECQ for five years from the date of a claim or return being made. This change complements the change made in respect of the time in which prosecutions arising from the Electoral Act can be commenced—going from three years to four years. This change means that prosecuting authorities can be assured they will have the relevant financial records available to them.

The EOLA Bill also creates a more professionalised election day experience for all Queenslanders. The bill updates sections 31 and 32 of the Electoral Act 1992 to allow the Electoral Commission of Queensland to appoint an elector as the returning officer or assistant returning officer for an electoral district. Currently, the Governor in Council is permitted to make the appointments to these roles on the recommendation of the commission. Recommendation 4 of the independent panel's review of the conduct of the 2016 local government elections, the referendum and the Toowoomba South by-election was that the practice of the Governor in Council appointing returning officers for state elections should be abolished and all returning officers should be appointed by the ECQ. The Local Government Electoral Act 2011 already uses this process.

This change will support a more consistent approach and transparent processes for the selection and appointment of returning officers, which was also a recommendation by the independent panel. The change will reduce the regulatory burden and costs for government and will provide greater administrative efficiencies and flexibility for the ECQ in managing returning officers. In accordance with other recommendations made by the independent panel, the ECQ is introducing an open merit process and performance assessment for returning officer roles and seeks greater flexibility to effectively manage these positions. For example, they require flexibility to manage the positions in the event of illness or underperformance. For this purpose, the ECQ is building a contingent workforce for the appointment of replacement returning officers when required.

ECQ staff will also allow for the preliminary processing of declaration votes to create efficiencies in the way votes are counted. The bills will amend the deadline for the receipt of applications for postal votes by the Electoral Commission of Queensland. An application for a postal vote will need to be received before 7 pm on the day that is 12 days before polling day for that relevant elector to receive a postal vote. This will ordinarily mean that the cut-off will be 7 pm on the second Monday before polling day. Currently, this deadline is 7 pm on the Wednesday before polling day. This does not reflect Australia Post's delivery standards. Currently, the deadline may disenfranchise electors, even those who try to comply with it but have a very limited or no prospect of receiving their ballot papers prior to polling day.


The amendment would ensure that voters request a postal vote in a timely way and provide sufficient time for them to receive and return their ballot paper and declaration envelope. There will also be a requirement for Electoral Commission Queensland to action a request for postal votes as soon as possible after receiving it. This will provide statutory backing to the timely dispatch of postal votes by the commission to support the franchise of postal voters. The bill implements the 10-day cut-off recommended by the independent panel report and requested by Electoral Commission Queensland. The end result is the same. The bill is worded to require a 12-day cut-off to take into account any public holidays that may fall in this period, which would arise if an extraordinary general election was called.

Changing the deadline for the receipt of postal votes by the Electoral Commission of Queensland to 7 pm on the day that is 12 days before polling day places some responsibility on voters to request postal votes in a timely way. However, this outcome is preferable to a potential postal voter complying with the law and then not receiving their ballot paper due to postal delays. There are certain alternatives in place for some of those who miss the postal vote application deadline. Pre-poll voting is available and the telephone voting service is available to certain eligible electors. Taken together, these changes represent an increase in the accountability for political parties, candidates and third parties and also provide a more streamlined election day experience for us all.

I commenced my contribution by reflecting on the way in which the Newman government trashed our electoral integrity laws. We cannot take our electoral system for granted and we need to be vigilant about any threats to the integrity of our democracy. The need for vigilance is heightened when we hear some of the contributions from those opposite. Hearing from some of the members opposite during this

debate is like hearing Campbell Newman all over again. For example, the member for Toowoomba South likes to portray himself as relatively moderate and a vanilla variety of the LNP operative. He almost gets away with it when we compare him to the former shadow attorney-general the member for Kawana, but he gave the game away yesterday. Upset that he could not get a run with his prepared lines on compulsory preferential voting and conceding that the EOLA Bill was relatively uncontroversial, the member for Toowoomba South could not help but have a crack at someone—at anyone—so he turned his attention to the chair of the independent panel Jim Soorley. He referred to what he called the ‘so-called independent panel’. He could not commit to actually saying that Mr Soorley was not up to the job and had nothing to say about the other two independent panel members, but his approach is typical of the former Newman government: if someone is not on your team, attack them. It is despicable to cast aspersions on the perception of integrity and the independence of the panel, particularly when you cannot identify any actual deficiencies in their report.

The changes proposed in the cognate bills are common sense and bolster the accountability and transparency of our democracy. The Palaszczuk government will never allow us to return to the dark days of the Newman government. I commend the bills to the House.

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (2.51 pm): In rising to make a contribution to this very important cognate debate I would like to recognise the importance of local government in Queensland and salute the great job that the local governments across the state of Gregory are doing in what are very dire circumstances. At a time when we are facing our eighth failed wet season, at a time when it can no longer be denied that we are being devastated by a drought of historical proportions, Gregory's local governments have played a crucial, significant role in sustaining their local communities and their local economies. This highlights the fundamental role that local governments play in the proper administration of a state as geographically vast as Queensland. Therefore, it is vital that Queenslanders can have a high level of trust and confidence in their local governments.

It was offensive to many to see the trust eroded by the endemic corruption at the Ipswich City Council. It was also offensive, but not surprising, to see how Labor tried to silence their own members who tried to blow the whistle. It was also offensive to see a Labor cover-up continue for many years to protect members of the Labor Party and it was offensive that, when the smell could no longer be ignored, it took an incompetent government three goes to remove the Ipswich City Council. The associated prosecutions are still ongoing, so I will say no more on that account. However, I will say the final insult is to see Labor now attempting to use this sorry saga as a way to advance their own Labor Party interests over the interests of Queensland and good government in Queensland.

On what basis do I say this? In the form it went through the committee, more than half the clauses in this bill—some 58 per cent of the clauses of the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 2 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019—do not relate to any findings of the Crime and Corruption Commission's Belcarra report on local government or on the Soorley report on the ECQ process in the 2016 local government elections. Take the proposed imposition of compulsory preferential voting. This is a change that is so fundamental it would have changed the nature of local government in Queensland entirely. Those with long memories will recall that out of the Fitzgerald inquiry came an independent and comprehensive review of electoral laws and processes. This was the EARC review and it is still unparalleled. That review found preferential voting to be complicated and flawed.

The shortcomings of compulsory preferential voting are only sharpened when they are applied to local government, but until yesterday the Palaszczuk government had shown every determination to foist it upon Queensland. Until yesterday they had said it was not about bringing political parties into local government elections. Until yesterday it was only about the Palaszczuk government protecting integrity. Suddenly yesterday our integrity was deemed safe and the compulsory preferential voting clause was gone—a backflip with a last-minute dismount. While we have to give thanks for that, let me spell that out clearly: no integrity report ever recommended compulsory preferential voting for local government—not the Fitzgerald report, not the EARC report, not the CCC Belcarra report and not the Soorley review. At least this backflip will save ratepayers millions of dollars and will keep local government local.

The LNP knows that the job of local government is to stand up for their local communities. We know that that happens when state governments work with them. This means listening to their concerns and hopes for their local communities and working with them to put solutions in place—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr McArdle): Member for Warrego and Minister, not across the chamber. Thank you very much.

Mr MILLAR:—in answer to those needs and support those hopes. When in government, the LNP respected local government as an equal partner in ensuring our regions flourished. We tried to reduce red-tape and give them the tools they needed.

Local mayors and councillors felt very tarnished and insulted by the ongoing saga at the Ipswich City Council. They are to be congratulated for the wholehearted efforts they have made—mayors, councillors and council staff—to introduce and work with stage 1 of the Belcarra reforms. The first stage saw the establishment of the Office of the Independent Assessor as a part of the councillor complaints system. The Office of the Independent Assessor has been welcomed by Queensland as providing a clear path for councillor complaints to be looked at independently. It is disappointing in the extreme that while Labor introduced the reforms they do not adequately resource the OIA. Now we find we could be going into the next local government election period with unprocessed complaints still hanging over some councillors and some individuals from the current term of government. This is simply unacceptable for them. Not only is it potentially unfair to individual councillors and mayors but it undermines the Office of the Independent Assessor itself. In fact, it means Queenslanders still cannot feel full trust in local government. Just as QCAT has publicly pleaded for adequate resources to ensure Queenslanders can trust in administrative justice, I plead with the Premier, the Treasurer and also the minister to urgently provide adequate resources to the OIA to ensure they can clear this complaint backlog.

I want to say a few words now in relation to conflicts of interest. I know this topic is front of mind for all Queenslanders at the moment. When we look at the conflict of interest for local government we need to consider the context of population size. The Queensland government should avoid imposing on all councils—and I have spoken to the minister about rural, remote and regional councils—the standards and rules which have been developed for populous councils like Brisbane or those in the south-east corner. If this sounds like special pleading it is, but there is a valid case here for remote councils. Take Diamantina shire. It covers 95,000 square kilometres—twice the size of Denmark—but its population is only 287 people. Note that is people. The number of ratepayers is even less. I think it is down to six or seven. A very small number of these ratepayers account for the majority of the shire's businesses and therefore the majority of the shire's rates.


We cannot bring in conflict of interest rules that would exclude everyone who wants to stand for council. The population is so small and the interconnections through family, business and shared interests are so dense that insensitive rules could well exclude everyone. There is an old joke in this part of the world of the Diamantina in outback Queensland that you should not offend anyone because they will always turn out to be related to you; no-one offends the storekeeper or the publican. I am proud that we have these far-flung communities, but when we legislate we must accommodate them or we will legislate them out of existence.

Lastly, I come to the changes to postal voting under the Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019. Again, I fear the impact on my rural and remote constituents. Many people in Gregory are permanently registered as postal voters because of where they live. Because of the size of the shire districts, many councils find postal voting for council elections and by-elections the only sensible way to conduct a poll. At some point many constituents will find themselves away on polling day simply because our location means we all travel to get things done. We travel frequently and we travel far, so postal voting is a key right of Gregory constituents. Currently, an elector can request a postal vote as long as the ECQ receives the request no later than 7 pm on the Wednesday before polling day. The bill moves this deadline to no later than 12 days prior to the polling day. As polling day is usually a Saturday, in practical terms this means it must be received by 7 pm on the Monday two weeks prior.

These Labor amendments go beyond what was recommended by the Soorley report. It recommended moving the deadline to no later than 10 days. The justification for either change is a deterioration in the Australia Post service. The move is required to ensure that the postal ballot requests can realistically be delivered to voters prior to the polling day. This explanation does not quite cut it for me. It can take three weeks for snail mail to deliver a letter from a Longreach office to my Emerald office, so I do not see how either change genuinely addresses anything. In a nutshell, you are solving a non-existent problem with a non-existent solution. I fear that it will deprive many rural and remote Queenslanders of their vote. I suspect that we may find ourselves back examining this issue in the not-too-distant future if only because it will cause problems in terms of compulsory voting obligations on every Queenslanders.

Finally, local councils right across regional and rural Queensland do a fantastic job. I reiterate to the minister the difference between councils in far-flung areas like Diamantina, Barcoo, Paroo—in the member for Warrego's area—and Quilpie that do struggle in terms of some of these laws. We are finding it harder and harder to find people who want to stand for council. We have got to remember that in the smaller councils and the smaller communities there are going to be issues around conflict of interest that we need to address, but we also need to encourage more people to stand up for their communities and be involved in their local council. I plead with the minister. Our rural, remote and regional councils do a fantastic job. They need all the assistance they can to ensure that we continue to see them doing a great job.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr McArdle): Before I call the next member, the noise level is rising in the House. If you are having a conversation, please take it outside.

 **Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (3.01 pm): A lot has been said about integrity in this parliament in relation to this bill, but integrity comes from within. It is a principle of life. It is a principle you live by every moment of every day—that is if you have integrity. It really annoys me that the word 'integrity' is being shopped around by both sides of this parliament as if integrity is only for the Labor Party, the LNP, the Katters or the Independents, because it is values that come from within your heart and soul. Everybody in this House should learn to have integrity as their No. 1 principle. When combined with persistency, courage, wisdom and trust, this parliament and local government would be a better place if all of us not only had integrity but practised it as well.

Today I will talk more about Ipswich City Council. I have some new information for the benefit of MPs. I am well aware of the forthcoming trial, so I will not go anywhere near that.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I thank the member for that, but we will bring the member back if she strays.

Mrs MILLER: Thank you very much. We know that the claims by some that Ipswich city councillors were dismissed because of the action of a few corrupt individuals are false. The council was dismissed by a unanimous vote of this parliament because of the wide spectrum of governance and integrity failures across council as identified by the CCC, in other words because of the actions and the inactions of many councillors over many years. I would like to talk briefly about some of the issues of concern, because we all know that each councillor had discretionary community grants that they could approve for community organisations without any process for assessing the merits or otherwise in relation to these funds. No consideration was given on a whole-of-council basis as to whether the funding should have been spent on city-wide projects rather than divisional initiatives.

In the 2018 council budget, some \$1.4 million was available to hand out in this way by all the different councillors. In 2018, each councillor controlled about \$680,000 per annum in divisional infrastructure funds. This was used by them to fund popular small infrastructure or capital works projects in each division without any process, again, for the overall prioritisation of capital spending across the city. In the 2018 budget, some \$7 million was made available to councillors to allocate in this way. I am advised that the divisional allocation could also be carried forward to future years if it were underspent. I am also advised that one councillor had a war chest of almost \$2 million to spend on projects in that person's division in the lead-up to the March 2020 local government elections. By anyone's view, that is simply disgraceful.

Ipswich was one of the few city councils in Queensland—I am not talking about big regional councils—where each councillor had their own office staffed by between one and three council employees. The annual operating cost of these offices was more than \$2 million. Allocating this amount of ratepayers' money towards unnecessary administration also reinforced the 'my patch' approach of many councillors. When added up, it came to something like \$10.5 million in administration costs for councillors, money that could have gone to other projects city-wide. That \$10.5 million consists of the total household rate base of these suburbs—all of Redbank Plains plus Blackstone, or all the houses of Goodna, Bellbird Park, Ripley and Blackstone, paying rates of roughly \$1,400 a year just to pay for city councillors to have some money to give out to community groups.

I also want to talk about Ipswich rugby league. I am advised that effectively council has been financially underwriting any operating losses of the Ipswich rugby league for many years. Apparently, this was negotiated some years ago by councillors to acquire the tenure rights to the North Ipswich Reserve. When this was negotiated, there was no apparent time limit to this deal. The people of Ipswich need to know when this was negotiated, by whom and at what cost? I believe that that needs to be investigated. Also, there was a heads of agreement with the Brisbane Lions AFL Club. Councillors had committed to various base works for the Springfield stadium without any clear understanding of the

actual costs nor the liabilities attached to this commitment. The budget allocated in 2018 for this was manifestly inadequate for the scope of the work to which council had committed. This was mismanagement and misconduct, but it was nice photo opportunities.

In relation to the piecemeal approach to handing out these infrastructure funds willy-nilly, there is a situation whereby the community sport and recreation facilities are definitely under-resourced and underfunded. That is no good at all. In fact, a lot of our facilities will privatise. People in Ipswich are saying that they do not want them privatised, that they want the assets back in council hands. Also, divisional councillors encourage many people to contact their office for complaints. The point is that 95 per cent of the complaints always went through the 24-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week council telephone number. Councillors were only ever dealing with five per cent of the complaints; therefore, you have to wonder why it was needed in the first place.

The Local Government Act is also very specific in relation to the fact that councillors were never allowed to and should not direct operational staff. However, councillors directed staff on a regular basis such as even moving work crews from programmed work to address specific issues that the council wanted. One councillor had a regular monthly tour across his division with operational staff, directing where specific works were to be undertaken. In anyone's language, this is misconduct and it should have been heard by the Councillor Conduct Tribunal.


In relation to councillors putting in place policies and procedures, they used to have mandatory notification of and consultation on any operational work to be done in their division. This included not just roads, rats and rates types of things but also a right for them to veto this work. In other words, issues such as food permits, licensing applications, compliance issues, legal matters and facilities maintenance could be overridden or vetoed by the councillor. This is against the Local Government Act. Delegations were even amended to note that officers had to seek the local councillor's endorsement before the work could begin. This was absolutely absurd, ridiculous and unlawful.

Council also had a formal, legally binding obligation to deliver certain roads around the Springfield urban growth area when traffic volume reached defined levels. This was just ignored by the Ipswich City Council, under the direction of former councillors. What we find is that in Springfield traffic builds up which is just absolutely incredible. I have a lot more that I could go on with, but—

Mr Bleijie: I will move for more time.

Mrs MILLER: I will be here for another 12 months! Thank you for your kind offer, but I can move my own motion for more time. I do not know whether it would be passed, though.

When we are looking at Ipswich City Council, never let it be said that it was not a Labor MP that pointed out the Labor council's problems. I did it. I am very proud that I did it. Even though it got me offside with many people in the Labor Party, I am very proud of my own actions. I could not have done it alone. When you are looking at integrity, you do not only have to have integrity. I also ask every member of this parliament to look up Ephesians 6:10-18, because that is what got me through.

 **Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (3.11 pm): I rise to speak in the cognate debate of the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 2 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 and the Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019. I say at the outset that I take this very seriously, as I am sure most members of the House do. It is an important thing. Local government is a very important matter, particularly, I believe, in the bush. Local government potentially has more impact on the everyday lives of the citizens of Southern Downs than may be the case in a metropolis. I will allow the city members to disagree with me on that if they wish.

I would like to say how much I appreciated the contribution by the shadow Attorney-General, the member for Toowoomba South. He pointed out that he had a speech prepared that focused on the technicalities of the bill and that he was going to go through it in a forensic fashion, rather like my honourable friend the member for Warrego did in her contribution. He said that in the hour preceding his speech he decided that he would speak more generally about some of the issues surrounding the most recent developments. It did not escape the notice of anyone in the chamber or anyone watching from their office that there are two key departures from what the government has been talking about for some time in relation to this bill. As we all know, they relate to conflicts of interest and registers of interest as well as compulsory preferential voting. The member for Toowoomba South made the point that it was almost not worth having that component of the bill at all, considering that some of the most contentious components have been excised.

It is very interesting that the component relating to compulsory preferential voting has been removed. I sit on a committee of this parliament. I wish that I had known at the time of the recent public hearing what I know now—that is, the government is unsure about whether compulsory preferential

voting is the right thing to do. The fact that it has been removed from this bill suggests that it is the wrong thing to do. I pay respect to the Minister for Local Government for his honesty in saying to the House that the Premier had listened closely to the views of local government. Obviously the local government community had been successful in lobbying the government to remove compulsory preferential voting from its proposals. I think that is a good thing for Queensland. The question then is: does Labor really support compulsory preferential voting? Perhaps that is for another time.

I cannot resist responding to the member for Logan's contribution to the second reading debate yesterday. He talked about how the Labor Party 'takes people with us'. I found that impossible to reconcile with the sordid history of electoral law in the last 20 or so years under Labor governments. Of course, we are all familiar—I was not in the chamber at the time as I was not a member—with that lamentable occasion when, with 18 minutes notice, the state government junked a fundamental reform of the post-Fitzgerald era; that is, optional preferential voting, a system the Labor Party itself committed to in the post-Fitzgerald environment. I have seen the material provided by the then state secretary of the Australian Labor Party, Wayne Swan, in-principle supporting optional preferential voting and particularly speaking about the importance of making sure that the votes of electors are able to be discerned, as long as their intention can be seen from what is on the ballot paper. In my opinion at least, it is clear that optional preferential voting provides better scope to realise that intention.

We are all here, frankly, because of corruption in a prominent South-East Queensland council. The member for Bundamba spoke about that earlier. I agree with the member for Bundamba: she ought to be proud of what she has done. It was not an easy route to take to highlight the corruption that was endemic there or to take on powerful interests associated with the Labor Party, but she did so—to the lasting benefit of Queensland. Perhaps this bill could be called the 'Local Government Electoral (Member for Bundamba) Anti-Corruption Bill'. That would probably be an appropriate recognition of her service to the state in this matter.

I will now talk about some of the things said yesterday by my honourable friend the member for Mermaid Beach, speaking as he does with the authentic voice of someone who has been in local government. There are a few members in the chamber who have that authentic voice. I believe I am looking at one in the minister himself. He was not a member of local government? Well, probably one in every five members would have been. There is a lot of experience in relation to this, particularly, I would say, on our side.

The member for Mermaid Beach, who was a Gold Coast mayor, made the observation that, while in no way suggesting that he or I or the LNP oppose the important recommendations of the Belcarra report, the role of councillors has been diminished over time in terms of their freedom of action. It is vital that they are subject to accountability and that there are rigorous processes to detect and prosecute corruption in councillors. I think we need to be careful that the mechanisms we employ do not disempower councillors and have them always jumping at shadows. Yesterday the member for Jordan made the observation that there are over 1,000 complaints currently with the Office of the Independent Assessor. That is not an appropriate way to measure the efficacy of anti-corruption mechanisms in our state. I suggest that shows that, given that 80 per cent of complaints are dismissed without even being investigated, there are a lot of political shenanigans going on between candidates or councillors who have opposing views or who differ personally, to use that system to make each other's lives hard.

I take on board what the member for Mermaid Beach said in that it perhaps makes those who would make great councillors think twice about whether or not they want to embark on a career where they are increasingly subordinate to an empowered CEO who is potentially favoured in terms of their access to resources in defending criticism or accusations of wrongdoing. That could lead us to have ineffective councillors or councils that are dominated by councillors who do not have the strength to restrain a wayward or dominating CEO or staff.

In relation to that issue, I want to table some newspaper articles from my electorate of Southern Downs concerning some of the things which can happen when a council becomes beholden to the proper electoral influences on councillors. One council in my area has accumulated vast Stasi style notes on opponents of the council—on their movements, on their facial expressions, all of that sort of stuff. There was a very revealing article about that in the *Southern Free Times* on 13 September 2018, and I table that.


Tabled paper: Article from the *Southern Free Times*, dated 13 September 2018, titled 'Don't look sideways—and keep quiet' [1843].

There was also a recent report in the current edition of the *Southern Free Times* regarding some concerning, I would say, revelations surrounding the approval of the solar farm outside Warwick. As the local member of parliament, I can say with absolute certainty that that is a very unpopular move and was pushed through with the use of a code assessable pathway. Some of the revelations there are at length because it has taken a long time to secure the necessary disclosures under right to information, but that has revealed some concerning interactions. I also table that report for the benefit of the House.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Southern Free Times*, dated 10 October 2019, titled 'Special Report: "Political pressure" behind solar farm', page 1 of 2 [1844].

Tabled paper: Article from the *Southern Free Times*, dated 10 October 2019, titled 'Special Report: "Political Pressure" behind solar farm', page 2 of 2 [1845].

I want to stress again that I do not in any way at all suggest that the proposals in the Belcarra report or the recommendations are not right. I respect them and the members on this side of the House respect them as well, but I would just caution all of us that it is best to have councillors who feel that they do have some freedom of action and who are accountable electorally to their constituents. That results in people who know and understand their community and people who have the support of their community making the decisions for their area. Excessive regulation and attempts to impose restrictions on councillors may not necessarily be the best thing for the people of Queensland, so I ask members to think about that. I do support the bill. However, we will have some amendments.

 **Mr BROWN** (Capalaba—ALP) (3.21 pm): I rise to speak in support of the two cognate bills that are before the House—the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 2 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and the Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill—and I do so as a representative of a council area where predominantly the councillors and the mayor do a fantastic job. I have a really good working relationship with three out of the four councillors who represent my areas. However, in recent years I have seen the need for the reform agenda that we have brought forward with regard to the integrity of councillors and councils. That is an unfortunate situation, but the Redlands in division 9—that is, Capalaba—has Councillor Paul Gleeson, who is probably the worst behaving councillor in Queensland at the moment.

Mr Whiting: What about the bloke from Noosa?

Mr BROWN: He outdoes the councillor for Noosa with his misogynistic comments towards women. He leaves him for dead. A recent statement from the tribunal with regard to Councillor Gleeson handed down four more misconduct charges against Councillor Gleeson totalling \$2,100 in fines which brings him to a grand total in just this term of 15 sustained allegations of misconduct and inappropriate conduct, 13 of which relate to social media comments.

Kathleen Florian went on to detail in the press release that the matters related to posts that were intimidatory and unfitting, with a photograph identifying members of the community and personal information of individuals; disclosing non-public details obtained by Councillor Gleeson in the course of his duties regarding an individual's freedom of information request which put the council at risk of a possible contravention of the law; and comments about individuals which were not further elaborated on in the published reasons. The press release went on to detail a sustained misconduct charge in which he verbally intimidated and threatened a fellow councillor.

As I said, these are just the most recent four misconduct charges out of 15. This goes to this round of reforms we see in front of us, in particular the training aspect of the reforms. I do not know if that would have helped in this case. I do know that Councillor Gleeson has received social media training as part of his punishment but has again completely ignored his roles and responsibilities under the law in that regard. I do note that the three confirmed candidates who are hoping to put their hand up against Councillor Gleeson will take part in the training and no doubt will conduct themselves in a 100 per cent better manner than Councillor Gleeson.

The member for Bancroft interjected earlier with regard to the Noosa *Bachelorette* contestant and some of the comments he has made. I note that the Noosa mayor took swift action to refer those comments to the OIA and also came out strongly and said that the councillor should resign. As I said in a contribution in this House a couple of weeks ago, the DV and misogynistic comments that Councillor Gleeson put on his social media platforms yet again have been referred to the Office of the Independent Assessor by not only the mayor but also the federal Liberal member for Bowman, Andrew Laming.

I wish that the Redland mayor would also take a stronger line with regard to this councillor and say that he should resign, because in the past when a councillor who was not on the mayor's ticket was found to have porn on their computer she was so outraged that she called for his resignation. However,

when a councillor who is on her ticket has received 15 sustained misconduct and inappropriate conduct findings and has been referred again by her to the OIA, she has not sought to make the same statement of resignation for Councillor Gleeson.

That leads me on to the next part of the bill with regard to changing the legislation to identify those running on the same ticket. This is an important reform because it lends transparency and more information to voters to know how a group is conducting themselves and whether they are using the benefits of collaboration to further their ticket and obviously their election prospects, and I table the mayor's how-to-vote card from the 2016 Redland election.

Tabled paper: Photograph depicting council candidates for Redland City Council election [1846].

Tabled paper: Photograph of how-to-vote card for mayoral candidate Karen Williams for Redland City Council election [1847].

On the front cover it says—

Vote for a Mayor who WILL keep Redlands on track.

It has a '1' against Karen Williams's name. On the back it says—

Don't Risk It!

Support candidates that support these pledges:

It then goes through the list of candidates, one of which is Councillor Paul Gleeson, and then it lists eight pledges. I want to quickly go through the pledges, but unfortunately I do not think we could legislate to ensure that politicians kept these pledges. I want to go through and tick them off to see whether they have kept their pledges to the people of Redlands. The first is 'fix traffic congestion'. No, no major roadworks have happened in the Redlands. In fact, year on year the roads budget has been cut. The second is 'keep rate rises low'. Recently in the *Cairns Post* there was an article showing that for the Redlands the median value price per rates is the highest in Queensland and that a 43 per cent increase in rates above Brisbane CPI has occurred during this term. The next is 'seal all dirt roads'. The member for Redlands would know this very well. In the southern Moreton Bay islands, are all of the roads sealed over there?

Ms Richards: No.

Mr BROWN: No? There is another failure. The next is 'increase pension discounts'. No, that never happened. The next is 'implement free city circle minibus'. That happened for about four weeks over Christmas but was then taken away, so no. The next is 'build more boat ramps'. No, that has not happened either.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stewart): Through the chair.

Mr BROWN: The next is 'keep dumps free'. That has happened, so one out of eight pledges has been kept. I do not understand when they say 'don't risk it', because the voters did risk it and they did not get the outcomes that were pledged. There are important reforms in both the electoral bill and the local government bill. They build on our reform agenda to ensure that there is openness and transparency in local government and also with regard to donations and where gifts come from. These reforms are very much needed.

Before I finish, I table the councillor complaints register for Redland City Council.

Tabled paper: Document, undated, titled 'Redland City Council Councillor Complaints Register' [1848].

These are much needed reforms—reforms that I know were well supported when the member for Redlands and I held a public forum engaging with our local constituencies about these changes. We received some feedback in regard to compulsory preferential voting. That came only from the councillors themselves. I also think that there was a bit of a misunderstanding. I remember one councillor saying, 'You can't change to compulsory preferential voting. We love first-past-the-post.' I had to explain to him the difference between optional preferential voting and first-past-the-post voting. He ran against only a couple of candidates and won on the primary vote. I do not know why he was so concerned about compulsory preferential voting when he won on the primary vote. I commend both of these bills to the House. They are much needed reforms and I look forward to further reforming integrity and accountability for local councils.



Hon. YM D'ATH (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (3.30 pm), in reply: I would like to thank all of the members for their contribution to this cognate debate on what are important bills before this House. I would like to address the main issues that have been raised by the

opposition members in this debate. I think that it is worthy of spending some time on these particular issues as the opposition has stated that, at the very least in relation to the prisoner voting amendments, it will be voting against those amendments in the bill.

As was observed by the member for Toowoomba South, the Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill is an uncontroversial bill. However, that did not prevent some members from trying to create controversy. The member for Broadwater in particular was so desperate to create controversy that he tried to claim that Queensland was changing its prisoner voting laws beyond the Commonwealth's approach. You have to be pretty desperate to create controversy when you start creating your own facts. I know that the member for Broadwater was quite confused yesterday. He kept referring to me as the 'shadow' Attorney-General. I am sure he wishes I were, but I am not; I am the Attorney-General. In fact, he was getting quite mixed up in the comments that he was making.

A government member: A nerve got touched.

Mrs D'ATH: I take that interjection. I think a nerve got touched. Yesterday, the member for Broadwater said the 'shadow'—

... Attorney-General has mentioned that we are the only state that prohibits prisoners from voting. The—
and I will leave out 'shadow'—

... Attorney-General says that the changes bring us into line with other states.

Mr Crisafulli says further—

I make two points for the Attorney's consideration. Firstly, our changes in most cases exceed the minimum threshold set by other states by three times.

That is wrong—completely wrong. I will get to how wrong that is shortly. He went on to say—

I would question whether that is overreach.

It is not overreach when what he said is wrong in the first place. He said further—

The Attorney, in a well-researched and well-articulated point—

I thank the member for Broadwater. I quote again—

The Attorney, in a well-researched and well-articulated point, mentioned that the changes align us with federal laws. She did not mention the different length of time. We are proposing three times longer.

That is wrong. Yes, I was well researched and well articulated in my point. Unfortunately, the member for Broadwater was certainly not well researched and certainly not well articulated in his point. Clearly, it was flawed and I will tell members why. The reality is that the changes to prisoner voting, which will allow individuals serving a sentence of less than three years to vote, reflect the current state of affairs in the Commonwealth law. For the benefit of the member for Broadwater—

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mrs D'ATH: I note the interjection from the member for Kawana. I am trying to clarify for one of his own shadow ministers the facts, because he has put on the record that what we are doing does not align us with the Commonwealth and that the Commonwealth allows only prisoners who are sentenced to one year or shorter to vote. That statement is completely false.

Section 93 (8AA) of the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918 provides—

A person who is serving a sentence of imprisonment of 3 years or longer is not entitled to vote at any Senate election or House of Representatives election.

Section 4 of the Commonwealth Electoral Act provides—

For the purposes of this Act, a person is serving a sentence of imprisonment only if:

- (a) the person is in detention on a full-time basis for an offence against a law of the Commonwealth or a State or Territory;
and
- (b) that detention is attributable to the sentence of imprisonment concerned.

Clause 27 of the bill amends section 106 so that it will then provide that a person who is serving a sentence of imprisonment of three years or longer is not entitled to vote. Section 106(4) of the Electoral Act 1992 also provides exactly the same as the Commonwealth Electoral Act. It states—

For subsection (3), a person is serving a sentence of imprisonment only if—

- (a) the person is in detention on a full-time basis for an offence against a law of the Commonwealth or a State or Territory;
and
- (b) the detention is attributable to the sentence of imprisonment concerned.

The provisions are virtually identical. For the member for Broadwater to come in here and say that what we are doing has a threshold that is three times higher than that of the Commonwealth is, to my mind, clearly deliberately misleading. If not, it is sheer laziness to not simply look at the Commonwealth act and the provisions, or simply look at the Australian Electoral Commission website to find out this information. To go to the point of saying that my well-researched and well-articulated point is wrong is misleading. The member for Broadwater should come in here and acknowledge that and apologise for misleading this House.

Queensland only prohibited prisoner voting to align its laws with those of the Commonwealth, which moved to prevent prisoner voting in 2006. In 2011, the Commonwealth changed its laws as a result of the High Court case of *Roach v Electoral Commissioner*, where the High Court found that an absolute prohibition of prisoner voting was unconstitutional. This approach simply ensures that Queensland remains in conformity with the Commonwealth's laws in this area.

I should also clarify that Queensland is not an outlier in its conformity with the Commonwealth. Again, I go back to the words of the member for Broadwater. Yesterday he said in this House—

Our changes—

and I am glad he is owning these changes—

in most cases exceed the minimum threshold set by other states by three times.

Only two other states in Australia have a lower threshold—only two—and that is New South Wales and Victoria. Tasmania, the Northern Territory and the Commonwealth all have in their provisions three years, as we are proposing for Queensland. That would bring four jurisdictions in line with each other.

Mr Hinchliffe: He's using first-past-the-post.

Mrs D'ATH: I take that interjection. He is using first-past-the-post. New South Wales and Western Australia have one year. South Australia and the ACT allow all prisoners to vote. Victoria has five years. In fact, three jurisdictions have a threshold that is higher than ours. In other words, more prisoners can vote in their jurisdictions than is the case in Queensland. It is extremely misleading for the member for Broadwater to say that, in most cases, we have three times what other jurisdictions have when only two jurisdictions have less than three—only two.

I would also refer the opposition to other submissions that were made to this bill in the committee process. The Queensland Law Society said in its submission to the Economics and Governance Committee—

QLS welcomes the Bill's proposed amendment to prisoner voting. This aligns the Queensland position with the current Commonwealth position. As a representative democracy, the citizens of Queensland have the right to determine who governs through voting at an election for their electoral district.

Even if the member for Broadwater did not want to look up the Commonwealth act or did not want to look up the Australian Electoral Commission website, he could have just read the committee report and seen for himself that our provisions were directly in line with the Commonwealth provisions.

I also want to note the contribution from the member for Glass House regarding the enrolment of prisoners. The member for Glass House asked what the registered address of a prisoner serving less than three years would be. The member for Glass House does have Woodford in his area so I guess he is wanting to know if those prisoners can vote for him or not.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms McMillan): Member for Kawana, you are warned.

Mr Hinchliffe interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Sandgate, you are warned.

Mrs D'ATH: I can advise the member for Glass House and all members of this House that amendments to section 64, which are spelt out in clause 13 of the bill before the parliament, set out the electoral district in which a person who is serving a sentence of imprisonment is entitled to be enrolled.

What can be seen from that section is that by default this will be the electoral district for which the person was enrolled immediately before they were sentenced or started to serve their sentence, the electoral district for which the person was entitled to be enrolled immediately before the person started to serve the sentence, an electoral district for which any of the person's next of kin is enrolled,

the electoral district in which the person was born or, if none of the electoral districts mentioned above applies for the person, the electoral district to which the person has the closest connection. I guess, for the member for Glass House, unless that person has spent most of their time in Woodford so that is their closest connection or their next of kin are all there then more than likely they will be registered elsewhere and not at the actual prison address. I hope that answers the question for the member for Glass House.

In relation to the true source of gifts, as others have observed, although I am not sure if anyone from the opposition actually referred to this issue despite its importance, this bill also bolsters our ability to ensure the integrity of our political donation system. Although people have said this is uncontroversial and they have not spent much time in this debate looking at the electoral amendments as opposed to the local government amendments, they are really important amendments in this bill. There are integrity issues in this bill but there are also important operational and efficiency measures in this bill that will benefit all Queenslanders in streamlining the electoral process, streamlining the postal voting process and making sure people are getting postal votes and those postal votes are getting counted because they are being received in time and also, of course, changes around the initial scrutiny and the preliminary processes that the returning officers must go through to check declaration and postal votes before they can be opened and counted so that they can start being counted far quicker.

Recommendation 6 of the Belcarra report was that the definition of 'relevant details' in section 109 of the Local Government Electoral Act 2011 be amended to state that, for a gift derived wholly or in part from a source intended to be used for a political purpose related to the local government election, the relevant details required also include the relevant details of each person or entity who was a source of the gift. It also recommended that the equivalent provision regarding loans, section 120(6) of the Local Government Electoral Act, be amended and proposed amendments to the Electoral Act 1992 are to align with these amendments. This is really important.

Clause 59 inserts a new section 260B, which requires an entity that makes a gift or loan to a registered political party or candidate equal to or exceeding the gift threshold amount of \$1,000 who is not the true source of the gift or loan to give the recipient notice of that fact and provide the relevant particulars of the entity that is the source. This requirement also applies to an entity making a gift to third parties who incur expenditure for political purposes to which section 263 of the Electoral Act applies. There is maximum penalty of 20 penalty units for failing to comply with this requirement to give notice.

The requirement for an entity to be the source of a gift or loan is contained in the proposed section 260A in clause 59. This section provides that where a first person or entity provides a gift or loan through an intermediary, referred to in this provision as the first recipient, with the main purpose of that intermediary to make an ultimate gift or loan, the first person or entity is considered to be the source of the gift or loan. No longer can you set up a group such as the Fadden Forum, have all the money go into there, either at a local government or at a state level, and then it is that entity that is giving all the donations and that is all you get to see. We get to see who put the money into that Fadden Forum and then to the state branch.

Mr Molhoek: It has been like that since the early 2000s.

Mrs D'ATH: I take that interjection that that has been the case from the early 2000s. In fact, that is not what has been disclosed in the past when it comes to donors on the Electoral Commission system. The fact is that this bill before the House right now will ensure that we can see what the true source of those donations is, both at a local government level and at a state level. The people of Queensland have a right to know who is the original source of those donations.

Honourable members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Can we cease the cross-chamber chatter.

Mrs D'ATH: Clauses 60 to 65 amend provisions to require, if applicable, relevant particulars of the entity that is the source of a gift or loan in returns given by candidates, third parties and political parties to the ECQ. This type of transparency measure is particularly important in light of recent donations we have seen going into bodies like this and then that body declaring it and us not seeing the source behind that money. We have seen over \$3 million disclosed in the last few days on the LNP's website. It is 18 months since the Supreme Court said you must disclose donations. It is six months since the High Court said you must disclose—and, by the way, the Commonwealth laws to try to circumvent all this are wholly invalid. We have real-time disclosure of seven days and it has taken a minimum of six months, and it may potentially have been donations going back 18 months that we are only just seeing now. These sorts of measures are really important so that the people of Queensland

know who is donating, how much and to whom. These laws demonstrate the Palaszczuk government's commitment to integrity and accountability. Rather than talk about integrity, the LNP needs to lift its game and start complying with our laws.


Finally, some opposition members are persisting with claims that the postal voting deadline is in some way contrary to recommendations of the Soorley report or unfair to voters who may wish to vote by way of postal vote. That is not so. This is about making sure people are not disenfranchised because they think that their postal vote is being counted because they have put it in at 7 pm on the Wednesday before election day. The Electoral Commission has to get the postal ballot back out to those people, they have to fill their ballot paper in—we know many of these people have mobility issues, but if it is because they are travelling somehow this postal ballot in 48 hours has to reach someone interstate or internationally—and then they have to get their ballot back in the post by that Saturday.

The reality is that people could certainly be disenfranchised by what we have now, especially in the regions, because we are talking five to seven business days at least for turnaround of post now. In my area, something posted in one suburb can sometimes arrive two weeks later in the next suburb, so we cannot rely on this. My strong advice to all members of parliament is to encourage your constituents, if they are going to do a postal vote, to apply online so we are at least taking out that initial delay of them posting it, it being received by the ECQ days later—potentially a week or more later—then the ECQ sending it back and then the filled out ballot paper coming back again. That three-way postal system of sending it out, it coming back—

A government member: What if you don't have internet?

Mrs D'ATH: I take the interjection. It is for people who do not have internet that we are setting this up. The bill contains ways to assist people with voting in other ways, such as pre-poll and assisted phone voting. It depends on their particular needs. The people in the regions are at far greater risk of not having their ballot paper counted through a postal vote, because their application takes far longer to travel through the mail system. They know that and every regional member should know that. Their mail takes a lot longer to return. They ring up the ECQ and the ECQ posts an application. The application is posted back and the postal ballot is then posted out. The postal ballot is filled out and then it is posted back. In 26 days, four postings are supposed to happen. We want to encourage people to ensure that their vote is counted and that is why we are making these changes.

I am very proud of this bill. I am proud of the work that the Minister for Local Government has done with the local government bill. This creates greater integrity, transparency and accountability across state and local government elections. It builds on the work that the Palaszczuk government has done in electoral reform, transparency and integrity in this state.

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (3.50 pm), in reply: I thank all members for their contributions to this cognate debate. In particular, I thank those who spoke on the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 2 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019.

In my opening remarks during the second reading debate, I reiterated the Palaszczuk government's commitment to its rolling reform agenda to restore the good name of local government in this state. As I have said many times and I will repeat, the vast majority of our Queensland councillors are honest, hardworking and dedicated individuals. They are individuals with a commitment to public service and to their communities' best interests. With the implementation of these extensive reforms to bring greater transparency, integrity and accountability to our councils, the Palaszczuk government has committed, also significantly—and this is embedded in the actions that I have taken with the introduction of some amendments—to imposing the same obligations on councillors as state ministers, while also delivering on the Belcarra recommendations and the more recent 6 September recommendation from the CCC.

I would like to address some matters raised during the debate. A number of members opposite have suggested that this bill should have contained only reforms that have been prescribed by the Belcarra report. Their key assertion seems to be that anything outside of that was not valid, was not acceptable and should not be going forward. I find it quite extraordinary that some members opposite seem to think that the CCC are the legislators and that we are some sort of postbox that delivers on CCC recommendations. No, we are not! The government and this parliament add value, drawing on the spirit of the recommendations and our consultation and engagement with the broader community to deliver the best possible outcomes for improvement and reform to local government and the best

possible reforms and outcomes across a range of matters, including the electoral matters contained within the Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill brought to this parliament by the Attorney-General.

In relation to that bill and the elements that are contained within the amendments to the Local Government Electoral Act, I note the concerns that have been raised about going beyond the recommendations of the Soorley report in relation to postal voting. As the Attorney-General has done, I reiterate that they are incorrect. Changing the deadline for the receipt of postal votes by the Electoral Commission of Queensland to 7 pm on the day that is 12 days before the polling day places some responsibility on the voters to request postal votes in a timely way. The 12-day cut-off date for postal vote applications implements the Soorley report recommendation 41, which was for applications to be submitted no later than 10 working days prior to the election—I repeat, no later. The bill provides for 12 days, which includes the weekend. It makes sense.

The changes will mean that there is the reasonable prospect of the postal ballot being received before polling day. In fact, in its report the committee noted that some stakeholders consider the bill's proposed deadline should be extended even further back from polling day. There are certain alternatives in place for some of those who miss the postal voting deadline. An elector whose address is more than 20 kilometres from a polling booth may be included in the register of special postal voters. Many of those opposite would be very aware of that process. Electors in many local government areas have access to pre-poll voting. Telephone voting is also available. The proposed time frames align with proposed amendments to state election processes and local government election processes and, as noted by the committee, are supported by the ECQ.

The member for Warrego asserted that the removal of mayoral powers was not recommended by any integrity body. That is incorrect. The CCC's Operation Windage investigation identified significant cultural issues and governance failures on how local governments operate. The reforms contained in this bill will mean that councillors are not involved in the day-to-day operations of council but will instead allow them to focus on the strategic and community issues that they are elected to do.

I acknowledge—and it seems to be a contribution acknowledged by those opposite—the contribution of the member for Bundamba which directly came to those specific issues. That is why this legislation takes the right steps. Removing those powers offers a clear separation between elected councillors who decide the policies, priorities and strategic direction of the council and employees who are responsible for implementing the decisions of the councillors. The mayor and the councillors have and will continue to have the necessary powers to drive the local government's agenda, including appointing the chief executive officer and affecting all significant decisions and policies, such as the budget and organisational structure. Members should not believe the hype from some of those opposite. The proposed amendments in no way prevent the chief executive officer from consulting with the mayor and councillors about the appointment of senior executive employees.

Incredulously, the member for Toowoomba South seemed to suggest that the views and feedback from regional councils and mayors on voting methodologies were not acceptable. He insinuated that the government should not be listening to the concerns of regional Queensland. That seemed to be what he was saying, although I could not quite follow it. That is not surprising as it is how those opposite operated when they were in government, resulting in the failure that we know was the LNP Newman government. Further, in his contribution the member for Toowoomba South failed to acknowledge that this bill implements 14 Belcarra recommendations and five recommendations from the Soorley report. He seemed to gloss over that really quickly and moved on to all sorts of other crazy things.

In particular, I note that the member for Toowoomba South stated—

... when the member for Broadwater was local government minister he did not have anything to do with Paul Pisasale.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: That is a direct quote from the member's contribution. However, excerpts from the diary of the member for Broadwater when he was the local government minister show that he met with Paul Pisasale for dinner on 28 April 2013, for luncheon on 21 May 2013, for dinner again on 22 January 2014, for lunch again on 29 January 2014 and again on 25 February 2014. For the benefit of the House, I also table *Queensland Times* photographs of the member for Broadwater and Paul Pisasale posing together for media stunts on 5 November 2012, 29 April 2013 and 10 November 2014.

Tabled paper: Bundle of photographs from the *Queensland Times* [1849].

Dr Miles: Apologise for misleading.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I take that interjection from the Minister for Health. It is a matter that maybe the member for Toowoomba South might want to reflect upon and respond to the House on in relation to misleading the House. They are hardly an example of a pair who have nothing to do with each other. Members should not get me wrong: local government ministers should work in partnership with mayors. I congratulate the member for Broadwater for doing that with the former Ipswich mayor in their respective roles at the time. I think that is entirely right. However, his colleague should be a lot more careful about making disingenuous claims that the former minister had nothing to do with Paul Pisasale.

I have a further example of the close relationship between the member for Broadwater and Paul Pisasale. On 14 November 2012, the then local government minister put out a media statement titled 'Ipswich mayor backs council reform', promoting the minister's legislative changes, of which much was said by the former minister in his contribution. Those legislative changes gave mayors additional powers. The then minister's press release quotes Paul Pisasale as saying—

Mr Power: In the minister's press release?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: In the then minister's press release. It reads—

Under the old legislation I could not ask my CEO to do something without keeping a record of the directive. How much red tape is that?

Mr Power: How did that work out?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I take the interjection from the member for Logan. That did not work out real well for some people involved. I suspect there are two involved for whom it ultimately has not worked out real well. Any reading of the Operation Windage report should make any Ipswich ratepayer shudder at that association and that sort of language which clearly the member for Broadwater was so proud of. That quote speaks for itself.

I am told that in promoting this legislation the then minister took his local government roadshow all around the state saying that the then Ipswich mayor was the model of how to get things done. That is how it worked. The member for Broadwater's vehement defence in this place yesterday of the legislation introduced in 2012—the Pisasale endorsed legislation—which handed over greater power to mayors and, as the member suggested, allowed mayors 'to get things done in their community' shows his lack of understanding of the root of the problem that we are dealing with. Mayors having the reach-around ability to direct council officers allows them too much involvement and too much power in the day-to-day operational running of councils. I refer those opposite to the Operation Windage report and the implications in that.

I reassert that the member for Broadwater's 2012 legislative changes were the tipping point which led to the integrity mess and the loss of confidence of the community in the local government sector which we have seen unfold in Queensland in recent years. Thankfully, this government working in partnership with local government are mending those issues.

The member for Bonney made the point that the 'So you want to be a councillor?' training is not available on the department's website. I must point out to him that that is because it is mandated in this bill. The training will be available from 30 October. Following the passage of this bill it will be mandatory for all candidates to complete this training, including sitting mayors and councillors, prior to being able to nominate with the ECQ for the March 2020 election. I can assure members, having had a chance to have a look at the work that the department has been preparing, that that training is in a good place. I know that it has been developed and created in consultation with a selection of mayors and councillors across the state. They have appreciated being part of that opportunity.

The member for Bonney also sought a definition of when a person becomes a candidate. That is a sensible question. Clause 253 of the bill provides a definition of a candidate. It states that a person becomes a candidate when they have 'announced or otherwise publicly indicated an intention to be a candidate in the election'. In the example that the member used in his contribution of when someone creates a Facebook page saying they are running for a particular division, that would constitute the person becoming a candidate.

I also note the member for Bonney's praise of the government for listening to basically every stakeholder. That was one of his quotes. I picked up a few quotes from the debate. It is a refreshing stance from those opposite to have them acknowledging the merits of the stakeholder consultation. That stakeholder consultation was very important in terms of the government's decision to not proceed with the implementation of compulsory preferential voting for local governments across the state.

In relation to the same topic, the member for Ninderry quoted Winston Churchill famously saying that preferential voting has the potential to make winners out of losers. That is an interesting observation from someone who was elected with 36 per cent of the primary vote. This reminds me of the member for Traeger's quip during his contribution that 'you cannot legislate for idiots'.

The member for Bundaberg suggested, as did the member for Lockyer and the member for Gregory, that CPV would have resulted in higher rates and been responsible for increased costs for local government elections. Clearly the talking points were leaked, to coin a phrase. The Attorney-General has previously addressed the issue of the cost of local government elections in response to a question from the member for Warrego. I take the opportunity to reiterate her comments. The total cost of the 2016 local government quadrennial elections was \$17.268 million, which was an average cost per elector of \$5.60. The total estimated cost to councils of the 2020 local government elections as at January 2019 is \$27.435 million, which is an estimated average cost per elector of \$8.63. This is the same average cost per elector as the 2017 state general election.

The cost differences between the 2016 and 2020 local government elections have been affected by a number of significant factors. Firstly, the 2016 elections were subsidised by the Queensland government for the concurrent conduct of the referendum on fixed four-year terms. This subsidy reduced the costs required to be recovered from councils. The cost to be recovered is calculated on a completely different basis. I note some local governments have referred to how much lower the cost was for the 2012 quadrennial elections. That was also subsidised by the state because it had been postponed from its usual date as a consequence of the state calling a general state election.

Secondly, the ECQ is currently implementing a broad range of electoral process improvements as recommended by the Soorley report, including a comprehensive workforce program for the recruitment and training of temporary election staff. Thirdly, the ECQ has undertaken a comprehensive review of budgeting and accounting practices to provide a more accurate estimate of the actual costs of conducting local government elections.

Fourthly, the number of electors in Queensland and the cost of basic services required to deliver elections, such as labour, accommodation, postage and other operational costs, are continuing to increase. The ECQ has contacted each local government individually regarding arrangements for the conduct of elections and will continue to work with councils to identify any cost-saving initiatives that may reduce the costs to councils. That is as simple as working through things like identifying council owned properties that might be used for polling places or pre-polling places and so forth. These are part of the normal course of work that goes on between the ECQ and local governments.

As was explained to the committee, there is no difference in the costs associated with the operation and conduct of an election using optional preferential voting and the operation and conduct of an election using compulsory preferential voting. Anyone who has any real understanding would know that there would be no significant cost differences. The overarching intention of the election planning process is to ensure that the 2020 local government elections are delivered to a high standard for councils across Queensland and that voters are provided with fair and equitable opportunities to participate in the electoral process.

I again thank everyone who contributed to the debate on this bill. In particular, I would like to acknowledge the contributions of those members who have formerly served in local government. I want to dissuade the member for Southern Downs from his misapprehension that I served in local government. He, like a number of other people, may have confused me with my fifth cousin David Hinchliffe. I want to acknowledge those members who served on local government and contributed to this debate. They include the member for Miller, the member for Bundaberg, the member for Traeger, the member Bancroft and the member for Lockyer. I also want to acknowledge the members for Broadwater and Mermaid Beach. I must say that the last two members seemed to speak more about themselves than the bill. There is nothing new there.

Stakeholders such as mayors and councillors from across Queensland, the Crime and Corruption Commission, the Local Government Association of Queensland, the Local Government Managers Australia Queensland, the Electoral Commission of Queensland, the Office of the Independent Assessor and the Department of Justice and Attorney-General have been integral in preparing this bill. I have had many great conversations with stakeholders, especially the many mayors and councillors whom I have spoken to about this on many separate occasions across the state. We have not always agreed, but I can assure the House that our united focus has been on better local government for this

state. I want to acknowledge the sensible and productive way in which those conversations have occurred and the result of listening and the government making a decision to not proceed with a particular matter that was of grave concern to a number of councils particularly across regional Queensland in relation to compulsory preferential voting.

Finally, I express my thanks to my ministerial staff and officers of the Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs for their dedication and work on this bill—in particular, Bronwyn Blagoev and Tim Dunne for their professionalism and expert advice. I conclude by thanking all members for their contributions. This has been a great debate and it has been very interesting to hear some contributions. I commend the bill to the House.

Question put—That the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 2 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Question put—That the Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 2 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill

Clauses 1 to 6, as read, agreed to.

Clause 7—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (4.12 pm): I move the following amendment—

1 Clause 7 (Replacement of ch 6, pt 2, div 5A (Dealing with councillors' personal interests in council matters))

Page 20, line 11 to page 41, line 30—

omit.

I table the explanatory notes to my amendments.

Tabled paper: Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 2 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019, explanatory notes to Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe's amendments [\[1850\]](#).

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 7 omitted.

Clause 8—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (4.12 pm): I move the following amendment—

2 Clause 8 (Amendment of s 178 (What this division is about))

Page 41, line 31 to page 42, line 2—

omit.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 8 omitted.

Clauses 9 to 11, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (4.13 pm): I move the following amendment—

3 After clause 11

Page 43, after line 14—

insert—

11A Amendment of s 252 (Regulation-making power)

(1) Section 252(2)(h), 'or its committees'—

omit, insert—

, its committees or other meetings of councillors (including informal meetings at which councillors discuss council matters)

- (2) Section 252(2)—
insert—
- (ha) empowering the council to make and adopt a policy about meetings mentioned in paragraph (h), other than meetings of the council or its committees; or
- (3) Section 252(2)—
insert—
- (j) matters relating to discretionary funds.
- (4) Section 252(2)(ha) to (j)—
renumber as section 252(2)(i) to (k).

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 12—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (4.13 pm): I move the following amendment—

- 4 **Clause 12 (Insertion of new ch 8, pt 10)**
Page 46, line 23 to page 47, line 33—
omit.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 12, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 13—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (4.14 pm): I move the following amendments—

- 5 **Clause 13 (Amendment of sch 1 (Serious integrity offences and integrity offences))**
Page 48, line 3 to entry for s 177W(2) after line 7—
omit.
- 6 **Clause 13 (Amendment of sch 1 (Serious integrity offences and integrity offences))**
Page 48, after line 10, entry for 195(1)(b)—
omit.

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 13, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 14—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (4.14 pm): I move the following amendments—

- 7 **Clause 14 (Amendment of sch 2 (Dictionary))**
Page 49, line 2 to page 50, line 24—
omit.
- 8 **Clause 14 (Amendment of sch 2 (Dictionary))**
Page 50, after line 24—
insert—
- (2A) Schedule 2—
insert—
- discretionary funds** see section 106(2).
- 9 **Clause 14 (Amendment of sch 2 (Dictionary))**
Page 51, lines 6 to 13—
omit, insert—
- (h) under the Planning Act, chapter 3, part 3, division 2 on a development application that includes a variation request under that Act if the application proposes to—
- (i) vary the category of development or category of assessment of development; or
- (ii) vary the assessment benchmarks or criteria for accepted development that would apply to development; or
- (iii) facilitate development that would result in a greater demand on infrastructure than the demand anticipated in the council's local government infrastructure plan; or
- (i) under the Planning Act, chapter 3, part 5, division 2, subdivision 2 on a change application under that Act that includes a change to a variation approval if the application is being assessed under section 82 of that Act and the application proposes to—
- (i) further vary the category of development or category of assessment of development; or
- (ii) further vary the assessment benchmarks or criteria for accepted development that would apply to development; or

- (iii) facilitate development that would result in a greater demand on infrastructure than the demand anticipated in the council's local government infrastructure plan.

Note—

Change application assessments for minor changes under the Planning Act, section 81 are not subject to paragraph (i).

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 14, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 15, as read, agreed to.

Clause 16—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (4.15 pm): I move the following amendment—

10 Clause 16 (Amendment of s 5 (Relationship with Local Government Act))

Page 52, lines 10 and 11, ' , and particular conduct of council employees'—

omit.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 16, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 17 to 32, as read, agreed to.

Clause 33—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (4.16 pm): I move the following amendment—

11 Clause 33 (Amendment of s 177T (Duty to report another councillor's prescribed conflict of interest or declarable conflict of interest))

Page 58, lines 7 to 17—

omit.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 33 omitted.

Clauses 34 to 40, as read, agreed to.

Clause 41—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (4.17 pm): I move the following amendment—

12 Clause 41 (Insertion of new ch 8, pt 10, div 3)

Page 60, lines 22 and 25, '3'—

omit, insert—

2

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 41, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 42 to 44, as read, agreed to.

Clause 45—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (4.17 pm): I move the following amendment—

13 Clause 45 (Amendment of s 162 (When a councillor's office becomes vacant))

Page 67, lines 3 to 5—

omit, insert—

- (1) Section 162—

insert—

(ca) ceases to be a councillor under section 174; or

- (2) Section 162(ca) to (g)—

renumber as section 162(d) to (h).

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 45, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 46, as read, agreed to.

Clause 47—

Division: Question put—That clause 47, 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, 40:

LNP, 36—Bates, Batt, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Boyce, Crandon, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Hart, Hunt, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McArdle, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O'Connor, Perrett, Powell, Purdie, Robinson, Rowan, Simpson, Sorensen, Watts, Weir, Wilson.

KAP, 2—Dametto, Knuth.

PHON, 1—Andrew.

Ind, 1—Costigan.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clause 47, as read, agreed to.

Clause 48—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (4.25 pm): I move the following amendment—

14 Clause 48 (Insertion of new s 173AA)

Page 69, lines 1 to 29—

omit.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 48 omitted.

Clause 49—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (4.25 pm): I move the following amendment—

15 Clause 49 (Amendment of s 173B (Obligation of councillor to correct register of interests))

Page 69, line 30 to page 70, line 10—

omit.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 49 omitted.

Clause 50—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (4.26 pm): I move the following amendment—

16 Clause 50 (Insertion of new s 174)

Page 70, line 11 to page 71, line 6—

omit.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 50 omitted.

Insertion of new clause—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (4.26 pm): I move the following amendment—

17 After clause 50

Page 71, after line 6—

insert—

50A Insertion of new ss 174 and 175

Chapter 6, part 2, division 5—

insert—

174 Failure to give particular returns under Local Government Electoral Act 2011

(1) If a person who is elected as a councillor fails to give a summary return within the required period or a longer period allowed by the Minister, the person ceases to be a councillor on the day immediately after the required period or the longer period ends.

Note—

In particular circumstances, the required period may be taken to be extended—see section 175.

- (2) However, subsections (3) to (5) apply if—
- (a) under the *Local Government Electoral Act 2011*, an agent was required to give the summary return for—
- (i) a group of candidates of which the person was a member; or
- (ii) a political party that endorsed the candidature of the person; and
- (b) the agent fails to give the summary return within the required period.
- (3) As soon as practicable after the date of the notice given to the person under the *Local Government Electoral Act 2011*, section 130C that the agent has failed to give the summary return, the person must give the Minister a notice stating that—
- (a) the agent failed to give the summary return within the required period; and
- (b) the person intends to give the return under subsection (4).
- (4) The person must give the summary return within—
- (a) 30 days after the date of the notice of the agent's failure; or
- (b) a longer period allowed by the Minister.
- Note—*
- In particular circumstances, the period mentioned in paragraph (a) may be taken to be extended—see section 175.
- (5) The person ceases to be a councillor if the person does not comply with subsection (4).
- (6) In this section—
- required period**, for a summary return, means the period within which the summary return must be given under the *Local Government Electoral Act 2011*.
- summary return** means a return required to be given under the following provisions of the *Local Government Electoral Act 2011*—
- (a) section 117(4);
- (b) section 118(4);
- (c) section 120(7);
- (d) section 125(2).

175 Extension of time for giving summary return

- (1) For section 174(1) or (4), a person who is elected as a councillor may make a written request to the Minister to allow a longer period for giving a summary return.
- (2) The request must be made before the following period (the **relevant period**) ends—
- (a) for section 174(1), the required period;
- (b) for section 174(4), the period mentioned in section 174(4)(a).
- (3) If, when the relevant period ends, the Minister has not decided the request, the relevant period is taken to be extended until the date of the notice of the Minister's decision on the request.
- (4) In this section—
- required period** see section 174(6).
- summary return** see section 174(6).

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 51—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (4.27 pm): I move the following amendment—

18

Clause 51 (Insertion of new s 177Y)

Page 71, lines 7 to 25—

omit.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 51 omitted.

Clause 52, as read, agreed to.

Clause 53—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (4.27 pm): I move the following amendment—

19

Clause 53 (Amendment of sch 1 (Serious integrity offences and integrity offences))

Page 72, lines 3 to 5—

omit.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 53, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 54—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (4.28 pm): I move the following amendment—

20 Clause 54 (Amendment of sch 2 (Dictionary))

Page 72, lines 9 to 12—

omit.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 54 omitted.

Clause 55, as read, agreed to.

Clause 56—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (4.28 pm): I move the following amendment—

21 Clause 56 (Replacement of ch 2, pt 2, hdg (Divisions of local government areas))

Page 72, line 20 to page 73, line 4—

omit.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 56 omitted.

Clause 57—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (4.29 pm): I move the following amendment—

22 Clause 57 (Amendment of s 15 (Division of local government areas))

Page 73, lines 5 to 29—

omit.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 57 omitted.

Clause 58—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (4.29 pm): I move the following amendment—

23 Clause 58 (Amendment of s 16 (Review of divisions of local government areas))

Page 74, lines 1 to 11—

omit.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 58 omitted.

Clause 59—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (4.30 pm): I move the following amendment—

24 Clause 59 (Amendment of s 17 (What this part is about))

Page 74, lines 12 to 15—

omit.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 59 omitted.

Clauses 60 to 69, as read, agreed to.

Clause 70—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (4.30 pm): I move the following amendment—

25 Clause 70 (Replacement of ch 5A, hdg (Councillor conduct))

Page 80, lines 19 to 26—

omit.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 70 omitted.

Clause 71—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (4.31 pm): I move the following amendment—

26 Clause 71 (Amendment of s 150B (Overview of chapter))

Page 81, lines 2 to 17—

omit.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 71, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 72—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (4.31 pm): I move the following amendment—

27 Clause 72 (Amendment of s 150C (Definitions for chapter))

Page 82, lines 1 to 3—

omit.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 72 omitted.

Clause 73—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (4.32 pm): I move the following amendment—

28 Clause 73 (Amendment of ch 5A, pt 2, hdg (Conduct at local government meetings))

Page 82, lines 4 to 8—

omit.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 73 omitted.

Insertion of new clause—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (4.32 pm): I move the following amendment—

29 Before clause 74

Page 82, before line 9—

insert—

73A Amendment of s 150I (Chairperson may deal with unsuitable meeting conduct)

Section 150I(3), after 'the meeting'—

insert—

or, if minutes are not required for the meeting, in another way prescribed by regulation

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 74—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (4.32 pm): I move the following amendment—

30 Clause 74 (Amendment of s 150L (What is misconduct))

Page 82, lines 12 and 13, '150EW(2)' to '171(3)'—

omit, insert—

170(3), 171(3) or 175G

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 74, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 75 and 76, as read, agreed to.

Clause 77—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (4.33 pm): I move the following amendment—

31 Clause 77 (Amendment of ch 5A, pt 3, div 4, hdg (Investigation of councillor conduct))

Page 83, lines 4 to 9—

omit.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 77 omitted.

Clause 78, as read, agreed to.

Clause 79—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (4.34 pm): I move the following amendment—

32 Clause 79 (Insertion of new s 150TA)

Page 83, line 18 to page 84, line 9—

omit.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 79 omitted.

Clause 80—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (4.34 pm): I move the following amendment—

33 Clause 80 (Amendment of s 150V (Investigative powers))

Page 84, lines 10 to 13—

omit.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 80 omitted.

Clauses 81 to 92, as read, agreed to.

Clause 93—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (4.35 pm): I move the following amendments—

34 Clause 93 (Amendment of s 150AY (Functions of investigators))

Page 89, lines 14 to 16—

omit.

35 Clause 93 (Amendment of s 150AY (Functions of investigators))

Page 89, line 22 to page 90, line 1—

omit.

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 93, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 94—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (4.35 pm): I move the following amendment—

36 Clause 94 (Amendment of s 150CH (Power to require information))

Page 90, lines 2 to 5—

omit.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 94 omitted.

Clause 95—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (4.36 pm): I move the following amendment—

37 Clause 95 (Amendment of s 150CJ (Power to require attendance))

Page 90, lines 6 to 9—

omit.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 95 omitted.

Clause 96—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (4.36 pm): I move the following amendment—

38 Clause 96 (Amendment of s 150CK (Notice about confidentiality))

Page 90, lines 11 to 14—

omit.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 96, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 97—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (4.37 pm): I move the following amendment—

39 Clause 97 (Amendment of s 150CN (Compensation))

Page 91, lines 2 to 5—

omit.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 97 omitted.

Clause 98—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (4.37 pm): I move the following amendment—

40 Clause 98 (Amendment of s 150CU (Functions))

Page 91, lines 6 to 24—

omit.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 98 omitted.

Clause 99—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (4.38 pm): I move the following amendment—

41 Clause 99 (Amendment of s 150DB (Conflict of interest))

Page 91, line 25 to page 92, line 1—

omit.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 99 omitted.

Clauses 100 to 105, as read, agreed to.

Clause 106—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (4.38 pm): I move the following amendment—

42 Clause 106 (Insertion of new ch 5B)

Page 93, line 16 to page 115, line 16—

omit.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 106 omitted.

Clause 107, as read, agreed to.

Clause 108—

Division: Question put—That clause 108, as read, stand part of the bill.

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, Crandon, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Hart, Hunt, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McArdle, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O'Connor, Perrett, Powell, Purdie, Robinson, Rowan, Simpson, Sorensen, Stevens, Watts, Weir, Wilson.

KAP, 2—Dametto, Knuth.

PHON, 1—Andrew.

Ind, 2—Bolton, Costigan.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clause 108, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 109 and 110, as read, agreed to.

Clause 111—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (4.44 pm): I move the following amendment—

43 Clause 111 (Omission of ch 6, pt 2, div 5A (Dealing with councillors' personal interests in local government matters))

Page 117, lines 9 to 12—

omit.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 111 omitted.

Clause 112—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (4.45 pm): I move the following amendment—

44 Clause 112 (Amendment of s 182E (When suspension of councillor ends))

Page 117, line 17—

omit, insert—

section 175K

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 112, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 113 to 115, as read, agreed to.

Clause 116—

Division: Question put—That clause 116, as read, stand part of the bill.

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, 43:

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

KAP, 3—Dametto, Katter, Knuth.

PHON, 1—Andrew.

Ind, 2—Bolton, Costigan.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clause 116, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 117 to 119, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clauses—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (4.52 pm): I move the following amendment—

45 After clause 119

Page 119, after line 27—

insert—

119A Amendment of s 270 (Regulation-making power)

(1) Section 270(2)(i), 'or its committees'—

omit, insert—

, its committees or other meetings of councillors (including informal meetings at which councillors discuss local government matters)

(2) Section 270(2)—

insert—

(ia) empowering a local government to make and adopt a policy about meetings mentioned in paragraph (i), other than meetings of the local government or its committees; or

- (3) Section 270(2)—
insert—
(l) matters relating to discretionary funds.
- (4) Section 270(2)(ia) to (l)—
renumber as section 270(2)(j) to (m).

119B Amendment of s 316 (Definitions for pt 12)

Section 316, definition *local government official*—

insert—

Note—

Section 150R(3) was renumbered as section 150R(4) by the *Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 2 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2019*.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 120—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (4.52 pm): I move the following amendments—

46 Clause 120 (Insertion of new ch 9, pt 14)

Page 122, line 27, '175Q(1)(a)'—

omit, insert—

175P(1)(a)

47 Clause 120 (Insertion of new ch 9, pt 14)

Page 123, line 5, 'provisions'—

omit, insert—

provision

48 Clause 120 (Insertion of new ch 9, pt 14)

Page 123, line 14 to page 124, line 19—

omit.

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 120, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 121—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (4.52 pm): I move the following amendments—

49 Clause 121 (Amendment of sch 1 (Serious integrity offences and integrity offences))

Page 124, line 22 to page 125, before line 1, entry for s 150EZ(2)—

omit.

50 Clause 121 (Amendment of sch 1 (Serious integrity offences and integrity offences))

Page 125, after line 3, entry for 195(1)(b)—

omit.

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 121, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 122—



Mr HINCHLIFFE (4.53 pm): I move the following amendments—

51 Clause 122 (Amendment of sch 4 (Dictionary))

Page 125, line 5 to page 127, line 23—

omit.

52 Clause 122 (Amendment of sch 4 (Dictionary))

Page 127, after line 23—

insert—

(2A) Schedule 4—

insert—

discretionary funds see section 109(2).

53 Clause 122 (Amendment of sch 4 (Dictionary))

Page 128, lines 1 to 8—

omit, insert—

- (h) under the Planning Act, chapter 3, part 3, division 2 on a development application that includes a variation request under that Act if the application proposes to—
 - (i) vary the category of development or category of assessment of development; or
 - (ii) vary the assessment benchmarks or criteria for accepted development that would apply to development; or
 - (iii) facilitate development that would result in a greater demand on infrastructure than the demand anticipated in the local government's local government infrastructure plan; or
- (i) under the Planning Act, chapter 3, part 5, division 2, subdivision 2 on a change application under that Act that includes a change to a variation approval if the application is being assessed under section 82 of that Act and the application proposes to—
 - (i) further vary the category of development or category of assessment of development; or
 - (ii) further vary the assessment benchmarks or criteria for accepted development that would apply to development; or
 - (iii) facilitate development that would result in a greater demand on infrastructure than the demand anticipated in the local government's local government infrastructure plan.

Note—

Change application assessments for minor changes under the Planning Act, section 81 are not subject to paragraph (i).

54 Clause 122 (Amendment of sch 4 (Dictionary))

Page 128, after line 8—

insert—

- (4) Schedule 4, definition *senior executive employee*—

*omit, insert—****senior executive employee***, of a local government, means an employee of the local government—

- (a) who reports directly to the chief executive officer; and
- (b) whose position ordinarily would be considered to be a senior position in the local government's corporate structure.

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 122, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 123 and 124, as read, agreed to.

Clause 125—

**Mr HINCHLIFFE** (4.54 pm): I move the following amendment—**55 Clause 125 (Amendment of s 150C (Definitions for chapter))**

Page 129, lines 7 and 8—

omit.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 125, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 126 and 127, as read, agreed to.

Clause 128—

**Mr HINCHLIFFE** (4.55 pm): I move the following amendment—**56 Clause 128 (Amendment of s 150L (What is *misconduct*))**

Page 130, line 15, '173(3) or 177T'—

omit, insert—

or 173(3)

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 128, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 129 to 132, as read, agreed to.

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

Question put—That amendments 57 to 130 be agreed to and clauses 133 to 259 of the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 2 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, as amended, stand part of the bill.

Amendments as circulated—

57 Clause 133 (Amendment of s 150AY (Functions of investigators))

Page 131, lines 17 to 19—

omit, insert—

173A(2) or (3) or 173B(2)

58 Clause 136 (Amendment of s 162 (When a councillor's office becomes vacant))

Page 132, lines 17 and 18—

omit, insert—

(2) Section 162(1)(b) to (h)—

renumber as section 162(1)(a) to (g).

59 Clause 140 (Amendment of sch 4 (Dictionary))

Page 134, lines 8 to 15—

omit.

60 After clause 141

Page 135, after line 1—

insert—

141A Replacement of ch 2, pt 2, hdg (Divisions of local government areas)

Chapter 2, part 2, heading—

omit, insert—

Part 2 Councillors for divisions of local government areas

141B Amendment of s 15 (Division of local government areas)

(1) Section 15, heading—

omit, insert—

15 Number of councillors for divisions

(2) Section 15(1), after 'electors'—

insert—

for each councillor elected, or to be elected, for the division

(3) Section 15(2), from 'is the number' to 'plus'—

omit, insert—

for a councillor of a division is the number of electors that is worked out by dividing the total number of electors in the local government area (as nearly as can be found out) by the total number of councillors (other than the mayor) currently elected, or to be elected, for the local government, plus

(4) Section 15(3)—

omit, insert—

(3) When changing a division, including changing the number of councillors elected, or to be elected, for the division, the reasonable proportion of electors for a councillor of a division must be worked out as near as practicable to the time when the change is to happen.

141C Amendment of s 16 (Review of divisions of local government areas)

(1) Section 16, heading, 'of local government areas'—

omit, insert—

and councillors

(2) Section 16(a)—

omit, insert—

(a) review whether each division of its local government area has a reasonable proportion of electors for each councillor elected for the division; and

141D Amendment of s 17 (What this part is about)

Section 17(2)(c), after 'government'—

insert—

or divisions of a local government area

- 61 **Clause 143 (Amendment of s 150AY (Functions of investigators))**
Page 135, lines 5 to 11—
omit.
- 62 **Clause 144 (Insertion of new s 150FB)**
Page 135, line 12 to page 136, line 3—
omit.
- 63 **Clause 145 (Amendment of s 162 (When a councillor's office becomes vacant))**
Page 136, lines 6 to 8—
omit, insert—
(1) Section 162(1)—
insert—
(ca) ceases to be a councillor under section 172; or
(2) Section 162(1)(ca) to (g)—
renumber as section 162(1)(d) to (h).
- 64 **Clause 148 (Insertion of new s 171AA)**
Page 138, line 4 to page 139, line 2—
omit.
- 65 **Clause 149 (Amendment of s 171B (Obligation of councillor to correct register of interests))**
Page 139, lines 3 to 15—
omit.
- 66 **Clause 150 (Insertion of new s 172)**
Page 139, line 16 to page 140, line 13—
omit.
- 67 **After clause 150**
Page 140, after line 13—
insert—
150A Insertion of new ss 172 and 173
Chapter 6, part 2, division 5—
insert—
172 Failure to give particular returns under Local Government Electoral Act
(1) If a person who is elected as a councillor fails to give a summary return within the required period or a longer period allowed by the Minister, the person ceases to be a councillor on the day immediately after the required period or the longer period ends.
Note—
In particular circumstances, the required period may be taken to be extended—see section 173.
(2) However, subsections (3) to (5) apply if—
(a) under the Local Government Electoral Act, an agent was required to give the summary return for—
(i) a group of candidates of which the person was a member; or
(ii) a political party that endorsed the candidature of the person; and
(b) the agent fails to give the summary return within the required period.
(3) As soon as practicable after the date of the notice given to the person under the Local Government Electoral Act, section 130C that the agent has failed to give the summary return, the person must give the Minister a notice stating that—
(a) the agent failed to give the summary return within the required period; and
(b) the person intends to give the return under subsection (4).
(4) The person must give the summary return within—
(a) 30 days after the date of the notice of the agent's failure; or
(b) a longer period allowed by the Minister.
Note—
In particular circumstances, the period mentioned in paragraph (a) may be taken to be extended—see section 173.
(5) The person ceases to be a councillor if the person does not comply with subsection (4).

(6) In this section—

required period, for a summary return, means the period within which the summary return must be given under the Local Government Electoral Act.

summary return means a return required to be given under the following provisions of the Local Government Electoral Act—

- (a) section 117(4);
- (b) section 118(4);
- (c) section 120(7);
- (d) section 125(2).

173 Extension of time for giving summary return

- (1) For section 172(1) or (4), a person who is elected as a councillor may make a written request to the Minister to allow a longer period for giving a summary return.
- (2) The request must be made before the following period (the **relevant period**) ends—
 - (a) for section 172(1), the required period;
 - (b) for section 172(4), the period mentioned in section 172(4)(a).
- (3) If, when the relevant period ends, the Minister has not decided the request, the relevant period is taken to be extended until the date of the notice of the Minister's decision.
- (4) In this section—
 - required period** see section 172(6).
 - summary return** see section 172(6).

68 Clause 152 (Amendment of sch 1 (Serious integrity offences and integrity offences))

Page 140, lines 22 to 24—
omit.

69 Clause 153 (Amendment of sch 4 (Dictionary))

Page 141, lines 1 to 4—
omit.

70 Clause 169 (Insertion of new s 52A)

Page 151, line 13, 'while it was suspended to have'—
omit, insert—

booth while it was suspended to

71 Clause 170 (Replacement of s 53 (Adjournment of poll))

Page 151, line 23, after 'interrupted'—
insert—

or obstructed

72 Clause 172 (Amendment of s 58 (Distribution of ballot paper and voters roll))

Page 153, line 9, 'paper'—
omit, insert—

papers

73 Clause 172 (Amendment of s 58 (Distribution of ballot paper and voters roll))

Page 153, after line 12—
insert—

- (1AA) Without limiting subsection (1)(a), a ballot paper is available at a polling booth if a ballot paper can be reproduced at the polling booth under section 58A.

74 Clause 175 (Amendment of s 69 (Who must complete a declaration envelope))

Page 155, lines 1 to 3, 'why the elector cannot make an ordinary vote at a polling booth'—
omit.

75 Clause 192 (Amendment of s 179 (Giving of how-to-vote cards to electoral commission))

Page 166, lines 7 to 10—
omit, insert—

- (1) Section 179(1), from 'no later than 5p.m.' to 'for the election'—
omit, insert—

after the start of the election period and at least 7 business days before the how-to-vote card is to be distributed on a day when votes may be cast for the election

(1A) Section 179(2), from 'by 5p.m.' to 'for the election'—

omit, insert—

after the start of the election period and at least 7 business days before the how-to-vote card is to be distributed on a day when votes may be cast for the election

76 Clause 192 (Amendment of s 179 (Giving of how-to-vote cards to electoral commission))

Page 166, after line 12—

insert—

(2A) Section 179—

insert—

(2A) The electoral commission must, within 5 business days after receiving the things mentioned in subsection (1)(a) and (b) or (2)(a) and (b)—

(a) decide to accept or reject the how-to-vote card; and

(b) inform the person who authorised the how-to-vote card of the decision.

(2B) Section 179(5), from 'no later than 5p.m.' to 'immediately before'—

omit, insert—

at least 2 business days before

(2C) Section 179—

insert—

(5A) The electoral commission must, within 2 business days after receiving the things mentioned in subsection (5)(b)—

(a) decide to accept or reject the revised how-to-vote card; and

(b) inform the person who authorised the revised how-to-vote card of the decision; and

(c) if the revised how-to-vote card is rejected—give the person who authorised the revised how-to-vote card written reasons for the rejection.

77 Clause 192 (Amendment of s 179 (Giving of how-to-vote cards to electoral commission))

Page 166, lines 13 to 16—

omit, insert—

(3) Section 179(6), from 'Before' to 'accepted'—

omit, insert—

As soon as practicable after the electoral commission accepts a how-to-vote card, the returning officer must ensure the

78 Clause 196 (Amendment of s 195 (Offences about returns))

Page 168, lines 4 to 10—

omit.

79 Clause 199 (Insertion of new pt 11, div 4)

Page 169, line 7, 'State'—

omit, insert—

Stage

80 Clause 204 (Amendment of s 40 (Disposal of deposits generally))

Page 171, lines 3 to 6—

omit.

81 Clause 205 (Amendment of s 41 (Record of membership in group of candidates))

Page 171, lines 12 to 17—

omit, insert—

(2) Section 41(1)—

omit, insert—

(1) This section applies if 2 or more candidates propose to engage in group campaign activities for an election.

- 82 Clause 205 (Amendment of s 41 (Record of membership in group of candidates))**
Page 172, lines 18 and 19—
omit, insert—
(6) Section 41—
insert—
(5) A candidate in an election may be a member of only 1 group of candidates for the election.
(6) Only 1 member of the group may be a candidate for election as mayor of a local government.
- 83 Clause 209 (Amendment of s 65 (System of voting))**
Page 173, lines 24 to 27—
omit.
- 84 Clause 214 (Amendment of s 83 (How electors must record a vote on a ballot paper—optional-preferential voting))**
Page 175, lines 1 to 15—
omit.
- 85 Clause 215 (Amendment of s 86 (Formal and informal ballot papers—optional-preferential voting))**
Page 175, line 16 to page 176, line 12—
omit.
- 86 Clause 216 (Amendment of s 92 (Preliminary counting of ordinary votes))**
Page 176, lines 13 to 17—
omit.
- 87 Clause 217 (Amendment of s 95 (Official counting of votes))**
Page 176, lines 18 to 21—
omit.
- 88 Clause 218 (Amendment of s 97 (Counting of votes for optional-preferential system))**
Page 176, line 22 to page 177, line 7—
omit.
- 89 Clause 220 (Amendment of s 106 (Definitions for part))**
Page 179, line 13, before '*electoral expenditure*'—
insert—
disclosure date,
- 90 Clause 220 (Amendment of s 106 (Definitions for part))**
Page 179, after line 17—
insert—
disclosure deadline, for a return, means the day or time prescribed by regulation for the giving of the return.
- 91 Clause 220 (Amendment of s 106 (Definitions for part))**
Page 180, line 1, 'section 121B(2)'—
omit, insert—
section 121A(2)
- 92 Clause 220 (Amendment of s 106 (Definitions for part))**
Page 180, line 7, 'endorsed for'—
omit, insert—
endorsed
- 93 Clause 222 (Replacement of s 107 (Meaning of gifts))**
Page 182, lines 16 and 17, 'or'—
omit, insert—
and
- 94 Clause 222 (Replacement of s 107 (Meaning of gifts))**
Page 183, line 1, 'include a'—
omit, insert—
include

95 After clause 229

Page 188, after line 7—

*insert—***229A Amendment of s 117 (Gifts to candidates)**

- (1) Section 117(2), 'date'—
omit, insert—
deadline
- (2) Section 117(7), 'under subsection (2)'—
omit, insert—
under subsection (4)

229B Amendment of s 118 (Gifts to groups of candidates)

- (1) Section 118(2), 'date'—
omit, insert—
deadline
- (2) Section 118(7)—
omit, insert—
- (7) If the electoral commission receives a return under subsection (4) from the agent of a group of candidates, any of whom are successful in an election, the electoral commission must give a copy of the return to—
 - (a) the chief executive officer of the local government for which the election was held; and
 - (b) each successful candidate in the group.

96 Clause 230 (Insertion of new s 118A)

Page 189, line 6, 'date'—

omit, insert—

deadline

97 Clause 233 (Amendment of s 120 (Loans to candidates or groups of candidates))

Page 190, lines 9 to 11—

omit, insert—

- (1) Section 120(2) and (4), 'date'—
omit, insert—
deadline
- (2) Section 120(6)(b) to (e)—
omit, insert—
 - (b) state the relevant details for the loan.
- (3) Section 120—
insert—
- (9) Subsection (10) applies if the electoral commission receives a return under subsection (7) from—
 - (a) a candidate who is successful in an election; or
 - (b) the agent of a group of candidates, any of whom are successful in an election.
- (10) The electoral commission must give a copy of the return to—
 - (a) the chief executive officer of the local government for which the election was held; and
 - (b) if the return is received from the agent for a group of candidates—each successful candidate in the group.

98 Clause 235 (Insertion of new pt 6, div 3, sdiv 3)

Page 191, line 30, after 'first'—

insert—

gift or

99 Clause 236 (Insertion of new pt 6, div 3, sdiv 4 hdg)

Page 193, line 11, 'section 121'—

omit, insert—

section 121C, as inserted by this Act

- 100 Clause 238 (Replacement of pt 6, div 4 (Disclosure by third parties))**
Page 197, line 12, 'date'—
omit, insert—
deadline
- 101 Clause 238 (Replacement of pt 6, div 4 (Disclosure by third parties))**
Page 197, line 23, 'expenditure; and'—
omit, insert—
expenditure.
- 102 Clause 238 (Replacement of pt 6, div 4 (Disclosure by third parties))**
Page 197, lines 24 to 28—
omit.
- 103 Clause 238 (Replacement of pt 6, div 4 (Disclosure by third parties))**
Page 198, lines 24 to 26, from 'must state'—
omit, insert—
must—
(a) state the total amount of electoral expenditure the election participant incurred during the disclosure period for the election; and
(b) for a return for a candidate or group of candidates—be accompanied by a copy of a bank statement for the dedicated account of the candidate or group for the disclosure period for the election.
- 104 Clause 238 (Replacement of pt 6, div 4 (Disclosure by third parties))**
Page 198, line 27, 'electoral'—
omit, insert—
election
- 105 Clause 238 (Replacement of pt 6, div 4 (Disclosure by third parties))**
Page 198, after line 29—
insert—
(5) Subsection (6) applies if the electoral commission receives a return under subsection (2) from—
(a) a candidate who is successful in the election; or
(b) the agent of a group of candidates, any of whom are successful in the election; or
(c) the agent for a registered political party that endorsed a candidate who is successful in the election.
(6) The electoral commission must give a copy of the return to—
(a) the chief executive officer of the local government for which the election was held; and
(b) if the return is received from the agent for a group of candidates or the agent for a registered political party that endorsed a candidate—each successful candidate in the group or endorsed by the party.
- 106 Clause 238 (Replacement of pt 6, div 4 (Disclosure by third parties))**
Page 199, line 23, 'date'—
omit, insert—
deadline
- 107 Clause 240 (Amendment of s 128 (Register of gifts))**
Page 201, line 20—
omit, insert—
(a) if the electoral commission is informed, by the person giving the return, that an individual identified in the return is a silent elector or an elector whose status is equivalent or similar to a silent elector under a law of the Commonwealth or another State—the address of the individual elector;
- 108 Clause 240 (Amendment of s 128 (Register of gifts))**
Page 201, after line 20—
insert—
(ab) the street address, but not the suburb, town, city or other locality including the State, of each individual identified in the return;

109 Clause 240 (Amendment of s 128 (Register of gifts))

Page 201, line 22, '124(3)(d)'—

omit, insert—

125(3)(b)

110 Clause 243 (Insertion of new s 130A)

Page 202, lines 13 and 16, '130A'—

*omit, insert—***130B****111 Clause 243 (Insertion of new s 130A)**

Page 203, line 6, after '153'—

insert—

, 162, 172

112 Clause 243 (Insertion of new s 130A)

Page 203, line 7, after '153'—

insert—

, 162, 174

113 Clause 243 (Insertion of new s 130A)

Page 203, lines 14 and 15—

*omit.***114 Clause 243 (Insertion of new s 130A)**

Page 203, line 18—

omit, insert—

- (3) If the person to whom the notice must be given is the agent for a group of candidates or the agent for a registered political party that endorsed a candidate, the electoral commission must also give a copy of the notice to each candidate who is—

- (a) a member of the group or endorsed by the party; and
(b) successful in the election.

- (4) In this section—

115 After clause 243

Page 203, after line 24—

*insert—***243A Insertion of new s 130C**

After section 130B, as inserted by this Act—

*insert—***130C Electoral commission must give notice about agent's failure to give return**

- (1) This section applies if—

- (a) an agent for a group of candidates or an agent for a registered political party that endorsed a candidate—
(i) is required to give the electoral commission a summary return; and
(ii) has not given the return to the electoral commission within the required period; and
(b) 1 or more of the candidates in the group or endorsed by the political party is elected as a councillor.

- (2) The electoral commission must, as soon as practicable after the end of the required period, give each successful candidate represented by the agent (each the **councillor**) a notice stating—

- (a) that the agent has failed to give the electoral commission the summary return within the required period; and
(b) that the councillor is required to give the return and the provision of division 3 or 4 under which the return is required to be given; and
(c) the following provisions, or a general outline of them, to the extent they are relevant to the requirement to give the return—
(i) the *City of Brisbane Act 2010*, section 174(3) and (4);
(ii) the *Local Government Act 2009*, section 172(3) and (4).

(3) In this section—

summary return means a return required to be given under the following provisions—

- (a) section 117(4);
- (b) section 118(4);
- (c) section 120(7);
- (d) section 125(2).

116 Clause 244 (Amendment of s 131 (Inability to complete returns))

Page 203, line 25 to page 204, line 12—

omit.

117 Clause 246 (Insertion of new s 162A)

Page 204, line 19 to page 205, line 14—

omit.

118 Clause 251 (Insertion of new pt 11, div 4, sdiv 2)

Page 209, line 5, 'councillors'—

omit, insert—

candidates—gifts

119 Clause 251 (Insertion of new pt 11, div 4, sdiv 2)

Page 209, lines 6 to 12, from 'who,'—

omit, insert—

who—

- (a) immediately before the commencement, was not a candidate; and
- (b) on the commencement, is a candidate.

120 Clause 251 (Insertion of new pt 11, div 4, sdiv 2)

Page 209, line 13, 'candidate'—

omit, insert—

person

121 Clause 251 (Insertion of new pt 11, div 4, sdiv 2)

Page 209, lines 16 to 22—

omit, insert—

person must give a return under section 117(2) and (4), as in force immediately before the commencement, for the person's pre-commencement disclosure period.

(3A) For applying section 117—

- (a) a reference to a candidate is taken to be a reference to the person; and
- (b) a reference to relevant details is taken to be a reference to relevant details under section 109 as in force immediately before the commencement; and
- (c) a reference to the required period is taken to be a reference to the period starting on the commencement and ending 14 days after the commencement; and
- (d) a reference to the disclosure date is taken to be a reference to the day that is 14 days after the commencement; and
- (e) a reference to the disclosure period is taken to be a reference to the person's pre-commencement disclosure period; and
- (f) a reference to a gift is taken to be a reference to a gift under section 107 as in force immediately before the commencement; and
- (g) a reference to the value of a gift is taken to be a reference to the value of a gift under section 108 as in force immediately before the commencement.

122 Clause 251 (Insertion of new pt 11, div 4, sdiv 2)

Page 209, lines 23 to 26, from 'apply in'—

omit, insert—

apply—

- (a) to the person if, before the commencement, a disclosure period would not have started under section 114 or 115 as in force immediately before the commencement, as applied under subsection (6), definition *pre-commencement disclosure period*, paragraph (a); or
- (b) in relation to a gift that is the subject of a return given to the electoral commission under part 6 before the commencement.

123 Clause 251 (Insertion of new pt 11, div 4, sdiv 2)

Page 209, line 28, 'candidate'—
omit, insert—

person

124 Clause 251 (Insertion of new pt 11, div 4, sdiv 2)

Page 209, after line 29—
insert—

(6) In this section—

pre-commencement disclosure period, for a person who, on the commencement, is a candidate, means the period—

- (a) starting when the disclosure period would have started for the person under section 114 or 115 as in force immediately before the commencement—
 - (i) if the person were a candidate for those sections; and
 - (ii) as if a reference in those sections to an election were a reference to the election for which the person is, on the commencement, a candidate; and
- (b) ending immediately before the commencement.

125 Clause 251 (Insertion of new pt 11, div 4, sdiv 2)

Page 209, before line 30—
insert—

217A Disclosure obligations for agent for group of candidates—gifts

- (1) This section applies in relation to a person who—
 - (a) represents a group of persons who—
 - (i) immediately before the commencement, were not candidates; and
 - (ii) on the commencement, are candidates; and
 - (iii) after the commencement, give a record of membership of the group to the electoral commission under section 41; and
 - (b) is appointed as the agent for the group after the commencement.
- (2) For part 6, the disclosure period for the group is taken to start on the day the group gives the record of membership to the electoral commission.
- (3) Within 14 days after the appointment, the person must give a return under section 118(2) and (4), as in force immediately before the commencement, for the group's pre-commencement disclosure period.
- (4) For applying section 118—
 - (a) a reference to a group of candidates is taken to be a reference to the group of persons; and
 - (b) a reference to a gift is taken to be a reference to a gift under section 107 as in force immediately before the commencement; and
 - (c) a reference to the disclosure date is taken to be a reference to the day that is 14 days after the appointment; and
 - (d) a reference to relevant details is taken to be a reference to relevant details under section 109 as in force immediately before the commencement; and
 - (e) a reference to the required period is taken to be a reference to the period starting on the appointment and ending 14 days after the appointment; and
 - (f) a reference to the disclosure period is taken to be a reference to the group's pre-commencement disclosure period; and
 - (g) a reference to the value of a gift is taken to be a reference to the value of a gift under section 108 as in force immediately before the commencement.
- (5) However, subsection (3) does not apply in relation to a gift that is the subject of a return given to the electoral commission under part 6 before the commencement.
- (6) Part 9, division 5 applies in relation to the person and to each member of the group as if—
 - (a) a reference in the division to part 6 included a reference to this section; and
 - (b) a reference in the division to section 118 included a reference to this section.
- (7) In this section—

pre-commencement disclosure period, for a group of persons mentioned in subsection (1)(a), means the period—

 - (a) starting when the disclosure period would have started for the group under section 116, as in force immediately before the commencement—
 - (i) if the persons in the group were a group of candidates for that section; and
 - (ii) as if a reference in that section to an election were a reference to the election for which the persons in the group are, on the commencement, candidates; and
 - (b) ending immediately before the day the group gives the record of membership to the electoral commission.

217B Disclosure obligations for candidates—loans

- (1) This section applies to a person who—
 - (a) immediately before the commencement, was not a candidate; and
 - (b) on the commencement, is a candidate.
- (2) For part 6, the disclosure period for the person is taken to start on the commencement.
- (3) Within 14 days after the commencement, the person must give a return under section 120(2) and (7), as in force immediately before the commencement, for the person's pre-commencement disclosure period.
- (4) For applying section 120—
 - (a) a reference to a candidate is taken to be a reference to the person; and
 - (b) a reference to the required period is taken to be a reference to the period starting on the commencement and ending 14 days after the commencement; and
 - (c) a reference to the disclosure date is taken to be a reference to the day that is 14 days after the commencement; and
 - (d) a reference to the disclosure period is taken to be a reference to the person's pre-commencement disclosure period.
- (5) However, subsection (3) does not apply—
 - (a) to the person if, before the commencement, a disclosure period would not have started under section 114 or 115 as in force immediately before the commencement, as applied under subsection (7), definition *pre-commencement disclosure period*, paragraph (a); or
 - (b) in relation to a loan that is the subject of a return given to the electoral commission under part 6 before the commencement.
- (6) Part 9, division 5 applies in relation to the person as if—
 - (a) a reference in the division to part 6 included a reference to this section; and
 - (b) a reference in the division to section 120 included a reference to this section.
- (7) In this section—

pre-commencement disclosure period, for a person who, on the commencement, is a candidate, means the period—

 - (a) starting when the disclosure period would have started for the person under section 114 or 115 as in force immediately before the commencement—
 - (i) if the person were a candidate for those sections; and
 - (ii) as if a reference in those sections to an election were a reference to the election for which the person is, on the commencement, a candidate; and
 - (b) ending immediately before the commencement.

217C Disclosure obligations for agent for group of candidates—loans

- (1) This section applies in relation to a person who—
 - (a) represents a group of persons who—
 - (i) immediately before the commencement, were not candidates; and
 - (ii) on the commencement, are candidates; and
 - (iii) after the commencement, give a record of membership of the group to the electoral commission under section 41; and
 - (b) is appointed as the agent for the group after the commencement.
- (2) For part 6, the disclosure period for the group is taken to start on the day the group gives the record of membership to the electoral commission.
- (3) Within 14 days after the appointment, the person must give a return under section 120(4) and (7), as in force immediately before the commencement, for the group's pre-commencement disclosure period.
- (4) For applying section 120—
 - (a) a reference to a group of candidates is taken to be a reference to the group of persons; and
 - (b) a reference to the required period is taken to be a reference to the period starting on the appointment and ending 14 days after the appointment; and
 - (c) a reference to the disclosure date is taken to be a reference to the day that is 14 days after the appointment; and
 - (d) a reference to the disclosure period is taken to be a reference to the group's pre-commencement disclosure period.

- (5) However, subsection (3) does not apply in relation to a loan that is the subject of a return given to the electoral commission under part 6 before the commencement.
- (6) Part 9, division 5 applies in relation to the person and to each member of the group as if—
 - (a) a reference in the division to part 6 included a reference to this section; and
 - (b) a reference in the division to section 120 included a reference to this section.
- (7) In this section—

pre-commencement disclosure period, for a group of persons mentioned in subsection (1)(a), means the period—

 - (a) starting when the disclosure period would have started for the group under section 116, as in force immediately before the commencement—
 - (i) if the persons in the group were a group of candidates for that section; and
 - (ii) as if a reference in that section to an election were a reference to the election for which the persons in the group are, on the commencement, candidates; and
 - (b) ending immediately before the day the group gives the record of membership to the electoral commission.

126 Clause 251 (Insertion of new pt 11, div 4, sdiv 2)

Page 210, after line 32—

*insert—***219 Election and elector information for election before commencement**

Elector information can be requested and given under section 101A in relation to the 2016 quadrennial election and any subsequent election.

127 Clause 253 (Amendment of sch 2 (Dictionary))

Page 217, after line 31—

insert—

group of candidates means members of a group for which a record of membership has been given to the electoral commission under section 41(2).

128 Clause 253 (Amendment of sch 2 (Dictionary))

Page 217, line 34 to page 218, line 1—

omit, insert—

silent elector means a person—

- (a) to whom the *Electoral Act 1992*, section 58(5) applies; or
- (b) whose address has been excluded from an electoral roll under an arrangement under the *Electoral Act 1992*, section 62 because of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* (Cwlth), section 104.

129 Clause 253 (Amendment of sch 2 (Dictionary))

Page 218, after line 14—

insert—

- (3A) Schedule 2, as numbered by this Act, definition *disclosure date*, '*date*'—

*omit, insert—**deadline***130 Clause 253 (Amendment of sch 2 (Dictionary))**

Page 218, lines 15 to 26—

omit.

Motion agreed to.

Amendments agreed to.

Clauses 133 to 142, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 143 and 144 omitted.

Clauses 145 to 147, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 148 to 150 omitted.

Clauses 151 and 152, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 153 omitted.

Clauses 154 to 203, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 204 omitted.

Clause 205 to 208, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 209 omitted.

Clauses 210 to 213, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 214 to 218 omitted.

Clauses 219 to 243, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 244 omitted.

Clause 245, as read, agreed to.

Clause 246 omitted.

Clauses 247 to 259, as amended, agreed to.

Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill



Mrs D'ATH (4.56 pm): I table the explanatory notes to my amendments.

Tabled paper. Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019, explanatory notes to Hon. Yvette D'Ath's amendments [\[1851\]](#).

Question put—That amendments 1 to 10 be agreed to and clauses 1 to 125 of the Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, as amended, stand part of the bill.

Amendments as circulated—

1 Clause 21 (Insertion of new ss 99A and 99B)

Page 22, line 12, after 'if'—

insert—

the returning officer is satisfied

2 Clause 60 (Amendment of s 261 (Disclosure by candidates of gifts))

Page 52, line 18—

omit, insert—

(1) Section 261(2)(b)—

3 Clause 60 (Amendment of s 261 (Disclosure by candidates of gifts))

Page 52, after line 22—

insert—

(2) Section 261(2)(c), after 'day,'—

insert—

or the time,

4 Clause 61 (Amendment of s 262 (Loans to candidates))

Page 52, line 24—

omit, insert—

(1) Section 262(2)(b)—

5 Clause 61 (Amendment of s 262 (Loans to candidates))

Page 52, after line 28—

insert—

(2) Section 262(2)(c), after 'day,'—

insert—

or the time,

6 After clause 64

Page 53, after line 28—

insert—

64A Amendment of s 266B (Requirement to disclose large gifts)

Section 266B(2)(c), after 'day,'—

insert—

or the time,

7 After clause 66

Page 54, after line 16—

*insert—***66A Amendment of s 290 (Returns by registered political parties)**

Section 290(2)(d), after 'day,'—

insert—

or the time,

66B Amendment of s 294 (Returns by associated entities)

Section 294(2)(c), after 'day,'—

insert—

or the time,

8 Clause 71 (Amendment of s 316 (Publishing of returns))

Page 56, lines 27 and 28—

omit, insert—

- (a) the address of an individual identified in the return if the person giving the return informs the commission that the individual is—
 - (i) a silent elector; or
 - (ii) enrolled on the electoral roll of the Commonwealth or another State with status equivalent or similar to a silent elector;
- (b) the street address of each other individual identified in the return.
- (4) For subsection (3)(b), the requirement to delete the street address of an individual does not include a requirement to delete the suburb, town, city or other locality, or State of the individual.

9 Clause 73 (Insertion of new pt 13, div 10)

Page 58, after line 9—

*insert—***430A Election and elector information for election before commencement**

Elector information can be requested and given under section 133A in relation to the general election held in 2017 and any subsequent election.

10 Clause 78 (Insertion of new ss 16A and 16B)

Page 63, line 12, after 'if'—

insert—

the returning officer is satisfied

Motion agreed to.

Amendments agreed to.

Clauses 1 to 125, as amended, agreed to.

Third Reading (Cognate Debate)

Question put—That the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 2 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, as amended, be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Mr SPEAKER: The question is that the Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, as amended, be now read a third time.

Section 4A of the Constitution of Queensland Act 2001 requires that in order for this bill to be passed and presented to the Governor for assent, as per my statement yesterday, it must be passed by an absolute majority of the members of the Legislative Assembly. Section 4A specifies that an absolute majority is a majority of the number of members set out in section 11 of the Constitution. Accordingly, an absolute majority requires the votes of 47 members of the Legislative Assembly.

In accordance with my earlier statement on the matter, to provide certainty on whether an absolute majority is achieved in passing this bill, I will call for a division on the questions on the third reading and on the long title of the bill. The results of the divisions will be published in the *Record of Proceedings*.

Division: Question put—That the Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, as amended, be now read a third time.

AYES, 91:

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.

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

Grn, 1—Berkman.

KAP, 3—Dametto, Katter, Knuth.

PHON, 1—Andrew.

Ind, 2—Bolton, Costigan.

NOES, 0:

Resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read a third time.

Long Title (Cognate Debate)

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, under the provisions of the business program, as there is no intervening debate for all future divisions the bells will ring for one minute.

Question put—That the long title of the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 2 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Division: Question put—That the long title of the Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill be agreed to.

AYES, 91:

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.

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

Grn, 1—Berkman.

KAP, 3—Dametto, Katter, Knuth.

PHON, 1—Andrew.

Ind, 2—Bolton, Costigan.

NOES, 0:

Resolved in the affirmative.

MOTION

Paradise Dam, Parliamentary Inquiry



Mrs FRECKLINGTON (Nanango—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (5.09 pm): I move—

1. That the State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development Committee investigate the Paradise Dam's design, construction and operation; and the Palaszczuk government's decision to lower the dam wall by five metres.
2. The committee should consider:
 - (a) the design of the dam and whether it was appropriate;
 - (b) how the dam was constructed including under a competitive alliance contract, the impact of Walter Construction Group going into receivership halfway through and the use of roller compacted concrete;
 - (c) how the dam has been operated;
 - (d) how the permanent reduction in the capacity of the dam will impact the region's water security and agricultural production and the flow-on effects to the regional economy and jobs;
 - (e) why the Palaszczuk government has decided to lower the dam by five metres, releasing 105,000 megalitres of water in just 10 weeks; and
 - (f) whether a claim could be made against those who built the dam or under Sunwater's insurance arrangements.
3. In conducting the hearing, the committee is asked to:
 - (a) conduct hearings in the Wide Bay region; and
 - (b) order those involved in the design and construction of the dam to appear at the inquiry.

Almost two-thirds of this state is in drought. From McKinlay shire to the Scenic Rim, our regions are crying out for water. Farmers are going to the wall each and every week. In Stanthorpe, water is being trucked in every day, just so families can cook and wash, so that children can have a bath. In the Wide Bay-Burnett, the Palaszczuk government has just flushed 105,000 megalitres of precious water into the Coral Sea. Producers across this state have simply watched in despair as this precious water pours out of Paradise Dam. They cannot believe that water is being wasted on such a shocking scale in the middle of one of Queensland's worst droughts. People living in drought-declared Bundaberg and Burnett have rightfully demanded an explanation. They want to know what on earth is going on with Paradise Dam. The Palaszczuk Labor government has simply refused to tell them. It has refused to tell those communities why their water is being wasted. Labor will not say what is wrong with the dam, and that was the dam it built. It will not say how it will fix it or when.

Those opposite cannot treat Queenslanders with such contempt. They cannot threaten people's livelihoods and their futures and then just tell them to suck it up. We need answers from this arrogant Palaszczuk Labor government, and that is why the LNP is demanding a full parliamentary inquiry into the dam debacle: an open and public inquiry into the dam's design, the dam's construction and the dam's operation; an inquiry into the Palaszczuk Labor government's decision to cut the dam's capacity to 42 per cent.

I want that inquiry to go to Bundaberg and the Burnett region to hear from those locals who have been affected by this decision. I want the Labor Party to get out of its bunker here in Brisbane and listen to what regional Queenslanders actually have to say because that is what I did, because, unlike Labor, I have not forgotten that we work for Queenslanders. We are their servants. It is not the other way around. Our farmers and our canegrowers depend on Paradise Dam. Free water now is of very little use to them because they were not prepared for it. They were not notified in advance of it, and it is not free to pump the water. It actually costs growers an absolute fortune and the minister—

Mr Perrett interjected.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I take that interjection from the member for Gympie; those opposite do not understand drought. The Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy should know about the costs to pump water because he is the one who is ripping off electricity users with a secret tax on their power bills. What producers fear is that there will be no water in the future because if there is not their businesses will be finished, and it is not just the producers who will be hit. The local tourism operators are talking about this. They are already affected by this diabolical decision to drain the dam. With Christmas just around the corner, tourism operators say that there will be no access for up to six months and campers will have to endure the stench of rotting vegetation. Draining Paradise Dam will damage the economy of that entire region.

We know that the Labor Party government has not built a dam in regional Queensland since 2005 and now it appears that that dam it did build was a botched job. The Paradise Dam cost the people of Queensland \$200 million to build. How much more will it cost to fix it and why has the dam only lasted

for 13 years? Queenslanders cannot have confidence in Labor's ability to deliver infrastructure until we have the answers to those questions. Queenslanders cannot trust the Palaszczuk Labor government full stop. Queenslanders want answers and only a full parliamentary inquiry will provide them.

Mr BUTCHER (Gladstone—ALP) (5.14 pm): Tonight I rise to oppose the member for Nanango's motion. When it comes to matters of community safety, most parliaments right across Australia enjoy bipartisan support, but unfortunately not here in Queensland from those opposite. They are desperate. They are simply a political party that has not seen an issue that they could not politicise in this state, and even issues of public safety are not out of the question.

On 24 May Minister Dr Anthony Lynham announced that a technical investigation into Paradise Dam under SunWater's ongoing safety program discovered issues could exist in an extreme weather event, and we know what those extreme weather events are like here in Queensland: just ask those members in Far North Queensland. The expert advice is to lower the spillway and increase community safety, meaning water needs to be released from Paradise Dam ahead of this year's wet season.

It is not something ScoMo or Barnaby or Littleproud ordered us to say. It is not diamond members from the LNP pulling the strings. It is a matter of community safety and we are acting on expert advice. It took less than 24 hours for the opposition leader to make a political issue out of this. They take any opportunity that they possibly can. They have no shame. It is no surprise that they will turn a community safety issue into a political issue because the LNP plays politics with dams, and we know that. It politicised due diligence on Emu Swamp and then it pretends to take the high moral ground on dams today.

With regard to Rookwood Weir, we have a federal government, supported by its mates opposite here, that never, ever wanted Rookwood Weir to go ahead. I am still waiting to see one red cent come from the LNP in Australia for Rookwood Weir. To be frank, I am sick of waiting and I am also sick of members in the north such as Landry and Canavan parading around just lying to people about water infrastructure and dams, particularly in my region in Central Queensland.

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

Mr BUTCHER: They are hypocrites when it comes to the matter of water.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stewart): Order! Pause the clock please.

Mr STEVENS: Clearly we had unparliamentary language by the member and he should withdraw those comments.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have been listening quite intently—I have been—

Mr Stevens: The 'I' word.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, I know the 'I' word, but it was not used as a direction towards members of the opposition.

Mr BUTCHER: Mr Deputy Speaker, I am happy to withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! One moment please. Sorry, member for Mermaid Beach. I do stand corrected. You have a point of order and I ask the member for Gladstone to withdraw.

Mr BUTCHER: I withdraw. The Prime Minister sat across the table from the Premier of Queensland on 12 July this year and ruled out more money for the Rookwood Weir. They do not care about dams. We know that for a fact. If they did, they would have money on the table right now. Our government makes no apologies for putting community safety first. We ask those opposite to stop making a political issue out of this. The government is acting on expert advice that has been given to it. Following our announcement, Engineers Australia stated—

Dam operators are doing the right thing by prioritising safety ...


It said that with regard to this dam wall, further stating that—

Dropping the water level ... reduces the forces on the dam dramatically and it removes the risk of anything untoward happening in the short term.

Community safety is paramount and this government is acting on expert advice to lower the spillway and lower the level ahead of the coming wet season—a decision that was certainly not taken lightly in this current climate, as we heard today.

To increase safety, 80,000 megalitres of free water is being released over the next 10 weeks to lower the dam. Two standpipes have been installed to make the water more accessible and a third is being investigated with the Bundaberg Regional Council for that free water. Water is also being released into four watercourses not normally supplied by this dam. That means irrigators with water access rights

already on the Elliott River, Mahogany Creek, the Gregory River and Logging Creek will also have access to this free water from this dam. This will further maximise productive use of the water that is being released. I am sure that members would be glad to hear that drought affected farmers are already taking advantage of this free water for irrigation and storage. This motion is another example of a party that is more interested in politics. This motion is further evidence of why the LNP is never, ever—and never will be—fit to govern in this wonderful state of Queensland.

 **Mr BATT** (Bundaberg—LNP) (5.20 pm): I rise to speak in support of the motion moved by the member for Nanango calling for a parliamentary inquiry into the design, construction and operation of the Paradise Dam and the government's decision to lower the dam wall by five metres. I have been inundated with stories from Bundaberg residents about the flaws in the construction of Paradise Dam. This has not just been one or two stories since Labor announced its ludicrous plan to reduce the dam to 42 per cent of its capacity; it has been stories from multiple residents day after day. In fact, since work began on the dam, rumours have circulated within my community regarding its construction, but nobody has wanted to formally put their name to these rumours due to fear of retribution.

Labor claims that it is reducing the spillway because of sudden safety concerns relating to the dam's original build. Despite its ongoing spiel about the importance of safety, Labor has failed to release any reports or any specific details to the public, leaving everybody completely in the dark. The safety of residents should always be paramount and the government should always be transparent but, unfortunately, being open and honest is usually the last thing on this government's mind.

The stories that I have heard about the Paradise Dam build are worrying, to say the least. I know that I speak on behalf of the Bundaberg region when I say that it is time we got to the bottom of this mess and find out the truth once and for all. That is why the LNP is calling for a full parliamentary inquiry. A public parliamentary inquiry would provide those involved in the dam's construction with the opportunity to speak up. It is the only way they will feel comfortable sharing their knowledge, knowing that they are fully protected by parliamentary privilege. It is their insight that is so desperately needed.


Everybody understands that reducing the dam's capacity to less than half of its capacity will permanently decrease water security in my region. That is causing immense anxiety to those involved in agricultural industries in my area. Over the years, many farmers have migrated to my amazing region and many businesses have committed millions of dollars because of the significant and secure water supply that Paradise Dam was promised to provide. Now, Labor has destroyed the security that those farmers once had, putting the livelihoods of hundreds of Wide Bay-Burnett families at risk.

Water security is not the only concern. Labor's decision to release 105,000 megalitres of stored water is a massive slap in the face and a stab in the heart to all Queenslanders who are currently experiencing drought. Two-thirds of our state is drought declared, including the Bundaberg region, and there are communities that will run out of water completely by Christmas. Yet Labor has decided that the water release is A-OK. The minister even claims that the water is free for farmers, but the reality is that the vast majority of this water will be wasted. Labor gave no notice of its release, so no-one had any time to prepare. This sudden, unannounced decision has taken everyone by surprise. The water will flow right past my office in Bundaberg's town centre, down the Burnett River and out to the ocean. What a complete and utter waste!

We must also think about what this permanent wall reduction could mean for Bundaberg in a future flood event. As everybody in this House should know, in 2013 Bundaberg experienced a record flood event, causing major destruction and inundation to over 3,000 homes, 600 businesses and major community infrastructure. North Bundaberg had the biggest mandatory evacuation in peacetime Australia, when some 7½ thousand residents were evacuated from their homes. Despite all of that, this government has not even given my city a thought when it comes to what a change in the spillway could mean for Bundaberg in the next flood.

What flood modelling has been done on this decision? As the flood recovery coordinator for the 2013 disaster, I know firsthand that the vast majority of data that has been used for flood modelling for Bundaberg city is based on the current spillway level and any change to that level has the potential to significantly impact that modelling. We need urgent confirmation from this government that the new modelling from this government that reflects the reduction has been completed in order to assure my community that the change will not have a more severe impact on people's homes, businesses and local infrastructure when the next flood event strikes.

It is both extraordinary and awfully concerning to think that a modern dam that cost taxpayers \$200 million cannot last more than 13 years. That is why this parliamentary inquiry is required and why I, on behalf of the Bundaberg community, wholeheartedly support the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition.

 **Hon. KJ JONES** (Cooper—ALP) (Minister for Innovation and Tourism Industry Development and Minister for Cross River Rail) (5.25 pm): I rise to speak in opposition to this motion. I know one thing about the honourable member for Stafford and that is that he will always put public safety first. In his whole career he has always listened to expert advice. That is what he is acting on. We make no apologies for acting in the interests of public safety. I hear the comments coming from the opposition. We have seen the minister commission an independent review by the Inspector-General Emergency Management. There is already a review underway into the background of the Paradise Dam. We will not support the opposition's motion, which would see us ignore the expert advice that we have received. We will put the interests of the community first. In fact, if we were to go down this path we would see a delay in the process. We would go backwards. We reject this motion. We reject the premise of this motion. We assure all Queenslanders that we will continue to act in their best interests.

I was reflecting that I was elected to parliament in 2006. As is well documented, I had a little segue out of parliament for a few years. I thought that, when I came back into this parliament after those three years, so many dams would be getting built across Queensland. Having sat in this parliament since 2006 and heard every single LNP member across Queensland say, 'We need a dam here, we need a dam there, we need a dam here, we need a dam there,' I thought that when I came back in here all of our infrastructure spending that would be locked into the forward estimates would be on building dams. How many dams did the LNP build in its time in government? Zero, zilch, absolutely none! If I recall correctly, the LNP government canned the Connors River Dam. The only contribution the LNP made under 'Can do' was to can the Connors River Dam.


The other thing the LNP tried to do—because this is what it does when it is in government—is it tried to privatise the dams. The members opposite had the time when they were in office. They had an unprecedented majority. They could have delivered on every single dam they have talked about since I started working here in the year 2000 when I used to hear the beautiful Vaughan Johnson talk about dams, Jeff Seeney talk about dams and that the other really nice guy from Toowoomba South—the Catholic, a great guy, Mike—who used to bang on about dams. When they finally got control of the treasury benches, what did they do about dams? Damn well nothing. That is what they did. I take that back.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stewart): Order! Pause the clock. Member for Cooper, I think that is unparliamentary. I ask you to withdraw.

Ms JONES: I withdraw. I could not resist. When the LNP was in government, it proved that it did not listen to expert advice. The members opposite got lots of expert advice about a number of issues that they ignored—whether it was the Barrett Centre, or the impact of their policy changes on electricity prices where they promised one thing before the election but we saw electricity prices go up by 43 per cent. We are a government that listens to advice.

Whether it is on public safety or any other matter, we seek out expert advice and we implement that advice, the same advice that sees our government actually investing in water security for the future of Queensland. As the member for Gladstone just talked about, we are the only level of government that is putting money into building Rookwood Weir, \$250 million for the pipeline; \$13.6 million for the Emu Swamp Dam; and a detailed business case for the raising of the Burdekin Falls Dam. This is the record of the Labor government, the only side of politics in Queensland that actually commits to building dams.

Those opposite came into government and had three years in office and did not commit any money to building any dams. I support 100 per cent the action that the member for Stafford is taking on behalf of all Queenslanders and in particular those in the Bundaberg region. It is not an easy decision but it is the right decision. It is based on fact. It is based on expert opinion. I reject the motion entirely.

 **Mr BOYCE** (Callide—LNP) (5.30 pm): I rise to support the motion put forward by my colleague, the opposition leader, Deb Frecklington, the member for Nanango, to have a parliamentary inquiry that directs the State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development Committee to investigate the Paradise Dam's construction, operation and the Palaszczuk government's decision to lower the dam wall by five metres.

From my investigations so far, it is my belief that the Paradise Dam in the electorate of Callide will become the biggest construction failure in Queensland's history. There are many questions that need to be asked and it is most important that the facts in relation to this issue be laid bare. If members remember what I said in my maiden speech, we need to operate with all the story and all the facts. The taxpayers of Queensland deserve and demand to know the truth.


The Paradise Dam is the newest dam in Queensland, a storage of some 300,000 megalitres of water, and it is only 13 years old. Why has it failed? Why is this government reducing the storage capacity to 42 per cent? What of the insurance policies on this dam? Are there any avenues for recourse and if not who will pay? Will it be the irrigators? At the recent QCA water price meetings we were told that water pricing is at full cost recovery. Given this, the cost of safety audits, insurance, operations and maintenance will be borne by the user, the irrigator, so will this apply to the Paradise Dam fiasco?

There are apparently photographs held by SunWater that show the core drillings of the dam wall reveal many faults in the concrete that was laid at Paradise Dam. These photos show cold joins in the concrete, aggregate with little or no cement powder and evidence of poor quality and construction methods used to build the dam wall. If they exist, why are they not released for public scrutiny? Why is it that the safety report has not been made public? What is the government trying to hide? It appears to me this is another crisis cover-up.

I have much experience in the construction industry and I know firsthand what can and does happen. I want to know where the slump tests are on the concrete. A slump test is a simple and quick test that is used to determine the quality and mix of the concrete that has been used on a particular job. I am told that all these records relating to the dam wall and its construction have mysteriously vanished. How convenient! Mr Graeme Newton was the man whose job it was to oversee the construction of Paradise Dam. I would like to have this man before a committee to answer questions. It appears to me that he may have been derelict in his duty in signing off on the dam's construction. Why has he been made CEO of the Cross River Rail project? Can we expect similar things to happen? If this man has no case to answer then put him before the committee and exonerate him. I expect the dam safety report is damning and that is why it has not been released. Is Mr Newton implicated? I need to know the answers. I want to know the truth. Let us have the inquiry and establish the facts.

When someone leaves a tap on at your house, what do you say? 'Turn the tap off! You're wasting water.' The Labor government has left the tap on at the Paradise Dam and it is a big tap. They are wasting thousands of megalitres of water as I speak. This is a disgrace. Australia is the driest habitable continent and water is a precious resource. Why on earth are we wasting it? To argue that it is free is absurdity. Nothing is for free. For the very few who are in a position to use this water, it will cost them dearly in pumping costs. Most of the water will go out to sea. This highlights the incompetence of the Labor government and shows how out of touch and ignorant they are as to the practicalities of running and managing an irrigation farm.

I want to know what will happen to the 105,000 megalitres of water that is still in the system. Will the government commit to building the Cooranga Weir on the Boyne River at Mundubbera? What about the weir on Barambah Creek so the people of Coalstoun Lakes can benefit from the loss of water in the Paradise Dam? I want to know what the Dam Plan is. Let us have this inquiry and find out. I support the motion.

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (5.35 pm): I rise to oppose this motion for the simple fact that this motion is a stunt. If those opposite want to run an inquiry as a political circus then I want no part of it. This issue should not be a political circus. It is about water security. This motion wants my committee to run it as a political issue. News flash—we are not engineers, we are politicians. Here is an idea: let us leave it for the engineers to investigate and listen to their report. How innovative is that? Those opposite want to ignore the engineer's advice. They would have kept the water there threatening the communities downstream.

I would say to those moving this motion if they are really interested in an investigation into water infrastructure and water security they would support an investigation into the federal government's drought response. The feds are not supporting the creation of water security in Queensland. The federal Drought Communities Program is being used for everything else but the creation of water security and water infrastructure. So far in 2019 \$100 million has been granted. Each community gets \$1 million. Imagine what would happen if that was put into the communities around where the Paradise Dam irrigators are. Guidelines say that council cannot use the funds for core council business, but look what they have done—cemetery upgrades, public toilets and a virtual gym. I cannot blame councils. Once they get a scheme with that criteria they will use it. I blame the federal government for this.

As the Premier said, the feds are not putting any money on the table for Rookwood Weir. I will repeat what the Premier has said this morning—

... there has been a constant fight with the federal government in relation to the Rookwood Weir. Let me make it very clear: this government has put our first tranche of money on the table.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance under standing order 118.

Mr SPEAKER: It is a different standing order for a general debate.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, members to my right. I am allowing some latitude given it is a very broad motion. At the same time, I will ask the member to ensure he is being relevant to the motion at hand.

Mr WHITING: I will expand on where I believe this inquiry should go. At the moment those opposite are asking about Paradise Dam. If they are truly serious about water security in the state of Queensland they would, for instance, be calling for an investigation into what has happened to the \$5 billion Future Drought Fund. We have heard today of the federal government's inaction when it comes to water infrastructure. There is a \$5 billion fund there. What are they doing with it? Nothing! What we see from the feds is a lack of understanding and a lack of commitment to the people who are doing it tough in this state, people like those irrigators who rely on Paradise Dam.

The federal LNP government has a great chance to make a real difference to water infrastructure and security here in Queensland and it is not using it. If we are looking for an investigation into the inaction on water security, let us investigate why members of the LNP decided they needed to go to Luna Park to hear about drought. I do not know what they would have reported back. 'What can we see? The lawn of Admiralty House at Kirribilli looks a bit brown.'

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Bancroft, I have been listening to your contribution. You need to come back to the motion as moved by the Leader of the Opposition, otherwise I will ask the next speaker to seek the call.


Mr WHITING: I find it really hard to understand the fundamental intent of this motion from the LNP. The struggles of our drought affected communities are being felt by all of us. The farmers we on this side have spoken to understand that the safety of a dam such as this is paramount. That is our first priority. The only people who struggle to understand issues of safety are the people opposite. Once again, they do not want to listen to the engineers. They say, 'Let's have a political inquiry. Let's get a bunch of us to decide on these fundamental engineering issues.'

One of the things that we do know is that the water being released from Paradise Dam is for the use of or storage by growers and farmers. What we see with this motion is a classic example of the double standards of those on the other side. It is beyond comprehension that the same people who blame everyone but themselves—and everyone but their colleagues in Canberra, who have not funded water infrastructure, as I have said—are now complaining that this government is offering free water to irrigators.

An honourable member: Free!

Mr WHITING: It is free of charge to irrigators, much to the delight of those irrigators. I fail to understand why this motion has been moved and I oppose it.

(Time expired)

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (5.41 pm): It is somewhat disturbing that we have people such as the member for Bancroft talking about such a serious issue for my electorate. This is a really serious issue.

Ms Grace interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for McConnel will cease her interjections and put her comments through the chair.

Mr BENNETT: I rise to support the Leader of the Opposition's motion and to thank the member for Nanango for championing the fight against the disastrous decision in relation to the Paradise Dam. This is a very serious issue and my region deserves nothing less than a parliamentary inquiry. The motion is detailed and highlights the very issues about which details must be provided. I know that the member for Nanango understands the issues confronting our region, because the day after the tragedy started to unfold the member for Nanango drove to the Paradise Dam where she met us and then she drove to Bundaberg to meet with stakeholders. That is in contrast to the minister, who has moved to rob the wealth of my community. He has failed to meet with stakeholders and he has failed to attend any of the subsequent meetings. At those sham meetings, Sunwater has been thrown under the bus. They are not answering questions and they are not dealing with the issues that my community needs addressed. We still have no details about the safety issue. Those details have never been provided.

Today the Labor government must come clean on what is going on. We all need to know. Today, they must announce what is proposed. Are they going to rebuild the wall after chopping five metres off the top of it? Potentially, more will come off the dam wall if we let them continue. What are the issues with the dam? No-one has told us anything. This is a betrayal. It is disgraceful. The spin on the issue has made us all dizzy. We do not want to hear any more nonsense about free water claims. The people sprouting those talking points do not understand what is going on. This is about unspecified safety issues.

Ms Grace interjected.

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

Mr BENNETT: If it can be proved that there is a safety issue, we are somewhat complicit in what is going on. Now is the time for Queensland Labor to come clean and explain to my community and the community of Queensland what is going on.

This issue is affecting property values and investment decisions in a region that grows the most macadamias, sweet potatoes and many other crops. That is the wealth of my electorate and it all comes from water. That is all at risk, but we have no answers. We have lost our No. 1 regional benefit, that is, the security of water supply. We need an inquiry to get to the bottom of this. I cannot understand what the government is trying to hide by not allowing a parliamentary inquiry to get to the bottom of what is potentially the biggest failure of infrastructure that this state has ever seen. I can tell the House that all I have been shown is an iPhone photo of core samples. Is that the safety standard that we apply when decisions are made?

This announcement is a bitter blow to our regional economy and the future of high-value irrigated agriculture. It is devastating that the government can decide to lower the water capacity of the Paradise Dam after spending so much on repairs following the 2011 and 2013 floods. All those repairs have been completed, but now they will tear it down.

The proposal to lower the dam wall by five metres is based on a new safety standard. Members should make no mistake: this is about a new one-in-15,000-year or one-in-33,000-year safety standard that is being applied. No-one knows where it came from. I make a prediction that no dams will be built in Queensland under Labor governments with that new safety standard. Today we have seen more evidence that Labor is anti dams with its politically motivated announcement to halve the size of Rookwood. Do we need any more evidence? I also predict that it will not end with chopping five metres off the dam wall, as has been spoken about. We know that originally there were reports that talked about taking 17 metres off the dam wall. I believe that is the agenda of what is being proposed.


It is unbelievable that in the middle of the worst drought in years the Labor government would progress with damaging water security for my region. It has been a long time since 2013. What is the urgency? Where are the reports to give us the confidence that there is anything at all wrong with the Paradise Dam, other than a photo of a core sample, which I have been shown on an iPhone?

In Queensland there is nothing more vital than water security, but Labor's policies are literally bleeding our region dry. I note that the member for Maryborough is not in the House, but I make the point that he has spoken about the importance—

Mr SPEAKER: Member, the convention is that we will not refer to a member's absence from the House.

Mr BENNETT: I notice that other members of the Labor Party have spoken about the importance of the Paradise Dam. I welcome their contributions and I hope that we can get their support in ensuring future water security for all Queenslanders, not just those in the bush. I was not being critical of the member from the other side. I was making the point that I hope that we can get more pressure from that member so that this government gives us the answers that we need.

Members have spoken about tourism and the environment. Members should make no mistake: we have first-class reports from the environmental sector that the platypus, the turtles and the lung fish are all at risk, yet we hear nothing from the other side. Stop the politics. Table the reports. Do the inquiry. Let us get to the bottom of the truth about the Paradise Dam. We continue to be told about these reports, yet no-one will table them. This will be the biggest infrastructure fail in our great state's history and there will be no reports. That is simply shameful. I ask Labor to come clean. I ask them to give us the reports so that we can get to the bottom of what the Paradise Dam should be and could be, for the future of my region.

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries) (5.46 pm): I rise to oppose the motion moved by the member for Nanango. It is clear that those opposite have no clue what this motion is really about and what it is trying to accomplish. If they are after a review, they should realise that a review is already underway. That was announced last month. I know that news can be slow to reach the opposition—

Mr Batt interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Bundaberg!

Mr FURNER:—but surely they are not so slow that they do not know that a media release went out last month? We should await the outcome of that review. To be moving for competing reviews shows that those opposite do not want to listen to expert advice, but want to create community ripples. We should listen to the experts and see what the advice is.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Bundaberg, you are warned under the standing orders. Member for Burnett, you have just given a contribution. Member for Nanango, you have had your opportunity as well. I ask that we hear the member for Ferny Grove.

Mr FURNER: Thank you for your protection, Mr Speaker. Those opposite may also forget that Queensland can be impacted by significant wet seasons. Earlier this year the member for Gympie and I travelled to see the effects of the monsoonal event. They may also be forgetting—and I acknowledge that the member for Bundaberg raised it in his contribution—that in 2013 a cyclone and large-scale flooding devastated Bundaberg and caused significant damage in the dam's vicinity. Those opposite should recall that the then LNP minister, Mark McArdle, commissioned a review of the dam to assess the damage, SunWater's response to the flood event, remedial works and updates to the emergency action plan. Therefore, reviews announced by their side when in government should be of no surprise.

How many reviews does the LNP really want on this matter? Like many things those opposite say about dams, it is all talk and no action. Every time those opposite talk about dams, it is an election pitch. It is all bubble and froth, with no water underneath. The Leader of the Opposition, like many LNP leaders before her, only goes through the motions. The party she leads is unfit to govern, unfit to lecture and unable to accept the facts.

Talking about facts, let me reflect on what was said today. Earlier today members opposite misled the House saying the Palaszczuk government was cutting support to drought-impacted farmers. I say again that those opposite should try to comprehend the facts sometimes. Producers who are currently drought declared will continue to receive assistance as long as they are drought declared. The only cuts come from those opposite.

In terms of agricultural productivity, the member for Gympie acknowledged that he has applied for individually droughted property status. If the member for Gympie can do it, anyone can do it. I encourage those opposite to make sure they call 132523 to find out how.

Mr Perrett interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Gympie will cease his interjections.

Mr FURNER: In terms of water security, what makes a real difference for producers is the On-farm Emergency Water Infrastructure Rebate scheme. In 2015 the Commonwealth cut its top-up of this rebate. They ignored the repeated requests of not only me but previous agriculture ministers to reinstate that funding that makes a real difference to producers in the midst of drought. It was not until 2018 that it was reinstated by the Commonwealth after copious calls by the Palaszczuk Labor government. I remind those opposite that EWIR remains part of this government's response to drought assistance for those producers requiring emergency water infrastructure.

Those opposite have no understanding that responses to drought need to be diverse and sustainable. We will work with industry as we always do on this side of the House. We work with experts. We work with the community. This motion moved by the LNP should not be supported. Those opposite should be ashamed of themselves for putting forward this motion and politicising the issues at a time when farmers are in drought. When farmers need assistance where do they turn? Do they pick up the phone and ring their counterparts in Canberra and ask them to put the 200 farmers who were pulled off the Farm Household Allowance back onto the allowance so that they can get assistance in their time of need? Who would farmers want on their side? They want the Palaszczuk government. We have farmers' backs and we always will.

Mr SPEAKER: Before calling the next speaker, I acknowledge that we have students from Kenmore State High School in the electorate of Moggill in the gallery.



Mr LISTER (Southern Downs—LNP) (5.51 pm): This is a very important motion. It is of huge disappointment, to say the least, to my electors in Southern Downs to see hundreds of thousands of megalitres of water going to waste. The government is saying that there are safety issues concerning the dam. We have very little to go by in that regard. Why not have an open parliamentary inquiry on this?

If we listen to the members who have skin in the game, like my honourable friend the member for Burnett and my honourable friend the member for Bundaberg, they speak with the authority of people who represent tens of thousands of people whose livelihoods depend on this dam. It is a young dam. It is a disgrace that it should be reduced to less than half its capacity because of some sort of failure. The people of Queensland have a right to know what has gone wrong. This is the forum for it.

It is a great discourtesy to this parliament and its members and the people involved to say that this is not something that the parliament should be considering. This deserves to be the subject of an open inquiry. My honourable friend the honourable member for Condamine just mentioned to me that his committee, the State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development Committee, does not have a single bill before it at the moment. They are obviously playing hooky and chess most of the time. It is about time we gave them something to do. I know my committee is pretty busy.

There is no reason this should not be done. Whenever this Labor government wants to conceal something, we have to ask ourselves why. Why do they not want public scrutiny? Why do they want to conceal from the public the reasons behind this? What is wrong with the dam? We need to know the answers to this. These are appropriate questions to be addressed by the parliament. The report of the independent inquiry that the government speaks of can be concealed and withheld. It can be withheld like the drought report was for 12 months.

We do not trust this Labor Party government. Water is extremely vital to irrigated agriculture in the Burnett and Bundaberg regions as it is my region. When I listen to my honourable friend the assistant treasurer talk about Emu Swamp Dam, as others have done today, I remind the state government that it owns the resource. The state government has in its power the ability to approve or deny these dams.

The federal government stands willing and able to provide funds, as has been shown, but the state has the propensity to go slow. I see the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy opposite. I welcome the \$13.6 million announcement which, with great mirth, I noticed had to wait until the Deputy Premier and Treasurer was in disgrace and overseas. Nevertheless, it gave heart to my community.

The department is going slow and the government is going slow. We are not seeing action on Emu Swamp Dam yet. I am starting to wonder whether this is going to be another Rockwood Weir. It is not going to be on my watch. I am going to fight for the people of Southern Downs to make sure that that dam happens because we need it. I will allow other members to speak knowing that time is short. I urge every member in this House to support this motion.



Hon. AJ LYNHAM (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy) (5.54 pm): The hypocrisy of those opposite never ceases to amaze. Why are they not interested in community safety? They are not interested in ensuring Bundaberg is prepared for future events. They are only interested in attempted political point scoring.

I am not waiting for their inquiry. Firstly, this requires action for public safety. Secondly, the people of Bundaberg and the Burnett want answers as soon as possible and our reviews will deliver that. The Palaszczuk government makes absolutely no apologies for putting community safety first. This is what a responsible government does.

As soon as we were provided with information from SunWater that water needed to be released to allow works to be undertaken, we made the decision to do so immediately. Immediacy is not a term those opposite are familiar with, except of course for a cheap shot or a personal attack. The Palaszczuk government is just as adept at making crucial decisions as soon as they need to be made as we are in making careful, responsible, consultative decisions. Neither course precludes the other.

If one is a member on the other side of the chamber there is another option. The option is criticise, chase the cheap headline, propose an alternative that is either unnecessary or superfluous to actions that have been already taken—actions such as an independent review into this dam which has already started, making sure the local community is ready and prepared should weather events occur, making sure that local producers have water security and gain maximum benefit from the free water on offer.

SunWater has been briefing local producers and community leaders and a reference has been set up comprising community and industry representatives. All this is happening while new and existing customers continue to take advantage of the free—that is right, free—water that has been made available. This is action. This is prioritising to ensure what needs to be done is being done.


Safety is paramount, but the member for Burnett said today in this chamber that due to new safety standards no new dams will be built in this state. He said that. He is advocating lowering dam safety standards across this state. He said that on the Hansard record. He is advocating lowering dam safety standards across this state. Stakeholders such as Mayor Jack Dempsey—you may be familiar with Jack; remember Jack Dempsey?

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

Dr LYNHAM: Those opposite may be familiar with Mayor Jack Dempsey. Engineers Australia have said the same thing—that is, that dam operators are doing the right thing by prioritising safety. Those opposite could learn a lesson here. I want to be absolutely clear about this, and I have said it many times before: under normal and current forecast weather conditions the dam is safe. In fact, if memory serves me correctly, a previous LNP minister has reportedly said the exact same thing. After the 2013 floods the then minister did not have a parliamentary committee look at the dam. He had experts look at the dam as we are doing right now.

This government will ensure, no matter how unlikely it is that there will be a repeat of the one-in-200-year event like the 2013 Bundaberg flood, that the community is prepared. We are acting on expert advice to lower the spillway and to lower the storage level ahead of this wet season—a decision not taken lightly in the current climate.

As I reiterated in the House yesterday, there is only one side of politics that cares about delivering water security for Queenslanders. We are working for the benefit of all Queenslanders—Townsville, Rocky, Gladstone, Stanthorpe, Bundaberg. From ensuring drinking water security for the regions to providing free water from Paradise for irrigation purposes, no-one appreciates the value of water more than the Palaszczuk Labor government. We are not fairweather friends like those on the other side of the House. We are responsible to and for all Queenslanders all year round—rain, hail or shine.

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (5.59 pm): I rise to support the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. Queenslanders are sick of dam inaction and the aversion that this government has to all things water in this state. Water is the lifeblood of Queensland. Whether it is the regions or South-East Queensland, whether it is for agriculture and industry or for household use, if you have water you have opportunities. This government has shown time and time again that it will do everything possible to delay, to block or in this case to reduce the size of our dams.

Queenslanders are sick of excuses. They are sick of the blame game. They just want an assurance that, when they go to the tap for a drink of water or when they go to turn the valve on to water their crops, water will actually come out of it. The Labor government's record on water infrastructure is abysmal. In fact, it is an unfolding nightmare right across Queensland.

Let me give an example. They have already spent \$56 million on Rookwood Weir and they have not put a shovel in the ground yet. Let me correct the member for Gladstone and the members opposite about the contribution by the federal government—\$178 million is a fair amount of money in my book. That is 50 per cent of the cost of the dam. They will have you believe that the federal government has not contributed a brass razoo to this project. The budget has blown out by \$200 million and the project has now been delayed by two years. Who do they blame? They go bleating, cap in hand, to the feds to try to bail themselves out of this mess when in fact it is their fault and their problem to solve. The people of Central Queensland should not have to put up with a dam with half the capacity because of their ineptitude. It does not stop there.

If you go north and look at Nullinga Dam, you will find another example where the government has punted a priority project into the never-never. This is a project that has the potential to make a massive difference to the Cairns district, to create agricultural opportunities and jobs that they so desperately need up there. It is a similar story if you come down to the Burdekin. Stage 2 of the Burdekin Falls Dam has been 31 years in the making. We heard from those opposite about the hydro-electricity concept at the Burdekin Falls Dam. What has happened with that? Absolutely nothing has happened—nothing except the threat to take that funding away from the north where it is desperately needed.

This motion is about accountability, it is about transparency but, more importantly, it is about liability because the LNP, unlike those opposite, are not afraid to ask the tough questions. Paradise Dam should be called 'Paradise Lost' because that is what this work will do—lost opportunities for the region, lost opportunities for investment, lost opportunities for agriculture and industry, and lost opportunities to provide water security into the future.

The Bundaberg community deserves answers because at the end of the day we need to get to the bottom of how we have reached this point. Someone needs to be held to account for this stuff-up because Queensland should never, ever be placed in this position again of having to halve the capacity of one of our dams. We heard earlier today that 66 per cent of Queensland is drought declared—and what some of those communities would not do to have a reliable and secure water supply! I bet the member for Southern Downs would appreciate some of that 105,000 megalitres of water.

Mr McDonald interjected.

Mr LAST: And the member for Lockyer. He would not mind having enough water to have a bath at night; I can assure you of that.

The minister claims that lowering the spillway and releasing water is needed to prevent a disaster. Minister, in your role in this debacle, you are the disaster and you will forever—

Mr SPEAKER: Member, you will put your comments through the chair or I will sit you down.

Mr LAST: This minister will go down in history as the minister responsible for pulling the plug on Paradise Dam and letting our valuable water wash out to sea—and that is a disgrace. The minister said the decision to reduce the size of Paradise Dam was about community safety, but he will not give the details of the threat to that community. The only threat to the Bundaberg community is this Labor government. If there is anything worse than letting down Queenslanders, it is not being honest and open with them. Unlike the Labor government, the LNP wants to know why Paradise Dam is a failure and we want to know who is responsible.

We owe it to Queenslanders and to taxpayers to get to the bottom of this matter. When Queenslanders elect an LNP government next year—a government that will actually build dams—we want to ensure that Queenslanders get what they pay for and that the opportunities that dams will create will flow throughout the state.

(Time expired)

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

AYES, 40:

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

KAP, 1—Katter.

PHON, 1—Andrew.

Ind, 1—Bolton.

NOES, 48:

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

Grn, 1—Berkman.


Resolved in the negative.

POLICE SERVICE ADMINISTRATION (DISCIPLINE REFORM) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 15 October (see p. 3137), on motion of Mr Ryan—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr PURDIE** (Ninderry—LNP) (6.10 pm), continuing: This bill expands the powers of the CCC and addresses the differing opinions of the QPS and the CCC in relation to the direction of investigation or appropriate sanctions. New laws will mean the CCC can assume responsibility for, and complete investigations into, police misconduct and can apply for the review of a QPS decision not to institute disciplinary proceedings against an officer. The provision for, and creation of, a State Discipline Office—which has already been established and is already proving its effectiveness—will also improve the transparency of the investigation process.

All stakeholders welcomed the reforms to the police disciplinary system and agreed that the changes will likely result in fairer and more effective disciplinary processes for the QPS and improve community confidence in police processes. I believe this bill strikes a balance between enhancing efficiencies within the police discipline framework while setting appropriate sanctions for those who need to be held to account for their actions. However, as I have mentioned in this place many times before, without increased police resources the performance of the Police Service is hamstrung. How can police officers focus on improving their performance—a key policy objective of this bill—while they are struggling to cope with inadequate staffing numbers, increasing crime and budget cuts? Labor promised—

Mr RYAN: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. All throughout this debate deputy speakers have been making rulings about venturing away from the long title of the bill. I rise on a point of order relating to relevance and ask you to direct the member back to the bill.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stewart): Member for Ninderry, other deputy speakers in the chair have ruled that you need to come back to the debate and not stray from the long title of the bill. At this stage you are straying. I will ask you to come back to the long title of the bill.

Mr WATTS: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I believe that the budget and the effects it will have on discipline within the ranks is directly related to the bill.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order. We need to come back to the long title of the bill.

Mr PURDIE: Thank you, Deputy Speaker; I fully accept your ruling. I do recall members opposite yesterday stating their objections in relation to the correlation. In her contribution yesterday the member for Mansfield was quite outraged that members on this side would link breaches of discipline with—

Mr RYAN: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member is now reflecting on your ruling and debating your ruling by referring to other members' contributions in this House. I ask you to bring him back to the bill or sit him down.

Ms McMILLAN: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I am yet to speak on this bill, so I ask the member to withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I must admit that I was not listening during that time; I was talking with the Clerk. I remind the member for Ninderry to come back to the long title of the bill. What you need to speak to is quite precise.

Ms McMILLAN: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I do take offence and I ask the member to withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member has taken offence. I would ask you to withdraw.

Mr PURDIE: I do withdraw. I meant to refer to the member for Macalister's contribution yesterday. I am certainly not reflecting on the chair. I wanted to reflect on the outrage she articulated in her contribution about linking breaches—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members! I cannot hear the member on his feet.

Mr PURDIE: I was certainly not reflecting on your ruling, Mr Deputy Speaker, but it is interesting that just last week the Deputy Premier and Treasurer, in the most recent excuse for her breaches of discipline and failing to comply with integrity protocols, blamed workload and being too busy, so it is interesting now that I cannot from my experience outline the correlation between workload and breaches of discipline.

Mr RYAN: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I raised a point of order about reflecting on your ruling. The member is now again reflecting on your ruling and debating the very point of order about keeping to the long title and—

An opposition member interjected.

Mr RYAN: Who is saying 'sit down' over there?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr RYAN: I will finish this point of order and then I will raise a point of order about the disorderly conduct of the member for Toowoomba South. It is about reflecting on your ruling and I ask you to direct him to come back to the bill or sit him down.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members, I have taken counsel, as you have seen. I do not think the member for Ninderry was reflecting on the ruling I made. However, member for Ninderry, you will speak to the bill at hand—specifically to the long title of the bill—and within the very preciseness of the long title of the bill. If you fail to do that, you will be asked to sit down and we will move on to the next speaker.

Mr RYAN: My second point of order relates to the interjection from the member for Toowoomba South while I was making a point of order. It was especially disorderly. Any interjection is disorderly but especially disorderly when I am making a point of order. His comments not only seek to interfere with my role as a member of parliament in raising a point of order but also disrespect the order of this House. I ask him to withdraw those comments and apologise to the House.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I take your point. I do not think that at this stage the member for Toowoomba South needs to apologise to the House. However, member for Toowoomba South, when a person is on their feet raising a point of order, I ask you to keep your opinions to yourself and go forward from there.

Mr NICHOLLS: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. On the points of order you have just ruled on, firstly with respect to the point regarding relevance and the long title, I draw your attention to standing order 139, 'Scope of second reading debate', which states—

Debate on the second reading may address the principles of the Bill, the portfolio committee's examination and report and any amendments recommended by the committee.

In my submission on the point of order, the principles of the bill were clearly being dealt with by the member for Ninderry in his address. I seek your guidance with respect to that particular standing order, which is the standing order that is often interpreted as saying that you must come within the long title of the bill but in fact requires addressing the principles behind the bill, which are stated in the green paper, and allow generally a wider debate than just simply saying, 'You must use the exact words of the bill,' which of course would be a narrow and ultimately pointless debate to have in this place. I would just ask you a question on that particular issue.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Clayfield. Member for Ninderry, I will again ask for you to speak to the long title of the bill.

Mr PURDIE: As I said previously, I want to speak about my personal experience as a police officer and make a direct correlation between workload, resources and breaches of discipline. Included in the long title of this bill are the words 'discipline reform'.

Police officers on the front line put themselves at risk. They put their lives on the line to protect our community. They often work around the clock with few resources. When that happens and when they are overstretched and overborne, mistakes are made and short-cuts can be taken. That is often the case, and breaches of discipline subsequently do occur and result in investigations.

I am not making any reflection. I just want to personally oppose what the member for Macalister said when she was outraged yesterday to hear that we were trying to link the two. There is a direct correlation. As I said, the Deputy Premier raised that correlation just last week in parliament. I want to talk about that. I want to talk about resources—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Again, member for Ninderry, I will not debate with you my ruling. I have read through the green document here and specifically the points within the explanatory notes. I cannot at this stage find any reference back to resourcing. I therefore suggest that you take my counsel. I suggest strongly that you do not go down the road of linking the two. You have 1.51 minutes left to continue your speech.

Mr WATTS: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Page 15 of the green document that was handed out with the bill says—

Estimated cost for government implementation


Any costs arising from the implementation of the Bill are expected to be minimal and will be met from existing budgets.

Therefore, constraints on existing budgets will be directly relevant to whether this bill has the finance to be administered or not in my opinion. I seek your guidance.

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

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, just let me deal with this one first. Member for Toowoomba North, thank you for pointing that out. You have actually contradicted what the member for Clayfield said. Members, this will be the last debate around my ruling. If you are unhappy with my ruling, I suggest that you write to the Speaker and express that. There is no point of order.

Mr PURDIE: It might be best if I quickly wrap up. Only an LNP government will invest in the men and women who keep us safe, increase community satisfaction in policing and stop crime.

 **Ms McMILLAN** (Mansfield—ALP) (6.22 pm): I stand before the House tonight to make my contribution to the Police Service Administration (Discipline Reform) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019. This bill is the product of the government's commitment in the 2015 election to review the

police complaints system and implement a new disciplinary system which ensures accountability and fairness for both police officers and the public. I commend the Palaszczuk government for fulfilling their promise by consulting with the Crime and Corruption Commission, the Queensland Police Commissioned Officers' Union of Employees and the Queensland Police Union to present much needed reforms to current legislation. I would also like to pay tribute to the chair of the CCC, Mr Alan MacSporran, for his leadership in spearheading the review of the police discipline system with the aforementioned stakeholders.

The police bill will reform several pieces of legislation. However, I will make comments specifically to the amendments to the Crime and Corruption Act and the Police Service Administration Act. Before I make these comments, I would firstly like to state that the vast majority—the overwhelming majority—of Queensland police officers perform their duties with honesty and integrity. However, there are some instances—the same as any occupation—where police officers fall short of these standards and do not meet the expectations of our communities. For an occupation which deals with the safety and wellbeing of Queensland's citizens, it is imperative that we have in place a robust police discipline system should a police officer breach their duties. Without a comprehensive and effective police discipline system, confidence in our police service risks becoming eroded.

Initially, the police bill will amend the Crime and Corruption Act by removing the artificial distinctions of 'misconduct' and 'breach of discipline' and replacing these categories with a new term 'ground for disciplinary action'. Currently, an officer or the CCC can only apply for review of a disciplinary decision made by the QPS in relation to an allegation of 'misconduct' and not a 'breach of discipline'. The removal of these artificial distinctions will assist in simplifying the police discipline system, as the ability to review a decision will no longer be based upon the categorisation of behaviour.

Consequently, if an officer or the CCC believes that a decision related to a breach of discipline by the QPS was made incorrectly, they have the right to review the facts and make a fair and informed decision. This amendment aims to address the differing opinions of QPS and the CCC through appropriate review mechanisms which will address any discrepancy in decisions. Furthermore, the police bill will allow for the imposition of sanctions that are commensurate with the seriousness of the allegation. In allowing this, the police bill will ensure strict discipline policies are in place, as a breach of the public's confidence should be dealt with accordingly.

In addition to this, the police bill will introduce a modernised police discipline system through the insertion of a new part 7 into the Police Service Administration Act. This discipline system will apply to officers, including police officers and new police recruits. Part 7 ensures that procedural fairness considerations are observed while establishing an efficient and transparent framework. This will be achieved through, firstly, new part 7.1(a), including the phrase 'rehabilitating and, if necessary, disciplining officers'. As a result, the new section clearly implies that the new police discipline system is not purely focused on retributive sanctions against officers where the error or misbehaviour can be corrected by alternative or more constructive measures.

Also, where the necessity arises to impose a sanction against an officer, the police bill will allow this either on its own or in combination with a professional development strategy. This reform is designed to address a general lack of public and officer confidence towards the police discipline system, so much so that new section 7.1(b) expressly states this.

Another significant reform within the police bill is new section 7.44 which specifically allows the commissioner to create guidelines in relation to the disciplinary process, including how disciplinary proceedings are to be conducted. This reform is significant as it ensures fairness for officers whilst upholding the public's confidence by requiring the commissioner to actively consult with the chairperson of the CCC and each officer's representative unions before making any guidelines. It is extremely vital to the Palaszczuk government that our police officers feel comfortable and content with their discipline system, as this will reflect in the performance of their duties and of course police morale. Similarly, with robust and informed discipline policies being put forth by the commissioner, the public's confidence will also be maintained.

Once again, I congratulate the government for committing to their election promise to reform the police discipline system through the introduction of this bill. It is well known that our police officers act with the utmost respect for the community. However, it is important that our legislative framework contains safeguards to ensure the police discipline system is robust yet fair. Through the bill's amendments—specifically, those that I have outlined—I am confident that the police bill will address the lack of consistency in decisions, as well as the general lack of public and officer confidence. I commend this bill to the House.



Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (6.29 pm): It is my pleasure to rise and speak to the Police Service Administration (Discipline Reform) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019. I want to welcome this bill into the House. In the 15 years I have been in this place, I have been the shadow police minister and I have been fully aware of the number of times that police officers have come under the discipline regime, as it was, and had to put up with the length of time it took for decisions to be made. This then had effects on their families and on the people who had made the original allegations, so this bill is timely.

I remember I was shadow police minister in 2011. In the past we on this side took policies to elections saying that we would bring in, as I recall, a new assistant commissioner to deal with these disciplinary matters, so I certainly welcome this bill coming to the House.

In my electorate of Surfers Paradise I have a lot to do with our senior and junior police officers across the Broadbeach and Cavill Avenue stations. They work very hard to ensure that our area is a safe place to live, work, play and raise a family. I am always grateful for the briefings that I receive from our police officers whether it is about water policing or drug and chroming issues in Broadbeach or other crimes that happen throughout parts of the Gold Coast that I represent. The LNP acknowledges that the vast majority of police officers provide exceptional services and maintain high standards. However, like any industry, any profession, there are some who do not live up to those standards. The bill before us provides efficiencies in the investigation of complaints and hearing of allegations and to then suitably discipline officers. Concurrently, it ensures the public's confidence in the QPS is preserved.

This bill has bipartisan support from the LNP and all key stakeholders, including the Queensland Police Service, the Queensland Police Union of Employees, the Queensland Police Commissioned Officers' Union of Employees, government representatives and representatives of the legal fraternity. Four stakeholders made submissions on the bill. These stakeholders were the Women's Legal Service Queensland, Queensland Law Society, Queensland Police Union and the Bar Association of Queensland. All stakeholders welcomed the reform of the police disciplinary system, agreeing that the changes were likely to result in a fairer and more effective disciplinary process for the QPS. As has been mentioned by others, the system needs to be robust, effective and fair. As I said before, delays are not fair to police officers or their families or the people who have made these allegations.

According to page 5 of the committee report—and I thank the committee—the Queensland Police Service and the Crime and Corruption Commission said that the police disciplinary system has become 'an inefficient system that has not kept pace with organisational, officer and community expectations'. In the past the system has been reviewed by numerous bodies such as the QPS and the CCC in its previous forms—the Crime and Misconduct Commission, the CMC, and the Criminal Justice Commission, the CJC. These reviews found areas for improvement where these issues have led to great stakeholder dissatisfaction, namely—and I quote from the committee report—

- a general lack of public and officer confidence in the current police discipline system
- unnecessarily lengthy timeframes taken to investigate and resolve some complaints
- outdated disciplinary sanctions that focus primarily on punitive measures and are limited in range
- the overly adversarial and legalistic nature of discipline proceedings
- a perceived lack of consistency in decisions made about matters involving similar conduct, and
- sometimes differing opinions of the QPS and the CCC in relation to the direction of investigations or appropriate sanctions, as evidenced by CCC applications for the review of QPS discipline decisions.

In order to modernise the system, the bill repeals the discipline regulation and inserts a new part 7 into the PSAA, which contains the legislative framework. In addition, a new chapter 5 part 3 has been inserted into the CC Act to increase oversight of disciplinary processes. This is achieved by establishing provisions enabling a subject officer or the CCC to review a disciplinary decision made under the PSAA. As per the committee report, it does not weaken the ability of our community to complain about police misconduct and ensures that managerial strategies are employed appropriately. The CCC said on page 8 of the report—

If you can save them they should be saved, if the conduct is so serious that they fundamentally undermine confidence in the service they should be weeded out and for that purpose some of the sanctions will be ultimately more serious than those in the past.

Overall, I support the bill's objectives of reducing delays in finalising disciplinary investigations, modernising the disciplinary sanctions that can be imposed upon a subject officer, formalising the role and range of management strategies available as part of the disciplinary process and addressing review provisions that apply to the CCC. I also acknowledge the bipartisan efforts in negotiating and assessing this bill. I support it.



Ms RICHARDS (Redlands—ALP) (6.34 pm): I rise in the House to speak in support of the Police Service Administration (Discipline Reform) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019, which was introduced in the Legislative Assembly and referred to the Economics and Governance Committee. As part of the 2015 election campaign, our government committed to review the police complaints system and implement a new disciplinary system to be done in consultation with a variety of stakeholders to ensure accountability and fairness for both police officers and the public.

The relevant provisions of the Police Service Administration Act and the discipline regulation have remained largely unchanged since enactment in 1990, leading to an inefficient system that really has not kept pace with organisational, officer and community expectations. A number of reviews and general stakeholder commentary identified several aspects of the police discipline system that could be up for improvement and modernisation. These areas of dissatisfaction—what in essence are the opportunities to improve and what have been delivered upon within this legislation—included—

- a general lack of public and officer confidence in the current police discipline system
- unnecessarily lengthy timeframes taken to investigate and resolve some complaints—

and we have heard some of the stories about how long a police officer can be made to wait for some sort of determination—

- outdated ... sanctions that focus primarily on punitive measures ...
- the overly adversarial and legalistic nature of discipline proceedings
- a perceived lack of consistency in decisions made about matters involving similar conduct, and
- ... differing opinions of the QPS and the CCC in relation to the direction of investigations or appropriate sanctions, as evidenced by CCC applications for the review of QPS discipline decisions.

As I mentioned at the outset, extensive work has been undertaken in recent years by the QPS and the CCC to work with stakeholders, which included the Queensland Police Commissioned Officers' Union of Employees and the Queensland Police Union of Employees, to create a modernised and more efficient disciplinary system to be supported by all stakeholders. It was acknowledged that a new system was needed that addressed stakeholder concerns and focused on resolution through managerial action, maintained accountability and restored community and officer confidence in their system.

In 2016 Alan MacSporran QC, chairperson of the CCC, convened a forum with ministers, shadow ministers and key stakeholders to further examine the methods and frameworks to achieve system reform. I think he needs to be commended on this process. As we heard in our public briefing, a lot of hard work was done by Alan MacSporran to bring together a varying range of stakeholders on a really complex reform that has been applied to this system. The forum established a working group consisting of representatives of the QPS, the Queensland Police Commissioned Officers' Union of Employees, the Queensland Police Union of Employees and the CCC to improve on the police disciplinary system. At the time a trial of joint assessment and modernisation meetings was undertaken. These meetings involved the QPS and CCC officers collaborating at the outset of a potential disciplinary matter to consider the circumstances surrounding a complaint and any subsequent disciplinary action that should be undertaken and to provide clear direction during the investigation.

In October 2017 Mr MacSporran announced that a revised police disciplinary model had been negotiated and had the support of the government, the CCC, the QPS and both of the unions, and relevant members of the opposition. All stakeholders committed their support via a memorandum of understanding. The CCC, the QPUE and the QPCOU were actively consulted during the drafting of the bill, ensuring that stakeholder support was retained and that the bill achieved the policy position as agreed by the parties and announced by Mr MacSporran.

To enhance the police disciplinary system prior to the passage of required legislative amendments that we are here today working on, the CCC, the QPS and the unions agreed that any of the proposed changes that were not dependent on legislative amendment would commence prior to the passage of the bill. These changes commenced on 1 July 2018 by amending the internal policies and processes of the QPS insofar as the current legislative regime allowed.

At the public briefing that our committee held in February 2019, Mr MacSporran noted—

Every part of this bill is designed to reform that entire system. We have been so confident in its worth that whilst waiting for this process to proceed, since late last year we have been actually trialling all of the aspects of these provisions that can be trialled before the provisions become law. We have had, for instance, over 50 referrals to the abbreviated disciplinary process which cannot proceed without our consent, the CCC, as a fundamental safeguard that members are only being appropriately offered that where it is appropriate. Of those 50-odd there has only been a handful, less than 10 per cent, that we have failed to agree to and some of those have been further negotiated and have come back to the process and then gone through.

This shows police officers' willingness to engage in this process before the bill was passed. They should be commended on actually working up-front to improve their own system.

The idea of that is to take away the greater bulk of disciplinary matters that are not so serious that they cannot be dealt with in an abbreviated fashion. Obviously, that will lead to the timely disposition of those matters, having the behaviour of the officer very quickly corrected and their moving forward.

The key amendments we see in clause 9 of the bill replace current part 7 of the PSA Act with a new part 7 'Internal Command and Discipline'. The new part 7 contains the framework for the new police discipline system excluding the right of parties to apply for review of a decision. It provides amendments that will introduce time frames for the investigations of complaints—it is really important that anything has a time frame so we know how to manage the outcome—modernise the discipline sanctions that can be imposed on an officer, formalise the role and range of management strategies available as part of the discipline process, introduce an abbreviated discipline process if the conduct is not in dispute and the CCC approves the proposed sanction, and create a central disciplinary unit responsible for conducting disciplinary proceedings.

During our Economics and Governance Committee public briefing, we heard from Assistant Police Commissioner Sharon Cowden. She noted that, from its foundation, this bill makes a marked impact by introducing new management practices and improvements, improving on the current sanctions and introducing new sanctions that are better graduated and more able to be tailored to address an individual officer's inappropriate behaviours. We heard earlier today in the debate on the Belcarra bill in terms of some councillors' behaviours of misconduct that there certainly are extremes in behaviour.

Assistant Commissioner Cowden also noted that the bill would better reflect modern management practices by the improvement of subject officers through the opportunity to modify their behaviour by providing guidance, correction and rehabilitation, which lead to the benefits for individual officers and the QPS as a whole if you can rehabilitate and fix those behavioural issues. She said—

This is achieved through allowing professional development strategies such as mentoring and additional training—
and we all know how important is mentoring in all parts of our life—

which would reduce the risk of reoffending behaviour and improve the performance of subject officers by addressing the underlying causes that lead to inappropriate behaviour. Rather than simply imposing punitive sanction on a subject officer, these strategies give a subject officer the opportunity to reflect on their behaviour, to enhance their professionalism, to develop and to improve.

There were other amendments to the Crime and Corruption Act—and, again, there was significant consultation with stakeholders, including the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service, the Bar Association of Queensland, the Crime and Corruption Commission, the Queensland Council for Civil Liberties, the Queensland Law Society, the Queensland Police Commissioned Officers' Union of Employees, and the Queensland Police Union of Employees. The Bar Association of Queensland in its submission supported the comprehensive changes proposed in the bill, stating it believes that the new system will be a great improvement on the existing system of police discipline. I, too, believe this bill will result in a fairer and more effective disciplinary process for our Queensland Police Service. I commend this bill to the House.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Broadwater, joining us in the gallery tonight are Dr Leask and Mrs Gail Leask. Welcome to the people's house.



Mr CRISAFULLI (Broadwater—LNP) (6.43 pm): I rise to make a contribution in support of the Police Service Administration (Discipline Reform) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I do so because the intent of the bill is sound. Equally, the detail of the bill is sound and strikes a balance between enhancing efficiencies with police discipline and having appropriate sanctions for actions.

I wish to place on record—and I will not use either names or the incident involved—that a good friend of mine, who is a police officer and remains a police officer, effectively had his career put in purgatory for a long period because of an investigation in which ultimately he was well and truly cleared. Because of a high-profile process that was cumbersome and clumsy, this person's career was stymied for a long period. This was a good person who missed promotions as a result, whose family suffered as a result—a great and stressful period in his life. What the minister seeks to achieve through this will take a positive step forward in that regard.

I place on record my admiration, support and respect for people who every day put on the blue uniform. Both the minister and the shadow minister here today have very important roles in the parliament, because one of the first roles of any good government is to keep its community safe. A good and efficient Police Service which strikes the balance between that efficiency and discipline and

vigour is essential for a good and a well-managed state. The six previous serving police officers in this House from both sides of politics bring to their jobs a great insight of the coalface, what it is like to serve the community. There is a vast breadth of experience, from people like the member for Nicklin, who has served in an array of professions including in the PCYC, to the member for Bundaberg, who did his service and for a time was in local government, but right across the board they make great contributions to this House.


I refer briefly to one of the police stations in my electorate. It has had its challenges from an HR perspective. This bill addresses the need for matters to be reviewed swiftly and fairly. I want to place on record my best wishes to the new Senior Sergeant of Runaway Bay Police Station, Scott Burness, and also take the opportunity to thank the newish head of the Water Police, Senior Sergeant Jay Notaro. The other evening, I had the great honour of attending a dinner with these two gentlemen as well as school principals of my electorate as a way of connecting what I see as two very valuable assets in my electorate, that is, those who set the standard for education and those who set the standard for law and order. The level of professionalism that I have seen in that police station is without peer, but there are challenges.

When I read about resources in the bill, I place on record that this push towards technology somehow being the panacea for not needing as many police officers must be resisted. It must be resisted, because it will lead to more HR issues. It will lead to more disciplinary matters. It will lead to more challenges. There is no substitute for blue uniforms on the ground. The joy of this bill is that it seeks to ensure a Police Service that can be as efficient and disciplined as possible but which never comes at the expense—and technology can never be used as the reason—why we do not need more boots on the ground. It is great to have in the House the member for Coomera, who has led a frenetic campaign for an increase in officer numbers in the northern part of the Gold Coast.

Mr RYAN: I rise on a point of order on relevance. Mr Deputy Speaker, you and other deputy speakers have made rulings in respect of this bill.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stewart): Order! Member for Broadwater, I have made a ruling in the House as have other Deputy Speakers about coming back to the long title of the bill. I gave you a bit of latitude when you were talking before, but I think you have strayed now. I ask you to come back.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I will conclude my remarks by going back to what really is the crowning achievement of this bill, that is, that it puts in place a framework that can ensure an end to the paralysis that costs good people opportunities. If somebody does wrong and they are a law enforcement officer, there should be no wriggle room at all. They are charged with setting the standard for our community. But where somebody has not done wrong and where an investigation drips on for months and years, that impacts on people and families. I hope that the bill we support today helps undo such unjust situations.

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (6.49 pm): I recognise the member for Broadwater. Although that was a very superficial view of some of the elements of the bill, he said one very important thing relating to his friend who faced a disciplinary process that brought uncertainty for a considerable amount of time. Whether a police officer is cleared, as was the case for the friend of the member for Broadwater, or is found to require some form of disciplinary action, if the process takes an inordinate amount of time it represents a great cost. The cost is not only a personal cost to the officer involved—we do not wish to have unnecessary personal cost—but also a great cost to the community if sworn officers, who have so much training and have so much to offer our society, are held up and not given the opportunity to protect and serve the people of Queensland.

As chair of the Economics and Governance Committee I report to the House that, after considering all of the information, the Economics and Governance Committee recommended that the bill be passed. We recognise that police officers work so hard to keep us safe and enforce the laws we make in this place. They often do so under extreme difficulty and face dangerous and stressful situations. During the last sittings the police minister said that when enforcing our laws against arson—that is, in the midst of bushfires and the stress they placed on officers—police were attempting to arrest a suspect when they were rammed and had to unfortunately draw their weapons. I respect the ex-serving police officers who are now members in this place. I cannot imagine the stress that this kind of assault by a dangerous suspect would put on me if that were part of my daily working life.

When sworn officers don their uniform each day, they do not know whether they will have a callout to a dangerous situation involving a potentially dangerous criminal. We recognise that there is enormous stress on police officers and there is capacity for them to not be their best selves. In light of

this stress and uncertainty we recognise, as the police union has said, that officers can make mistakes. Sometimes serious mistakes are made that undermine the strong confidence Queenslanders now have in our Police Service. Before 1989 many Queenslanders did not have full confidence in the police or the disciplinary process. We needed to make changes to transform the professionalism of the Police Service, to restore confidence and integrity. We needed a professional Police Service.

Recently in parliament we recognised the 30th anniversary of the Fitzgerald inquiry that began a transformation in our state. However, this transformation was not without cost. As has been outlined by a number of speakers, that process took considerable time and that cost the people of Queensland in a few ways. There was a time cost in investigating and preparing for a drawn-out, adversarial process. It cost Queenslanders because the officers, even if they had made a mistake, were in a situation of stress. The Queensland Police Union said that in some cases police faced years of uncertainty. This has to have a negative impact not just on the individual but also on their partner and family, who would no doubt share some of this stress. As the union pointed out, there is a significant cost to train a new police officer. The very process that fails to improve performance and skills holds them back unnecessarily from the front line. That, too, is a cost to Queenslanders. The police department, the union and the Crime and Corruption Commission, together with the minister, have been consulting on a new system of police discipline. The union stated that the new system is not a return to the pre-Fitzgerald era.

After the introduction of the bill on 13 February and the CLA's referral, the Economics and Governance Committee had a briefing from the department and then called for submissions. By way of background to the bill, issues included a general lack of public and officer confidence in the current discipline system; unnecessarily lengthy time frames to investigate and resolve complaints; sanctions being outdated and in some cases punitive but limited in range; the overly adversarial and legalistic nature of proceedings; a perceived lack of consistency in decisions in one officer's case compared to another; and sometimes differing opinions of the QPS and the CCC in relation to directions or appropriate sanctions, as evidenced by the CCC's applications for the review of QPS decisions.

The committee took submissions. We contacted 60 key stakeholder organisations. There was a very limited number of submissions, but I think that is an indication of the balance this bill struck. The committee also received a written briefing. We saw that the objectives were to restore confidence in the QPS; to provide efficiencies in the investigation system; to educate officers and to give, in a modern human resources sense, some guidance to make a difference in their performance; and, if necessary, to suitably discipline officers. The QPS advised the committee that the bill represents the culmination of years of effort. Mr MacSporran of the CCC said—

Everyone to their credit immediately agreed that it was an important reform that needed to be progressed and we then formed a smaller subcommittee and started to work through the issues.

Stakeholders from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service, the Bar Association, the CCC, the Queensland Council of Civil Liberties, the Queensland Law Society, the Queensland Police Union of Employees and the officers' union all brought forth their opinions on the bill which we took into account. We ended up with a bill that seeks to modernise and expand the range of disciplinary sanctions and formalise the role of professional development strategies. Instead of an adversarial system in which a police officer who had made a mistake was effectively prosecuted for the mistake they had made and the union was in the trenches defending them, there will be opportunities for professional development and a much more managerial system. Time frames are introduced to ensure fewer delays in the system. There is also the introduction of the abbreviated discipline process that so many members have spoken about. A central disciplinary unit will be created. Instead of an officer directing a particular area having disciplinary responsibility as well as managerial responsibility, a specialised unit will have responsibility.

In relation to the process of developing this legislation—I think this gives guidance for the development of any bill—Mr MacSporran said—

I have nothing but praise for all of those stakeholders who participated because at no stage was there ever a show-stopping problem that could not be solved.

It seems that all of those people came together with an incredibly positive way of addressing this issue. New part 7 provides for a system of guiding, correcting, rehabilitating and, if necessary, disciplining officers.

I was disappointed to note that the member for Toowoomba North was surprised by the amendments being moved. The committee had correspondence that outlined and flagged both the reasons for those amendments and the process that was ongoing plus correspondence from the minister that highlighted that. This was a very transparent process.


I recognise that we have fantastic police who deal with these struggles of discipline in my local area. I mention Senior Sergeant Nathan Booth of the brand-new police station in Yarrabilba—I thank the minister for being there for the opening; Senior Sergeant Peter Waugh of Jimboomba police; and Senior Sergeant Shane Clarke, who is acting at the BP police. He always does a fantastic job. I value the role police officers play to ensure the safety of Queenslanders and to enforce our laws. I am pleased that we will have a process that is less adversarial and results in better management and better outcomes for our state.

Debate, on motion of Mr Power, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stewart): Before I call the member for Toowoomba North, I advise members that joining us in the gallery this evening is James Sedman, a board member of the Dear Dyslexic Foundation. Welcome along to the people's house.

Dyslexia Awareness Month


 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (7.00 pm): Today I rise to let people know that October is national Dyslexia Awareness Month. Dyslexia, dysgraphia and dyscalculia are something that affect our community and they go a little bit unseen. Unfortunately, what they really mean is that people struggle to read and comprehend in the way that 90 per cent of the population would be able to absorb information easily. Interestingly enough, in our First Nations people it was never a problem until settlement because of course there was no written language. It exists in different cultures around the world and it exists in nearly all human populations at about the same percentage of population.

This issue is something that we need to take very seriously because part of my portfolio responsibilities cover Corrective Services. What we find in Corrective Services is that there is a massive overrepresentation of the prison population who have dyslexia. Often this is exhibited in the same ways that I exhibited it at school. I was not a great student at school. I was frustrated. I felt stupid. I would often be embarrassed because I could not do the things that others would do, so I consequently did woodwork, metalwork, technical drawing and anything I could do that got me out of having to read and write a lot, and that was how it exhibited for me. That meant that it limited a lot of options, so I left school young and started work. At that time computers were only just beginning, but I found myself working on a computer where I got to do lots of Excel sheets and I found that much easier than reading books.

There are lots of problems that can come from dyslexia. In today's world with YouTube and learning from video and all of the technology that is available, there are many ways to get around this problem. We need to make sure that our educational institutions are aware of the different ways that people will learn and the different ways they can observe knowledge so that people do not fall behind early in their education, which is what happened to me, because once you start falling behind you just think you are stupid and you think you cannot keep up and so, basically to save the embarrassment, you just misbehave and then you get sent out and that was a much easier way to deal with it than actually trying to catch up to everybody else. It is really important that we are aware and that we do take it seriously and look for alternative ways to make sure we can educate because there is a great untapped resource of people who have a different way of thinking, a different way of approaching problems and a different set of solutions available to them if we can only give them the knowledge they need to be able to participate fully and effectively in our community.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Toowoomba North, for your advocacy on a very important issue.

Macalister Electorate, Sporting Achievements

 **Mrs McMAHON** (Macalister—ALP) (7.03 pm): It is my absolute pleasure to report to the House on the outstanding achievements of my Macalister senior sporting clubs this recent season. Last Saturday night I attended the Logan Lightning Football Club's annual presentation dinner celebrating the achievement of the various teams. In the Queensland premier league the club had firsts in the men's under-18s and under-20s and in the over-35s comp—and a shout-out to all of those players in all sports still running around the paddock and keeping active—they had firsts in the division 3 and division 4 comps. The under-18s were division 3 grand final winners and the women's team also won the women's city cup trophy. The club was also announced as South-East Queensland's football community club of the year. Congratulations to Fred Waters and the club committee, all players and volunteers for that award.

The Beenleigh Buffaloes Australian Rules football club also had sterling finals seasons, with the women's team making the finals, falling just one game short of the grand final. The club also fielded the under-16s division 4 premiers, winning their grand final 54-52, and in the QFA division 2 comp the Buffaloes were grand finalists—a valiant effort but fell short on the day. Next year that team will step up to the division 1 comp. Well done the Buffs! The Logan City Hawks also produced two grand final teams.

The women's team were division 3 white grand finalists and faced Beaudesert in a tough match-up, with the final score of 26-14 indicating how close those two teams were all season. The Hawks men's team were premiers in the division 2 senior Cross River Challenge cup, beating Brighton 24-18. The Eagleby Giants finished their season hosting a Ky Boss suicide awareness invitational series under lights at Bishop Street Park. I was proud to pull on the blue jersey of the Giants and take the field with local players to take on the Logan Mustangs invitational team. It was a great game and I think we can say that footy was the clear winner. The Eagleby Giants are truly doing great things for the local area.

Finally, the Beenleigh Pride senior Rugby League side had another record-breaking year. While my women's team were not in the hunt for the finals this year, with three more wins than last season we are expecting a big 2020. I acknowledge the winner of the Melissa McMahon award, Georgie Radford. The big success story is the men's BRL reserve side—premiers, again! I remind members that this club is only five years old and in those five years the senior men's team have won four minor premierships, four premierships, two Ted Beaumont trophies and one Cross River Challenge trophy, and this was their first ever season in the BRL reserve grade. Next year they will field a team in the BRL A-grade after affiliating with the Wynnum Seagulls for season 2020. Up the Pride! For those who are critical of the importance that I place on sport in my electorate, let me just say this: sport allows people, regardless of postcode, the opportunity to shine. I would like to talk about my junior clubs, but I would be here all night!

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Macalister. We all have our favourite footy teams.

Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce, Business Excellence Awards



Mr JANETZKI (Toowoomba South—LNP) (7.06 pm): Tonight I want to speak about a number of wonderful businesses that were honoured by the Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce at the Business Excellence Awards on Saturday night which I attended with the member for Toowoomba North. I want to firstly start with the long-term leadership of Joy Mingay, President of the Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce, who is shortly stepping aside after five years of wonderful service and over 10 years on the board. Joy has led the board with distinction and serves her community in every way extremely well. I want to pay tribute to Joy.


On the evening there were many businesses that were recognised. I want to start with Fitzy's on Church which was given the honour of business of the year. The Fitzgibbons family has a very long history in Toowoomba. To Brad, Anita, John and Marilyn at Fitzy's on Church, congratulations! I also want to acknowledge the broader contribution of the Fitzgibbons family who were honoured at the Queensland Hotels Association awards on Monday night with the winning Glen Hotel at Eight Mile Plains. I also caught up with Richard Bowly from the Southern Hotel—one of the finest pubs in my own electorate—who was at the QHA dinner. I saw Richard and Yvonne, which was wonderful. Other key winners on the evening at the Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce were AgEtal, with Ken and Luanne who are doing great work in ag technology across the region. Clifford Gouldson was an employer of choice. Together with Ben, Dan and Amanda, they make up an outstanding and progressive law firm that is really making a difference in their local community. That award was sponsored for the first time by Focus HR with Naomi and Alistair. That is another great business in town that is providing HR services right around the community.

I also want to acknowledge other businesses that won on the evening—Toowoomba Clubhouse, the Australian Camp Oven Festival and Proterra Group. I also want to pay tribute to future leader winner Catherine Ardi. Future leaders play an important role in the next generation of our business community. The chamber serves a great role in promoting business and I thank the chamber again for its promotion of these awards. Of course, the naming sponsor is Heritage Bank—one of Toowoomba's great businesses that I had the honour to work for for nearly 10 years.

Finally, I am a mad cricket fan and I want to pay tribute to a good mate of mine—one of my old mates—who had the better of me with the ball when it was in his hand, and of course I refer to Kent, who has kicked off the Darling Downs Bush Bash. Going into the last round, it is tight on the table. Kent

had this vision 12 months ago, but it required companies to buy into it and now we have companies that are supporting teams—Livewire, George Banks, Liebke Tyres & Mechanical, Aidacare and Hip Pocket Workwear. I am patron of the Hip Pocket Workwear team. To Graham, Ian and the team, let's go, boys! Let's get this won!

Cairns Electorate, Schools

 **Mr HEALY** (Cairns—ALP) (7.09 pm): I would like to inform the House of the work being done in a number of schools in my electorate and what the Palaszczuk Labor government is doing to support our teachers in ensuring the appropriate infrastructure to provide our kids with a world-class education. When I was elected in 2017, I stated that education would be one of my major priorities. That commitment stands today. I understand the transformative power of education and the role it plays in building our communities. I am proud to back our schools. I am proud to back them both on the big and the small issues, such as getting new fans for the Parramatta State School hall, getting new nature based play space with landscaping and student lunch seating areas for Whitfield State School, getting six new general learning areas at Cairns West State School and a refurbished prep block at Balaclava State School.


I very much look forward to seeing the work begin on the new \$11 million multipurpose hall for Cairns State High School in the coming months. The school has been lobbying for a new hall for over a decade and I am pleased that the Palaszczuk government is delivering it through the Renewing Our Schools program. At this stage I must say that the executive principal, Mr Chris Zilm, has been impressively consistent in his demands. I say: well done. The hall will be an absolute game changer for the school. Students will have instruction in health and physical education uninterrupted in the wet season. The hall will also enable the school students to gather as one, which they have not been able to do in the past. Labor knows that improving school facilities like the school hall presents so many positive opportunities to learn new skills and celebrate school spirit.

It is not just state schools that are benefiting from the Palaszczuk government's commitment. When I was elected as the member for Cairns, my very first visit was to Freshwater Christian College, where I inspected the new industrial arts complex, which was partly funded under the Labor government's external infrastructure subsidy scheme. This facility included new woodwork and metalwork areas, a dust extraction area and a paint booth where students at the college can participate in school based traineeships. These projects are important in creating vital jobs for local tradies and more opportunities for apprenticeships and traineeships for the kids.

Over the next financial year, my government is committed to phase 1 of the Advancing Clean Energy Schools Program, which will impact on a number of schools in my electorate. The Advancing Clean Energy Schools Program will make a significant contribution to the state government's target of 50 per cent renewable energy use by 2030. I can tell members that, when I remind the kids of that target every time I go to these schools, they absolutely love it.

Finally, I want to thank all the hardworking teachers, teacher aides and principals for their amazing work year on year to give our kids the best start. It has to be said that there are challenges within every community. We know what education can do. These teachers and these executive principals and principals—and Mr Deputy Speaker, you would be very aware of this—do a fantastic job.

Kenilworth Show and Rodeo; Grace, Mr R

 **Mr HUNT** (Nicklin—LNP) (7.12 pm): I rise to pay tribute to the community of Kenilworth and congratulate them on their 100th Kenilworth Show and Rodeo, which was held on 21 September. His Excellency the Governor of Queensland attended to open the show and I was pleased to join him alongside the federal member for Fairfax, Ted O'Brien, and local councillors to welcome a parade of livestock, horse riders and vintage cars. The Sunshine Coast vintage car club recreated the historic trek from Nambour to Kenilworth for the event in their vehicles and it was great to be taken back in time to that era of 1919 when the first Kenilworth Show and Rodeo was held.

When it comes to community events, the people of Kenilworth certainly punch above their weight. With a total population of only 600, there are over 30 community organisations. I congratulate those organisations on the work they do. They make Kenilworth one of the great tourist and event destinations on the Sunshine Coast.

An honourable member: Great cheese.

Mr HUNT: I take that interjection. They make great cheese. I particularly congratulate the show organising committee and volunteers—too many to mention—for such a great event celebrating the 100th anniversary.

Tonight, I want to also pay tribute to a great man from my local community who, sadly, passed away last week, Ray Grace. Ray was a community hero in every sense of the word: a generous philanthropist, community volunteer, businessman and advocate. Ray was known as the father of the Sunshine Coast motor industry. Ray was well known and well respected in my local community. I will quote the words of long-time friend and local councillor Jenny McKay—

He was an old-style Sunshine Coast businessman willing to put back into the community. Ray wasn't challenged by rules and regulations. He was prepared to take a calculated risk and deliver. Ray was a little man with a big heart.

For 32 years Ray volunteered for the Sunshine Coast Show Society, helping to put on the Nambour event each and every year for the community with a pavilion at the grounds bearing his name in tribute. For 16 years Ray was a great fundraiser and volunteer for Apex Nambour. He set up the Bendigo Bank at Woombye as an inaugural board member and donated the land, equipment and buildings for the Sunshine Valley Men's Shed. Ray was a much loved and well-respected member of my community who will be sadly missed. A Bill Hoffman article in the *Sunshine Coast Daily* last week quotes Ray as saying—

'I was lucky enough to have a brain that could think of ideas and make them happen. And I get a lot of pleasure out of making things happen for other people ... I think it's what I was meant to do.

Rest in peace, Ray Grace.

Acacia Ridge State School, 150th Anniversary



Hon. LM ENOCH (Algeria—ALP) (Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for the Arts) (7.15 pm): This year marks an important milestone for a school in my electorate of Algeria. This year, Acacia Ridge State School is celebrating its 150th anniversary. Acacia Ridge State School, in the Algeria electorate, has a rich and diverse history. Since 1869, it has taken on the important responsibility of educating the community's youngest members. The school started with one teacher, Fanny Stanbrough, who taught 26 students in a simple bark building. The school has now grown to more than 50 staff, 349 students and amazing infrastructure, including a full arts auditorium and expansive library.

For a time the school was known as the Coopers Plains State School, but its connection to the local area was recognised when it was reopened as Acacia Ridge State School in 1956. Over the years, the staff and parents have worked tirelessly to assist students to get the most out of their education and create a learning environment that supports the community more broadly. They have supported a thriving community reading hub, created an instrumental music program and glee club, and embraced STEM programs.


It has been a great privilege to represent a school with so much history and a school that has helped shape members of my community over many years and many generations. In fact, it is not uncommon for me to come across grandparents and parents at the many and varied school events and hear them talk about their students there as being the third generation who have attended the school. That is why, just like the community, the Palaszczuk government recognises that education is key to allowing that next generation to fully realise their capabilities and dreams. That is why we are committed to supporting schools just like Acacia Ridge State School in my electorate of Algeria—to help students reach their full potential.

To mark the 150th anniversary, students have been learning about the school's history and the kinds of things past students were taught and how the school day 150 years ago compares to their daily routine today. To commemorate their contribution to the school's history, recently, students buried a time capsule filled with drawings of what they think life will be like in the future. This will be an interesting capture of time when the capsule is opened in another 25 years.

The school will also be hosting the Twilight Ridge Fest this Friday from 4 pm to 9 pm to celebrate its 150-year anniversary with the community. This event will be an opportunity for members of the community to reminisce about their memories of the school and explore the historical hub, which will showcase the school's history over the years. It will be amazing to celebrate this significant milestone with my community and I cannot wait to share in the memories, the milestones and the stories with past and present students, parents and teachers.

I would like to extend my congratulations to the principal, Nicole Collins, and the P&C president, Donna Wynn, and the school community on reaching this tremendous milestone. I wish the teachers, staff, students and parents a great night.

Mount Coot-tha Quarry

 **Mr BERKMAN** (Maiwar—Grn) (7.18 pm): Everyone around Mount Coot-tha remembers the Brisbane City Council's ill-fated zip-line proposal, which was defeated by an enormous community campaign that BCC just could not ignore no matter how hard it tried. Now it is time for us to look to the future of Mount Coot-tha.

Last Wednesday night more than 100 Maiwar locals and people from all over Brisbane joined me and local community group, the Mouth Coot-tha Protection Alliance, for a community forum on the future of Mount Coot-tha and the quarry in particular. It was a fantastic event and hopefully a demonstration of what creative, thoughtful and meaningful bottom-up community consultation can look like. There were so many great ideas for how we might turn the quarry site into something wonderful for all of Brisbane to enjoy, a site that is sensitive to the natural environment, that is sustainable, non-commercial and accessible to everyone.


We are so lucky to have the beautiful mountain and parklands in our electorate, but the quarry, owned by Brisbane City Council, is a massive, ugly 30-hectare scar on the landscape. The noise, vibrations and dust from blasting are hazardous to the health and wellbeing of residents, human and animal, and there are other options for obtaining rock for road projects around Brisbane.

Residents have been calling for the closure of the quarry for years and as their local MP I have been advocating to the council and the state government over the last year for the same. Unfortunately, the council is not listening and over the years it has kept pushing back the closure date and in typical BCC fashion it has done so without any public consultation whatsoever. It has zero plans for closure and rehabilitation and zero funds set aside for this mammoth task.

I invited the Lord Mayor and the three councillors whose wards are affected by the quarry to attend the forum. None of them were able to make it, unfortunately. The state government, for its part, has imposed no rehabilitation requirements on the quarry, which completely bypassed the new mining rehabilitation laws, and the quarry is allowed to operate outside of industry best practice despite the fact that residents live within metres of this quarry—well within the normal buffer zones. We may be getting some cheap rocks for roads right now, but in a few years we will be really paying for it. As we heard from a mining rehabilitation expert last Wednesday, the council should be progressively rehabilitating and incorporating any closure plans into its current operations and every year and month that passes without progressive rehabilitation underway increases the cost of rehabilitation to Brisbane ratepayers and limits the options for the quarry's future use.

I am calling on the Brisbane City Council to urgently develop a closure and rehabilitation plan and undertake genuine, meaningful consultation with the community. I am also calling on the state government to review the operating conditions for the quarry and develop a new framework for operations in line with current best practice. This is a unique opportunity to plan for what could be a new defining feature of our city. I am extending a genuine and ongoing invitation to all Brisbane City Councillors and the state government to join with me and the community to make the most of this opportunity.

Thornton, Mr J

 **Mr KING** (Kurwongbah—ALP) (7.22 pm): I rise tonight to say a few words about someone who was a champion to many but who never liked to make a fuss or be acknowledged for his efforts. This legend passed away recently and if numbers at a funeral are anything to go by I am not the only person who will sing Jimmy's praises. Jimmy Thornton was a giant of the electricity supply industry. I want to put on record his contribution to safety in the industry and in particular his legacy of what is now known as SAHVEA, an acronym for Safe Access to High Voltage Electrical Apparatus—the industry loves acronyms—or 'the orange book' as it was known in Jimmy's day.

In the early nineties, if my memory serves me correctly, in QEC, which is now Powerlink, there was an expression of interest to have a look at refreshing our high-voltage switching and access procedures and Jimmy, who was a leading hand and a long-term mentor for apprentices and younger tradespeople such as me, stood up. Little did he know that this would be the turning point in his career and one that would see him work hard in creating a safer environment for workers in the industry for the rest of his working life.


It goes without saying that the switching of voltages of up to 330 volts is a dangerous task and the intricacies of switching to create a safe, dead, earthed zone for maintenance and construction activities in a live switchyard is no mean feat. Having a safe system of work is vital and having a good one like SAHVEA is the reason the Queensland electrical supply industry's safety and system security is second to none.

Jimmy and his team took the redesign of our procedures seriously and although he was a little, gentle, polite guy he never took a backward step against not only the powers that be in QEC but he also brought Energex and Ergon along as well. That being said, management, workers and everyone wanted a safe system to work under, but getting agreement from all parties and egos was something Jimmy excelled at. Jimmy was always a proud ETU member and he wore his worker, trainer and ETU hats proudly to bring all players together.

The safer procedures were just the start. Developing consistent training and levels of qualification was the next body of work Jimmy and the team took on. This work is still ongoing as the industry and outage constraints continuously change. I know that many others have contributed to SAHVEA, and I was even a switching trainer for a while before I left Powerlink to be a member here, but you do not often meet someone like Jimmy who selflessly made a career out of creating a safer workplace for his and future generations and in doing so became a role model for most of us.

I have to say, in finishing, that Jimmy loved putting together a PowerPoint presentation and from time to time they could be a little bit boring. I do not know how long it went for, but the one he put together for his funeral gave him the last laugh as we all had to watch it without saying a word or interrupting with a question. RIP, old mate. You have left your mark.

Glass House Mountains Rural Fire Brigade

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (7.24 pm): All Queenslanders have been reminded in recent weeks not only of the threat of fire but also of the amazing courage, dedication and service of our QFRS auxiliary and rural fire brigades. They are simply brilliant. When you reflect on the fact that the rural fireys are volunteers, we fellow Queenslanders are humbled. What may not be widely known is that 2019 is the 70th year of rural fire brigades operating in this state and that the No. 1 brigade, the first brigade constituted, was, in fact, the Glass House Mountains brigade. It pipped the Lagoon Pocket, Byfield, Kandanga, Thangool and Gordon Brook brigades established later in the same year, 1949. Twenty-seven members attended the first meeting at the United Fruitgrowers' Co-op Association in late 1948 before the brigade was registered on 29 June 1949. Exactly 70 years later we celebrated at the current Glass House Mountain brigade sheds.

Like many brigades, membership waned through the years until the horrific fires of September and November 1994. The November fires started in Cove Road. They cut the Bruce Highway. They spread through Caboolture and on to Bribie Island and saw 330,000 hectares burnt, 23 houses lost, 3,000 people evacuated and nine volunteer firefighters injured. There was a letter to the editor not long after those fires from one of the neighbouring brigades that sounds early familiar and contemporary—

Last week is certainly one which will remain in everyone's mind for years to come. The stress of being involved with such a huge operation has left us all exhausted.


The devastation wreaked on the landscape, particularly in the Glass House and Beerburrum area, is hard to believe. It is amazing that so few homes were lost. I realise that must be cold comfort to those who lost everything and they have our heartfelt sympathy. Fires such as we experienced last week are virtually impossible to stop but with hard work a lot can be saved.

There are many lessons to be learnt and the most important one is not to be complacent. Prevention and preparation before the bushfire season is so important and it is not too late now to attend to the clearing of rubbish and gutters, check hoses and pumps and remove stored fuel, gas bottles and firewood.

Don't think the danger has passed!

Not surprisingly, following those fires a subsequent meeting saw 30 locals, predominantly farmers, come along and the brigade reinvigorated. Two existing members, Dave Gower and Charlie Pike, were at that meeting 25 years ago. I want to acknowledge first officer Anthony Rook, the other officers, Charlie, Steve, Aiden, Michael and Dave and members Jarod, Richard, Andrew, Corey, Mathias, Alana, Todd, Kirsty, David, Matt, Robert, Tim, Gary, Linda, Alex, Gavin, Peter, Kev and Leanne and Tamara. Keep up the great work!

Walter Taylor Bridge

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (7.27 pm): My constituents in Graceville, Sherwood, Chelmer and Tennyson continue to suffer in terms of one of the worst bottlenecks in Brisbane—that is, of course, the Walter Taylor Bridge. The Walter Taylor Bridge was built in 1936 when FDR was still President of the United States and Winston Churchill was four years off being Prime Minister of Britain. That is how long it has been since anything has occurred in this part of the city. We see am peak hours, pm peak hours and Saturday morning peak hours—the congestion gets worse and worse year in, year out, month in, month out, day in, day out. It is 100 per

cent a Brisbane City Council matter and they continue to refuse to do anything about the traffic congestion there. We have had 16 years of LNP Lord Mayors—Campbell Newman, Graham Quirk and now Adrian Schrinner—and yet we have the same inaction, the same ignoring of communities in my constituency for that period of time.

There is strong local support for action. What we need is a commitment to design a second bridge in the allocated corridor on the downstream side, on the eastern side; genuine community consultation with communities on both sides of the river to get the design right; and then we need tendering and construction. That will take a number of years. The congestion will get a lot worse in that time, but we need to get going right now. This is a great opportunity for the Brisbane City Council because at the moment it creates traffic. People go the long way around, all the way through Highgate Hill and Dutton Park, on the northside, to avoid this extraordinarily bad bottleneck. If we want to reduce congestion in this city we have to deal with this issue.

I know City Hall does not have a great record. Kingsford Smith Drive is a year over time and \$100 million over budget. King George Square was not a great outcome. Spending \$6.2 million out of the bushland levy on land at Mount Gravatt East that does not have a single tree on it is not a good record either. We have seen recent profligate spending of ratepayers' funds on taxis to Keith Urban and Cher concerts and we have seen \$100,000 unaccounted for that goes into the Lord Mayor's account.

All those things aside, this is a great opportunity for this Lord Mayor not to be shifty but to get out there and deal with a real issue in this city that is his responsibility and show he has a new way of going about things. My constituents want to see action in terms of traffic congestion in that south-west part of Brisbane. It is not just my constituents; it is no doubt constituents in other areas such as the seats of Mount Ommaney and further south. People in the seat of Maiwar north of the river want to see this dealt with as well because they cannot get south in the same way my constituents cannot get north and it is getting worse. I call on the Lord Mayor and the Brisbane City Council to start funding the design work needed to get a second bridge—Taylor II—across the river beside the Walter Taylor Bridge.

The House adjourned at 7.30 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Andrew, Bailey, Bates, Batt, Bennett, Berkman, Bleijie, Bolton, Boothman, Boyce, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Costigan, Crandon, Crawford, Crisafulli, D'Ath, Dametto, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Frecklington, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Hart, Healy, Hinchliffe, Howard, Hunt, Janetzki, Jones, Katter, Kelly, King, Knuth, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Lauga, Leahy, Linard, Lister, Lui, Lynham, Madden, Mander, McArdle, McDonald, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Mickelberg, Miles, Millar, Miller, Minnikin, Molhoek, Mullen, Nicholls, O'Connor, O'Rourke B, O'Rourke C, Palaszcuk, Pease, Pegg, Perrett, Pitt, Powell, Power, Pugh, Purdie, Richards, Robinson, Rowan, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Simpson, Sorensen, Stevens, Stewart, Trad, Watts, Weir, Whiting, Wilson