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FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SIXTH PARLIAMENT

Wednesday, 18 March 2020

Subject	Page
SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS	653
Hansard Reporters in Chamber.....	653
Absence of Members	653
TABLED PAPER	653
MINISTERIAL PAPER	653
Revocation and Dedication of Forest and Protected Areas	653
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Proposal under sections 29, 30 and 32 of the Nature Conservation Act 1992 and a brief explanation of the proposal, relating to Monkhouse Timber Reserve, Kondalilla National Park, Ngalba Bulal National Park and Duggan Conservation Park.....	653
NOTICE OF MOTION	653
Revocation and Dedication of Forest and Protected Areas	653
MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS	654
Coronavirus, Response	654
Coronavirus, Economy	656
Coronavirus, Update	656
Supermarkets, Loading Dock Laws	657
Coronavirus, Vaccine.....	658
Local Government Elections	658
Coronavirus, Schools	659
Coronavirus, Creative Industries Jobs	660
Lockhart River, Plane Crash.....	660
Coronavirus, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services.....	661
Coronavirus, Road and Transport Infrastructure.....	662
Coronavirus, Agriculture Industry	662
Coronavirus, Water Security	663
Local Government Elections, Pre-Polling.....	663

Table of Contents – Wednesday, 18 March 2020

MINISTERIAL PAPER	663
Ministerial Expenses	663
<i>Tabled paper: Public Report of Ministerial Expenses for the period 1 July 2019 to 31 December 2019.</i>	663
TRANSPORT AND PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE	663
Report	663
<i>Tabled paper: Transport and Public Works Committee: Report No. 35, 56th Parliament—Subordinate legislation tabled between 22 October 2019 and 26 November 2019.</i>	663
NOTICE OF MOTION	664
Palaszczuk Labor Government, Youth Justice	664
QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE	664
Coronavirus, Economic Response	664
Coronavirus, Economic Response	665
Coronavirus, Aged-Care Facilities	666
Coronavirus, Economic Response	666
Coronavirus, Indigenous Communities	667
Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority, Sustainability Loans	668
Coronavirus, Economic Response	668
Coronavirus, Retail Trading Hours	669
Coronavirus, Supply Chains	669
Coronavirus; New Acland Coalmine, Jobs	670
Coronavirus, Health Services	670
Coronavirus, Training	670
Coronavirus, Small Business	671
Coronavirus, Housing	672
Coronavirus, Energy Sector	672
Police Resources	673
Coronavirus, Tourism Industry	673
Redland Hospital, Intensive Care Unit	674
Coronavirus, Public Transport	675
Coronavirus, Economic Response	675
Coronavirus, Sport	675
Coronavirus, Economic Response	676
MOTION	676
Order of Business	676
Division: Question put—That the question be now put	679
Resolved in the affirmative.....	679
Division: Question put—That the motion be agreed to	679
Resolved in the affirmative.....	679
SPEAKER'S STATEMENT	680
Public Health and Other Legislation (Public Health Emergency) Amendment Bill	680
MOTION	680
Order of Business	680
PUBLIC HEALTH AND OTHER LEGISLATION (PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY) AMENDMENT BILL	680
Introduction	680
<i>Tabled paper: Public Health and Other Legislation (Public Health Emergency) Amendment Bill 2020.</i>	680
<i>Tabled paper: Public Health and Other Legislation (Public Health Emergency) Amendment Bill 2020, explanatory notes.</i>	680
<i>Tabled paper: Public Health and Other Legislation (Public Health Emergency) Amendment Bill 2020, statement of compatibility with human rights.</i>	680
First Reading	683
Declared Urgent; Allocation of Time Limit Order	683
Division: Question put—That the motion be agreed to	685
Resolved in the affirmative.....	685
Second Reading	685
<i>Tabled paper: Email, dated 18 March 2019, from a Partner, Minter Ellison, Mr Robin Lyons, to the member for Burleigh, Mr Michael Hart MP, titled 'Retirement villages—COVID-19 response.</i>	697
<i>Tabled paper: Public Health and Other Legislation (Public Health Emergency) Amendment Bill 2020, Mr Tim Mander's amendments.</i>	697
<i>Tabled paper: Public Health and Other Legislation (Public Health Emergency) Amendment Bill 2020, explanatory notes to Mr Tim Mander's amendments.</i>	697
<i>Table paper: Public Health and Other Legislation (Public Health Emergency) Amendment Bill 2020, statement of compatibility with human rights contained in Mr Tim Mander's amendments.</i>	697
Consideration in Detail	702
Clauses 1 to 14, as read, agreed to	702
Division: Question put—That leave be granted.	702
Resolved in the negative.....	702
Clauses 15 to 49, as read, agreed to	702
Third Reading	703
Long Title	703
MOTIONS	703
Portfolio Committees, Reporting Dates	703

Table of Contents – Wednesday, 18 March 2020

Amendment to Sessional Orders	704
Division: Question put—That the question be now put	711
Resolved in the affirmative.....	711
Division: Question put—That the motion be agreed to	711
Resolved in the affirmative.....	711
LEAVE TO MOVE MOTION	711
Division: Question put—That leave be granted.	711
Resolved in the affirmative.....	711
SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT.....	711
Division: Question put—That the motion be agreed to.	715
Resolved in the affirmative.....	715
ADJOURNMENT	715
ATTENDANCE	716

WEDNESDAY, 18 MARCH 2020

The Legislative Assembly met at 10.00 am.

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



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

SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS

Hansard Reporters in Chamber



Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, for members' information, we have the Hansard reporters on the floor of parliament while we are dealing with technical issues. It is always good to put faces to the words.

Absence of Members



Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have received notifications of absence for the following members: the member for Noosa, the member for Hinchinbrook, the member for Traeger and the member for Mirani. These members will be absent this week. Each member's notification complies with standing order 263A—in particular, the way that I will be enforcing that standing order, as I mentioned yesterday.

TABLED PAPER

TABLING OF DOCUMENTS (SO 32)

MINISTERIAL PAPER

The following ministerial paper was tabled by the Clerk—

Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Hon. Bailey)—

[437](#) Transport and Public Works Committee: Report No. 33, 56th Parliament, February 2020—Transport Legislation (Disability Parking and Other Matters) Amendment Bill 2019, government response

MINISTERIAL PAPER

Revocation and Dedication of Forest and Protected Areas



Hon. LM ENOCH (Algerst—ALP) (Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for the Arts) (10.03 am): I lay upon the table of the House a proposal under sections 29, 30 and 32 of the Nature Conservation Act 1992 and a brief explanation of the proposal.

Tabled paper: Proposal under sections 29, 30 and 32 of the Nature Conservation Act 1992 and a brief explanation of the proposal, relating to Monkhouse Timber Reserve, Kondalilla National Park, Ngalba Bulal National Park and Duggan Conservation Park [\[438\]](#).

NOTICE OF MOTION

Revocation and Dedication of Forest and Protected Areas



Hon. LM ENOCH (Algerst—ALP) (Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for the Arts) (10.03 am): I give notice that after the expiration of at least 28 days as provided in the Nature Conservation Act 1992, I shall move—

1. That this House requests the Governor in Council to:
 - (a) revoke by regulation under section 30 of the Nature Conservation Act 1992 the setting apart and declaration of part of a timber reserve;

- (b) dedicate by regulation under section 29 of the Nature Conservation Act 1992 the revoked area of the aforementioned timber reserve as part of an existing national park;
- (c) revoke by regulation under section 32 of the Nature Conservation Act 1992 the dedication of part of one national park and part of one conservation park,

as set out in the Proposal tabled by me in the House today, viz

Description of areas to be revoked

Monkhouse Timber Reserve	An area of about 9.9 hectares described as part of lot 165 on plan FTY1722 (to be described as lot 1 on AP23568 and dedicated as part of Ngalba Bulal National Park), as illustrated on the attached sketch.
Kondalilla National Park	An area of 0.1529 hectares described as part of lot 783 on plan NPW788 (to be described as lots 1 to 5 on SP305105), as illustrated on the attached sketch.
Duggan Conservation Park	An area of 0.6849 hectares described as part of lot 2 on plan MCH5054 (to be described as lot 1 on SP314659), as illustrated on the attached sketch.

Description of areas to be dedicated

Ngalba Bulal National Park	An area of about 9.9 hectares described as part of lot 165 on plan FTY1722 (to be described as lot 1 on AP23568), as illustrated on the attached sketch.
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2. That Mr Speaker and the Clerk of the Parliament forward a copy of this resolution to the Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for the Arts for submission to the Governor in Council.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Coronavirus, Response

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (10.04 am): The world, our country and our state are changing. Things will continue to change. They will continue to change by the day and by the week over the immediately foreseeable future as we deal with and confront the coronavirus crisis, an event we have never seen in our lifetimes, an event that is a one-in-100-year event. Today I want to assure Queenslanders that we will get through it. We will get it through it by working together, by supporting each other, by keeping calm heads and by listening to accurate expert advice.

Australia will continue to keep running, Queensland will continue to keep running, but this will take at least six months for us to get through and it may be longer. Decisions need to be made—critical decisions, important decisions. Last night the national cabinet met. I want to keep Queenslanders informed about those critical decisions that were made at the meeting. From the outset let me say that I have never before experienced such cooperation, such cohesion and such support among the state and territory premiers and the federal government which is crucial during this extremely difficult time. It is absolutely paramount that we cooperate with each other so we can respond to this crisis and so we can ensure that our country continues to run as smoothly as possible.

It is vital that we keep Queenslanders working. It is critical that we keep Queenslanders safe. It is crucial that we support each other, particularly our most vulnerable. Rumour and speculation have no place in this current situation. I urge all Queenslanders to ignore it—on the Internet, on social media and even to an extent sometimes in the mainstream media. Rumour and speculation should be treated with scepticism. In the meantime, I encourage all Queenslanders to listen to state and federal leaders and to chief health officers for accurate, precise, up-to-date information.

The measures agreed by the national cabinet are fundamentally and rightly about containment and limiting the spread of the virus. All Queenslanders can be confident in our system.

The federal government has now declared a human biosecurity emergency which allows it to take action under the Biosecurity Act. That does not mean it is time for panic. It is a time for important decisions to be made to keep all Australians safe. Overseas travel by Australians is no longer an option. I repeat the words of the Prime Minister: do not go overseas. Let me say to Queenslanders: do not go overseas. The biggest threat to our country with this virus has been Australians returning from other countries.

Bans on indoor gatherings of more than 100 people for non-essential purposes will be enforced in Queensland. What is the difference between essential and non-essential? The list is still being finalised, but the Prime Minister said a number of essential gatherings would include considerations such as airports, public transport, medical and emergency facilities, jails, courts, the parliament, business premises, construction and mining sites, schools, universities, childcare centres, hotels, motels and other places where people are transient like supermarkets and the Queen Street Mall, for example.

I stress that at whatever gatherings you are attending, social distancing practices should be observed. Everyone has a duty to do this, every single one of us. We must set the example. Additionally, the ban on outdoor gatherings of more than 500 remains in place. There will be no change to domestic air travel because it is considered low risk; however, parts of the country, such as vulnerable Indigenous communities, should be avoided to limit the spread of the virus. There will be further discussions about this over the coming days. I ask for people's patience as we work through these incredibly complex issues.

Schools will remain open based on the best possible health advice. The advice tells us that this virus operates differently in children, but if your child appears to be ill, keep them at home; do not send them to school. If you are a teacher or a cleaner or work in the office at a school and if you are unwell, you must stay at home. That is very important. It is not just students and teachers; it is also other people who work at the school. If you are unwell, you must stay at home. We cannot disrupt our schools for what will be at least six months—that would be catastrophic. As I said, the decision is based on the best possible health advice.

In relation to aged-care facilities, strict restrictions will now be put in place. The following visitors and staff, including visiting workers, should not be permitted and will not be permitted to enter an aged-care facility: those who have returned from overseas in the last 14 days; those who have been in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the last 14 days; and those with a fever or symptoms, acute respiratory infection or symptoms and those who have not been vaccinated against influenza after 1 May.

The facilities must also implement the following measures for restricting visits and visitors to reduce the risk of transmission to residents. This is very important for all Queenslanders to understand. I urge all Queenslanders to please listen to the advice and obey the advice. The measures include: limiting visits to a short duration; limiting visits to a maximum of two visitors at one time per day—these may be immediate social supports, family members, close friends or professional service or advocacy workers; visits should be conducted in a resident's room, outdoors or in a specific area designated by the facility, rather than communal areas where the risk of transmission to other residents is greater; there should be no large group visits or gatherings, including social activities or entertainment permitted at this time; no school groups or baby groups of any size should be allowed to visit aged-care facilities; visitors should be encouraged, as all Australians are, to practise social distancing, where possible; and children aged 16 years or younger should be visiting only by exception, as they generally will not necessarily follow the hygiene measures all the time like adults would and they could be asymptomatic.

In cases of end of life, very tough decisions will have to be made and rules will have to be made on a facility-by-facility basis. As everyone understands, this is an incredibly personal family time. The intention is not to restrict people during those times.

As Queenslanders will already be aware, Anzac Day ceremonies will be cancelled across this state. This is unavoidable. There will be a televised national event from the War Memorial in Canberra.

We are living in a different world today to the world we knew yesterday, last week or last year. It is a rapidly changing world and we need to be prepared for that. That means helping each other, supporting each other and respecting each other. Some of the behaviour I have seen in our state and around the country recently has shocked and saddened me. People continue to raid supermarkets and other shops with the intention of hoarding. It is not necessary. We are not going to run out of food in Queensland. I understand that people are anxious and stressed, but it saddens me that some Queenslanders are behaving in this way at the expense of others.

We all need to be very conscious of the fact that some people have more access to money than others. Some of the most vulnerable members of our community live week to week or pay cheque to pay cheque. By people going into supermarkets and raiding them and hoarding at this time, it is putting the lives of some of the less fortunate in our society at great risk. This is a very important social message for the media and the public. The leaders in this House have to stand up and show leadership in their communities.

I say today: stop it; stop it today. Let us show the great Queensland spirit and instead put our energies into caring for our family, friends, community and neighbours. By doing that together we will get through this together.

Coronavirus, Economy

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (10.14 am): Every day things are changing—often hourly—as the extent of the pandemic affects our everyday activities. Queensland is already experiencing significant impacts on key industries, including our tourism, international education and training, and agriculture and fisheries industries. Broader impacts are also becoming evident across a range of industries as the outbreak in Australia further develops.

Queensland Treasury has undertaken updated modelling of the potential economic impacts based on the likely scenario of a widespread outbreak of the coronavirus more globally and here at home. This latest Treasury modelling suggests the economic impacts of the coronavirus could see gross state product, GSP, in 2019-20 reduced by up to \$3.4 billion compared with the outlook at MYFER, while the cumulative impacts across 2019-20 and 2020-21 could see total economic activity in Queensland reduced by up to \$10 billion compared with the outlook at MYFER.

The Queensland government has taken immediate action. Yesterday, I convened a teleconference with key business and industry leaders in Queensland—people responsible for the employment of thousands of Queensland workers. I thank the Minister for State Development, the Minister for Tourism Industry Development and the Minister for Small Business for joining me on that teleconference.

It is important for government and the business community to work together to help protect jobs now and to bounce back stronger once we have contained and are over the coronavirus outbreak. Yesterday, I briefed them on our further measures to support businesses and keep Queenslanders in work and listened to their concerns and their ideas about how we get through this together. The government's new \$500 million concessional loan facility means that people can keep their workers engaged through this tough period. I am pleased to report to the House that just on 24 hours after announcing this \$500 million concessional loan facility almost a thousand employers have expressed an interest in accessing money to keep their workers employed.

KPMG estimates that 36 million workdays could be lost due to coronavirus, affecting productivity and further impacting our economy. Having a job with paid leave at a time like this helps keep our economy moving, it cushions against shocks to consumption expenditure and makes sure people are not left behind. Importantly, being able to retain the right people with the right experience and skills will help us get back on our feet once the worst of the virus has passed.

When it comes to supporting casuals, the Palaszczuk government is leading the way. We are ensuring that all state government employees have access to adequate leave and support to deal with the impacts of coronavirus. This includes government owned corporations and statutory authorities like Queensland Rail. It will not matter if a person is casual or full-time. If they get sick or if they need to self-isolate, they will be supported and they will get paid. We will not leave hardworking casual employees stranded in their hour of need. We are looking to the federal government to make sure they are supporting casual workers in the private sector and people employed in the gig economy.

Some people, through no fault of their own, have no option but to go to work and earn an income at the moment. On the other hand, some casual workers might feel as though they have to go to work, even if they should stay home. We will continue to call on the federal government to do the right thing and help all of these insecure workers. They need to know they have a safety net to pay their rent and to put food on the table for their families.

Coronavirus, Update

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (10.18 am): In Queensland this morning we now have 94 confirmed cases of COVID-19. Nationally more than 414 cases have been confirmed and there have been five deaths. Globally there are more than 197,000 cases, with 7,905 lives lost across 153 countries and regions. Since January we have listened to the experts and we have been preparing for it.

The latest advice from the national cabinet is that non-essential indoor gatherings of more than 100 people should be cancelled. This is effective immediately. This will affect the number of patrons allowed in cinemas, entertainment venues, pubs, clubs and large restaurants. It will not affect airports,

public transport, medical facilities, emergency services, aged care, prisons, courts, supermarkets, offices, schools, universities or construction sites. There will be more information to come about which operations this will affect and what precautions are appropriate for the exceptions.

We know this virus affects older loved ones much worse than the general population, and that is why aged-care homes will only allow residents two visitors at a time. The department of foreign affairs is advising that all Australian travellers now return home. Anyone returning from overseas must now quarantine in their homes for 14 days. To those at home right now following this advice, I want to say thank you. You are protecting your community from this virus. You are stopping the spread and saving vulnerable people's lives.

To people who are anxious about this outbreak, I understand. I want you to know that Queensland is well prepared. We entered this emergency with a very substantial stockpile of equipment, medicines and personal protective equipment including masks, and we have continued to source more throughout. We have continued to rapidly expand our testing capabilities. In fact, Queensland was the first state to expand the test criteria for travellers returning from China to all returning travellers with symptoms.

Queensland has been leading the other states in ensuring its testing criteria has been targeted to those in the community who need it most. Queensland's laboratory testing is among the best in the world, and we are continuing to lead the way. We have testing collection hubs right around the state. Queensland Health is uniquely placed as a public pathology provider. It has two distinct analytical test platforms and assays. This ensures that we are well prepared and well placed for all possible novel coronavirus outbreak scenarios as demand increases for worldwide stocks.

I am pleased to advise the House today that we will double the number of public laboratories able to test for COVID-19. Currently, samples collected throughout the state are transported to either Brisbane or Townsville. Queensland Health will expand testing for COVID-19 to Pathology Queensland laboratories at the Toowoomba Hospital, the Rockhampton Hospital and the Sunshine Coast University Hospital.

The additional instruments will dramatically improve turnaround time. They will allow us to do more tests faster. This will support us not just as we continue to respond to COVID-19 but for the upcoming influenza season. We use the gold standard of viral testing, known as polymerase chain reaction testing. This is a three-phase test which involves the extraction, purification, amplification and detection of virus DNA. The three new state-of-the-art Hologic Panther Fusion instruments cost almost \$300,000 each, but they are worth it.

We are working to increase large-scale capability on a third test platform for COVID-19 using this new fleet. Queensland's two largest private pathology providers—QML and Sullivan Nicolaides Pathology—have also recently developed testing capability and are supporting most of the private sector demand. In fact, between us we have already tested 24,018 Queenslanders. Roughly 30 per cent of all tests done in Australia were done in Queensland.

As always, please get your information from Queensland Health or a healthcare provider. Right now panic and fear are more dangerous than the virus itself. In Queensland right now, to get the virus you have to have been overseas or come into contact with someone who has it. To get scared you only have to open Facebook. There is a lot of misinformation out there, but Queenslanders can be assured that our health service is doing everything to support their staff and patients.

Supermarkets, Loading Dock Laws

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning) (10.23 am): Today I can inform the House that the Palaszczuk government will be introducing new laws to support supermarkets so they can restock around the clock. Across our state we have seen unprecedented demand for groceries as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our proposed new laws will allow the government to extend the operating hours for deliveries for products to essential businesses such as supermarkets and chemists.

Current limitations on times of delivery mean that supermarkets cannot keep pace with consumer demand for domestic supplies and products. Should these reforms be supported by this House, the changes will come into effect in coming days and will allow supermarkets, grocery stores and food outlets to receive goods 24 hours a day if needed. These laws mean that supermarkets will be able to restock around the clock; however, we also need Queenslanders to play their part. We say to Queenslanders: please do not buy more than you need and always think of others.

This change to state planning laws is a practical response to an unprecedented situation and will help to ensure the continuity and sustainability of the supply chain for food and other essential goods. Current shortages are not being driven by supply but by behaviour. Increasing the operating hours of loading docks will give the community the confidence that the goods they rely on will continue to flow into supermarkets.

We are all aware of the stories of panic buying and, regrettably, some instances of aggressive behaviour, but we should also take the time to pay tribute to the vast majority of our fellow Queenslanders who continue to conduct themselves with civility and decency. For every story of regrettable conduct there are a thousand others of sharing and compassion, of shoppers offering others the last item on the shelf, of the young assisting the elderly, of Queenslanders all over this state sticking together and helping each other out. I also want to pay tribute to retail workers and shop assistants across the state who are doing their very best in difficult times to make sure Queenslanders can get what they need.

The most confronting thing about the COVID-19 virus is that we have no precedent to guide the way. What we do have is the resilience and tenacity of the Queensland people and the knowledge that, although the most difficult days may lay ahead, we will come through it. I emphasise again that we are not running out of products. These new loading dock laws will help ensure shelves are replenished as quickly as possible. Whilst the COVID-19 pandemic is serious, it will not last forever. Working together, we will emerge from this crisis stronger and more united.

Coronavirus, Vaccine

 **Hon. KJ JONES** (Cooper—ALP) (Minister for Innovation and Tourism Industry Development and Minister for Cross River Rail) (10.26 am): As we stand here today, a team of world-leading medical researchers at the University of Queensland is working on a vaccine that could stop the spread of one of the worst viruses in recent history. Coronavirus has already affected more than 197,000 people and caused more than 7,800 deaths world-wide.

The secret weapon in the fight against this disease could lie with the University of Queensland. The researchers at UQ's School of Chemistry and Molecular Bioscience have developed a vaccine that is now entering the testing and trial phase. This is widely thought to be the most promising coronavirus vaccine project on the planet right now. I am proud to say that this work would not be taking place without the ongoing investment in the University of Queensland's research program by successive state governments. Initiatives introduced by the Beattie government under the Smart State agenda through to our government's Advance Queensland strategy have contributed to help make the University of Queensland one of the world's leading research universities.

Today I can confirm that the Premier has tasked me to lead discussions with the federal health minister, Greg Hunt, in relation to the use of two widely available antiviral drugs to combat coronavirus and also in relation to Queensland's role in developing a vaccine. I can advise the House that the ongoing discussions I have been having with Minister Hunt to date have been very productive and, as the Premier has said, have been conducted in a bipartisan way. I know that the Premier herself will be raising these matters directly with the Prime Minister. We know that in order to deliver these medical breakthroughs here in Queensland we need to work collaboratively with the federal government and the world-class researchers at the University of Queensland.

I can also confirm that I will be meeting with the Chief Entrepreneur, Leanne Kemp, tomorrow to discuss ways that we can support Queensland's broader innovation sector, local firms, businesses and start-ups, particularly those that are trade exposed, to get through this tough time. We want to ensure that we keep these brains here in Queensland and keep the jobs here in Queensland.

Local Government Elections

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (10.28 am): As we all know, local government elections are underway. Extraordinary measures have been put in place to ensure those Queenslanders who have the right to vote are able to safely do so. Our most recent health advice is that it is fine for these elections to continue. In fact, you will encounter far fewer people at the polling booth than you would at a shopping centre or service station. I can report that Queenslanders are rising to the occasion.

The Electoral Commission Queensland is reporting voting figures that we have never seen before—around 540,000 applications for postal votes and more than 170,000 early votes to 5 pm yesterday. That is four times the number who turned out during the same period in 2016. Today and

tomorrow 128 of our early polling centres will be open from 9 am to 9 pm. On Friday and Saturday they will be open from 9 am to 5 pm. This is in addition to election day on Saturday, 28 March. Having two consecutive Saturdays to vote in local government elections has never been done before.

I should also mention there will be extended hours next week for early voting. To ensure that the 28 March election day and earlier election day run smoothly, the Electoral Commission has put in place several measures, including: a recommendation that voters bring their own pen or pencil; extra cleaning of polling booth areas; extra staff to help with queue control and monitoring; maximising the distance between voters, vote-issuing tables and screens; being mindful of the distance between voters and the next person in line; and being respectful of voters who may need some space or help, particularly the vulnerable amongst us.

This is not a time for platitudes such as 'business as usual'. This is not, as we have heard from the Premier, business as usual, but it is important business for local government elections. It is important that local governments provide the leadership, confidence and continuity that these elections will provide. The most recent advice from Chief Health Officer, Dr Jeannette Young, is that it is safe for elections to go ahead. Telephone voting is being organised for people in institutions, including nursing homes. Further telephone voting is being organised for people who are in social isolation because of the virus, because of illness or other issues that may make it difficult to get to a polling booth.

The early voting turnout tells us that Queenslanders want to exercise their franchise, and with the latest public health advice we are doing everything in our power to make sure that happens.

Coronavirus, Schools

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations) (10.31 am): Following the meeting of the national cabinet last night, the expert health advice is that schools should remain open. I repeat: the expert health advice is that schools should remain open. This is not being done at the risk of the health of our children. The health, wellbeing and safety of students always comes first. If this health expert advice changes, our instructions to schools will change. If there is a confirmed case at a school, the Department of Education, in conjunction with Queensland Health, will make a call about the closure of that school.

Extensive preparation and plans are in place. We know that our schools are ready to provide resources so that students' learning can continue. We must continue to follow what the health experts are saying because if we do not, it could have profound and long-lasting impacts on our society. Tens of thousands of jobs would be lost. There would be a 30 per cent impact on the availability of health workers who are parents and carers which would put lives at risk. I urge every parent to listen to this expert health advice—not rumour and gossip on social media. It is vital that people remain calm and treat everyone with respect and kindness.

I thank those parents and carers who are doing the right thing and listening to the advice, but I also want to thank those who are keeping their children at home if they are feeling unwell. I also want to thank principals, teachers, staff and other educators for implementing the necessary changes around large gatherings and social distancing; for example, the spacing of school desks as well as increased hygiene practices like more routine hand washing.

I also want to briefly mention the special pandemic leave provisions for public sector workers in response to these extraordinary circumstances. Special pandemic leave for public sector employees has been in place since 2009, but it has been updated to include the new COVID-19 pandemic and casual workers. Similar provisions were issued by the federal government for Commonwealth employees only yesterday. As the single largest employer in Queensland, the government has an important role to play in leading the way for all industries in implementing measures to protect essential workers across the state. We are ensuring that all Queensland government employees have adequate leave and support. This includes our doctors, nurses, teachers, paramedics, firefighters, police, scientists and other medical staff.

The public sector plays a unique role in responding to this unprecedented emergency, but it is not only frontline workers who are putting their shoulders to the wheel. They are also being supported by other Public Service workers; for example, departmental staff in Education, not teachers, who are putting together learning materials should schools close; those workers putting together a stimulus package for businesses; and those workers who have drafted the necessary changes to allow shops to restock overnight, to mention but a few. Without these important measures in these unprecedented times our community would struggle to continue functioning—a big thank you for all your efforts.

Coronavirus, Creative Industries Jobs

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algera—ALP) (Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for the Arts) (10.34 am): It has been consistently made clear that public health and safety is the government's No. 1 priority during this global coronavirus outbreak. In addition, we are committed to supporting Queensland jobs. More than 80,000 Queenslanders work in the creative industry sector, and many of them support themselves gig to gig. Unfortunately for workers in the arts and creative sector, coronavirus will have a significant impact on their ability to work. These Queenslanders include performers, artists, designers, crew members, front-of-house staff and others who help make live performances, exhibitions and public events such as memorable experiences. They are the independent artists, organisations and small to medium sized arts companies that so often push the boundaries of the arts.

Just weeks ago these same people—musicians, dancers, actors, performing and visual artists—came together to give their time and talents to fundraise in support of the victims of bushfires. They have done the same for those impacted by drought, floods and cyclones. That same sector now faces massive challenges. As social distancing rightly takes place, gigs have been cancelled and performance seasons and exhibitions have been postponed, and that means the loss of income for many workers.

Today I am announcing that more than \$8 million in funding relief measures are being made available to help many small to medium sized arts organisations pay their bills and keep people employed during the current health crisis. To provide certainty for the sector, companies that are currently recipients of the Organisations Fund will be guaranteed a further 12 months funding at current levels until December 2021. Arts Queensland is also suspending applications for the next four-year funding round in order to take pressure off these organisations to do long-term planning. For the next six months we are also waiving rental payments for tenants in Queensland government arts facilities. In addition, the government is working to find ways to support individual arts sector workers through our existing programs. In the coming weeks I will make further announcements about how we provide a response that supports workers with creative development and digital delivery.

The Palaszczuk government, through Arts Queensland, will continue to work with the sector to support organisations and arts workers to emerge from this public health crisis with strength and confidence.

Lockhart River, Plane Crash

 **Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works, Minister for Digital Technology and Minister for Sport) (10.37 am): I would like to echo the Premier's remarks yesterday in paying my condolences to the five people who lost their lives in the Lockhart River plane crash last week on the morning of Wednesday, 11 March 2020. As I mention regularly in this House, QBuild workers are there on the front lines when Queenslanders need them most. Last Wednesday Henry Roebig, Wayne Brischke, Wayne Ganter, contractor Mark Rawlinson and pilot Stuart Wavell went to work and never came home. They were travelling to Lockhart State School to conduct repairs.

This terrible tragedy underscores the fact that QBuild staff regularly support our most remote Queensland communities, often because no other contractors are able to carry out the work. The director-general and I travelled to the Cairns QBuild depot the day after this devastating incident to be with QBuild staff, who are grieving deeply. QBuild is not simply a workforce: to many it is a lifelong job. It is a family. The QBuild family will not forget the dedication of Henry Roebig, Wayne Brischke and Wayne Ganter in serving the Queensland community.

Since the incident there have been outpourings of grief from the community in which these Queenslanders worked, their families and their colleagues. I would like to share a statement from a Cairns QBuild team member, Bobby Bowditch, which conveys the sentiment of workers at the Cairns QBuild depot. Bobby says—

This is a time to reflect

As some of you may have heard, we at QBuild have lost three of our staff.

All tradesmen that I have had the pleasure to work with in the office for the past 15 years.

They were some of the greatest guys that make up our awesome team here.

My heart is breaking just [reflecting] on the good times.

Some may ask ... why do they fly in situations like today.

Why does a fireman run into a burning building.

Why does a fellow human person run to the aid of a fellow.

Why do I do it?

It is not a job, its more. I do it for the love of people,

For the love of the community that I get to be a part of,

For the love of our clients trying to better Queensland—

And we are all selfless at QBuild in building and maintaining Queensland.

I have personally been flying into communities just after cyclones, floods and riots, and I would do it again in a heart beat.

My heart goes out to the families of the three team members, the contractor's family and the pilot's family.

May my fellow team mates now rest in peace. We will all remember how awesome you were.

I would like to mention Mates in Construction, who came up and supported QBuild staff members in Cairns and Townsville. Mates in Construction performs an incredibly important role in supporting the mental health of our construction workforce. I would like to reiterate the Premier's and Bobby's thanks to these men. Their service will not be forgotten. My thoughts go out to their families and everyone affected.

Coronavirus, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services



Hon. CD CRAWFORD (Barron River—ALP) (Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (10.40 am): QFES has put in place comprehensive policy and procedures to help keep our frontline staff and volunteers as safe as possible. Our operational personnel have received significant training for the protection of their safety in a range of circumstances. When attending alarm calls at residential based facilities like aged care and hospitals, QFES crews now will be wearing P2 masks and gloves. QFES personnel have been urged to minimise interaction with the public by time and distance where possible. When going inside a building to investigate an alarm panel or liaise with owner/occupiers, reduced crew numbers will undertake this task when that is possible.

QFES is encouraging meetings to be held by teleconference to minimise face-to-face interaction. All international travel that QFES sponsors or is work related is suspended. The only state based fire and rescue training that will be authorised to commence or continue will be the fire and rescue recruit courses, the fire communications officer recruit course and the current fire and rescue officer development courses.

Specific regional training activities, such as the one for the combined aerial pump appliances, may be continued at the discretion of the regional QFES assistant commissioners. Other training may be added as the situation evolves. All community education programs as well as charity or fundraising events will stop, unless specifically related to COVID-19. Where possible, only staff on shift and management staff working out of those stations will be at fire stations.

All state and regional offices will limit access to QFES staff and volunteers only. Prevention health messaging advice has been and will continue to be circulated to QFES staff and volunteers, consistent with Queensland Health advice. While QFES can take a range of actions to minimise the spread of COVID-19, QFES personnel will always be encountering members of the public in the course of their day-to-day work and this cannot be totally eliminated.

Our people are the most important asset. Healthy and fit QFES members means Queenslanders will continue to have crews on hand to respond to critical emergencies. QFES staff and volunteers remain ready to serve their community, state and country. The QFES Commissioner has commenced planning for how QFES crews will be able to assist other agencies such as Queensland Ambulance Service and Queensland police.

QFES provides international search and rescue teams as part of its INSARAG commitment along with New South Wales, and I can report to the House that Queensland's rotation to be on standby is from 1 April. Currently, QFES is in contact with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to determine how this will be provided during the COVID-19 pandemic. QFES is confident it can ensure it protects the health and safety of its first responders. All QFES crew staff and volunteers stand ready to serve their state.

Coronavirus, Road and Transport Infrastructure

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (10.43 am): During this time, Queenslanders need to keep working, businesses need to stay open and our roads need to continue being built and maintained. Our roads connect communities, frontline services and local businesses. The Palaszczuk government is taking a proactive approach to make sure that our record \$23 billion investment in transport and roads continues to be delivered and to continue employing more than 23,000 Queenslanders.

All our projects at Houghton River flood plain, Mackay Ring Road, Rockhampton Northern Access, Cairns Southern Access and the M1 upgrades are underway and continuing to employ thousands of Queenslanders. These will be joined by much larger job-boosting road upgrades over the coming months, including on the Bruce Highway at Maroochydore and Mons Road, which was unveiled today; the Bruce Highway-Gympie bypass; the M1 upgrades on the Gold Coast and at the Gateway merge; and the Bruce Highway upgrade from Caboolture to Steve Irwin Way and also from Edmonton to Gordonvale, employing thousands more Queenslanders. Incomes are absolutely critical to our economy as well as to families.

We can keep these projects moving because we have worked successfully with the Commonwealth government to fast-track \$1.6 billion in funding for shovel-ready projects as announced in November last year. Since then, the Premier has been in communication with the Prime Minister to discuss funding for more projects that will help keep Queenslanders in work. I can assure Queensland road workers that we are doing our part to protect their local jobs. My department is working closely with industry groups, freight operators and businesses to ensure they can continue to operate as best as possible given the unfolding events. Transport and Main Roads' dedicated road maintenance team, RoadTek, and local contractors are ready to respond to incidents and to maintain our roads. Roads are a critical part of the supply chain into shopping centres.

I would also like to update the House on our preparedness across Queensland's ports and on efforts to protect our maritime workers. From today, all foreign trading ships will not be allowed to enter Queensland ports until 14 days has elapsed since leaving their last international port. Queenslanders can be assured that our transport workers are on the front line to reduce the spread of this virus and to keep critical services moving.

Coronavirus, Agriculture Industry

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferry Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries) (10.46 am): The Palaszczuk government is on the front foot to minimise the impact of the coronavirus on Queensland's agricultural industries. We listened carefully to industry and acted immediately with a \$3.66 million investment in protecting jobs in Queensland's seafood industry. This has included: waiving quota fees for rock lobster and coral trout fishers for the first six months of 2020 as well as boat licence fees for these and other fisheries like mud crab affected by coronavirus; expansion of the fishery area for the tropical rock lobster fishery area for three months; and rural financial counselling services for commercial fishers and those along the supply chain impacted by coronavirus.

We have begun accepting applications from Queensland agribusiness affected by the outbreak for the government's \$500,000 Market Diversification and Resilience Grants Scheme to tap into new markets. Applications for the first round of these grants close on Monday, 20 April. I strongly urge any agribusiness that has been affected to contact the department as soon as possible.

I note that at the recent meeting of agriculture ministers from around the country Queensland's response to the outbreak was recognised—one that all other states and territories should look upon. We are not resting on our laurels. We are continuing to work with industry. I have convened the Agriculture Coordination Group, comprising industry representatives and department staff. We met last week and again yesterday to discuss ways to protect our food supply chain. There is some concern about how this outbreak may impact labour resourcing in the horticulture industry, and we will continue to work with the Commonwealth on this.

I have written to the federal agriculture minister, David Littleproud, asking him to consider this as a matter of urgency. In Queensland, in some cases backpackers make up 80 per cent of the labour force on farms. Farmers need some clarity about what the federal government will do to help them find staff to harvest crops and feed people through this unprecedented outbreak. We will continue to listen to and work with industry, and we are putting our energy into protecting the jobs of hardworking Queenslanders.

I will have a teleconference with the other agriculture ministers via a special Agmin meeting tomorrow. I will flag the needs of Queensland's primary producers. The Palaszczuk Labor government will always put first people's jobs and growing more jobs for the future. We will fight day and night for Queensland agricultural jobs, and we always will.

Coronavirus, Water Security

 **Hon. AJ LYNHAM** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy) (10.49 am): As I told the House yesterday, our state owned water businesses, Seqwater and Sunwater, have stood up their emergency management teams to respond to any water supply issues. These plans continue to be updated according to the most current available information. Here in South-East Queensland, Seqwater's priorities are trifold: firstly, to deliver reliable drinking water to its retailer customers; secondly, to operate its dams safely; and, thirdly, to provide flood mitigation services.

Seqwater is continuing to operate its water treatment plants as normal and provide bulk drinking water to Urban Utilities, Unitywater and the Logan, Gold Coast and Redland councils. Importantly, Seqwater is working cooperatively with these retailers, including taking advantage of opportunities to share resources. I emphasise: there is no evidence that coronavirus is transmitted by drinking water. Existing water treatment and disinfection processes, including the use of chlorine, are effective in protecting water supplies.

At the centre of achieving all these priorities are Seqwater's employees and their health and safety. This applies particularly to staff members who are critical to Seqwater's day-to-day operations. All Seqwater employees are working from home—other than these critical staff. To protect these critical staff, access to operational sites has been limited. All Seqwater public events, including our community education program, have been cancelled or postponed. There are limitations on non-operational staff entering Seqwater operational sites and control centres. Access is also being limited to essential suppliers such as maintenance or construction crews and people delivering important goods such as chemicals. Seqwater expects these people's employers to take measures to protect their own employees. These suppliers are also expected to follow Seqwater protocols when they enter sites and while onsite. These measures are part of the plan by our publicly owned water businesses to continue essential services to the people of South-East Queensland through this pandemic.

Local Government Elections, Pre-Polling

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (10.51 am): In addition to my earlier statement, I wish to advise the House that the Electoral Commission of Queensland is encouraging electors who are more vulnerable to COVID-19, including Queenslanders aged 60 and over, to vote early, between 9 am and 11 am each day, at pre-polling centres. Additional ECQ staff will be available to provide support for vulnerable electors during the voting process. I can update the House that, as of this morning, further to the figure of 170,000 over the last two days of pre-polling, some 25,000 Queenslanders have voted.

MINISTERIAL PAPER

Ministerial Expenses

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (10.52 am): I lay upon the table of the House the public report of ministerial expenses for the period 1 July 2019 to 31 December 2019.

Tabled paper: Public Report of Ministerial Expenses for the period 1 July 2019 to 31 December 2019 [[439](#)].

TRANSPORT AND PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

Report

 **Mr KING** (Kurwongbah—ALP) (10.52 am): I lay upon the table of the House report No. 35 of the Transport and Public Works Committee.

Tabled paper: Transport and Public Works Committee: Report No. 35, 56th Parliament—Subordinate legislation tabled between 22 October 2019 and 26 November 2019 [[440](#)].

The report covers portfolio subordinate legislation tabled between 22 October 2019 and 26 November 2019 considered by the committee. I commend the report to the House.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Youth Justice



Mr WATTS (Toowoomba North—LNP) (10.52 am): I give notice that I will move—

That this House:

1. notes:
 - (a) crimes committed by juveniles have increased following the enactment of clause 10 of the Youth Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019, known as Labor's 'catch and release laws' which implemented a policy of 'detention as a last resort' to be applied to bail decision-making and incorporated an explicit presumption in favour of release of youth offenders on bail;
 - (b) ongoing reports of juvenile offenders committing the most serious offences while in the community on bail;
 - (c) Labor's 'catch and release laws' prioritise the rights of offenders over the rights of victims and the community;
 - (d) the police minister's recent attacks on the judiciary, blaming magistrates for applying Labor's 'catch and release laws' because bailed offenders have gone on to reoffend while in the community on bail;
 - (e) the member for Cairns said he wasn't going to toe the party line, despite voting for Labor's 'catch and release laws' in August 2019, but has not raised the issue in parliament;
 - (f) the members for Gaven, Barron River, Cook, Thuringowa, Townsville, Mundingburra, Keppel, Rockhampton and Mackay all voted for Labor's 'catch and release laws' in August 2019; and
 - (g) the contradictory statements by the Minister for Police and the Minister for Youth about whether the intention of Labor's 'catch and release laws' was clear; and
2. calls on the Palaszczuk government to put community safety first and immediately scrap Labor's 'catch and release laws' this sitting of parliament.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, question time will conclude today at 11.55 am.

Coronavirus, Economic Response



Mrs FRECKLINGTON (10.55 am): My first question is to the Premier. Yesterday the Premier said—

Coronavirus is a health and an economic emergency.

The New South Wales government has announced a \$2.3 billion support package including a three-month payroll tax cut for all small and medium sized businesses, a measure that the CCIQ has said would support 580,000 Queensland jobs. Will the Premier match the New South Wales plan to support Queensland jobs in this economic emergency?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for her question. Of course, it is a health crisis and it will have a huge economic impact. That is why, way back at the end of January, my government took the deliberate step of starting to test. We were the first state to start testing, about eight weeks ago. I commend the work of our Department of Health, the health minister and Dr Young for being on the front foot and making sure that we were doing everything possible to keep Queenslanders safe.

Secondly, in relation to the economic impact, it was my government that first put forward a plan in terms of dealing with the impacts on industry, straightaway. In fact, we were the first government to call industry to a round table here to talk to them about the economic impacts.

Mr Dick: She said it wasn't as bad as SARS.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is right. I take that interjection. The Leader of the Opposition and others on that side of the House dismissed what we were saying. They dismissed the seriousness of it.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Comments will come through the chair.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I find it disappointing that the Leader of the Opposition failed to attend a health briefing on coronavirus offered by the Minister for Health yesterday.

Mr Bleijie: The health shadow minister was on the line and the opposition office was represented.

Ms PALASZCZUK: On the phone. The Leader of the Opposition was not there.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Kawana, your comments will come through the chair. I have given clear guidance to the House.

Ms PALASZCZUK: This is such an important issue. Everybody needs to be serious about it.

Ms Jones interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Cooper will cease her interjections.

Ms PALASZCZUK: When the national cabinet meets, we represent different political parties but together we are focused on the health of this country and the economic impact on this country. I urge members of the opposition to get across the information so that they can convey this information to their communities.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: So rude and so disappointing.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, members!

Ms PALASZCZUK: As our cabinet continues to meet on a regular basis and discuss budget implications, we will announce more measures that are appropriate to Queensland. If those opposite are not aware of the important announcements that were made today by the Prime Minister following the national cabinet meeting, that is the key focus at the moment.

(Time expired)

Coronavirus, Economic Response

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: My second question is also to the Premier. South Australia implemented a \$350 million package, Tasmania a \$420 million package, Western Australia a \$607 million package and New South Wales has a plan for a \$2.3 billion package to protect jobs in the coronavirus crisis. By contrast, the Queensland Palaszczuk government has announced \$27 million of spending and some concessional loans—

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members to my right will be silent while the question is asked.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: By contrast, the Palaszczuk Labor government in Queensland has only announced a \$27 million package of spending, some concessional loans and deferred taxes to be repaid in the future. Why has the Palaszczuk government not announced a similar sized package given Queensland already has the highest unemployment rate in the nation?

Ms PALASZCZUK: In case the Leader of the Opposition was not listening to the Treasurer this morning, a \$500 million fund—

Opposition members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: As I said, we will be making further announcements. The focus at the moment is on the important measures that were announced today by the national cabinet and the implementation of those measures and making sure—

Opposition members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: The health of the nation is paramount and we will continue—

Opposition members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Every other state—

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Members to my left, the Premier is being responsive to the question asked. You may not like the answer that is being provided, but the Premier is being responsive.

Ms PALASZCZUK: When we met with industry and announced our initial package we were ridiculed by those opposite.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am not responding to those comments in this House during the most serious time in our state and our—

Honourable members interjected.

(Time expired)

Coronavirus, Aged-Care Facilities

Mr KELLY: My question is to the Premier and Minister for Trade. Will the Premier update the House on what measures state and federal governments are taking to protect residents in aged-care facilities from COVID-19?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Greenslopes for that very important question. I know that the member for Greenslopes has a mother in an aged-care facility. I have a grandmother in an aged-care facility and I am quite sure other members have grandparents or parents in aged-care facilities and, of course, many family members often go and visit their loved ones who have, through no fault of their own, had to go into an aged-care facility to get the care that they need during a particular point in their life.

As I said yesterday in this House and I will say again, the most important issue at the moment is to make sure that the most vulnerable members of our community are protected. That is why the national cabinet made that a priority for discussion last night and that is why the measures the Prime Minister announced today I back 100 per cent. They are strong measures and they are measures that need to be implemented. It is going to be hard for many families to reconcile in their minds the measures that are in place, but I urge all Queenslanders to think of their loved ones first and foremost.

As I said in this House, this is a time in our lives that I hope we never see again and the worst is yet to come, but if we can do everything in our power now to focus on protecting our elderly we will go a long way to not only mitigate the spread of this virus but also to flatten the curve.

We have been looking very closely at other countries. The national cabinet was briefed on the measures that Singapore put in place. As I said at the beginning, what we have done here in Queensland has been world class. The World Health Organization has said test, test and test and we have tested since day one. Since day one we have been out there testing. Since the first tourist from China arrived we have done everything in our power to protect Queenslanders. There is a long journey ahead. Every state will roll out different measures and our state will roll out measures. There is no one solution to this problem when it comes to the economic impact of this virus. It is not unique to Queensland. It is not unique to Australia. It is a worldwide pandemic.

Today I will offer, through the health minister, a briefing for all members of parliament to make sure that you are all aware of the facts. We will have a senior health representative there because I cannot have ignorance in this place. I cannot have ignorance in the face of a global pandemic where lives are at risk in this state. I will ensure that every single member gets the information they need to tell their communities—

(Time expired)

Coronavirus, Economic Response

Mr MANDER: My question without notice is to the Treasurer. New South Wales, Tasmania, South Australia and WA have all announced significant economic stimulus packages with substantial new spending to support jobs in those states. With almost 70 per cent of Queensland businesses believing Queensland is already in a recession, why has the Treasurer delayed announcing a similar support package for vulnerable Queensland jobs?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for Everton for the question. As the Premier said, and to be absolutely crystal clear, when others, including those on the opposite side of this chamber, were playing down what we now know to be a significant health and economic crisis, not only for Australia but the whole world, Queensland was ahead of the pack.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms TRAD: Queensland was the first to announce the payroll tax deferral for small and medium businesses.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms TRAD: In relation to the interjections of those opposite, namely the member for Everton who gets all of his advice from social media in relation to COVID-19, I will—

Mr MANDER: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I am highly offended by that comment and I ask that it be withdrawn.

Mr SPEAKER: Deputy Premier, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has asked you to withdraw.

Ms TRAD: I withdraw. But let us be absolutely crystal—

Mr SPEAKER: Sorry, you cannot continue with a 'but' following that.

Ms TRAD: I withdraw. Let us be crystal clear. The first state to do anything in relation to industry assistance, payroll tax relief and a nation-first in terms of a concessional loan to give businesses cash flow so that they can actually keep workers employed was Queensland—is Queensland, will always be Queensland—because, quite frankly, we are a government—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Kawana!

Ms TRAD: We are a government that cares about people.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

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

Ms TRAD: We are a government that puts people first. We are a government that does not stand up and preach tough love for Queenslanders, measures like cutting nurses, sacking doctors and cutting education services. Thank God those opposite were voted out in 2015 because we would not have the health workers that we currently need for this crisis. If those opposite want to talk about cuts they should stand in their place and talk about the health worker cuts that they presided over. Thank God they were voted out because, quite frankly, we would not have the health personnel in our hospitals, in our community health facilities or in Indigenous communities to respond to the coronavirus.

When those opposite want to come in this place, come with a track record that they can actually stand up on. Those opposite promised payroll tax relief and then said, 'I'm sorry, we're going to defer it for three years'. You want to come in here and talk about payroll tax relief? Well, I am sorry, show us what you have delivered because, quite frankly, if that is what we have to go on then we may as well pack up and go home.

Mr SPEAKER: A reminder to members that comments will come through the chair or members will be warned under the standing orders.

Coronavirus, Indigenous Communities

Ms LUI: My question is to the Premier and Minister for Trade. Will the Premier advise the House what steps authorities are taking to minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmission, including in vulnerable communities such as the many Indigenous communities in my electorate?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Cook for that really important question. When I spoke earlier in response to a question from the member for Greenslopes, I talked at length about the impact that coronavirus has on elderly people in our state and how as a nation we have tackled the issue of aged care. The next important issue that we as premiers and first ministers are discussing at the national cabinet meeting is the devastating impact that coronavirus can have on our Indigenous communities.

My ministers as government champions and my directors-general also have responsibility for different communities across our state. The member for Cook represents a large number of communities in the cape, stretching up to the Torres Strait. We need to do everything we possibly can to protect those communities. Let us make no mistake: if coronavirus gets a foothold in any of our Indigenous communities, the consequences will be dire. Therefore, as first ministers we are tackling this issue and discussing a number of ways in which we can ensure the safety of our communities.

The first of those issues is non-essential travel into Indigenous communities. It is imperative that everyone follows this direction. The other issue I am very concerned about and that we are putting more attention into relates to the large number of Indigenous communities that come to Cairns to utilise health services, which could impact with visiting tourists. We need to get the balance right. There needs to be some very serious discussions about how we protect the most vulnerable, including our Indigenous communities.

I want everyone to know the gravity of this situation. It is not just me saying this. This is the Prime Minister. This is every other premier and first minister. This is happening globally. We need only look at what is happening around other nations. If we do not practice social distancing and if we do not put in place those measures about indoor gatherings of under 100 people and outdoor gatherings of no more than 500 people, the consequences will be severe. I know this is a tough call. I know it will be hard for young people. I know it will be hard for families. I know it will be really hard and disruptive for

our social life. However, we need to change and we need to change now. We all need to think about what is essential and non-essential. We cannot go out to large gatherings as we used to. We must stop doing that. We must adhere to those guidelines.

Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority, Sustainability Loans

Mr PERRETT: My question without notice is to the Premier. The government's First Start and sustainability loans distributed by QRIDA to primary producers have run out early, with no more money for loans available until the end of this financial year. Will the Premier now top up those loans so that farmers and farming families can get back on their feet and take advantage of recent rains?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am more than happy to look in more detail at what the member has said. However, my understanding is that the Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority is responsible for the administration of concessional loans and is currently taking expressions of interest in the lead-up to rolling out those loans as soon as possible.

Mr Perrett: So they've run out of money?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I will get more information. I do not have it on hand at the moment. I will get more information and respond to the member. Perhaps the minister can provide me with some—

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, is that being taken under standing order 113?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Yes.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you.

Coronavirus, Economic Response

Mr HEALY: My question is to the Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on how the Palaszczuk government's extension of payroll tax deferrals and half a billion dollars in interest-free loans has been received by Queensland businesses?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for Cairns for his question. Following on from the Premier's response, I can confirm that any business in Queensland—a farming business, a construction business, a tourism business; any business—can apply to QRIDA for loans to assist them during these tough times. Those are interest-free loans.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, members to my left!

Ms TRAD: I recall the federal LNP government giving out lots of concessional loans during the drought, which those opposite did not complain about.

The package that was announced yesterday has been welcomed by industry, just as our first package, announced quite a number of weeks ago in our first deferral of payroll tax, was also warmly welcomed. The CEO of bus company Greyhound Australia, Mr Alex de Waal, said—

It's a huge assistance in terms of the payroll deferral ... that deferral over a six-month period is going to save jobs.

He went on to say—

It's definitely going to assist us in retaining our skilled workers and the business loans with the interest-free period ... is also going to be of great assistance in terms of assisting with cashflow scenarios.

The Asset President of BMA, James Palmer, said—

We welcome this week's announcement by the Queensland government. This will assist businesses of all sizes, regardless of their postcode. The resources sector is so important to so many Queenslanders and it is pivotal to the Queensland economy. These are unprecedented times and we are committed to continuing to work together with all levels of government to support our workforce, our local suppliers and our local communities.

Rebecca Andrews, the Queensland head of the employer body Ai Group, said that our loans of up to \$250,000 interest free for 12 months will help Queensland businesses continue to operate and preserve the jobs of thousands of Queenslanders. Together we need to ensure local businesses survive the economic headwinds brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic and can continue to not only supply goods and services to customers but also support staff and their families. Our package is designed to help businesses when they need that assistance the most and also ensure that we are working with them to strengthen conditions for the rebound. We know that it is just as important rebounding as it is supporting each other during these difficult times.

Coronavirus, Retail Trading Hours

Mr BLEIJIE: My question without notice is to the Premier. To assist with social distancing, will the government listen to the calls from business and temporarily relax retail trading hour restrictions separate to what Minister Dick has announced for the duration of the coronavirus pandemic?

Ms PALASZCZUK: There are no plans to do that under the current arrangements. We know that this is going to have an impact on businesses across the nation and we need to have national consistency. We need a national move adopted by all states, but there is no move at this stage for that.

I know it will be hard for businesses to work on this, just as we all have to. However, it will be a brand-new way for how we need to interact with people and how we congregate. It is going to be a big change for us when we think of the way we used to attend community events. We would be out and about in the communities. We would be going to seniors' morning teas. At this time, we would be going to different functions right across the state. All of that needs to change. As members will know, you cannot have seniors' morning teas anymore because of the huge risk that it presents to the most vulnerable in our population.

In terms of bars, restaurants and nightclubs, I am now urging everybody to do the right thing. I am urging employers to do the right thing and I am urging patrons to do the right thing. As we legislate for this, there will be further examples. There is further work being done by the national cabinet. We need social distancing and we need people to abide by the rules.

Ms Trad interjected.

Mr Powell interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Deputy Premier and member for Glass House, you will cease your quarrelling across the chamber.

Ms PALASZCZUK: We are trying to have consistency across the nation.

Coronavirus, Supply Chains

Mr BROWN: My question is to the Minister for State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning. Can the minister please update the House on how the Palaszczuk government is supporting Queensland supply chains for essential goods as we face the coronavirus pandemic and is the minister aware of any other approaches?

Mr DICK: I thank the member for Capalaba for his interest and support in this important initiative. As we know, Queensland supermarkets are under pressure as we face the coronavirus pandemic. I am pleased to report to the House that not only are we moving to make legislative reforms but also I have directed my department to establish a new essential goods supply committee. That committee will provide a conduit between those in the supply chain and our government to ensure that manufacturers can keep operating and goods can get into the shops as they are needed. Through this committee we will work with retailers, manufacturers, meat and food processors, essential goods manufacturers, transport and logistics companies, wholesalers and unions to ensure essential supply chains keep flowing during the pandemic. The committee will also work to ensure that workers throughout the supply chain are supported and protected. That is a very important thing, as they work each day, to help ensure Queenslanders are supplied with what they need and to keep Queensland moving.

Our message to business and industry is that if you encounter any problems with production, supply, import or manufacturing, our government is ready to respond quickly to help address those problems the best we can. There are no problems with fundamental supply now. We want to keep it that way. It is a matter of behaviour in the retail sector, as we have talked about collectively, and we need to change that.

I have also directed my department to suspend non-essential activities, such as workshops and information events, to focus the work of all staff on supporting business and industry to address the impacts of COVID-19. I make this point clear: that directive is not just to our central staff here in the south-east but to all staff in the department, including our regional officers, who do very, very good work across the state. We will work hard together to ensure we identify any potential gaps in the supply chain and respond quickly.

This is all about supporting business, about stimulating business and about keeping it going. We have made a commitment of \$500 million to support business and industry. We are the first state to act. I am very pleased to hear the Leader of the Opposition talking about support for the economy. Six weeks ago, when the Premier called on the national leadership of the Morrison government to act, we heard nothing. In fact, the Leader of the Opposition did not even speak on the debate on this issue. Other members of the House diminished it.

Mr Powell interjected.

Mr DICK: I will take the interjection from the member for Glass House. He said we did not run to Canberra when it was N1H1. The member for Clayfield said we did not run to Canberra when SARS hit the state. Our Premier was the first to identify this as a significant national problem. When she asked for national disaster relief arrangements to be initiated, the Prime Minister said no. We are working together now to help secure the future of our state.

(Time expired)

Coronavirus; New Acland Coalmine, Jobs

Mr WEIR: My question is to the Premier. Yesterday the Premier promised to protect vulnerable jobs as Queensland faces a coronavirus economic emergency. Will the Premier back up her words with action and right now approve New Acland Stage 3 so that the 350 direct jobs and many indirect jobs relying on this project are protected?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for the question. That matter is before the court. Everyone in the House knows that. Is the member going to ask the federal government to urgently approve Olive Downs? I understand that has been sitting with the federal environment minister for many days. It is not before a court. It is sitting on the minister's desk.

Coronavirus, Health Services

Mr SAUNDERS: My question is of the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services. Will the minister please advise the House how the Palaszczuk government is supporting Queenslanders during this unprecedented viral outbreak?

Dr MILES: I thank the member for Maryborough for that question. I know he has been a passionate advocate to ensure that his community has the health staff and the health services that they need. They will need it most in coming months. It was great to be up there, a couple of weeks ago now, when we opened the new emergency department at the Maryborough Hospital. I am so glad that the Maryborough community will have a new emergency department as we face the coronavirus threat. It is a more than \$14 million upgrade to the Maryborough Hospital, thanks in large part to the advocacy of the member for Maryborough, increasing the treatment spaces there from 17 to 24, including six acute bays, seven fast-track bays and seven clinical decision unit beds. It is a fantastic new emergency department, staffed by some of the best emergency clinicians in the world.

We talk a lot about new health buildings, new health facilities and new health equipment, but the most important thing in health is not those things; it is our staff. The doctors, nurses and health professionals who work in those buildings and use that equipment inspire me. The way they have come together to protect Queenslanders in this pandemic is inspiring. They have planned, they have prepared and now they are responding. Their efforts and their work will save lives. It will save the lives of Queenslanders.

The state health emergency committee has been operating 24/7 for weeks now in the coordination centre in Charlotte Street. It includes not only Health staff but also staff from across government—police and emergency services. They are doing the work of collating the data, of tracing the contacts and of working with the Red Cross to support those who are in home quarantine. They are working 24/7. Our Health staff right across this state are doing incredible work.

Can I say how appalled I was to learn yesterday that some of the staff at the Logan Hospital had had their cars broken into and their cars vandalised while they were on shift. It is disgusting. It should not happen to those who go to work every day to support and take care of us. I am advised that the staff immediately reported that matter to the Queensland Police Service. Metro South Health will continue to assist the QPS. I would like to thank our dedicated staff who continue to work hard to provide high-quality health care for our community when they need it most.

Coronavirus, Training

Ms SIMPSON: My question without notice is to the Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development. With many casual workers potentially losing work during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in the hospitality sector, will the minister fast-track assistance for enhanced pathways for workers wanting to retrain into areas of growing need, such as personal care in the aged-care sectors, to support the health and wellbeing of elderly Queenslanders and provide an economic lifeline to these workers?

Ms FENTIMAN: I thank the member for the question. We are certainly looking at that. The director-general of the Premier's department has tasked the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training to lead work across government to support the retraining of workers as a result of the coronavirus crisis. We know that there will be some workers who are displaced. We need to be across government working with those workers to upskill them in order to fill jobs in industries that will need workers. That is work that is underway right now.

We are looking at expanding our Regional Skills Adjustment Scheme which has been an incredibly important \$6 million investment for the government. We are already working with industries to identify how we can upskill workers to make sure that they are meeting the jobs of the future. That work is being escalated. That work is under way right now.

I am incredibly proud of how this government is responding to this crisis to support industry. The Deputy Premier hosted a round table with industry yesterday. They absolutely welcomed our initiatives. The initiative to extend the payroll tax deferral was absolutely welcomed. We had many businesspeople talking about how the extension to all businesses across Queensland of the six-month payroll tax deferral will save jobs. That is what they told us yesterday during a phone hook-up with industry representatives right across Queensland. Our initiatives will absolutely save jobs.

We have already had almost 1,000 businesses register for interest-free loans through our half a billion dollar fund. If that does not tell you that this is what business wants, I am not sure what will. They are signing up for these interest-free loans so that they can provide Queenslanders with the jobs they need to stay in work.

This government is looking at how it can support businesses. My department has a dedicated hotline for small businesses. We have had almost 800 small businesses reach out. We are providing mentoring and case-by-case support. If there are businesses that know they will need workers we can assist them to make sure we are skilling up workers who may be displaced because of this crisis over the next six months and we can provide them with tailored support. We have workshops happening right across the state. The first workshop has been held already. We will have workshops on the Gold Coast and in Cairns to provide tailored support to business so they can keep their doors open and keep Queenslanders in jobs.

That is what our \$27 million package was about. That is what \$3.7 million in financial counselling was about. That is what half a billion dollars in interest-free loans was about. That is what the six-month deferral of payroll tax is about. It is about jobs. It is about supporting Queenslanders in these incredibly difficult times to keep jobs. If we can give business the cash flow they need, which is exactly what we are doing, they will keep Queenslanders in jobs. That is what we are focused on.

Coronavirus, Small Business

Ms McMILLAN: My question is of the Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development. Will the minister outline what the Palaszczuk government is doing to support small business through the coronavirus pandemic?

Ms FENTIMAN: I thank the member for the question. Let me talk again about the wonderful initiatives we have for our small businesses. I know that the member for Mansfield has been an advocate for small businesses in Mansfield, and I really enjoy working with her. We know that small businesses are feeling the effect of the coronavirus not just on their businesses but on their livelihoods. Many of the mum-and-dad businesses across the state are feeling the economic downturn. We know that small and medium businesses employ 44 per cent of Queenslanders. That is why I am so pleased we have dedicated support for our small businesses to keep their doors open.

We know that casual workers rely on their pay cheques. Many small businesses employ casual workers. I have to say that it was disappointing to hear a senior federal government minister talk about how casuals would be putting aside some of their money to pay for their sick leave. Any of us in the real world would know that casual workers are usually living from pay cheque to pay cheque. That is what happens in the real world. That is something that our government understands.

That is why the Palaszczuk government has announced measures to keep small and medium businesses going through this tough time. As we heard from the Deputy Premier and Treasurer, if we can get them through this tough time, keep their doors open and keep their workers employed then that means we will be able to rebound more effectively once we get through the next few tough months. If we can keep their businesses afloat and keep people in their jobs that will help us rebound economically.

As I said, we have already received almost 1,000 expressions of interest for our interest-free loans in 24 hours. Businesses are acutely aware that we are providing this support and that this support will help them keep their doors open. We have also extended payroll tax deferral, which is essential. The Deputy Premier talked about Alex de Waal from Greyhound who said that the deferral for a six-month period is going to save jobs. Greyhound is one of our biggest tourism transport operators.

Michael Johnson—those opposite might remember Michael, a former federal member—who is the chairman of a small business, Orbitz Elevators, said that he will back any government that does all in its power to keep people in jobs, and this includes deferral of payroll tax. He said, 'For this the Queensland government has my full support and that of most other Queensland business leaders and employers.'

Business is telling us that our measures will help them. Business is telling us that our measures will help them keep their doors open, keep cash flow coming in and, most importantly, keep people in jobs. Small businesses should call our dedicated hotline. We have had hundreds of calls through. They are getting the support they need. We have a survey up on the Business Queensland website. We are open to more ideas about how we can help. Please let your small businesses know what help is available.

(Time expired)

Coronavirus, Housing

Mr BERKMAN: My question is to the Premier. The coronavirus pandemic is likely to go on for six long months and thousands of Queensland renters could lose their jobs, incomes and even their homes at the worst possible time. Will the government legislate to stop all evictions during the crisis and freeze rents in public housing until the economic pressure eases on renters, young people and working Queenslanders?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for the question. It is a very good question about housing. During this crisis I would hope that everyone would do the right thing by tenants. I am sure the government will do all the right things by people in social housing. This is an unprecedented time that our state and our nation is experiencing. It is not really funny, Leader of the Opposition.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Mr Speaker, I take offence and ask the Premier to withdraw.

Ms Trad interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I withdraw.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Mr Speaker, I take offence to what the Deputy Premier said and I ask her to withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: The Deputy Premier was not on her feet. I did not hear what was said. Deputy Premier, to show courtesy to the House, would you withdraw as a member has been offended?

Ms TRAD: I withdraw.

Ms PALASZCZUK: These are unprecedented times. We need all Queenslanders to pitch in and help one another out. That also means that if we have elderly neighbours, people in our neighbourhoods or friends who cannot do their shopping, go to certain places or make their appointments then we need to show our great Queensland spirit and help one another out. I hope all members convey that to their communities during the hard weeks and months ahead of us.

Coronavirus, Energy Sector

Ms LINARD: My question is of the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy. Will the minister advise the House of the latest step by our publicly owned energy businesses to protect customers and staff?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for Nudgee for the question. As the public health emergency continues to develop our publicly owned businesses continue to respond. As the response to coronavirus escalates, publicly owned Ergon and Energex want to minimise the impact on customers in financial difficulty. I can advise the House today that Ergon Energy Retail electricity customers in regional Queensland will not be disconnected for unpaid bills for the foreseeable future. Ergon has stopped all disconnections for unpaid bills and at vacant premises. This is a step to protect both Ergon Energy Network employees and contractors and their customers. I point out that this has been able to be put in place because we own these assets.

Similar developments are underway in the deregulated south-east corner. One large South-East Queensland retailer has been in discussions with Energex and discontinued their customer disconnections. I now call on the other South-East Queensland retailers to do the right thing in this difficult time and drop disconnections for unpaid bills.

As Queenslanders face this public health emergency those who are struggling financially will have one less concern to deal with. I encourage customers to contact their retailers if they are having difficulty now or strike difficulty over the coming challenging months with paying their power bills. Under national energy retail law, a retailer cannot disconnect people if they are engaging with them.

My colleague the industrial relations minister has outlined this morning the special leave provisions under the health pandemic directive. The directive also strongly encourages GOCs to apply these provisions to these workforces. These leave arrangements will assist our energy GOCs to manage their critical staff. As I described yesterday in this House, this is already happening. I met with the chief executives of the energy GOCs on Monday morning for urgent advice on their emergency arrangements. I am receiving weekly briefings from them. I am advised that Stanwell and CS Energy have been discussing work arrangements with the workforce and union delegates and further meetings are planned.

I repeat what I said yesterday: I can assure Queenslanders that should the virus spread and if staff are taken offline, well-rehearsed contingency procedures will ensure ongoing reliable electricity supply.

Police Resources

Mr LAST: My question is to the Premier. Recently an alleged offender facing charges relating to eight separate offences has been repeatedly granted bail in the Ayr Magistrates Court because police do not have the budget to transport him to and from remand in Townsville. Why is the Premier allowing a lack of police resources, not community safety, to determine whether alleged offenders should be released on bail?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I say to the member for Burdekin that if that case is before the court we cannot talk about it. In relation to police resources, I find that very hard to believe, but I will investigate for him and ask the police minister to get back to him.

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, you are taking that question on notice under standing order 113?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Yes.

Coronavirus, Tourism Industry

Ms PEASE: My question is of the Minister for Innovation and Tourism Industry Development and Minister for Cross River Rail. Will the minister please update the House on how Tourism and Events Queensland is working with tourism operators and event organisers across Queensland during this tough time?

Ms JONES: I thank the honourable member for the question. I know that she works very closely with local tourism operators down by the bay. I know that they are feeling it in their local community just like everybody else in Queensland right now.

Today, as we have heard from the Premier, the national cabinet has made further decisions around gatherings. We are now restricted to events under 100 people indoors and 500 people outdoors. This of course will continue to have an effect on the kinds of events that we will be hosting in Queensland over the next six months. I want to assure all members of the House that Tourism and Events Queensland has been working very collaboratively and closely with events proponents. We have worked very hard as a government to grow our events calendar. When we came into government it was worth around \$330 million to the Queensland economy and was in excess of \$880 million. Not being able to host major events across the state is going to have an impact, particularly in regional and rural communities where we have worked very hard with local communities, mayors, councils and regional tourism organisations to build these events, particularly in the shoulder times off school holidays, to diversify the economy.

In total, as a consequence of the restrictions in place in Queensland through coronavirus, we have had to cancel 56 events across Queensland—major events that would have been supported by us. We are working with those events proponents to ensure that, as the Treasurer has said in her comments here today, we are best placed for when the economy rebounds.

There unfortunately will be around 56 major events in Queensland already that have had to cancel because of coronavirus, but we are working with those proponents to ensure that if their event cannot go ahead this year we will be able to stage those events next year. What we want to minimise through our events management program is not being able to have these events next year when hopefully the economy is back up and running and the restrictions put in place by the national cabinet are lifted.

We are making a two-pronged attack as a government. As we have heard this morning, the Queensland government was the first government in Australia to implement support for the tourism industry, and indeed industry, across this state. We took action when nobody else in the country did. In addition to that, we have been listening to local business and have implemented further measures to support them in regard to cash flow and outgoing costs during this tough time. We will continue to work with them shoulder to shoulder to ensure that we are as best placed as we can be. In light of the comments by the Prime Minister today, we will work with small business operators, our tourism operators and our industry to keep people in work. Our focus is to keep as many Queenslanders in jobs during these tough times—

Mr Minnikin: Mr Speaker—

Ms JONES:—so we can rebound.

Mr SPEAKER: The minister's time has expired. Member, please wait to seek the call when time has expired.

(Time expired)

Redland Hospital, Intensive Care Unit

Mr MINNIKIN: My question is to the Premier. Despite repeated calls from the intensive care unit, there are still no ICU beds at Redland Hospital. Will the Premier advise what is the government's plan for Redlanders who catch coronavirus once Brisbane and Logan hospitals reach full capacity?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for that very important question. Mr Speaker, as you know, our hospitals are gearing up. The measures that we have put in place mean that we will be able to deal with as many people as we can. That is not to say that we will be able to deal with everyone. I want everyone to be very clear about that. That is why we are taking these measures now—these strong measures about protecting our most vulnerable.

Let me also put on the record that the former government slashed health in this state. That is not a laughing matter.

Mr Mander: Who's laughing?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Exactly.

Ms Grace: We heard it. They did. There were sniggers.

Mrs Frecklington: And the Premier has been the Premier for five years!

Ms PALASZCZUK: Thank you. Yes, Leader of the Opposition. I have been the proud Premier of this state for five years restoring frontline services across Queensland. The LNP cut 306 staff from hospitals in the Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service; 197 health staff from hospitals in Central Queensland; health staff from hospitals in Central West; 116 health staff from Darling Downs hospitals; 52 health staff from the Gold Coast and Robina hospitals; 32 health staff from Mackay hospitals; 1,431 health staff from Metro North hospitals; 195 health staff from Metro South hospitals; 14 health staff from North West hospitals; 55 health staff from South West hospitals; 80 health staff from Sunshine Coast hospitals; 397 health staff from Townsville hospitals; 124 health staff from West Moreton hospitals; and 345 health staff from Wide Bay hospitals.

Mr MINNIKIN: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance. The question was geared very much towards what Redland people will be doing, not a diatribe in relation to past history—relevance.

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Thank you, members. Premier, under standing order 118(b), I ask that you come back to the question asked.

Ms PALASZCZUK: The relevance is that our health system was decimated under the LNP—and thank God we have a fighting chance now. We have extra doctors and nurses. We are doubling our capacity, getting our theatres ready and getting our ICUs ready. We are spending \$20 million trying to get some of our elective operations done after hours. That is our record. I am proud of the health professionals who are going to be on the front line as we battle coronavirus.

Coronavirus, Public Transport

Ms PUGH: My question is of the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Can the minister provide the House with the latest travel advice for commuters catching public transport in the context of efforts to contain COVID-19?

Mr BAILEY: Today public transport services are running as scheduled throughout Queensland. We are following the best advice available from Queensland Health and from federal health authorities. Current advice says that there is no need to reduce public transport services. We will continue to seek up-to-date advice from health authorities and act on that advice as it comes. This is a dynamic situation. Advice can change at short notice, and we are ready to act quickly if it does. We have been planning for this since we first became aware of the potential impacts of the pandemic. I have directed Queensland Rail and TransLink to increase their cleaning programs.

More cleaning staff have been recruited to disinfect trains, trams, buses and ferries every day in South-East Queensland. This includes antibacterial cleaning of handles, seats and doors on trains whenever they enter a depot. Services at stations, including handrails and lift buttons, are also being cleaned. TransLink is also working with its delivery partners to develop reduced timetables in the event of school closures, public travel restrictions or Transport staff shortages should we have to if events bring those forward. Our planning includes measures to protect drivers and other transport workers who are critical to helping us deliver these public services. Queenslanders should have confidence that we are making decisions on the best advice available including regular liaison at a national level with the Commonwealth.

If changes to public transport services are needed at some time in the future, we will communicate those changes as soon as possible through the TransLink website, MyTransLink app and social media. Health and safety must be everyone's priority as we work together to contain the spread of COVID-19. Commuters should practise good hygiene, wash and sanitise their hands regularly, and limit personal contact where possible. If a commuter is sick or showing any symptoms of illness they should stay at home and avoid public spaces. If possible, travelling on public transport at off-peak times is an option if commuters wish to increase their social distance from others.

On behalf of the government I sincerely thank all of our transport workers, who are ensuring that these essential services continue to run through this difficult time. I also thank all commuters who are prioritising health and safety when they travel. Every single Queenslander must stand together in this, the fight of our lives. We will reduce the impacts of this pandemic if we all look out for each other, take precautionary measures as recommended by health authorities and support each other through this.

Coronavirus, Economic Response

Mr POWELL: My question is to the Premier. In response to the coronavirus economic emergency, the Western Australian Labor government has announced a \$607 million stimulus package, including freezing all household fees and charges including electricity, water and car registration. Will the Palaszczuk government match WA Labor's package to address the economic emergency here in Queensland?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for the question. Of course our cabinet will be discussing a whole range of issues and we will make announcements as the days, weeks and months progress.

Coronavirus, Sport

Mr RUSSO: My question is of the Minister for Housing and Public Works, Minister for Digital Technology and Minister for Sport. Will the minister please update the House on how the minister's department is keeping Queenslanders safe in the context of COVID-19 and how he is supporting the sporting industry from major sporting codes to local grassroots organisations?

Mr de BRENNI: I thank the member for the question. Queenslanders are a tough breed. Whether it is flood, cyclone or bushfire, we rally together and support one another to get through it, and that is exactly the way Queenslanders are approaching coronavirus. Alongside the Premier and Minister for Health, we are taking the advice of the experts on the best way to support vulnerable Queenslanders. Before I turn to the matter of sport I will just mention housing.

Our government will act to sustain social housing tenancies in cases where a tenant cannot pay rent due to the impacts of coronavirus, and we will not include stimulus or safety net measures in income or rent calculations. I can inform the House that our staff have commenced telephone outreach to our vulnerable tenants. We are meeting homelessness service providers regularly and can confirm they

are prioritising the needs of those Queenslanders who are most susceptible to the virus. In partnership with the community sector, we are steadfastly focused on continuing to provide essential services to Queenslanders. Good housing is essential to good health. That is why we are building more homes and that program is continuing. That is why we are bringing in minimum standards for rental properties, and it is also why we are working incredibly hard to reduce overcrowding in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

In relation to sport, with the updated advice around public gatherings our government is working with state sporting organisations and stadium hirers on how we can support clubs and codes. I can inform the House that Stadiums Queensland met with clubs yesterday to consult and agree on a path forward. I have asked peak sports body QSport and peak recreational body Outdoors Queensland to support their members to work through all of the issues with which they are confronted. I can advise that the Palaszczuk government will provide additional resources to QSport through my department and Outdoors Queensland to enable support for alternative and appropriate activity in accordance with the rules set out by the national cabinet.

In relation to the Queensland Academy of Sport and our Olympic athletes, I can inform the House that the academy is taking this virus incredibly seriously. I can advise that QAS training facilities are not open to anybody anymore except for athletes and their accredited coaches and staff. Athletes returning from overseas must self-isolate for two weeks to protect the Queensland community and other athletes.

Finally, in relation to community sport, parents are inquiring about finances relating to club fees already paid. As Minister for Sport, I meet with local sporting clubs across the state almost every day. I know they are there solely for the benefit of kids and families, so I have every confidence that financial issues will be resolved fairly. In the long term, we will also make sure there is a plan to support children and all Queenslanders to get back into sport and recreation again once the time is right—

(Time expired)

Coronavirus, Economic Response

Mr LANGBROEK: My question without notice is to the Premier. The Tasmanian government's plan to deal with the coronavirus economic emergency is a stimulus package of \$420 million, including payments to individuals and families—not loans—to support them when they cannot work during self-isolation. Will the Premier match, as soon as possible, the Tasmanian government's support package, or why doesn't the Labor government believe that Queenslanders deserve the best support in the country?

Mr SPEAKER: The period for question time has expired.

MOTION

Order of Business



Hon. YM D'ATH (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (11.55 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That this day's sitting of the House be suspended until the Speaker, after consultation with the government, directs that the bells be rung.

As we have heard throughout this and the past few weeks, we are not in a situation of 'business as usual'. We are in unprecedented times that require an unprecedented response. Over the last 24 hours I have been in contact with other leaders of the house and managers of opposition business in Victoria and the federal parliament to ascertain how they are managing their parliaments going forward. As we have heard this morning, the Prime Minister acknowledged it is important that we have cooperation across all states and that we have consistency from the premiers and the Prime Minister about how we deal with and act on the advice we have been given in relation to issues such as social distancing and how we respond to this emergency crisis.

I acknowledged yesterday the cooperation of the Manager of Opposition Business, but we believe it is important that this House concentrates on what it is absolutely essential to do to address and respond to this health emergency. That is what the people of Queensland expect us to do. There are a number of matters here, and one is social distancing. Right now we are not fully practising the advice we are giving the broader public. Because of this beautiful historic building and this chamber, we are very much restricted in the space in which we can do business and the number of members in parliament this week. I acknowledge the efforts of the Clerk in relation to reducing the number of staff

in the parliamentary precinct to reduce risk, but the reality is that we are not fully complying with this advice. We must lead by example and follow this advice, and that means changes in the way we are doing business.

We must also acknowledge that it is not business as usual, and those matters in this parliament that it is not absolutely essential to deal with should be adjourned and dealt with at a later time. The government needs to make sure that every single minister is doing what they have to do every moment of the day to respond to this health emergency and that they have the ability to do that—not necessarily sitting here debating stuff that is not of an emergent nature. We also need to ensure that members are not being put at unnecessary risk.

There is going to be disruption. Every single business is feeling disruption. Out of necessity we are going to have disruption to this chamber and the way the parliament operates. We have to be realistic and we have to be responsible in the way we respond. Today I understand that Victoria will move a motion to suspend all non-government business and only deal with absolutely essential government matters in relation to the health emergency.

There is full bipartisan support and agreement between the Morrison government and the Labor opposition in the federal parliament to suspend all non-government work. There is mass pairing to ensure the minimum numbers required in Canberra. They have agreed on a list of urgent bills. They have agreed that the only members required in the chamber to speak on those bills are the minister and relevant shadow ministers. Where possible, they will cognate debates and suspend the parliament the moment that important legislation is dealt with while awaiting Senate outcomes.

I respect the Manager of Opposition Business also following the lead of the federal government and federal Labor opposition in question time today by providing a list of the ministers required to be in the chamber. There will be no quorum calls or procedural motions. This is bipartisan agreement in terms of how the federal parliament will operate next week. This is showing leadership to the people of Queensland. That is what they expect from us.

Let us recognise that right now the government and its ministers have a lot of important work to do to respond to this health emergency, that we need to keep everyone in this parliament precinct safe and following the health advice. To do that, we propose to suspend business and come back to deal with an emergency health bill that will have a number of elements in it from various ministers. I understand that those ministers, including Minister Hinchcliffe and I, have provided briefings to shadow ministers on these matters. This is not about catching anyone out. This is an important piece of legislation. We are providing briefings so that we can let the opposition know what needs to occur to ensure the supply of items in our shops and how to respond across various issues such as local elections and further health initiatives.

I appreciate that the opposition would like to see non-government time proceed and that its members think that is important to Queensland's democracy. I do not argue that in a normal circumstance that is a very important part of our democratic system. We have ensured that question time continued yesterday and today, because we respect the opposition's right to hold the government to account and to ask the important questions in relation to its response on this health emergency, but let us also acknowledge that the only work this chamber should do is in response to that health emergency. We should not put ourselves in a position going forward where we do not follow that health advice as we should.

We are seeking to suspend sittings. We hope to come back later this evening or this afternoon with that bill. We ask for the opposition's support and cooperation in proposing that only ministers and relevant shadow ministers speak to that bill. We have limited the number of members in this chamber so that we follow the health advice on social distancing principles outlined by the Chief Health Officer, the national Chief Health Officer, the Prime Minister and the Premier of this state. I do really request that the opposition considers and supports the government's motion in regard to suspension.

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (12.03 pm): I can advise the Leader of the House and parliament that, having just considered this request, I do not support it. I do not support the suspension of parliament, because this parliament is here to hold this government to account. This parliament is here to ensure that the Treasurer answers questions about why there is not a proper economic stimulus package for the people of Queensland. Right around Queensland as we speak, people are at work, having coffees in cafes and acknowledging the federal government's rule with respect to social distancing and 1.5 metres. Why are we saying to the people of Queensland that they ought to live their normal lives as much as possible with respect to going to work but that parliament is a different story because Labor members of parliament think they are a special breed of Queenslanders to whom special

rules should apply? It is not the case. Both chief health officers—of Queensland and the Commonwealth—said that life can go on, other than the measures mentioned today in terms of 100 people in an inside venue or 500 at an outside venue. The advice was that if you are symptomatic of COVID-19 you ought not go to work.

Mr Speaker, leading into the parliamentary sitting, you instituted some very good advice earlier this week and last that if members of parliament were symptomatic of COVID-19 they ought not be here this week. We followed that rule. We had nearly a whole day's sitting yesterday. We adjourned a little early. We had non-government business. Did the world come crashing down around us? No. Parliament went on, because parliament is important. Yes, as the Leader of the House says, the federal parliament is doing some things next week. Let us deal with this week and with the here and now. Today, businesses in our local communities across Queensland have laid off people because they cannot afford them. Businesses are wondering whether tomorrow they can open their doors. What they asked local representatives to make the Labor government aware of is that they are not happy with the government's current economic stimulus package. We should be debating those issues this week. Tomorrow in non-government business we should hold the government to account.

The Leader of the Opposition was about to introduce an important bill dealing with domestic violence. Even though we have the crisis of COVID-19, the wheels of government keep turning in Queensland—and they must keep turning. Ministers still have responsibilities. In ministerial statements this morning, some ministers did not talk about COVID-19 but about portfolio matters, as should be the case. The wheels of government, the business of government, goes on.

My other point to the Leader of the House in regard to this highly anticipated bill concerning COVID-19 is that all morning government members highlighted how quick they were to deal with this issue. We still have not seen a bill in the House in terms of how the Labor government will fix these issues or provide solutions. We heard that shadow ministers have been briefed. Removing the ability of non-government members to draw attention to these issues in the House is disrespectful to members and gives the government an easy out on other issues. For instance, there is a youth detention centre in crisis, in riot, as we speak. Is the government telling us that we should just ignore these issues? Should we not draw to the House's attention that currently a riot is happening in a youth detention centre in Queensland? No.

The government wishes that all these other matters not be debated or heard of this week in parliament, but that is not the case. It is the opposition's job to hold this government to account. It is the opposition's job to ensure that it holds the government to account in its response to COVID-19 and, in many aspects, for its lack of response compared to eight other state jurisdictions and the Commonwealth government. This morning, we heard of the New South Wales government's \$2.4 billion economic stimulus package for its businesses and the people of New South Wales. All this government has offered is a loan that people must pay back and the deferral of a tax which in six months will end up being a double tax. The government does not want to debate these issues. This morning I heard from pubs, clubs and construction companies. I heard of weddings being cancelled—my grandfather's 90th birthday just got cancelled—and of DJs, the entertainment industry and restaurants cancelling events.

The wheels of government continue and must continue to turn. The parliament is what holds the government to account and what ensures the people understand if the government is not doing a good job. In the past five years we have seen so much arrogance in this House from this government—cutting down hours, opposition time and debate time. When I talk about opposition I include crossbench members. This takes it to a whole new level.

Yesterday we finished debating the resources bill. We put measures in place for social distancing. If Queenslanders can do it, we can do it—and we did it yesterday without any great fanfare.

Mrs D'Ath: Are we practising 1½ metres right now?

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection. I told the Leader of the House this morning that we will sit apart instead of using every chair. We can do it. We can implement those measures. We can double our efforts in terms of social distancing. That does not mean that we cannot introduce the domestic violence legislation the opposition leader was about to introduce and now will not have the opportunity to do. That does not mean that we cannot talk about the riot happening in the youth detention centre at the moment.

Mrs D'Ath interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The Leader of the House will cease her interjections.

Mr BLEIJIE: That does not mean that we should not debate the crime crisis that is happening right across Queensland. What I fear most is that when we suspend and reconvene to debate the health bills, whenever they come in—we will probably debate them tomorrow—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition will cease their interjections.

Mr BLEIJIE: What I fear most after today is where this will go. Will we even come back? When is parliament sitting next? Will we come back? What about the budget—supply, public servants and their jobs? What is happening? This morning the Premier urged all employers to 'do the right thing'. I say to the Premier: there will not be any employers able to do the right thing if they have to close their businesses down because of the lack of economic stimulus and support this Palaszczuk Labor government is giving to our businesses.

How is it that across the country the federal government has given \$17.2 billion as a start and the New South Wales, Tasmanian and Western Australian governments are giving support to local small businesses, but the most this state government offers is a loan to be repaid and a deferral of tax to be paid—double in six months time? That is not support. Businesses are putting people off today. The only thing that stands between the community and the Labor government is the opposition and this parliament. That is why I do not support suspending the parliament.

We can institute social distancing, as we are advising Queenslanders to do, without stopping work. The wheels of government do not stop and should not stop turning. We should be doing everything we can this week to make sure that by Friday of this week small businesses can still open their doors.

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (12.13 pm): In accordance with standing order 88, I move—

That the question be now put.

Mr SPEAKER: In accordance with the temporary sessional orders, the bells will be rung for one minute.

Division: Question put—That the question be now put.

AYES, 42:

ALP, 42—Bailey, 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, Mullen, B. O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pease, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Stewart, Trad, Whiting.

NOES, 34:

LNP, 33—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, Rowan, Simpson, Sorensen, Watts, Weir, Wilson.

NQF, 1—Costigan.

Pairs: Boyd, Robinson; C. O'Rourke, Purdie; Pegg, Stevens; Power, Bates.

Resolved in the affirmative.

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

AYES, 42:

ALP, 42—Bailey, 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, Mullen, B. O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pease, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Stewart, Trad, Whiting.

NOES, 34:

LNP, 33—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, Rowan, Simpson, Sorensen, Watts, Weir, Wilson.

NQF, 1—Costigan.

Pairs: Boyd, Robinson; C. O'Rourke, Purdie; Pegg, Stevens; Power, Bates.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Sitting suspended from 12.18 pm to 7.15 pm.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

Public Health and Other Legislation (Public Health Emergency) Amendment Bill

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, the Clerk, at the request of the Leader of the House, has sent to each of you an electronic PDF copy of the Public Health and Other Legislation (Public Health Emergency) Amendment Bill that will be introduced shortly. I understand that hard copy production of the bill for a full supply would have taken almost three hours, so an electronic copy has been sent in advance and limited hard copies will be produced for relevant shadow ministers.

MOTION

Order of Business

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (7.15 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That notwithstanding anything in standing or sessional orders, the order of business for the remainder of this day's sitting be government business until adjournment moved with no adjournment debate or statements.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

PUBLIC HEALTH AND OTHER LEGISLATION (PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (7.16 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the City of Brisbane Act 2010, the Constitution of Queensland 2001, the Economic Development Act 2012, the Electoral Act 1992, the Local Government Act 2009, the Local Government (Dissolution of Ipswich City Council) Act 2018, the Local Government Electoral Act 2011, the Local Government Regulation 2012, the Planning Act 2016, the Public Health Act 2005 and the State Penalties and Enforcement Regulation 2014 for particular purposes. I table the bill, the explanatory notes and a statement of compatibility with human rights. I nominate the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Public Health and Other Legislation (Public Health Emergency) Amendment Bill 2020 [441].

Tabled paper: Public Health and Other Legislation (Public Health Emergency) Amendment Bill 2020, explanatory notes [442].

Tabled paper: Public Health and Other Legislation (Public Health Emergency) Amendment Bill 2020, statement of compatibility with human rights [443].

After outlining the contents of the bill, I will move that the bill be declared urgent. The novel coronavirus, or COVID-19, presents a significant risk to the health and wellbeing of Queenslanders, particularly the most vulnerable in our community. It also proposes unique challenges for our society. It will have a profound effect on our economy. It will affect the lives of many Queenslanders. We will be asked to quarantine or self-isolate. We will need to follow the advice and guidance of health experts, particularly our Chief Health Officer, and we will need to be there for the fallout on our businesses and industry.

In an environment of saturation news and social media coverage, Queenslanders young and old are understandably concerned. I want to reassure them that we are well prepared to meet the challenge ahead. On 29 January this year I declared a public health emergency under the Public Health Act 2005 in relation to the developing situation. This enabled emergency powers to be exercised to help contain the spread of COVID-19 in Queensland. On 6 February, this House enacted legislation to ensure that the declared public health emergency could be extended by regulation for a period of up to 90 days. On 13 March 2020, the Prime Minister announced that gatherings of more than 500 people should be cancelled from 16 March 2020.

Today, the Commonwealth issued the Biosecurity (Human Biosecurity Emergency) (Human Coronavirus with Pandemic Potential) Declaration 2020. This declaration enables the federal health minister to determine emergency requirements or give directions in accordance with the Commonwealth Biosecurity Act for a period up to three months. The federal government has

announced a ban on non-essential gatherings of 100 people in indoor areas. This does not include public transport, medical facilities and courts. Shopping centres and supermarkets are also considered essential and therefore not subject to the ban. In aged-care facilities, visitors and staff who have returned from overseas in the last 14 days, have made contact with a confirmed case or are symptomatic or are not vaccinated against flu after 1 May 2020 will not be permitted to enter a facility. States and territories will give effect to these bans and restrictions through local legislation and orders and may add to these bans in response to local circumstances.

The COVID-19 situation will continue to move very quickly. This bill will provide clear powers for the Chief Health Officer to give a public health declaration to assist in containing or responding to the spread of COVID-19 within the community—for example, by banning non-essential mass gatherings and closing or restricting access to facilities. The Chief Health Officer may issue new directions as the situation evolves.

We know that the people most vulnerable to COVID-19 are older Queenslanders, particularly our frail and aged residents living in residential aged-care facilities. This amendment bill ensures Queensland has the clear legislative authority necessary to keep all vulnerable Queenslanders safe. The bill will also enable emergency officers appointed under the Public Health Act to give a direction to an individual, entity or person. The bill amends the emergency powers that can be exercised by emergency officers to make it clear that they can require persons to self-isolate for a period of up to 14 days, whether or not the person has symptoms of COVID-19 or has come into contact with a suspected case.

The amendments to the Public Health Act only create new powers in relation to the COVID-19 public health emergency. They do not apply to other situations. Given the need for these amendments to progress urgently, and acknowledging that the powers it provides are broad, the bill includes a sunset clause so that new provisions expire 12 months after they commence.

The level of work that our emergency officers and public health units are doing in response to COVID-19 is unprecedented. Governments around Australia are providing industry assistance and economic stimulus in response to the outbreak to support the public and businesses. The bill also amends the Public Health Act to provide that the compensation provisions that ordinarily apply to the exercise of emergency powers will not apply in relation to COVID-19. The compensation provisions were never intended to be used for large-scale cancellations of events or the closure of businesses in these circumstances. Instead, targeted measures are required.

The Queensland government has moved quickly to provide immediate support for those Queensland businesses facing the most direct challenges to get through this crisis. Earlier this year the Premier announced an initial industry recovery package. The Palaszczuk government has also introduced payroll tax relief for small and medium sized businesses impacted by coronavirus. Eligible businesses will be able to defer their payments for six months, backdated to when the travel ban started at the beginning of February. The federal government has committed to releasing an approximately \$17 billion economic stimulus package. The Queensland government will continue to work with the federal government to ensure stimulus goes where it is most needed.

I turn now to the amendments the bill makes to other portfolio legislation. The ability to hold meetings of the Executive Council by technological means has been identified as an important measure to ensure that the business of government can continue throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. This bill will amend the Constitution of Queensland 2001 to provide that a meeting of the Executive Council may be held using any technological means such as teleconferencing or videoconferencing.

I turn now to amendments to the local government legislation. The local government elections are scheduled for 28 March 2020. As the Minister for Local Government informed the House on Tuesday, the government must be nimble in an evolving situation and provide for all the options we need in relation to local government elections if things change. Given the unprecedented health emergency facing Queensland and the nation, flexibility may be required in relation to the election date and the processes surrounding the election.

The key policy objective of the amendments is to provide flexibility, if required, in terms of the election date for the 2020 quadrennial local government election and the statutory processes surrounding the conduct of the election, to help avoid risk to the health and safety of individuals posed by a public health emergency. The measures are temporary and will only apply to the 2020 quadrennial local government election in order to minimise the public health risks associated with the public health emergency involving COVID-19.

The bill proposes a number of amendments to achieve the policy objectives. These amendments allow for the suspension or termination of the 2020 quadrennial local government election, if needed, and confirm the caretaker arrangements that apply during a period of suspension. They allow the time frames for the receipt of postal vote applications to be extended for certain electors. They allow flexibility in deciding if a poll is to be conducted by postal ballot. They ensure there are no barriers to appropriately qualified persons being issuing officers. They provide more flexible time frames for taking or resuming an adjourned poll. They allow the declaration of another class of electors who may cast an electronically assisted vote and for alternative voting arrangements to be made for visitor electors who are ill. They allow the Electoral Commission to give a direction about the distribution of how-to-vote cards or other election material, prohibiting a person from canvassing for votes in or near polling booths, or permitting the display of political statements inside or within six metres of the entrance to a polling booth.

They allow the making of regulations under the City of Brisbane Act 2010 or the Local Government Act 2009, if necessary, about matters not sufficiently provided for in those acts as a result of the 2020 quadrennial local government election not being held in March 2020. They allow the making of regulations under the Local Government Electoral Act 2011, if necessary, about matters not sufficiently provided for in the act to allow or facilitate the holding of the 2020 quadrennial local government election. They provide flexibility in the filling of councillor vacancies that may arise if the election is not held in March 2020. They allow for the continuation of the Ipswich City Council and Logan City Council interim administrations if the election is significantly delayed. These amendments must be considered during this sitting week to allow passage prior to 28 March 2020.

The bill will insert a new part 12A into the Electoral Act 1992, which provides specific provisions applicable to by-elections held before the next general election after commencement. The purpose of these amendments is to facilitate the holding of state by-elections in a way that helps minimise serious risks to the health and safety of persons caused by the public health emergency involving COVID-19 that Queensland is facing.

The bill contains a number of measures including allowing flexibility for the polling day for a state by-election to be postponed or the days stated in a writ for a by-election to be substituted with a later date by the Governor or Speaker, whoever issued the writ. They will allow for a poll for a by-election that is adjourned, for example, due to serious risks to the health and safety of persons at a polling booth. To minimise the public health risks that may be posed through the distribution of how-to-vote cards and other election material at polling booths, the amendments will provide flexibility to the Electoral Commission to give a direction about the distribution or display of how-to-vote cards at a polling booth. This includes prohibition if it is in the public interest, with an offence for contravening the commission's direction in this regard.

The bill introduces a regulation-making power which may be used where necessary to facilitate the holding of a state by-election in a way that helps minimise serious risks to health and safety. These amendments will allow flexibility so that the statutory and operational arrangements for by-elections can be adjusted to protect the health and safety of Queenslanders, while supporting the rights of voters in by-elections.

Urgent amendments to the Economic Development Act 2012 and the Planning Act 2016 are also included in the bill. The acts are being amended to ensure that declared businesses—for example, supermarkets and chemists—are able to operate, including restocking, 24 hours per day, seven days per week, during an event such as the COVID-19 public health emergency or other emergent situations. This is not a change to the trading hours regulated under other legislation. Rather, this gives declared businesses greater options to manage logistics, workforce and services in the best interest of its staff and communities.

Businesses will also be able to apply for and be granted a temporary-use licence to change or vary planning constraints which may prevent them from appropriately providing services in these circumstances. These changes also introduce the ability for the Minister for Planning and the minister responsible for economic development to suspend or extend any of the statutory time frames across the planning framework during an event, recognising possible impacts of COVID-19 on the workforce. This will ensure that development approval time frames under the Planning Act can be managed and do not default to a deemed approval under the current arrangements. This will also ensure that applications are not invalidated because of missed time frames. These provisions will become a permanent part of Queensland's resilient planning framework, providing flexibility to respond to not only COVID-19 but also floods, bushfires, cyclones and other disasters. However, the effect of these powers

is temporary and only applies where the Minister for Planning has declared an applicable event, ensuring the state government can make advance preparations and respond to an event that has taken place, is taking place or is likely to take place.

The Palaszczuk government is prepared for COVID-19. Our preparations and the dedication of so many has successfully contained the spread of the virus in Queensland so far. Our goal has been to find every suspected case, isolate and test them and, if they are positive, to provide them with the best possible care. Our efforts have delayed the start of the epidemic in Queensland. By maintaining our effort now, we can slow the spread and flatten the curve of infection. That will allow our hospitals to save more lives.

I want to thank everyone across government who is working to meet this challenge head-on, particularly our frontline health workers who are out there every day taking care of Queenslanders when they need them most. I also want to express my sincere thanks to the unsung heroes of any bill process—the team at the Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel. I would particularly like to thank the Parliamentary Counsel, Tony Keyes, and drafters Claire Riethmuller, Sandra Lawson, Belinda Comino, Katy Le Roy, Ian Larwill and Melita Gardiner who have worked long hours, hard and intensively, over the past few days to ensure this bill could be introduced and debated tonight. The drafting team was ably supported by the outstanding editors, proofreaders and quality assurance checkers who also worked extremely hard to ensure the bill could be delivered quickly and accurately. Thanks to Helen Fleming, Thomas Mizanowski, Marcia Doolan, Denise Amies and Jo Pittendreigh.

Thank you to the legislation teams in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, the Department of Justice and Attorney-General, the Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs and the Department of State Development, Manufacturing, Industry and Planning, and in particular the Department of Health's Legislative Policy Unit. Special thanks to Tricia Matthias, Rachel Stewart-Koster, James Liddy, Karson Mahler, Alex Ottens, Kirsten Slape and Life Ettrup for their outstanding work coordinating the preparation of this bill and ensuring the critical amendments to the Public Health Act could be developed so quickly.

I want to personally acknowledge and thank my Director-General, Dr John Wakefield, and our Chief Health Officer, Dr Jeannette Young, for their extraordinary leadership. We still have a way to go before we will be able to declare an end to this emergency, but Queenslanders can take comfort from the fact that such a remarkable group of people in Queensland Health are committed to their health and wellbeing. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. SJ MILES (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (7.32 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.

Declared Urgent; Allocation of Time Limit Order

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (7.32 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That this House—

1. under the provisions of standing order 137, the Public Health and Other Legislation (Public Health Emergency) Amendment Bill be declared an urgent bill and not stand referred to a committee and be considered immediately;
2. the following members be permitted to speak on the second reading with the nominated maximum periods of time as specified:
 - (a) Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services (15 minutes);
 - (b) the Leader of the Opposition or nominee (15 minutes);
 - (c) all other members (10 minutes);
 - (d) Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services in reply (10 minutes);
3. the total time for debate of all stages is two hours;
4. the bill pass through all remaining stages this day;

5. if the bill has not been completed by the allocated time specified in (3) Mr Speaker:
- (a) shall call on the minister to table any explanatory notes to his circulated amendments, any statement of compatibility with human rights or any statement relating to an override declaration;
 - (b) shall put all remaining questions necessary to either pass that stage or pass the bill without further debate;
 - (c) will complete all stages required by this motion notwithstanding anything contained in standing and sessional orders.

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (7.34 pm): We have had the bill introduced now and we have had the minister move the motion for urgency, yet we have a day's sitting tomorrow. The reason the minister is declaring it urgent to be debated this evening and putting a two-hour time limit on it is that they do not want to come back to parliament tomorrow. That is the reality. We are not going to be here. They will suspend the House after this bill is debated tonight and we will not be back tomorrow. It is such an urgent but important matter that members of this House should be able to speak on it.

Every week I get up in here to talk about members' rights to speak when bills are moved urgently and there are guillotine debates and we finish early because of the new family friendly hours. The Premier said today this is a one-in-100-year event in Queensland and a crisis like we have not seen before, yet the government gives two hours to debate this bill. It is such a serious issue, yet the government wants only two hours debate, less the 15 minutes the minister has already been given, with only one hour notice from when we were provided the bill. I thank the Clerk for getting it to all members as soon as he received it from the government.

We have been waiting on and expecting this bill for two days. All of a sudden at 7.30 pm the minister introduces the bill. There is no reason why the bill could not have been sent to members tonight. Members would have had the opportunity during the night to read it—to actually read it—and work out what is in it. There are so many impacts on people right across Queensland who are pre-polling or going to voting booths in a week and a half, as well as in terms of getting their how-to-vote cards. A lot of members in this House spent two to three hours in a health briefing this afternoon. The briefing went longer than the time members will get to debate this bill. That was just the health briefing, let alone all the electoral changes and the planning changes. By my quick flick of the bill, it involves about five ministerial responsibilities.

There is no reason, none, why all members, including the crossbench, could not have had the bill overnight to have the opportunity to read it. The crossbench will not get a chance possibly to speak on this because of the two-hour time line and the condensed time line. I suspect that later in the evening the House will adjourn and we will not come back tomorrow. It is a waste of a day. We could have had a proper debate on this tomorrow. We said today—and I gave a commitment to the Leader of the House and the government—that we would work with the government to observe the 1.5-metre distance between us, we would sit three apart, and I would give as many pairs as the government wanted to have their members off the precinct.

We said we would do all of that. Had the government agreed with that, we could have had a good debate about this bill tomorrow. Yes, it will be a two-hour debate—it will be a rushed debate—but COVID-19 does not just impact the five ministers who will get a chance to speak on this and the five shadow ministers who will get a chance to speak on this. Ten members out of 93 will get a chance to speak on this—the biggest issue in 100 years, the Premier said, that she hopes to never again see in our lifetime, and this parliament gives it the disrespect of only two hours of debate.

A lot of the members are regional members. They are not flying out at midnight tonight. There are no flights available for them to get home to their constituencies or their families tonight after we suspend the House tonight. They will be here tomorrow. There is nothing this bill will solve between 10 o'clock tonight and eight o'clock tomorrow morning that could not be delayed during that time and debated properly tomorrow. It would have given people a proper opportunity.

I look around the House and I see many of the members sitting over there who have been here for a few more years than a lot of other members. They always get up in this place and talk about how important it is that legislation is properly scrutinised. This will not be properly scrutinised. We have had an hour.

An opposition member interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: It was the former member for Bundamba, but I am also looking at Minister Hinchliffe. I have heard him talk many a time in this place about bills being properly scrutinised. Urgent bills do not go through the committee system, but a lot of times for urgent bills that do not go through the committee system we allow time for proper debate and allow the debate to run its natural course.

We are getting messages from our constituents saying that tomorrow they are closing their businesses. We are not going to be able to talk about that. We are not going to be here. I cannot speak to this bill. I have spent two days allowing as many opportunities as I can for people to talk to me about the hospitality industry and the impacts that COVID-19 will have on communities.

About an hour ago I talked to Bernie Hogan from the Queensland Hotels Association. He took 180 calls today from pubs and hospitality industry businesses that put people off today. Where is his voice? Where is the pub voice? Where is the community sector voice? Where is the construction industry voice?

Mr Whiting interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: They may make light of the fact that they are in here and the member who interjected may say he can represent, through his wise words, all those communities and interest groups that are tonight worrying how tomorrow they will afford to put food on the table because they may not have a job tomorrow because of COVID-19. This parliament disgraces those people by saying that such a serious issue is worth two hours of debate.

The Premier spoke about this being a one-in-100-year event. We only ever hear about huge floods being one-in-100-year or one-in-500-year floods. We are now talking about a virus and the over \$10 billion in damage it is going to do to the economy in the next two years. This parliament disgraces the people impacted by the virus by debating this bill for two hours.

There is no reason we could not be in here tomorrow because we are going to be here anyway. We will not be debating these laws. Members will now be organising flights home to their constituencies. It is a wasted opportunity for members to express the viewpoints of their constituents regarding this important issue. This is an important issue, but giving it two hours of debate does not reflect its importance.

I cannot understand why the government thinks they need to rush this through without proper scrutiny. I am not even talking about scrutiny. I am talking about the ability to read the bill before the debate. Members had the bill an hour ago. We were then summoned back in here at 7.15 pm to debate a bill that deals with not only the health response but all the other issues such as the planning, the retail shop trading hours, the distribution issues, the voting that is happening as we speak, the pre-polling and all those sorts of things. We have two hours to debate that. It is not enough time.

I think it is disgraceful. We should be sitting tomorrow. I know that the government will be adjourning the House tonight. The Leader of the House has advised that we are not coming back tomorrow. Mr Speaker, I put it to you that we should be coming back tomorrow. We should be giving members the opportunity to represent their constituencies that are dealing with, in the Premier's own words, what she does not want to deal with again in her lifetime. I think it is disgraceful to the people of Queensland that this parliament is about to debate this bill for two hours when we should be having a free-flowing and natural debate tomorrow—a debate like we used to have.

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

AYES, 41:

ALP, 41—Bailey, Brown, Butcher, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Healy, Hinchliffe, Howard, Kelly, King, Lauga, Linard, Lui, Lynham, Madden, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, B. O'Rourke, C. O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pease, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Stewart, Trad, Whiting.

NOES, 33:

LNP, 32—Batt, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Boyce, Crandon, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Hart, Hunt, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McArdle, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, O'Connor, Perrett, Powell, Rowan, Simpson, Sorensen, Watts, Weir, Wilson.

NQF, 1—Costigan.

Pairs: Boyd, Robinson; Jones, Purdie; Mullen, Nicholls; Pegg, Stevens; Power, Bates.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Second Reading

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (7.46 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (7.46 pm): I rise to speak to the Public Health and Other Legislation (Public Health Emergency) Amendment Bill 2020. These are extraordinary times and they require extraordinary measures to address them. I say from the outset that the opposition will support this bill. That does not mean that we support the processes in bringing this bill here tonight that have been outlined by the Manager of Opposition Business and nor do we believe that this bill is comprehensive enough.

Life is changing in Queensland. Life is changing in Australia. In fact, life is changing all around the world. On this side of the House we know that there is no chance that we can seal ourselves off from other countries and escape contact with this virus. There is no way Queensland can avoid the coronavirus pandemic, but we can take steps to control how quickly and how far this disease spreads. This is a once-in-a-100-year event. We have not seen this type of thing in Australia since the end of the First World War. We must step up to the challenge. We need to keep Queensland running and we need to keep Queensland functioning. We also need to defend our values and what makes our state and our country great.

One of those things is our democracy. The Labor government's actions in rushing this bill through tonight without proper examination or debate by the opposition are nothing short of shameful. This is a significant bill which covers 11 acts or regulations. It deserves proper scrutiny and proper debate. The 11 acts or regulations we are amending are the City of Brisbane Act 2010, the Constitution of Queensland Act 2001, the Economic Development Act 2012, the Electoral Act 1992, the Local Government Act 2009, the Local Government (Dissolution of Ipswich City Council) Act, the Local Government Regulation 2012, the Planning Act 2016, the Public Health Act 2005 and the State Penalties and Enforcement Regulation.

The bill will amend the Public Health Act to strengthen powers of the Chief Health Officer and emergency officers appointed under the act for the COVID-19 emergency to implement social distancing measures including regulating mass gatherings, isolating or quarantining people suspected or known to have been exposed to COVID-19 and protecting vulnerable populations such as the elderly; provide that the compensation provisions that apply to declared public health emergencies do not apply to the COVID-19 emergency; and amend the State Penalties Enforcement Regulation 2014 so that penalty infringement notices can be issued for the offences of failing to comply with a direction made by the Chief Health Officer or an emergency officer in relation to the COVID-19 emergency.

The bill will also amend the Planning Act 2016 and the Economic Development Act 2012 to ensure important services may continue to be provided to the community. It will amend the City of Brisbane Act 2010, the Local Government Act 2009, the Local Government (Dissolution of Ipswich City Council) Act 2018, the Local Government Electoral Act 2011 and the Local Government Regulation 2012 to provide flexibility, if required, for the election date for the 2020 local government election and statutory processes for the conduct of the election to help minimise serious risks to the health and safety of persons caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The bill will amend the Electoral Act 1992 to provide flexibility, if required, to facilitate the holding of state by-elections in a way that helps minimise serious risks to the health and safety of persons caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. It will amend the Constitution of Queensland 2001 to allow meetings of Executive Council to be held via technology such as teleconferencing or videoconferencing.

The emergency powers available to emergency officers under chapter 8 of the Public Health Act include directing a person to stay at or in a stated location. The Public Health Act enables an emergency officer to detain a person while they receive medical treatment. The emergency officer or a person nominated by the emergency officer may enforce the detention order using force reasonable in the circumstances.

I would like to seek some clarification from the health minister as to why additional provisions are required about compensation for loss or damage because of an exercise or purported exercise of powers in connection with a declared public health emergency. Whilst I acknowledge that in a pandemic situation there is a possibility for a significant proportion of the population to be directly affected by the exercise of powers under the declared public health emergency, however these provisions are uncapped.

As the Manager of Opposition Business has already declared, it is extraordinary that this legislation has been dropped on this House in the manner in which it has been. We should have been able to examine the bill tonight to allow more scrutiny, but it is clear that the government is trying to avoid scrutiny especially when it comes to its inadequate economic response—a response too weak that Queenslanders must feel that this government does not have their backs.

As I mentioned yesterday, we in Queensland are the most vulnerable state economy in the country because of the woeful economic record of the Palaszczuk government over the last five years. Our economy is in no state economically to fight this virus. The Palaszczuk Labor government is failing to protect jobs and failing to support Queensland businesses that are going to the wall because Labor will let a health crisis become an economic crisis.

Queensland continues to be the jobless and bankruptcy capital of Australia with the highest unemployment rate and the highest bankruptcies in the nation. This was all before the coronavirus hit. Queensland is going bankrupt under Labor, with almost 4,239 bankruptcies occurring in Queensland over the last year accounting for nearly 30 per cent of all bankruptcies. There are 171,500 Queenslanders out of work under this Labor government. We can only imagine how that will increase over the coming weeks and months.

Labor has smashed Queenslanders with nine new or increased taxes in two years—taxes which are toxic for jobs and growth. The Queensland businesspeople have delivered a devastating verdict on the Palaszczuk Labor government with the CCIQ Pulse survey finding business conditions the worst on record. Just this week almost 70 per cent of Queensland businesses surveyed by Roy Morgan said they believed Queensland is already in recession. Now more than ever we need economic leadership which the Palaszczuk government is failing to provide.

Yes, we will be supporting this bill but, given that Labor has left Queensland behind, I intend to introduce a number of amendments because the LNP does have Queenslanders' backs. We will act because the Labor government will not. Our amendments will include introducing an electricity price ceiling so that households and businesses do not have to pay any increases in power bills during the declared public health emergency and for a period after as determined by the government, as has happened in other states. We will lift the payroll tax threshold from \$1.3 million to \$6.5 million from 1 April to 31 December 2020 to provide instant relief for around 15,000 Queensland businesses.

We will introduce the power to allow the minister to provide an extension for retail trading hours and provide a temporary extension to the core trading hours for non-exempt shops during the public health emergency. We will freeze current registration of motor vehicles for the financial year ending 1 July 2020. Finally, we will introduce a bulk water price ceiling so that households and businesses do not have to pay any increase in bulk water bills during the declared public health emergency and for a period after as determined by the government.

Madam Deputy Speaker McMillan, I am sure you are like many members on this side of the House who have received countless emails and countless phone calls from concerned businesses and individuals. I heard from a mum in my electorate whose son is doing an apprenticeship and has just been let go because of the effects of the virus and the restrictions that are being placed on our society. I heard another case today of a security firm that looks after security at stadiums—that will not be needed anymore because we will not be gathering in stadiums—and they are still forced to pay WorkCover. The WorkCover people are being very bureaucratic in their response in saying, 'It's business as usual. If you don't pay it, we will be sending the debt collectors after you.'

This type of thing is causing great concern for Queenslanders. That is why we believe that the response by the government is not broad enough nor comprehensive enough. That is why we will be introducing these amendments—amendments which reflect what has happened in basically every other jurisdiction in this country. The reason we cannot do this is the \$92 billion debt that we are heading towards. Who knows what it will be after this economic crisis. The Treasurer herself said this morning that it could cost the economy \$10 billion over two years which is frightening, particularly when our economy is in such a parlous state.

I would also like to pay tribute to our health workers—our doctors, our nurses, our health professionals—all those who work in hospitals for not only the work they have done up until this point but the work they will do over the next six months. We on this side of the House would like to wish these people good luck and give them our best wishes. We are behind them. We know that they will face extraordinary challenges over the next six to 12 months. It is important that Queenslanders recognise this and get behind them. We from the opposition will support anything the government puts forward with regard to supporting those people because they are literally our front line in this war. It is very important that they are well equipped, that they are well resourced and that they know they have the full support of the Queensland public.

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning) (7.58 pm): I rise in support of the Public Health and Other Legislation (Public Health Emergency) Amendment Bill 2020—and that is what it is. It is an emergency. We are in the midst of a public health emergency we have not seen in this state for at least a century.

It requires extraordinary action by the government to respond to these extraordinary times. We may choose to wait and watch as this event unfolds, or we can take swift and decisive action now to ensure essential businesses such as supermarkets and chemists can operate their loading docks and distribution centres 24 hours a day, seven days a week, as necessary to meet the needs of Queenslanders both in response to COVID-19 and where required for future emergencies.

Listening to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, you would have thought we were debating a budget bill. We had their seriatim list of opposition talking points about the Labor government; that is all it was. It was the same list of talking points they use over and over again. You would have thought that tonight they would have actually engaged in the debate.

Mr Mander: With an hour's preparation!

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms McMillan): Order! Member for Everton, you have had your go.

Mr DICK: The fact that the member for Everton bellows and interjects when everyone on this side of the House listened respectfully to him is an insight into how they have approached this debate and it is an insight into the deputy leader's conduct. This requires a state response. This requires something above what we are normally capable of.

Mr Mander interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Everton, this is your last warning before you will be formally warned.

Mr DICK: We see it every time and we have seen it again: an inability to think on their feet and respond in an agile way to the crisis that is engulfing Queenslanders. I will say this, Madam Deputy Speaker: when the deputy opposition leader said, 'We have Queenslanders' backs', I know who is working to protect the backs of Queenslanders, to protect the working men and women of this state, and to protect the 50 business and industry leaders I had on the telephone with me this afternoon for an hour and a half going through the issues impacting them in relation to telecommunications, logistics, transport and fuel.

Mr Crandon: Why don't you give them tax breaks?

Mr DICK: I will take the interjection from the member for Coomera. That is their response: tax breaks. What they need to do is ensure that the supply chain remains strong so the working men and women who are keeping this state going can get the food and supplies they need. That is why this bill moves those amendments to the planning scheme to ensure that supermarkets, groceries and food outlets can get the resources they need and can be resupplied and restocked around the clock so we can get through the initial phase of the crisis. This will roll on for days and weeks and months, and we need to ensure individually as members of this House and collectively that we are working together to support Queenslanders in a time of great need. I would urge the opposition to try to rise above the political fray on one day of one year of one parliamentary term on one occasion.

Mr Ryan: Even just for two hours.

Mr DICK: I take the interjection from the Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services—even if it is only for two hours on one day in one year of one parliamentary term.

We have seen that COVID-19 has the potential—it is more than a potential now; it is becoming a reality—to have widespread impacts on the normal functions of state and local governments, business, industry, the community and our planning system. We know that essential businesses are facing challenges in providing necessary goods and services to our communities. This calls for extraordinary measures to both protect the integrity of our planning system and to ensure that Queensland businesses are able to meet the essential needs of our community.

Accordingly, the bill includes urgent amendments to the Planning Act 2016 and the Economic Development Act 2012 to respond to the emerging public health emergency COVID-19. The planning legislation already includes some limited emergency powers. These powers cover situations where development or works must be undertaken in emergency situations such as when emergency building works must be undertaken following a natural disaster. However, the Planning Act and the Economic Development Act do not contemplate when a use must exceed or otherwise offend existing conditions of approval to meet community needs during an unexpected event. An example of this relevant to COVID-19 is the development of conditions on uses such as supermarkets that are limiting the ability to resupply stock that is being rapidly depleted. Many such uses have conditions limiting hours of operation and other operational requirements that may need to be suspended temporarily to support the community through this unprecedented time.

In response, it is proposed to make amendments to the Planning Act and the Economic Development Act to, firstly, introduce the concept of an applicable event which would draw upon the meaning of 'event' in the Disaster Management Act 2003; and, secondly, introduce the concept of temporary use licence which can be approved during an applicable event. Under the proposed amendments, the Minister for Planning would be empowered to give notice of an applicable event where an event defined under the Disaster Management Act 2003 is taking place or is likely to take place and it is necessary to take action to protect state interests. Following the giving of the notice of an applicable event, the Minister for Planning will have the further power to notify declared uses across the state or part of the state. The notice provides for blanket temporary use and will remove any operating constraints on the hours and movements of lawfully declared uses. At this time I propose that this would provide for supermarkets to be resupplied 24 hours a day.

In addition to declared uses, any person may apply to the chief executive of my department for a temporary use licence. Approval would be granted where there is a clear link to the purpose of the applicable event and it would last for the duration of the applicable event. Local government would be provided with a copy of any decision notice approving a temporary use licence, and a register of such licences would be maintained on the department's website for the purposes of transparency and accountability. The declaration will ensure that the state government may use the planning framework to advance preparations and respond to an event that has taken place, is taking place or is likely to take place, and this will not be limited to COVID-19. Following this declaration, the Minister for Planning will give declared businesses the ability to load and restock around the clock 24/7 to meet the community's needs. This will allow supermarkets and other essential businesses to restock and resupply to keep up with increased demand.

This is not a change to trading hours regulated under other legislation; it is about ensuring that the essential loading, restocking, cleaning and other operational needs a business needs to operate can be met in times of community need. The amendment allows rapid and decisive action to ensure that development conditions on uses such as supermarkets or distribution centres do not restrict the ability for resupply of stock which is being rapidly depleted. Many such uses have conditions limiting hours of operation and other operational requirements that may need to be suspended temporarily to support the community through this unprecedented time. The amendments give essential businesses more options when making decisions about logistics, service delivery and the health and safety of staff and customers in these unprecedented circumstances. The amendment also allows for any person to seek relief from development approval conditions or other operating constraints through a simple application to the state. This licence would then be in place for the duration of the event.

Finally, to protect the integrity of our planning framework in extraordinary circumstances the bill also proposes amendments that will enable the planning minister to suspend or extend any time frames in the planning framework, including plan making and development assessment time frames. The ability to affect statutory time frames will assist local governments, business, industry and state government to manage their workforce where they may be affected by COVID-19. This will also ensure that community rights and expectations to be involved in planning processes are protected. These provisions will become a permanent part of Queensland's planning framework, but declarations relaxing provisions will be temporary to that event.

As a fellow Queenslander, I urge the parliament to act tonight on this legislation. I am pleased to speak to those parts of the bill that are relevant to my role as the planning minister. I also acknowledge the outstanding work of Queensland's public servants. Members of the Queensland Public Service—and it does not matter in which department or agency—are reorienting hour by hour to respond to the needs of Queenslanders, whether it be teachers and principals in schools, our amazing frontline health staff, who I had the honour of working with for three years as health minister, or the planning team in my department who, I can tell you, Madam Deputy Speaker, have worked nonstop on this legislation for less than a week to change the law of this state—which I hope is supported by all members of this House—to ensure Queenslanders can be supported in their time of need. I want to acknowledge the director-general, Rachel Hunter, the deputy director-general for planning, Kerry Doss, and his amazing team who worked all through the weekend to make this a reality. I commend the bill to all members of the House.

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (8.09 pm): I rise to address the Public Health and Other Legislation (Public Health Emergency) Amendment Bill 2020. At the outset, I directly address the people of Glass House as I have not yet had an opportunity to do so and, by the sounds of things, will not have an opportunity to do so after this or potentially for some time. I share the concerns of the people of Glass House about the health crisis we face. I commend them on their resilience to date. We were one

of the first communities to be impacted by a positive test of COVID-19. There were initial reactions of panic and concern but, as the area I represent has done on so many occasions, they rose to the challenge. They cared for their neighbours and continue to care for those in the community around them.

I have heard loud and clear those in the Glass House electorate who operate the many small businesses. Potentially, the economic crisis of this virus, this pandemic, will be far more catastrophic than the health crisis. We need to do more. Many spoke about how the package released by Prime Minister Scott Morrison and the federal government went a long way to assisting them but, when we compare what is occurring in other state jurisdictions with what is happening in this state, the state's response has been lacking. We need to do more. For an area like Glass House that survives on tourism—and much of that Asian tourism—places like Montville are ghost towns at the moment.

As much as people in South-East Queensland can, given the restrictions now in place in terms of social distancing and so on, I encourage them to continue to come to communities that thrive and rely on tourism. Bring a friend, sit a metre and a half apart, order a coffee, enjoy a day trip to Montville, Maleny, the Glass House Mountains or Mount Mee. Otherwise, unless this government steps up and starts carrying some of the weight around the economic responsibilities that it needs to demonstrate, I fear for many businesses in my electorate. Those business owners should know that, whether or not this parliament is sitting, I will continue to be a strong advocate for them and a voice to ensure they survive this pandemic as well.

Turning to the provisions of this bill—given that we had it for only an hour and that our debate is restricted to two hours—let me focus specifically on those two aspects that pertain to the state development, manufacturing, infrastructure and planning portfolio. Sadly, the first comes about because of some very un-Australian behaviour, as the Prime Minister said—panic buying. While we have plenty of food and groceries in this nation, companies are unable to get them to supermarkets fast enough to cover up for what is some appalling behaviour. The main reason for that is because of the conditions of approval placed on supermarkets like Woolworths, Coles and IGA where the trucks transporting the goods cannot deliver them outside of certain hours. In normal operating conditions, it is a sensible thing. We do not want our neighbourhoods awoken by truck movements at odd hours. But in a situation like this, we need sensible solutions.

When I heard that the minister sought to explore the temporary use licence that he would declare over an applicable event, which allows those conditions to be removed for a short period of time, I saw a lot of sense in it. I saw a lot of sense in it—and the minister admitted this himself—as it is mirrored off something that I as the environment minister at the time brought in to deal with a similar situation in the environmental sector, namely a temporary emissions licence. It came about through cyclonic events where some of our larger refineries were unable to meet conditions of approval. They needed to get rid of water and quickly, otherwise we could have had serious environmental catastrophes on our hands. We put through legislation in this place that led to the creation of a TEL, a temporary emissions licence. It is ironic that at that time I copped a lot of abuse from a number of members still sitting on that side, including the now Treasurer who was the shadow environment minister at the time. To know that that solution has formed the basis of this temporary use licence is in some ways refreshing and also ironic.

The temporary use licence will allow our supermarkets in particular to operate around the clock to refill their shelves hopefully to mitigate and eventually reduce this panic buying, but ultimately that responsibility sits with individual Queenslanders. As the Prime Minister and I said earlier, it is un-Australian and it has to stop. It also allows distribution centres and manufacturing hubs which may have conditions imposed on them to potentially operate outside of those conditions during such an applicable event as what we now see.

The other aspect of the legislation that addresses the planning portfolio concerns statutory planning time frames. As expressed to me by the minister, there is a concern that, as staff at the state government level, the local government level and within development organisations themselves, development companies and indeed amongst the community, as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to take its toll, as people self-isolate or are isolated because they have tested positive, there may not be the staff in place in any of those government or private sector situations to address the statutory time frames enacted through legislation around planning and development approvals. If those statutory time frames are not met, in some cases it means it is a deemed approval. In some cases that is not what we want. We want the process followed correctly.

My understanding is that, again, the minister has the ability to extend time frames. Some talk was made of it being extended by an additional 20 business days at this moment to allow staff at all levels of government, within the development sector and within the community to meet the statutory

time frames that rest within the planning laws. I will raise, as I did with the minister earlier today, one significant concern: where there are genuine instances where staff numbers are down and councils in particular are unable to meet the statutory time frames this makes sense, but because a blanket ruling will be made I am very concerned that a number of other councils not experiencing staff decline will use it as a means of going slow. To be blunt, as we heard from the shadow Treasurer, now is not the time to be going slow. Now is the time to ensure that anything that we can possibly approve legitimately and appropriately is approved, built, developed and that we keep jobs in the construction, hospitality and tourism sectors across this state.

I would be fearful if, as a result of these extensions of statutory planning time frames, we have a number of councils that deliberately use them to procrastinate and to extend out planning approvals when they really should not be. I put that on the record in acknowledgement of the minister taking that on board. I understand that his department will not have the staff to monitor every single council, but I say to councils and to the development sector, 'Please keep an eye on this. If you see issues arising, please report it to the minister and, if you do not get a response there, please come to me,' because in effect the minister and the government have been warned and know it is a potential problem. If it turns into a reality, I want to ensure that the minister is aware and that we can look at a solution.

In the time remaining, I return to some of the aspects that the shadow Treasurer touched on. We need to be doing more. I know that the focus is primarily on flattening the health crisis curve, on ensuring our hospitals and our hardworking frontline medical staff are able to cope with what is about to unfold in this state and nation. Again, what concerns me more is the economic impact on this state and this nation. The Prime Minister and his team are taking this incredibly seriously. State governments around Australia are taking this incredibly seriously, be they Labor or Liberal-National coalitions. The only one that is not is the state Labor government in this state. So far, what we see simply are loans—fine, there is no interest but it is a loan that will have to be repaid—or deferral of payroll tax. A deferral means that we must pay double when they come knocking for it. Where are the tax waivers? Where are the freezes on water and electricity prices and car registration? Where are the things that will genuinely help our businesses survive in the incredibly tough next six months, 12 months or two years? That is not being addressed by this bill tonight.

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (8.20 pm): I rise to speak on the Public Health and Other Legislation (Public Health Emergency) Amendment Bill 2020. These are difficult times, but if there is one true benefit of having dealt with so many floods, cyclones and bushfires in Queensland it is that we know how to get through difficult times. The most important message is not to panic. We have made our plans and we are well prepared. Months ago when the virus first appeared overseas, here in Queensland we were getting ready. The virus is now here, but we started ordering extra supplies and setting up fever clinics even before it arrived. We are now tripling capacity in our emergency departments and doubling intensive care.

The world has not experienced something like this since immediately after the First World War. When we are faced with something like this, something none of us has ever experienced, it is only natural that people are concerned, stressed and anxious. That is why it is important to listen to expert advice, advice from people who are able to provide accurate information. Please turn to sources that can be relied on. One of the best places to get information is the Queensland Health website. You can also call 13HEALTH. Do not rely on unsourced and potentially inaccurate information spread online. There are simple things that you can do to help us limit the spread of the virus, simple things like stay home if you are sick, simple things like washing your hands thoroughly and taking care to practise social distancing which, in simple terms, is keeping at least 1.5 metres away from others.

Together with other state premiers and the Prime Minister we are closing our borders and isolating people who arrive from overseas because that has been the major cause of the spread of the virus. Today I have announced that to protect themselves Queenslanders should no longer travel overseas. But we still need to do more—much, much more. The very way we interact with each other must change and it has to start today. Our lives and the lives of our loved ones depend on it. This is not going to be a short-lived crisis. The way we behave, the way our country and our state works, will be extremely different for at least the next six months.

The measures announced by the Prime Minister this morning that the national cabinet is taking will be in place for quite some time. The measures we are taking in this bill will also last at least six months. To cut the risk we have stopped non-essential gatherings of 100 or more people indoors and 500 or more outdoors. A supporting directive will be made where essential gatherings will include things such as airports, public transport, medical and emergency facilities, jails, courts, the parliament,

business premises, construction and mining sites, schools, universities, childcare centres, hotels, motels and other places where people are transient like supermarkets and the local shops. We are serious about this so fines for breaches will apply.

There will be changes in how we live and how we work. Many Queensland businesses will already be making decisions to enable people to work from home more regularly and to move to split shifts so fewer people are working at any one time. The government is taking similar actions. For example, this bill amends the Constitution of Queensland 2001 to provide that a meeting of the Executive Council may be held using any technological means, such as teleconferencing or videoconferencing. The ability to hold meetings of the Executive Council by technological means has been identified as an important measure to ensure the business of government can continue through the COVID-19 pandemic. I anticipate that many more meetings will utilise teleconferencing and videoconferencing for the foreseeable future, just as we are for the meetings of the national cabinet.

I also want to address the incidents we have seen of panic buying and people hoarding food supplies. Let me make this very clear: we will not run out of food. Queensland has a strong agricultural sector and we have some of the greatest food security in the world. I understand that people are anxious and stressed, but it saddens me that some Queenslanders are behaving this way at the expense of others. By people going to supermarkets and raiding them and hoarding at this time it is putting the lives of some of the less fortunate in our society at the greatest risk. My government is acting to ensure the supermarket supply chains continue to function. The amendments in this bill will support our supermarkets in staying stocked to deal with the unprecedented demand for groceries. Woolworths and Coles have welcomed these changes, saying they will help with more deliveries into stores to help replenish stock. These amendments will allow for temporary changes to approvals for loading docks and distribution centres to operate 24 hours a day in extraordinary times.

Some people who catch the virus will have a mild illness, but for those who are older or have underlying conditions, particularly respiratory illnesses, or are in aged care, the virus could be deadly. Everyone has seen the evidence from around the world. This is a deadly virus, make no mistake, and it is here. It is here now in Australia, through nearly every state and territory, and we are in the fight of our lives. Please read the advice to all Queenslanders that will be updated on my social media channels. Additionally, one of the best places to get that information is 13HEALTH. Please listen to expert advice and please take this advice seriously.

Queenslanders know how to work together. We have shown it time and time again. During the 2011 floods Queenslanders showed their support and sympathy with the mud army which helped affected people clean up their properties and to get back on their feet. Now we stand together for a brand-new battle. Our response to this threat will look different. We will have to stand further apart physically but we will remain together in spirit. We will continue to work together and we will get through this.

I never thought I would see this in my lifetime. I am concerned for everybody. If we do not act now to contain the spread of this virus it will spread rapidly through our communities with devastating impacts. That is why we must act swiftly. We are seeing the states and territories working cooperatively with the federal government, regardless of their political persuasion. This parliament is acting because the national cabinet took the decision to get these measures through as quickly as possible. That is what happens when you are in a battle for lives: you act swiftly and you act decisively. There is no time for delay. As soon as this bill was drafted it was introduced. It will be passed tonight because, members, make no mistake, this bill will save lives.

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (8.26 pm): I rise tonight to speak on the Public Health and Other Legislation (Public Health Emergency) Amendment Bill 2020. I know that people are going through the full range of emotions at the moment. Tonight people are rightfully worried about their health, about their loved ones and about their jobs. I am just like everyone else. I have one daughter who works in retail and is currently in year 12, wondering what her year 12 is going to be like. I have one daughter who is in uni and works part-time. I have one daughter who is currently a student nurse. My elderly parents have just been on a cruise which should have been the trip of a lifetime. Like many other Queenslanders, my husband works away from home. We all must be calm, we must be compassionate, but most importantly we need to be considerate at this time.

The Palaszczuk Labor government is being anything but calm. This bill has panic written all over it. Labor is paving the way for the suspension of a democratic government in Queensland. No-one disputes the seriousness of the coronavirus, but Labor's plan is an extreme and undemocratic overreaction. Labor is forcing this bill through the House tonight because it does not want the scrutiny

of the opposition. Those opposite do not want the questions asked. In a crisis like this it is more important than ever that governments remain transparent and accountable. In fact, that is what the people expect of their politicians. Coronavirus should not be used to cover up our democratic processes. Schools and workplaces are open; the parliament should stay open too. This morning the Prime Minister of Australia stood up and said essential workplaces—and he used the term ‘parliament’—should remain open. The Premier of Queensland stood up in this parliament and she said she echoes the words of the Prime Minister. What a difference a couple of hours makes.

Labor is forcing this bill through in a couple of hours and not giving my members a chance to exercise their democratic right to speak on behalf of their constituents in this House because the Labor Party is out of its depth.

This bill does not go far enough. The danger is the health crisis. I know that the shadow Attorney-General will outline areas where this bill does not go far enough. Disappointingly, when the Minister for Main Roads over there is more interested in playing politics than in the health and wellbeing of Queenslanders, we know that we are at an all-time low in this House. The danger is the health crisis, but it will become an economic crisis because this bill does not go far enough. We on this side have been calling for the incompetent transport and main roads minister to bring forward the \$500 million worth of funding that could be spent in rural and regional Queensland to protect jobs.

Mr Minnikin interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Order! Pause the clock. Acting Manager of Opposition Business, those interjections are not called for. You are interrupting the time of your own speaker. I urge you to keep your comments to yourself.

Mr Bailey interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister, I urge you to cease your interjections or you will be warned.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: There we see the trivial ministers of the Palaszczuk government. They are the laughing-stock that the people of Queensland are meant to put their hope and faith in. We have heard industry groups laughing at the Palaszczuk government. The pleas of stakeholders such as the CCIQ and the National Retail Association are being ignored.

Mrs D'ATH: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. While those on the opposite side have said that they want time to speak on the bill, my point of order is on relevance. They should speak to this bill.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am listening carefully and the member is being relevant.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Again I point out the issue with the state of the Queensland economy right now because of the coronavirus. The pleas of stakeholders such as the CCIQ and the National Retail Association have been ignored. Those groups represent employers—

Mr Powell interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Glass House, again, you are interrupting your own speaker. I call you to order.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is not an invitation for laughter and joking, members. I will be warning someone. Member for Glass House, I call you to order.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Stakeholders such as the CCIQ and the National Retail Association represent the casual workers who the jokers over there laugh about. They are the people who are losing their jobs right now because of the health crisis. They are the people who will be at the front line of the economic crisis that this state is facing because the Palaszczuk government is behind the eight ball. Every other state in this country is pulling out every single stop that they can to protect their workers, but the Palaszczuk government sits there and closes down parliament. They are rushing through a bill and denying democracy in this great state by not allowing opposition members the opportunity to speak on the bill.

The Attorney-General and the Minister for Main Roads can take as much offence as they like, but on behalf of each and every Queenslander I stand here with the LNP team doing everything we can to force the Palaszczuk government into action. It is obvious when those opposite laugh and carry on that that is what they think of casual workers. That is what they think of the kids who have lost their retail jobs. That is what they think of the student nurses. That is what they think of the elderly of this state who will be struggling because of the inaction of the Palaszczuk government.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: Public confidence in our governments at all levels and in our democratic processes must be maintained. Today the government is taking urgent measures—

Mr Watts interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Order! Member for Toowoomba North.

Mr Watts interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Toowoomba North, you are warned.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: The government is tonight taking urgent measures to maximise public safety, minimise public health risks and maintain our democratic processes for local government elections in the face of an evolving public health emergency. The bill before the House tonight provides the flexibility required to address the unique and unprecedented circumstances surrounding the 2020 council elections.

The Palaszczuk government is not taking these steps lightly. Local government has an essential role in delivering services and supporting communities. I have been working with the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and the Electoral Commission of Queensland to ensure our response meets the needs of the Queensland community in these challenging times.

As I informed the House on Tuesday, the Attorney-General and I had a phone hook-up with mayors and CEOs and other stakeholders from across Queensland earlier this week and discussed measures that have so far been put in place by the ECQ. In these discussions I foreshadowed the introduction of legislation that would give us the options we may need in relation to local government elections if things were to change. Councils, councillors, candidates and voters can be assured that our amendments address the current uncertainty around the quadrennial elections by providing for greater flexibility to meet the challenges that we may face.

As the Minister for Health has outlined, the measures are temporary and will only apply to the 2020 quadrennial local government election in order to maximise public safety and minimise public health risks associated with the public health emergency involving COVID-19.

The bill proposes a number of amendments to achieve the policy objectives. These amendments allow for the suspension or termination of the 2020 quadrennial local government election, if needed, and give options around the caretaker arrangements that will apply during a period of suspension; allow the time frame for the receipt of postal vote applications to be extended for certain electors; allow flexibility in deciding if a poll is to be conducted by postal ballot; ensure that there are no barriers to appropriately qualified persons being issuing officers; provide more flexible time frames for taking or resuming an adjourned poll; allow the declaration of another class of electors who can qualify for alternative voting methods; allow the Electoral Commission to give a direction about the distribution of how-to-vote cards or other election material, to prohibit a person from canvassing for votes in or near polling booths and to permit the display of political statements inside or within six metres of the entrance to a polling booth; to allow the making of regulations under the City of Brisbane Act 2010 or the Local Government Act 2009 if necessary about matters not sufficiently provided for in these acts as a result of the 2020 quadrennial local government election not being held in March 2020; allow the making of regulations under the Local Government Electoral Act 2011, if necessary, about matters not sufficiently provided for in the act to allow or facilitate the holding of the 2020 quadrennial local government election; provide flexibility in the filling of councillor vacancies that may arise if the election is not held in March 2020; and allow for the continuation of the Ipswich City Council and Logan City Council interim administrations if the election is significantly delayed.

The amendments achieve the key policy objective to provide flexibility, if required, in terms of the election date for the 2020 quadrennial local government election and the statutory processes surrounding the conduct of the election to help avoid the health risks and safety of individuals posed by this public health emergency. While these amendments enable the flexibility that might be needed, let me make it clear that at this point in time, based on public health advice, the Palaszczuk government is determined to deliver the 2020 local government elections on the current schedule.

At this point I would like to thank the Local Government Association of Queensland which today threw its strong support behind the government and behind 28 March being the final day of polling. I thank the hundreds of thousands of Queenslanders who have already voted. I urge people to make use of the extended early voting hours tonight, tomorrow night and this Saturday. I also want to thank those frontline health workers and other workers who are dealing with the significant impact of this global pandemic here in Queensland.

In relation to the contribution of this part of the bill that I have referred to tonight, I acknowledge the efforts of the officers of my department, especially Bronwyn Blagoev, to bring these urgent amendments to the House, to make sure that we see the certainty and delivery of quality local government in this state during these troubled and challenging times. As I said, these are truly extraordinary times, but times that need that continuity, that certainty, that assurance in local government. The bill delivers that continuity. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr JANETZKI** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (8.45 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Public Health and Other Legislation (Public Health Emergency) Amendment Bill 2020. I will make a couple of different contributions tonight. I will speak briefly to the particular amendments that affect my portfolio, but then also raise a number of other issues of concern both across the state and locally in my electorate.

The amendments in relation to the bill facing the House tonight relate to 11 acts that sit in this House. With one hour's notice to amend the Electoral Act 1992—we should be thankful to get an hour, because we normally only get 18 minutes. To have the full hour, it is a tripling of the normal time we get before those opposite sneak through amendments that fundamentally change the electoral system in Queensland.

I come back to the provisions in relation to the Electoral Act. I note section 392A relates to COVID-19 and the amendments are limited to the involvement of the public health emergency that we currently face in Queensland. The changes in section 392D that relate to the Governor or Speaker being able to postpone a polling day are appropriate in the circumstances. While I am speaking in relation to the Governor, I note that the proposed changes to the Executive Council technology and the way that Executive Council meet is appropriate in the circumstances, too. It may be opportune, given the uncharted waters that we are currently in across Queensland, that more consideration be given to the way generally this House conducts its affairs and whether more can be done electronically into the future.

Sections 392G and 392H relate to methods of voting. These are significant and serious amendments to the Electoral Act, especially so when you consider that we are already voting. The two by-elections in question are the Currumbin by-election and the Bundamba by-election. Notwithstanding the seriousness of the public health emergency that we face, it is unprecedented to be changing the methods by which our citizens can vote in the middle of an electoral battle underway right now in Queensland. They are very significant changes.

It raises questions, when you start making such significant changes in the middle of a ballot, whether ECQ can keep up with the necessary resources. Obviously, with the increase in pre-poll voting hours, we need to make sure the ECQ is properly resourced with people to assist voters as they come into the booths. I note the local government minister this morning was talking about additional hours between 9 and 11 for the aged and the vulnerable, and the additional staff that will be present for those periods. I would hope that we would have additional staffing through pre-polling as much as humanly possible to support people as they come into the polling booths.

My concerns also relate to the technology and the integrity of the technology. If more people are phone voting then it is extremely important that there is integrity around the systems where people are voting with assistance or over the telephone.

I turn to the amendment of section 392I. They are broad powers which raise questions. This is the how-to-vote card provision. In a public health emergency all options need to be on the table. This is a fundamental change to the way we have conducted elections. It does raise questions around a limitation on freedom of political communication and the way in which candidates and those supporting candidates can communicate a message freely and persuasively to voters as they are entering the polling booth or at any other time. I also note that there is some lack of certainty around the question of public interest. Given the time I have had to read this bill, I believe that this has not been linked to a particular advice or public health warning, but I accept that in the circumstances these things will be necessary.

The final question I have in relation to the provisions amending the Electoral Act is around the amendment to section 392J which talks about the regulation and section expiring after one year of its commencement. Given that the next Queensland election is set down for 31 October, I wonder whether the Attorney-General could clarify why that has been given an expiry of one year rather than up until 31 October.

There is an issue that I would like to bring to the attention of the House tonight which arises from the Prime Minister's address this morning. He talked about the limitations on aged care throughout Australia. It is noteworthy that the provision announced by the Prime Minister this morning does not

relate to the retirement villages sector. The Prime Minister foreshadowed that, without the states and territories intervening in respect of retirement villages, operators may have no power to enforce social distancing and other health and safety provisions. I tonight table an excerpt from the Prime Minister's address and also an email from Minter Ellison where they raise those questions and in particular state that in the absence of enabling legislation or regulation by the state government, retirement village operators are effectively limited to requesting support from residents to introduce the restrictions and tighter controls required to limit the spread of the virus. I would be interested to hear the government's response to that.

Tabled paper: Email, dated 18 March 2019, from a Partner, Minter Ellison, Mr Robin Lyons, to the member for Burleigh, Mr Michael Hart MP, titled 'Retirement villages—COVID-19 response' [444].

In the time remaining, I would like to turn briefly to the financial aspects of this bill. In my previous working life I worked for a bank during the global financial crisis. In my last days in London before returning home I saw the first bank run in the United Kingdom in 150 years which brought down Northern Rock. Upon returning to Australia I started working for a bank. That was initially the credit crunch in London. It ended up being the global financial crisis when I returned to work for Heritage Bank in Australia.

One thing we learnt from the global financial crisis—the advice taken up by a Labor federal government—was to go hard, go early, go households. My concern about what is facing the House tonight is that economically the bill does not go hard enough nor far enough. That is why the amendments, foreshadowed by the shadow Treasurer and which I now table, are so important.

Tabled paper: Public Health and Other Legislation (Public Health Emergency) Amendment Bill 2020, Mr Tim Mander's amendments [445].

Tabled paper: Public Health and Other Legislation (Public Health Emergency) Amendment Bill 2020, explanatory notes to Mr Tim Mander's amendments [446].

Table paper: Public Health and Other Legislation (Public Health Emergency) Amendment Bill 2020, statement of compatibility with human rights contained in Mr Tim Mander's amendments [447].

Those amendments would set down a true economic road map to get through this. What we have seen at the moment, with the loans on offer and the payroll tax deferral, does not go far enough. The amendments talk about increased trading hours. They talk about a true waiver of payroll tax and not just the deferral of it so that businesses go broke in six months. It is about helping them today.

I said earlier that I had an hour to review this bill. I really had only 15 or 20 minutes because I spent the first 40 or 45 minutes after the Clerk sent us this bill talking to small business operators, chambers of commerce and TSBE in my electorate and across Toowoomba. I spoke to businesses such as Gabbinbar Homestead and GC Event Hire. I spoke to the franchise owner of a number of McDonald's stores in Toowoomba. In a city of 105,000 people he employs 600 people. They are crying out for genuine reform and genuine economic support—not payroll tax deferrals but payroll tax waivers.

I have spoken to Clubs Queensland. I have spoken with Martin Taylor, the CEO of Club Glenvale, tonight. I have spoken with Bernie Hogan of the QHA. Everybody is supportive of the health measures. We are going to see mass unemployment if the government does not step in and provide true stimulus—waive payroll tax, forgive licence fees and place gambling tax moratoriums on clubs and pubs. All options need to be on the table because at the moment this economic stimulus just does not go far enough.

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (8.55 pm): I rise to support this bill. As the Premier has noted, the COVID-19 pandemic is perhaps the greatest challenge of our lifetime. We need our democratic institutions to be responsive to this emergency in order to maintain our way of life and to safeguard our community's wellbeing. We need to be prepared for all scenarios.

I want to acknowledge the contribution of the Minister for Local Government, the member for Sandgate, in relation to the amendments that go to the local government elections scheduled for 28 March. The amendments in part 5 of the bill focus directly on ensuring any by-elections occurring before the general election on 31 October this year are conducted in a way that minimises and mitigates any risks posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. This bill ensures the individual who issued the writ for the by-election, being either the Speaker or the Governor, can postpone the by-election and substitute an appropriate day as they see fit. Given the rapid progression of the pandemic, it is important that a significant degree of latitude is provided, should postponement occur.

I want to take up the point raised by the member for Toowoomba South. He pointed to section 392J, saying that it has a sunset provision of 12 months. I appreciate that that 12 months takes us beyond the next general election. It is correct that any by-election that occurs this side of the general

election would not continue beyond that election. Any extension would obviously not go beyond the general election. If those seats were still vacant at the time of the general election, they would be filled at the general election.

We certainly hope—and I do not envisage—that there would be any by-elections after the general election that would be caught by these provisions. On the most current advice, we are talking about six months in which we could be dealing with this pandemic. What we sought to do was try to align the provisions as much as we could with the local government elections. For good reason local government requires that 12-month time frame. We sought to bring it into line with that. I can assure the member that we certainly do not envisage that happening. We hope that they would not need to be used.

The ECQ can already respond to any emergent situations arising on polling day. The amending provisions ensure that the ECQ will not be constrained by a 34-day time limit on setting the date for the resumption of polling. Instead the focus will be on when the poll can be conducted practicably and, most importantly, safely. The ECQ will also have the power to provide more flexible time frames for postal vote applications, facilitate alternatives to electoral visitor voting where visitor voting poses a health risk to an issuing officer and expand the class of electors who can make an electronically assisted vote.

The bill also provides for a regulation-making power so that we can take any further steps necessary to ensure the safest possible voting experience for all Queenslanders. Finally, the ECQ will also be given the power to issue a direction in relation to the distribution or display of how-to-vote cards as well as other election material. The ECQ may also regulate the way people canvassing for votes conduct themselves at a polling booth.

I started my contribution noting that the COVID-19 pandemic will require changes from us all—big and small. This will not be a normal election. Parties and candidates and their volunteers need to meet this challenge at our forthcoming by-elections. This is not business as usual. Queenslanders will expect a vigilant approach that prioritises safety. That means practising social distancing at polling booths.

I have posted this afternoon the most up-to-date fact sheet of the ECQ that talks about between 9 am and 11 am allowing those most vulnerable, those over 60, to come in and vote early and separately to others and some of the other initiatives—the extended hours for pre-poll and the Saturday pre-poll. I ask members to please get that message out through their social media as well and to talk to any candidates and volunteers in their area to reinforce the importance of this. This election can only work if we adhere to the advice of the health professionals. Please ask them all to practise these guidelines.

It means alternative methods of communicating our how-to-votes to electors. The ECQ has already communicated to candidates its expectation that caution be taken when distributing electoral material at pre-poll booths. I know the language used by the member for Toowoomba South was not intentional, but when we use language such as ‘this will be significant’ when we are talking about changing elections, let us be really careful to get a clear and consistent message to voters out there. This bill provides the ability to alter elections; this bill does not initiate such change. It is really important that we get that message out there.

As of today, no decision has been made to alter the election date. It is still 28 March. All actions taken to date are to support the delivery of the by-elections and the local government elections on 28 March. We need to reinforce that with people. To make that happen, we need to follow the advice and operate in a different model than we are used to when it comes to these elections.

I also, like others, want to thank the Electoral Commission—the staff and volunteers. This is not what they were planning at the start of the year when they were looking at conducting local government elections. Then they ended up with a by-election and then they ended up with another by-election. Now they also have a pandemic to deal with. I know that the system has not been working perfectly. It is under extreme demand, but the work that they have been doing is extraordinary. They are working tirelessly.

What we do know—and the Minister for Local Government said this this morning—is that voters are turning out. They are not looking for excuses not to vote. In fact, they are turning out in droves. They want to be heard. They want their voices to be heard. They want a say in democracy. They want to choose their next councillors and mayors and they want to have a say in the by-elections. It is great that they are doing that.

I thank the Minister for Local Government, his staff and his department, which is also working very closely with my department on these amendments and working with the ECQ to make this as efficient an electoral process as we possibly can. In relation to this bill, I acknowledge the tremendous

work of all ministers, along with the departments, the parliamentary drafters and the parliamentary staff. I particularly want to single out the Minister for Health and his extraordinary efforts since this pandemic first started and also Dr Jeannette Young. She is extraordinary. I am so proud that she is our Chief Health Officer. I think she is leading the way. It is an exhausting job that they are doing and we want to acknowledge that.

I also want to echo comments earlier. Let us make sure that we respect everyone out there at the moment, especially our health workers. They do not deserve to be abused or criticised for the decisions they are making. They are doing it in the best interests of all Queenslanders. Let us respect everyone who goes to work, whether it is our shopkeepers or anyone else. Let us do what we do in any other natural disaster—actually come together and support each other.

Mr Powell: What—have parliament sit?

Mrs D'ATH: I think that says it all.

Mr Powell: It happens with every other disaster—we sit.

Mrs D'ATH: I take that interjection. When I was a federal member, parliament was suspended so we could deal with the fires in Victoria.

Mr Powell: Yes, for a day or two days. How many months did it suspend for?

Mrs D'ATH: There are circumstances and there are times when you need to—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Order, members! We will not have quarrelling across the chamber, member for Glass House.

Mrs D'ATH: There are times when you need to act and prioritise the work of this parliament and prioritise the work of the government which is working every minute of every day to deal with this virus across all of the portfolios. We need to continue to do that. We need to recognise that that has to be the priority of the government right now, just as it is for the federal government. That is recognised by the Labor opposition in Canberra—

Mr Powell: And they're sitting.

Mrs D'ATH:—in Victoria—

Mr Powell: And they're sitting.

Mrs D'ATH: I take that interjection. They are sitting to pass urgent bills and then they are going to rise. That is it. That is a bipartisan position that they have taken. It is a shame we could not do the same here. This is a very important bill, and I commend it to the House.

Ms LEAHY (Warrego—LNP) (9.04 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Public Health and Other Legislation (Public Health Emergency) Amendment Bill. We are in the midst of a declared global pandemic. We are also in the midst of a quadrennial local government election and two by-elections. In Australia, as of 18 March, there were 414 confirmed cases of COVID-19, five confirmed deaths, with 94 confirmed cases in Queensland. Unfortunately that number will increase.

We have heard from the government in the last two days that they have been working on the COVID-19 situation since January this year. Now we have a legislative response. We have been given the legislation for an hour and it has been truncated into a two-hour debate. Surely some of those things could have been identified. I know hindsight is a great thing, but it begs the question that, if you have been working on it since January and suddenly we get all these emergent things happen with just two hours of debate, it is a rather interesting situation.

Many members of the House will not have the opportunity to scrutinise this legislation fully. They will not have the opportunity to talk about it and how it affects their communities. At this unprecedented time when we have a pandemic, it does not instil confidence in the community when we see political expediency. We will all be here tomorrow and we could have debated this bill tomorrow.

As I stand here in this parliament, I represent an electorate where many communities and families live in isolation— isolation on properties and in isolated communities. They often feel the disadvantage due to isolation. However, as the seriousness of this situation starts to be fully comprehended, that isolation may become a blessing to them. However, they are concerned about the Queensland economy. They are concerned about jobs. They know there is a health crisis, but they are concerned that this will become an economic crisis, and we will feel it most in the regional areas. Today I had an email from Domino's Pizza in Dalby. They said—

We see the debate happening today around the deferment or freezing of payroll tax. Deferment, as the Labor Government is suggesting, offers nothing. It simply means that at some stage the small or medium business owners will have to come up with a double payment. It will crush businesses and encourage business owners to cut back on staff in the interim.

It is going to have the opposite effect. It is not going to help the economy; it is going to cost jobs. They wanted us to know what a critical policy decision this is for business owners, and they encouraged me to argue the case with the government. I do want to thank Sulay and Prakash, the franchisees at Domino's in Dalby, for pointing out what local businesspeople will face in relation to the Palaszczuk Labor government's payroll tax deferment.

This state is in the middle of local government elections. At this time we need to have local government representatives in place after that election on 28 March. Local government mayors are the heads of the disaster management committees across our state. Our state needs them at this time. We need their local leadership. We need their local knowledge and their workforces. Local government employs some 40,000 staff across Queensland. This may be a tough time for those newly elected mayors and councillors—and I hope they will be elected on 28 March. This is a balancing act. We need to have local government in our state but we need to ensure that when we act we take into account the health of the wider community. It is a serious balancing act.

This bill seeks to make a number of urgent amendments. I specifically want to talk about those for the City of Brisbane Act, the local government acts and the Local Government Electoral Act. Local governments may be in caretaker mode, but it is disappointing that the LGAQ did not have more time to scrutinise this legislation because they, as the representative body of local governments in Queensland, are not actually in caretaker mode. The purpose of the amendments is to provide flexibility, if required—I emphasise 'flexibility, if required'—for the election date for the 2020 quadrennial local government elections and the statutory processes for the conduct of the elections to help minimise the serious risks to the health and safety of persons caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The emphasis should be on the fact that there is power for flexibility if required. The measures are temporary and will only apply to the 2020 quadrennial local government elections; however, the government is giving itself significant powers, and I hope these powers will not have to be used. Hopefully, they are being provided as an option if the health advice specifically determines that a local government election has to be postponed or suspended. The bill allows for the suspension or termination of the 2020 quadrennial local government elections if needed—I think the important word there is 'if'—and confirms the respective caretaker arrangements that apply during the period of suspension.

Many thousands of people have already voted in this election, so it is a difficult time. The bill allows the time frames for the receipt of postal vote applications to be extended for certain electors. I want to make something clear, because there has been a lot of discussion about the time frame for postal vote applications. I am advised that this provision will not allow the ECQ to reopen postal vote applications for the local government elections that are currently underway. It allows flexibility in deciding if a poll is to be conducted by postal ballot if there is a suspension or delay in a particular ballot in the future.

The bill also ensures there are no barriers to appropriately qualified persons being issuing officers, and that may be quite appropriate for some of our Indigenous communities. It also provides more flexible time frames for taking or resuming an adjourned poll. The bill allows the Electoral Commission to: give a direction about how, where and when how-to-vote cards may be distributed and displayed in a polling booth; prohibits the distribution and display of how-to-vote cards or other election material—I assume that includes booth wrap as well—at a polling booth; prohibits a person from canvassing votes in or near polling booths; and permits the display of political statements inside or within six metres of the inside of a polling booth. This will significantly impact the Brisbane City Council election that is underway, and it will impact all parties involved in that election. Basically, it stops the handing out of how-to-vote cards at the Brisbane City Council election.

The bill also allows the making of regulations under the City of Brisbane Act and the Local Government Act about matters that are not provided for sufficiently in these acts as a result of the 2020 quadrennial local government elections not being held in March 2020. That is a very wideranging power. The concerning thing is that, if those regulations are made and this parliament for whatever reason does not come back and sit, there may be no check and balance against those regulations because the only way to scrutinise those regulations is through debate in the parliament.

There is another provision in the bill that provides for flexibility in councillor vacancies that may arise in the election if it is not held in March 2020. I suggest to the government that, if they want to fill council vacancies in this manner in these uncertain times, then that should be done by bipartisan agreement between the government and opposition. Politics should be taken out of the filling of councillor vacancies, particularly at this uncertain time. We have a situation where the state needs local governments. They need mayors and leaders in local communities. They need them more now than ever, and they need them to help with this pandemic.

 **Mr COSTIGAN** (Whitsunday—NQF) (9.13 pm): I am quite pleased to make a contribution tonight to the Public Health and Other Legislation (Public Health Emergency) Amendment Bill 2020, and I do so given the context of the debate. These are troubling times; that is an understatement. I remember going through Airlie Beach on Monday and looking at the cafes and restaurants. I am sure it was not just me wondering where the next customer is coming from.

As the leader of North Queensland First and the member for Whitsunday, I want to say that I have no intention of opposing the bill here tonight. I want to acknowledge what has been said by a number of speakers. I think there are almost a dozen acts or regulations that will be amended if this bill goes through this evening—and I think it is a no-brainer that it will—but I cannot believe that we only have a two-hour window to scrutinise this legislation. It has been said already in the debate here tonight in the people's house that we could be here all day tomorrow debating this. I see the member for Gregory nodding his head. As I look to the opposition I do want to flag my intention to support the LNP opposition's amendments to the bill. As noted by the member for Everton and Deputy Leader of the Opposition, as much as I think he is a muppet, in this context—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Weir): Member for Whitsunday, that is unparliamentary. I ask you to withdraw.

Mr COSTIGAN: I withdraw and I thank you for your guidance. I do in all seriousness commend him in relation to the waiving of payroll tax and other measures, including: ensuring power bills are not increased for the period of the declared public health emergency; extending retail trading hours; freezing car registration; and shareholding ministers responsible for bulk water costs providing a written directive to those authorities not to increase charges for the supply of bulk water services for the declared public health emergency.

As the member for Everton takes his seat I do commend him on those amendments. They are sensible. Do they go far enough? Probably not. I thought there was scope for some work around land tax, council rates and other charges because people are hurting. Of course people are hurting! Every person in the House, regardless of their politics, would acknowledge that people across Queensland, the length and breadth of our state, are hurting. Workers in the tourism industry, the construction industry, the agricultural industry, the resources industry, as well as mums and dads, retirees, pensioners, battlers, the disadvantaged, the sick, the frail, the elderly—the mind boggles in relation to how COVID-19 or coronavirus is impacting them not only from a medical, health and wellbeing point of view but also from an economic point of view. How are they going to manage through this? Where is their hope? For without hope what have we got? Right now the eyes of millions of Queenslanders—maybe not literally—are on this place wondering what we are doing as elected representatives.

I heard the comments from one of the government MPs. Again putting politics aside, Dr Jeannette Young and her team need to be commended for their leadership here. I see the health minister nodding on the other side of the aisle. I thank the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services for the extent of the briefing today. It is not the first time I have been to a briefing on coronavirus or COVID-19. I know that going back a few weeks ago the crowd was much smaller then. It was not quite standing room only today but it was a big crowd, and rightly so. Again putting politics aside, we all care about the people we represent and then some, particularly those people I mentioned before: the frail, the disadvantaged, the sick, the socially isolated and those people living in remote and Indigenous communities.

There was some talk earlier in relation to amendments to the Electoral Act. I had some feedback today from a gentleman outside my electorate in North Queensland who pointed out the layout of the pre-polling facility in this town. I thought to myself, 'Why are the voting cubicles so close together?' They are supposed to be a metre and a half apart. It is as if there is no health emergency at the moment, no economic emergency. It is almost as if people have forgotten that and they have just rolled out the hardware for the election so everyone can line up as we always do when we go and vote. Social distancing is a term we will have to get used to. A lot of people will have challenges adhering to social distancing, but they must do it because it is in the public and national interest.

In conclusion, I would prefer more time to scrutinise the bill. I walked in here today after the dinner break and suspension which went on and on. It is my view that we should be here tomorrow. I travelled in my Prado, the 'Whitsunday Wanderer'—and I do not want a medal for it—for a few hours at the wheel on Monday to get here. For nearly 1,200 kilometres, I drove from Shute Harbour to George Street. That is my job. That is what we are elected to do. It was my decision in travelling down to avoid the planes and to organise my flat tyre being fixed in the car park here because that is my job—to represent the people and make decisions in the best interests of Queenslanders, particularly the people of North Queensland in my role as the Leader of North Queensland First.

This bill has been rushed. I understand that we need to make decisions on the advice of eminently qualified people, but we should be here tomorrow. The House should debate this bill tomorrow. We could have gone into our beds tonight and read up on it so we could scrutinise it properly. That is our job. They do not do it in the other House anymore, do they? This was not going to go to committee, and there is a reason for that. I support the bill. I will not oppose the bill.

I reiterate again that it is my intention to support the amendments of the member for Everton as they are more than reasonable. They will help people in need who are wondering, 'What is going on?' What will tomorrow bring? How bleak will Easter be? That has been the elephant in the room. There are tough times ahead. We cannot sugar-coat it. The people are looking to the government to govern. The opposition and the crossbench have a responsibility to hold the government of the day to account. We need to work as constructively and collaboratively as we can to make the system better, to protect Queenslanders and to help Queenslanders, particularly those vulnerable Queenslanders. I refer to the little old lady at Eventide in Rockhampton, Francis of Assisi in Mackay, the people in our cape communities, our Indigenous communities, the cafe owner at Airlie Beach, the shopkeeper on the Esplanade in Cairns, the mine worker in Cloncurry or Mount Isa and so on.

I might add that today the crossbench was a fairly lonely section of parliament. That is the way it goes and I can wear that, because we are here to do a job and it is a great privilege. I reiterate again that I represent not only the people of Whitsunday but the people of Central, North and Far North Queensland, because tonight they look to this place to make decisions that will help them and give them hope, because without hope what have we got?

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (9.23 pm), in reply: I thank all members who have contributed to the debate tonight. Earlier I had a chance to speak in some detail about this important bill and to address the amendments proposed, especially those relevant to the health portfolio. At that stage I did outline to the House precisely why they were urgent and why we needed to pass them quickly tonight. They are indeed needed and urgent in order to allow us, via our Chief Health Officer, to implement important decisions that have been made by the national cabinet in an unprecedented regular meeting of the first ministers of the states and territories and of the Commonwealth, especially those decisions that relate to stopping mass gatherings and locking down aged-care facilities.

It is important that we clarify that we have the power to do those things. It is also important that we can ensure that the state can do those things without being exposed to a potentially limitless amount of compensation. That is the purpose of the health amendments in this bill. Other ministers have appropriately addressed why amendments to the legislation for which they are responsible should be passed and why they should be passed urgently. For that reason, I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 14, as read, agreed to.

Mr MANDER: I seek leave to move the amendments circulated in my name outside the long title.

Division: Question put—That leave be granted.

AYES, 33:

LNP, 32—Batt, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Boyce, Crandon, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Hart, Hunt, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McArdle, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, O'Connor, Perrett, Powell, Rowan, Simpson, Sorensen, Watts, Weir, Wilson.

NQF, 1—Costigan.

NOES, 41:

ALP, 41—Bailey, Brown, Butcher, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Healy, Hinchliffe, Howard, Kelly, King, Lauga, Linard, Lui, Lynham, Madden, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, B. O'Rourke, C. O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pease, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Stewart, Trad, Whiting.

Pairs: Boyd, Robinson; Jones, Purdie; Mullen, Nicholls; Pegg, Stevens; Power, Bates.

Resolved in the negative.

Clauses 15 to 49, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (9.28 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a third time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Long Title

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (9.29 pm): I move—

That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

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

Motion agreed to.

MOTIONS

Portfolio Committees, Reporting Dates

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (9.29 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That, under the provisions of standing order 136, the Transport and Public Works Committee report to the House on the Transport and Other Legislation (Road Safety, Technology and Other Matters) Amendment Bill by 29 May 2020 and the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee report to the House on the Corrective Services and Other Legislation Amendment Bill by 29 May 2020.

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (9.29 pm): I support the motion moved by the Leader of the House, but I make the point that those timelines would have been discussed tomorrow at a Committee of the Legislative Assembly meeting that we are not having because we are shutting down parliament and we are not coming back. Who knows whether we even will come back in two or three weeks?

This is the sort of stuff that this government will now start doing: it will make decisions without the Committee of the Legislative Assembly. I give credit to the Leader of the House, who rang me and said that because we are not having the meeting tomorrow she was going to move the motion tonight. I thank her for that. That is why I will support it. This is what happens when an arrogant government decides to shut parliament down and there is no scrutiny.

Mr Mander: I don't think we will be back before the election.

Mr BLEIJIE: Anything is open now. Who knows when we will be back? It depends on what else happens before we adjourn this evening. These are the decisions that are made and should be made by the Committee of the Legislative Assembly. Continually, week by week, we see the power grabs from this Labor government. It treats this parliament as its political plaything. I have said it before and I will say it again. I will not be accused by Labor of not taking COVID-19 seriously enough. I will not be conned by the Labor government with a coronavirus cover-up in relation to parliamentary proceedings. I will not buy it. These matters should be determined by the CLA.

Mr Speaker, I am not sure whether you have been given the courtesy of the government letting you know that we are not meeting tomorrow for the Committee of the Legislative Assembly which you chair. We will wait and see whether we are meeting. These are the decisions that the Legislative Assembly would have made tomorrow. The Leader of the House would have come in tomorrow afternoon and notified the parliament that the CLA had made those decisions. The CLA has now had that decision taken away from it and it has been made by the government on the run, on the hop again, as we have just seen with the guillotining of the debate and the only-two-hour time frame, and I suspect we are about to see when the Leader of the House says we are not coming back tomorrow. When the House was suspended earlier I hope the Leader of the House had sufficient time to think about the seriousness of the issue of not coming back tomorrow and will not in a minute move the motion that I suspect she will move to shut the parliament down.

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (9.32 pm): I too rise with concern in relation to a decision being taken away from the Committee of the Legislative Assembly. We have seen a lot of different rights of this parliament taken away over the sitting of this parliament. We have seen a constant

guillotine on almost every bill that has come through the place. We have seen a government change legislative acts that relate to elections with no notice—well, 18 minutes notice. We have seen a lot of things taken away from this democracy.

Whilst we are in extraordinary times, and I do support the government taking extraordinary action in these extraordinary times, I am very concerned that this parliament will not be sitting tomorrow but my wife will be at school tomorrow with 700 or 800 kids. If this crisis is so desperate then I have to ask: why are so many other things open?

In relation to this motion about committees reporting back, I am curious to understand, with the parliament shut down, how these committees will function, how they will report and how they will gather evidence. We could seek answers to these questions if we were only allowed to sit in this parliament. I am concerned that the structures of this parliament are being tampered with and a majority of this parliament is being used to circumnavigate the rights of this parliament. I am very concerned about that.

Mr COSTIGAN: Mr Speaker?

Mr SPEAKER: Member, I have already given guidance today for people to not rise and seek the call while a member is on their feet. I am happy for you to seek the call now that the member for Toowoomba North is finished.

 **Mr COSTIGAN** (Whitsunday—NQF) (9.34 pm): Thank you for your guidance. My apologies. I thought the member for Toowoomba North had finished. I think the great institution that is Her Majesty's Queensland parliament is being undermined. I was listening intently to what the member for Toowoomba North had to say about his good wife going to school to educate young Queenslanders, kids who will vote one day, kids who are looking to us for leadership. So many people will go about their daily business tomorrow and parliament will not sit. I find that mind-blowing.

Mrs D'ATH: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance. This is about when the committees report back, not whether the parliament is sitting or not tomorrow.

Mr SPEAKER: The Leader of the House has a point. The motion is strictly about the provisions relating to standing order 136 and the Transport and Public Works Committee reports. I ask you to speak to that motion or resume your seat.

Mr COSTIGAN: I will confine my comments to the committee process. The CLA is supposed to be sitting tomorrow. I do not sit on any committee at all thanks to the shenanigans involving the government and the opposition last year. I will not go into that now. I would have thought that the CLA should be convening tomorrow.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr Mander: We fought for you!

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr COSTIGAN: I take the interjection from the member for Everton. He fought for us? Yes, like a chocolate soldier! Whilst the Leader of the House, from what I have heard from the Manager of Opposition Business just a moment ago, out of courtesy let the Manager of Opposition Business know what was going on here, the CLA should be meeting. From my point of view, the institution of parliament is being undermined in this process. The House should be sitting tomorrow and parliamentary committee meetings should be held as they have been done historically. That system is being short-circuited. I find it appalling and I am sure that most Queenslanders would find it absurd to say the least.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Amendment to Sessional Orders

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (9.37 pm), by leave, without notice: I move the following amendment to sessional orders that take effect immediately—

Insert after sessional order 1A—

"Change to sitting date or time

- 1B. (1) Notwithstanding standing order 49, sessional order 1(a) or the House having already adjourned to a specified time and date, the Speaker, upon advice from the government of the state, may set an alternative day or hour for the next sitting, and must notify each member of any change.
- (2) The Speaker's notification to each member may be by electronic means.
- (3) This sessional order expires on 17 September 2020."

I know that this is a significant change to our existing sessional orders. The fact is that under our current arrangements, certainly while we are sitting, the sitting calendar can be changed, the next adjournment debate and time could be changed by the government and by the parliament, but when parliament is not sitting and it is scheduled to return on a set date and time there is no mechanism other than the Governor proroguing the parliament to alter that date and put parliament off.

Around the world we are seeing regions within countries and whole countries go into lockdown. No-one in this chamber could stand here today and say that they can absolutely guarantee that an area of this state, the state or the nation would not be locked down.

We are not in a position to make those decisions about what will happen over the coming days, weeks and months. However, if we do not provide a mechanism within the sessional orders then, despite us potentially being in a national or state lockdown, we would still have to recall parliament and go against everything that has been directed for health reasons to protect our community and Queenslanders. This is a gap. It is a gap that potentially needs to be addressed longer term, but we have put a sunset provision on it so that parliament must sit within six months. On the question of the date, a parliament must sit within six months. That is why that date is there.

Opposition members interjected.

Mrs D'ATH: This is not a game being played here. The federal parliament's standing orders contain a power for the Speaker, while the House is not sitting, to alter the future date with no criteria and no sunset date. It is a power that has existed for a very long time. Has it ever been abused? Not that I am aware of. Has it been used? Absolutely. When I was a federal member and my colleague—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mrs D'ATH: Those on the other side may want to listen, because this is an important change. If they are seriously concerned about this change, maybe they should listen to the reasons why it needs to occur. I have seen the power being used federally. The federal parliament was suspended because of the Victorian fires. People were dying and action needed to be taken. Ministers needed to be elsewhere. There were members whose own offices, homes and constituents were at risk. It was considered that they were best placed dealing directly with the fires and not meeting in parliament, and the parliament did not sit for that reason. That power allowed that to happen at the request of the government, and the Speaker of the day supported it. This should be used in a very extreme and rare circumstance, but if no mechanism is there—

Mr Hunt: 'Trust us!'

Mrs D'ATH: We should trust the Speaker of the House and put faith in the Speaker of the House. Their concern is about giving the Speaker this authority, yet the government of the day can change the sitting calendar when they want. Let's not get too carried away saying, 'We can't possibly change when parliament is sitting.' The government of the day—whichever party is in government at the time—can do that already, so let's not make this out to be more than what it is.

We have a national and global emergency going on at the moment. We have a national and international health pandemic happening. The premiers and the Prime Minister of this country have come together to form a national cabinet. They are meeting regularly. Decisions are being made not just daily but hourly to keep the people of Queensland and Australia safe. Around the world people have been dying from this disease. We have to be flexible. We have to be nimble and able to change circumstances and we need the mechanisms to do that. To say that we should have to go to the Governor to prorogue the parliament, simply to defer a sitting date to deal with a potential lockdown or other directions from health professionals, is irresponsible. This is a reasonable amendment with a sunset clause attached to it—

Mr Millar: Twelve months—no, six months.

Mrs D'ATH: It is not 12 months. I take that interjection. The member should read the motion before he starts interjecting.

Mr Watts: Hopefully it will get circulated before we vote.

Mrs D'ATH: I read it out. It is not very long. The Manager of Opposition Business was well aware of it. I make the point that this has been provided to the Manager of Opposition Business.

Mr Bleijie: In draft form; not the final motion.

Mrs D'ATH: The final motion has not changed from the draft. Come on: let us not play games with important issues like this.

Opposition members interjected.

Mrs D'ATH: The behaviour of those opposite in many of the debates over this week, but this one in particular, is irresponsible.

Mr SPEAKER: Members to my left will cease their interjections. If any member wishes to seek the call, they can seek the call and they must be relevant to the motion, which I believe the Leader of the House is doing.

Mrs D'ATH: It is childish and it is irresponsible. The people of Queensland and the people of Australia want all members of parliament—their politicians, their parliamentarians—to show some maturity and some professionalism in the way we go about our jobs and how we deal with this crisis. This is one of those moments when we have to make decisions as to how the parliament can function going forward. Right now there are parliaments that are adjourning without setting future dates. I will be moving a special adjournment that will set the next sitting date as scheduled. It will not be open-ended. Other parliaments are leaving it open-ended. I am setting the next sitting date as planned in the calendar. This mechanism is important. I ask those on the other side to, just for one moment, put aside the party politics, listen to what I am saying and support the motion.

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (9.46 pm): I oppose the amendment to the sessional orders. I premise my comments by saying that what I am about to say is no reflection on you, Mr Speaker. The sessional orders that are being amended give the power to 'a Speaker', so the comments that I am about to make are no reflection on you, Mr Speaker. The comments I am about to make are on the role of the Speaker, regardless of who is sitting in the Speaker's chair at the time that this sessional order would be requested to be used by a government.

This is an extraordinary power to give to anyone. The reason I am so concerned about it is that under this amended sessional order the government could advise the Speaker to do what they want to do. I am going to say what I think is going to happen or what could happen under this amended sessional order. I think tonight the government will move the special adjournment and we will not be back tomorrow. A minute ago the Leader of the House said that she will move the special adjournment so that we are here when we are meant to be here in a couple of weeks time. Earlier today at the health briefing, they said that coronavirus or COVID-19 is only going to get worse. Let us consider what they have done in this week's sitting, that is, there have been no debates today, they suspended the House and we are not sitting tomorrow.

Do members really think we will be here in two weeks time? Is COVID-19 going to be fixed by then? Is the economic reality that we are facing going to be gone? Will everything be fixed? No, it will not! Therefore, for the Leader of the House to say that she will move the special adjournment and we will all be here in a couple of weeks time is rubbish. We will not be here in a couple of weeks time. If the advice today is not to sit and that is why we are finishing up, I cannot see how, in two weeks, the health advice will be that it is all better and parliament can now sit. All the health advice, both federally and across the state, is that it is only going to get worse.

The reason the Leader of the House will move the special adjournment is so that when the media question why they are giving the Speaker such a power tonight, they will be able to say, 'Oh, but we might be sitting next week; it's only backup.' This sessional order change could mean that the government could go to the Speaker and say, 'We do not want to sit until 17 September 2020.' For six months we might not sit in this House. What concerns me is that, as members may recall, the Premier stood in the parliament this morning and said that this crisis could last for six months.

Incidentally we have an amendment to a sessional order giving the power to the government to direct the Speaker to stop parliament for six months. All these little bits we heard today are leading to one road. What the Leader of the House did not say is that the Constitution of Queensland Act also says that the House cannot go for longer than six months without sitting. So we have six months from the Premier this morning. We have the health advice today saying this could go for six months. We now have a sessional order amendment which just happens to be six months. The government want to escape scrutiny and accountability for six months.

Colleagues, this could be your last sitting until the election. This could be our last sitting of this parliament until the election. I see Minister Lynham shaking his head and laughing. How is it that what I am saying could not happen? If it cannot happen, then why did they put 17 September in the sessional orders?

The Leader of the House also says federally they have this power and no-one has ever abused it. Federally, they have a Senate. I cannot believe Minister Furner did not remind the Leader of the House. He knows all about the Senate. All we have is this House and a ceremonial house a few metres down the corridor. Our committees are government controlled. The chair of the committees, other than the PCCC, are government controlled. The only thing that separates a corrupt government and the people of Queensland is this parliament. This parliament stops it.

Gordon Nuttall would not have gone to jail had it not been for parliament. The former member for Redcliffe would not have stood at that bar had it not been for this parliament. For the government to dismiss this parliament as their little plaything for the next six months is disgraceful—absolutely disgraceful. They will cancel committee meetings and, at a whim, in two weeks the Leader of the House can inform the Speaker, ‘Please advise honourable members that this sitting is not happening.’ They could advise the Speaker to do it the next sitting, and on and on they could do this.

Mrs D’Ath: What if the Chief Health Officer said it should not sit? Do you care?

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection. The Chief Health Officer and federal Chief Health Officer did not say parliament should be suspended. The government did suspend it today. You suspended the House. The Leader of the House says, ‘We are not suspending it.’ Five hours ago they did. The Leader of the House moved a notice of suspension. If we were not going to have a special adjournment in a minute, we would be back here tomorrow sitting. It concerns me greatly.

This House is important and to some members on this side, including the crossbench, this House is still important. We are not going to use a scare campaign of the COVID-19 to escape accountability and integrity, as this government have done. They are using the coronavirus to escape integrity and accountability. Since the Palaszczuk government was elected, we have seen nothing but accountability and integrity shown the door in this place.

This Parliament needs to sit. We have seen these issues and this is why we need to sit not only tomorrow but also in two weeks and for the next six months. As I said today, we can sit with limited people. We can do the same deal as the federal government did with limited people in the House. We can do all that. We can abide by the 1.5-metre rule. The government said today that it is hard to abide by the 1.5-metre social distancing rule because this is an old place. I will tell the Leader of House something: it did not stop the ministers lining up at the buffet at lunch standing next to each other or at the bar tonight. Where is the 1.5-metre rule? It is a guise. The government is conning the people of Queensland under the coronavirus scare campaign that parliament ought not to sit. Parliament should be sitting. I tell you why. More than ever we should be sitting because if these are the tactics of this government this week, God help us and God knows what is going to happen in the next six months.

Absolutely the Queensland public would expect us to sit. How else are we going to debate the youth justice crime wave across the state, air conditioning in state schools, the Cross River Rail and the member for Toohey—all these issues that need to be debated in this place? If it was not for this place, Gordon Nuttall would have got let off and Scott Driscoll would have got let off. It is this House, it is this parliament and it is these members that stand between a corrupt government getting away with their corruption and a good government. We will do everything we can on this side of the House to make sure that the people of Queensland are informed of this. This is so wrong, so wrong, and members should not support it.

(Time expired)

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (9.56 pm): I think it is quite extraordinary that we have the opposition in this House creating a bogeyman out of a very sensible and reasonable amendment to our sessional orders, creating a bogeyman as the great spooky spectre that is waving over the state at this time when the reality is that COVID-19 is the spectre that is hanging over this state and this jurisdiction at this time. The very sensible and prudent amendment that is before the House—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I want to make it clear as, from some of the interjections of members opposite, I think they do not understand what it actually means. I want to make it clear—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Members to my left. The member for Nicklin will cease his interjections.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: What the amendment moved by the Leader of the House provides for, sensibly with a sunset clause sitting over the top of it, is a different set of arrangements for the way in which this House can have its normal sitting program amended. In the circumstances that we currently face as a

community, indeed as a country and as a world, it is entirely prudent to have this set of arrangements. Even though this is a set of arrangements which has proposed in the amendment moved by the Leader of the House a sunset clause sitting over the top of it, these are the arrangements by which the Speaker can change the program going forward. These are the arrangements that sit in place in a range of jurisdictions in this country. This is the set of arrangements that sits in place permanently for the House of Representatives, permanently for the Senate, permanently for the South Australian House of Assembly, permanently for the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly, permanently for the Western Australian Legislative Council, permanently for the Western Australian Legislative Assembly and permanently for the Victorian Legislative Council.

What we are seeking to put in place is a fallback position where we would see the House not sit on its next scheduled date in the program. That needs to be put in place because circumstances may arise where that needs to happen. There seems to be some misapprehension that the government cannot do that now. It can do that at any time it wishes by proroguing the House. Proroguing the House would mean that all the work of the committees would be swept away. The work on all the bills before the House—the ones that I have heard members cite as being important things to be dealt with—would get swept away.

An opposition member interjected.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: So you are saying that you want to see that happen? That is what would happen. I have now heard from the opposition in this place that if we are in the extraordinary circumstances where the sitting program as planned has to be amended their prescription is to wipe away all of the work of this parliament so far and to take everything off the agenda going forward. This is sensible and prudent protection against the wasted effort and diminution of what is on the *Notice Paper* and the committees of this House. This is the right and proper way to deal with this situation. It is a sensible and prudent way forward.

Mr Speaker, you started the sitting week with reference to the events in this chamber 98 years ago as the spectre of the Spanish flu continued to reverberate and impact the globe and reverberate and impact this great state. What we saw 98 years ago was a lack of bipartisanship which resulted in the inability of the House to deal sensibly and prudently with a pandemic.

I am so sad to say that this sensible and prudent amendment to the sessional orders, which has a sunset clause, is being opposed by the opposition in this House. What we are seeing as a consequence—

Mr Krause interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Scenic Rim is warned under the standing orders. I will hear all contributions in silence soon, members. Just because there are fewer members in the chamber it does not mean that the behaviour at the moment is acceptable.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: What we are seeing is that the Neanderthal tendencies of the conservatives in this state have not progressed in 98 years.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Please resume your seat, Minister. The member for Southport will cease his interjections. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition will cease his interjections. I will ask for silence shortly if you cannot cease your interjections. Any member who wishes to speak can seek the call.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: The sensible and prudent amendment to the sessional orders, with a sunset clause, proposed by the Leader of the House is being opposed in this House in an echo down the halls of this parliament from 98 years ago when a member had to be brought into the House on a stretcher in a delirious state in order to try to make sure that this state could function in the face of a perilous, terrible pandemic. It is absolutely extraordinary that these people have learnt nothing.

This is a sensible and prudent set of arrangements that do not even go as far as the arrangements that permanently exist in the other jurisdictions in Australia that I named.

Mr Millar interjected.

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

Mr HINCHLIFFE: Those jurisdictions are the House of Representatives, the Australian Senate, the South Australian House of Assembly, the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly, the Western Australian Legislative Council, the Western Australian Legislative Assembly and the Victorian Legislative Council. This is nothing extraordinary and radical. What is extraordinary and quite radical is the creation of this bogeyman by those opposite when the real threat to our state is COVID-19.

I implore those opposite to reconsider and rethink their attitude. I know that the sensible and moderate people on this side of the chamber will support the amendment being proposed by the Leader of the House in order to make sure we see good, sensible management of this House in the face of an extraordinary global pandemic. I support the Leader of the House. I support her amendment as proposed to the House. I hope all members of the House will see sense and do the same.

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (10.06 pm): I speak against the motion to amend the sessional orders. We have one fundamental issue with the amendment—that is, we do not trust the government. We do not trust them. At the beginning of this week we entered into negotiations with the Leader of the House in good faith. We recognised the seriousness of the situation that we are facing in this state. It is important that we have bipartisan support so we can tackle the issues that are an incredible threat to the health of Queenslanders and the economic future of Queensland.

We will not stand by and see the very foundations of the Westminster system of government undermined. Our bottom line through all of this is that parliament should continue to meet. We will negotiate what form that looks like. That is why we said we were happy with the changes this week—whether that be in terms of quorums, sitting in different seats and so on. We even gave the government notice of which ministers we would ask questions of today so that they need only send in those ministers because we want the parliament to continue to operate. In times of emergency and crisis it is even more important that parliament sits.

We are opposed to this amendment because we do not trust this government. The balance in the trust bank of the Labor government is extremely low. In fact, it is in overdraft. When we look at the integrity issues that have plagued this government—whether it is those related to the Deputy Premier, the Minister for Transport and Main Roads, the health minister and his dodgy polls; the list goes on and on—we find it very difficult to trust this government. This amendment, which has just been circulated, says—

“Change to sitting date or time

- 1B. (1) Notwithstanding standing order 49, sessional order 1(a) or the House having already adjourned to a specified time and date, the Speaker, upon advice from the government of the state ...

It says ‘upon advice from the government’. It is the government that runs this place. It is the government that advises the Speaker on what should happen. That is what we are concerned about. I agree with the Manager of Opposition Business. There is no chance in the world that we will be back here in a fortnight’s time—no chance in the world. They will look for every opportunity they can to avoid scrutiny.

The Prime Minister himself this morning in his address listed the essential services that would not be affected by the crowd control measures that have been brought in—and one of those was parliament. The parliament is an essential service. It is incredibly important that we meet regularly as planned so that we can address the issues of the day whatever they might be. Of course we have this crisis at the moment that we need to constantly reassess, but there are other issues that will not go away because of the coronavirus crisis. In fact, we could argue that they would be more pressured—with regard to domestic violence, with regard to crime—

Mr Boyce: Magnified tenfold.

Mr Weir: Unemployment.

Mr MANDER: Unemployment—I take those interjections. Those types of issues are incredibly important. We simply do not trust this government.

Our bottom line is that we want parliament to continue to meet. We are open to negotiate on what that may look like—whether everybody comes or how many people we have in the chamber at a time—but the institution of parliament must continue. As the Manager of Opposition Business said, why would we not be meeting tomorrow? We are all here. So what chance is there that we will be back here in a fortnight?

Again, with regard to levels of trust, right through the week we have been operating on 10 minutes notice and 15 minutes notice on incredibly important issues. Of course the bill this afternoon was one of those. It is very difficult for us to trust this government at the moment, because most of us on this side of the House believe that any change that a Labor government bring in is to their advantage. They will only bring in legislation if it is to their advantage.

This amendment, which says, ‘upon advice from the Government of the State’, says to me that they want to dictate when we meet. They want to determine what is happening. It will not take much for them to say, ‘We don’t want to meet,’ because there will be another crisis—whether it is in youth justice, domestic violence, high unemployment, escalating debt. All of those things will continue to take place whether the coronavirus is here or not.

Mrs D’Ath: And you think the Speaker is going to approve that, do you?

Mr MANDER: ‘Upon advice from the government of the state’—that is what the amendment says. The Speaker has little option but to follow the advice of the government. That is what this amendment is saying.

Mr Harper: Are you not taking the coronavirus seriously?

Mr MANDER: I take that interjection. We take the coronavirus incredibly seriously. That is why parliament should continue to meet so we can debate these things, so we can reassess. It was quite obvious in this afternoon’s health briefing that the Labor backbenchers had not been briefed about anything. They had more questions than we had about the coronavirus. Both sides of the House should be looking to make sure that the parliament meets. That is how important it is.

We are now being constantly bombarded in our offices—I am sure Labor members are as well—by businesses that are going broke. They are going broke as we speak. It is so important that we continue to meet so we can look at strategies and policies to address this ever-changing environment that we have at the moment. It is literally changing by the hour. That is why it is important that we meet.

The Leader of the House is asking us to trust the government. I am sorry, Attorney-General, but your record does not—

Mr SPEAKER: Put your comments through the chair.

Mr Harper interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Thuringowa will cease his interjections. I remind members who are on warnings that there will be zero interjections from you.

Mr MANDER: The Attorney-General is asking us to trust her and to trust the Palaszczuk government. We simply cannot do that. The principles of the Westminster system of government are that the opposition is here to keep the government accountable. It is to ask the right questions. Leading into a state election—coincidentally, I think 17 September is the last sitting week before the election. That is a coincidence, isn’t it? It is the last sitting week before the election. We do not trust that this government is acting with pure motives. We have all of this legislation that has been—

Mr Saunders interjected.

Mr Hunt interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Maryborough and member for Nicklin, you are both warned for quarrelling across the chamber. One more, members, and I will ask for silence and we will listen in silence, if that is what you would like to do.

Mr MANDER: Once again, I repeat: we will be opposing this amendment, not because we are being difficult, not because we do not believe that there should be a bipartisan approach to tackling this coronavirus epidemic. We will oppose this because we believe it undermines the foundational principles of the Westminster system of government—and that is that parliament must continue to meet. That is even more important in a unicameral system when we have no upper house—no senate, no house of review. It is incredibly important that we continue to meet. Unfortunately these amendments put that at risk.

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferry Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries) (10.16 pm): Under standing order 88, I move—

That the question be now put.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Standing order 88(2) requires you, Mr Speaker, to be satisfied that there is sufficient debate on this motion. Considering that the Leader of the House has said that this is an extraordinary motion and grants power to the Speaker that has not

been given in this House before, I would submit to you in your consideration of standing order 88(2) that sufficient debate has not occurred when numerous members were on their feet and on your advice earlier, Mr Speaker, to rise if you wish to participate in the debate.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Kawana. I believe that this is a largely procedural motion in terms of the mechanics of how the House is to sit or not sit. I believe that we have had sufficient debate.

Division: Question put—That the question be now put.

AYES, 41:

ALP, 41—Bailey, Brown, Butcher, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Healy, Hinchliffe, Howard, Kelly, King, Lauga, Linard, Lui, Lynham, Madden, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, B. O'Rourke, C. O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pease, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Stewart, Trad, Whiting.

NOES, 33:

LNP, 32—Batt, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Boyce, Crandon, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Hart, Hunt, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McArdle, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, O'Connor, Perrett, Powell, Rowan, Simpson, Sorensen, Watts, Weir, Wilson.

NQF, 1—Costigan.

Pairs: Boyd, Robinson; Jones, Purdie; Mullen, Nicholls; Pegg, Stevens; Power, Bates.

Resolved in the affirmative.

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

AYES, 41:

ALP, 41—Bailey, Brown, Butcher, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Healy, Hinchliffe, Howard, Kelly, King, Lauga, Linard, Lui, Lynham, Madden, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, B. O'Rourke, C. O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pease, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Stewart, Trad, Whiting

NOES, 33:

LNP, 32—Batt, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Boyce, Crandon, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Hart, Hunt, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McArdle, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, O'Connor, Perrett, Powell, Rowan, Simpson, Sorensen, Watts, Weir, Wilson.

NQF, 1—Costigan.

Pairs: Boyd, Robinson; Jones, Purdie; Mullen, Nicholls; Pegg, Stevens; Power, Bates.

Resolved in the affirmative.

LEAVE TO MOVE MOTION

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.21 pm): I seek leave to move a motion without notice.

Division: Question put—That leave be granted.

AYES, 41:

ALP, 41—Bailey, Brown, Butcher, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Healy, Hinchliffe, Howard, Kelly, King, Lauga, Linard, Lui, Lynham, Madden, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, B. O'Rourke, C. O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pease, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Stewart, Trad, Whiting.

NOES, 33:

LNP, 32—Batt, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Boyce, Crandon, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Hart, Hunt, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McArdle, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, O'Connor, Perrett, Powell, Rowan, Simpson, Sorensen, Watts, Weir, Wilson.

NQF, 1—Costigan.

Pairs: Boyd, Robinson; Jones, Purdie; Mullen, Nicholls; Pegg, Stevens; Power, Bates.

Resolved in the affirmative.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.23 pm): I move—

That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 9.30 am on Tuesday, 31 March 2020.

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (10.23 pm): We oppose the motion. As I said in earlier debates, it is extraordinary that, the government having just passed a motion that gives the government the power to ask the Speaker to not have parliament sit, we are now having this special adjournment whereby we are coming back in two weeks. But, as I said to members earlier, we are not. If the health officer today—and we can base it on what the government is saying is the latest health advice—is saying that it is too risky for members of parliament to be here on Thursday, and then all the health advice says the coronavirus is going to get worse before it gets better, I do not suspect we will be here in two weeks time as the Leader of the House said. This is a rouse to make it look like they are coming back in a couple of weeks. They realise that the sessional orders they have just changed give them extraordinary power, and now we are debating whether we are coming back. We should be coming back tomorrow. We are here. Do you know why we should be coming back tomorrow?

Mr Minnikin: It is our job!

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection from the member for Chatsworth. It is our job. We should be here tomorrow. More importantly, the youth justice bill is before the House. Minister Farmer has said that urgent amendments must be made to that act. We could do it tomorrow. If we do not adjourn the House now we could be here tomorrow. We could debate the youth justice bill to get those important provisions through to try and save property and get people's livelihoods back on track, particularly in North Queensland and even in Brisbane now with the northside gangs that are roaming around. Minister Farmer herself said this week that her laws are not working and she is going to amend them. We do not have to wait until 31 March: we can come tomorrow. I know that the member for Cairns is very interested in youth justice reform because I read an article where he said, 'I am going to the Attorney-General and I am going to demand changes.' When he said it in the paper he forgot that he was talking about the wrong minister, because the minister responsible for youth justice is Minister Farmer. We should be here tomorrow. Minister Farmer should be here tomorrow making changes to what she said is not working.

As I said earlier—and for those members who were not in the House, or for the members in the House who were not listening—I suspect that the next time we will be in the House is after the election, and I hope we are sitting on that side of the House. The way this government is going I suspect that might be the case, because if we do not have parliament to raise these issues—which we will not—then we will make sure the Queensland community is still informed about what this government is doing. What this government is doing is adjourning the House now to a few weeks time, yet we were meant to sit tomorrow. Not only should we debate the Youth Justice Act but what about the electoral reform bill?

Mr Krause interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Scenic Rim, you can leave the chamber under standing order 253A. You were under a warning. I have given you plenty of opportunities to remain silent. I apologise for the interruption, member for Kawana.

Whereupon the honourable member for Scenic Rim withdrew from the chamber at 10.27 pm.

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you, Mr Speaker; I will sort him out later. As I was saying, there are provisions in the electoral reform bill that start before parliament is now due to come back. We should be debating that tomorrow. What will then happen is that when parliament eventually does come back they are going to have to make those provisions retrospective. As we have seen in the last five years, the government has a habit of making retrospective reforms to the Electoral Act.

The Attorney-General and Leader of the House, who is moving this motion, has provisions in that bill that are due to start before the next election in October, including spending caps. Attorney-General, are the spending caps going to be in place? Because if they are, then I see the member for Mansfield—I was just thinking of our fabulous candidate with whom I was in Mansfield the other day, Janet Wishart. She is a fantastic candidate. The member for Mansfield was nodding her head yes, the spending caps will be in place. Have I missed a sitting where we passed those laws? As far as I know, the law is not in place. I suspect the member for Mansfield would know that if she spent less time whingeing about our great candidate, Janet Wishart, wearing a badge on school grounds and making a complaint about her.

Mrs D'ATH: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance. The Manager of Opposition Business might have just predicted and pre-empted that.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Kawana, I ask you to come back to the motion before the House.

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you for your guidance, Mr Speaker. As I anticipated, that was the case; I thought it would have happened earlier. We should be sitting tomorrow. We have important bills. There are the reforms to youth justice. There is the disability permit parking legislation which was on the agenda and which could have started. We could be debating that tomorrow. We could have debated it today; in fact, we could have finished it today but the vision-impaired people of Queensland now have to wait. Although the government thinks that we just oppose these measures for the sake of opposing, no, we are not. Disability parking is important. For the visually-impaired in Queensland, it is important. We started the debate yesterday and now we are not finishing it but adjourning to 31 March. As I said, I doubt we will be back.

Mr Minnikin: It's cruel.

Mr BLEIJIE: It is cruel, I take the interjection from the member for Chatsworth. The electoral reform legislation will be in place before the next sitting as will the spending caps. The government will need retrospectively to amend that down the track. The disability parking legislation, which is important to Queenslanders, now will not be passed. I was really looking forward to the debate on the youth justice amendments in terms of all the opposing views in the Labor government. We look forward to whether we will have that debate, but I can guarantee one thing: if what I said occurs and we are not back until after the election, I can guarantee and assure the Labor party that youth justice amendments will be one of the first priorities of a Deb Frecklington government. There is plenty of action ready to go on that.

The fact is we should not be adjourning now. We are here tomorrow, but we should be in the House. There is no guidance from the government in terms of whether any committees are meeting. We have no information with respect to that. It saddens me that the government now is using the coverage of the coronavirus to cover up so much in the state. We can understand why: it wants to escape scrutiny of these matters and the youth justice amendments. Not only is there an electoral bill that we should debate tomorrow; there are also the ministerial accountability provisions in that bill which are very important to the people of Queensland. We just are delaying all these important decisions that should be made by this House. As I said, the wheels of government do move and there are ministers sitting opposite who have no ministerial responsibility for the COVID-19 response. That could—

An honourable member interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection based on the performance of the last few years that some of the ministers have really not done anything in their portfolios. There is plenty of time for some of those ministers. Look at them across the chamber now.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Kawana, I ask you to come back to the motion.

Mr BLEIJIE: The important aspect is that the House has important matters before it. As we said, yes, the COVID-19 response is important; the economic response will be even more important. I was told earlier by a business that it will off-load hundreds of people tomorrow. This is sad. What is sadder is that the elected representatives of these people will not have a voice in this parliament until God knows when.

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (10.34 pm): I rise to oppose this motion. I oppose adjourning for two weeks. We face extraordinary times. COVID-19 is an extraordinary threat to Queensland, Australia and the world. If anything, we should be sitting more. We should sit tomorrow, Friday and next week because as this medical crisis ramps up we may not be able to sit. If the legislation before this House were not important and not relevant, the government would not have put it before this House, but it is before the House. The fact that we may go into a lockdown period is why we should not adjourn debate for two weeks. We should debate every bill we can so that the governance of Queensland continues.

Over a period of time, we have seen extraordinary abuses of power by this Labor government. We saw that today. Those need to be highlighted. If the fourth estate could only look at what has happened, it would see that every debate is being guillotined. Tonight I am guillotined in trying to talk about COVID-19, something incredibly important to the future of the state. We are told we cannot sit because there is some sort of threat, yet tomorrow thousands of children and teachers will go to school. This parliament will not sit.

Clearly the government has sent a message, by not sitting for two weeks, that the legislation before this House is not important enough to bring on debate. If it were important enough, the House would be sitting as a matter of urgency to get as many things passed as it possibly could before

COVID-19 is upon us and we are not able to sit. There is no reason at all to adjourn this debate, apart from the government's fear of scrutiny of its actions. The people of Queensland should be afraid of its actions.

This parliament was formed with Queen Victoria's blessing so that we could rule and govern ourselves. The parliament exists to hold the executive accountable by the people of Queensland for its actions. That is the purpose of its existence—to pass legislation for self-governance under the scrutiny of an opposition of the executive's actions in terms of how it controls the budget.

My concern is that if we remove scrutiny of the executive and if the legislation before this House is not important enough to debate, what is the point of the executive? They have simply assumed all power and control of everything in lieu of this House's scrutiny. The people of Queensland should be afraid of that. That is the first point.

The budget and expenditure will not be scrutinised. Ministers will not be accountable for their portfolio actions, because the House is not sitting. There is absolutely no reason to put off sitting for two weeks. The comments are that it is to do with COVID-19. That is the reason we should be sitting every day before we go into a lockdown, before there is a medical crisis, before we have to do the things that we do not want to do in a democracy in terms of restricting people's movements and rights. That is the reason why the House should be sitting, why the government should be scrutinised and why the legislation before this House, particularly in relation to youth justice, should be passed.

People are under attack in their own homes. I know of a lady in Cairns, an area that I know Mr Speaker knows well, who has been broken into while at home on four occasions by the same person, who is about to be released again. She is absolutely terrified. The youth justice amendment legislation is something that we could debate tomorrow. We could debate it on Friday. We could debate it on Monday or any other day before the adjournment. This is important reform. If it were not an important reform, why did the Labor government get the *Cairns Post* to tell everybody that it is all okay, that we will pass this bill? We cannot pass this bill if this House does not sit.

Under this motion this House is not due to sit for two weeks. I am gravely concerned that in that two weeks the medical emergency of COVID-19 will start to overtake the process of this House. An extraordinary power has been centralised into the executive's hands and that is the reason why legislation that is before this House should be brought on and debated in quick time.

There have been conversations tonight about trust. Trust needs to be earned. This government has not earned the trust of the victims of crime in North Queensland. It has not earned the trust of the opposition by acting in a decent manner. It has guillotined debate. It has restricted us from speaking. It changed the Electoral Act in 18 minutes. It is looking to make further changes and centralise more and more power into its hands without the scrutiny of this House by shutting this House's debate down, by adjourning this House's debate for two weeks, when in actual fact we have potentially only, according to what was briefed to us today, maybe two to four weeks before the COVID-19 medical emergency will require the very powerful restrictions that were discussed in this place tonight. Under those restrictions it may be difficult for this House to meet. We will now be in your hands, Mr Speaker, under the leadership of the Leader of the House and the government's advice, as to whether this House can, in fact, sit under those circumstances.

This motion tonight is not only irrelevant, because the power has already been usurped and it can be changed at the drop of a hat without any debate or discussion, but we are now completely dependent on the fourth estate to hold this government to account because no other voices will be heard. This motion means that no other voices will be heard for two weeks. As I said, the problem with silencing our voices right now is that we may not get to speak again this side of an election.

Under the motion that was passed earlier tonight, the ability for this House to be deferred until 17 September rests in the Speaker's hands under the advice of the government. This motion is not only irrelevant; it shows a centralisation of power to the executive and complete contempt for the people's house and complete contempt for the democratically elected members of this House who have constantly had their voices guillotined and silenced by this government because it does not like a dissenting voice.

I can in no way support this motion that says that this House should not sit for two weeks for two principle reasons: one is the urgency of legislation before this House which should come on tomorrow, Friday, or Monday or Tuesday of the following week. We should do as much as we can as urgently as we can because we all know that a medical and an economic crisis is going to sweep this state as COVID-19 grows in our community.

That is the reason why the very important legislation before this House should be debated every day we have the opportunity to debate it. As the government and executive act on behalf of the people of Queensland, spending taxpayers' dollars to try to provide them a safe and healthy environment to live their lives, the opposition should have the opportunity to scrutinise their actions on behalf of the people of Queensland, to hold them to account for the things that they are going to do. Instead of that scrutiny, instead of that opportunity for this House to hold the executive to account, we face an executive that is drunk on power and wants to run away with controlling the state. It has passed some incredibly powerful legislation, which I understand in the medical crisis we are in is important, but it centralises power and control in an extraordinary manner and then we have two motions passed tonight that are very dangerous for the democracy of Queensland.

 **Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works, Minister for Digital Technology and Minister for Sport) (10.44 pm): In accordance with standing order 88, I move—

That the question be now put.

Question put—That the question be now put.

Motion agreed to.

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

Mr SPEAKER: Will members reporting votes please rise. Will the government whip advise what the government votes are for the ayes or noes.

Mr BROWN: Forty-one ayes.

Mr BLEIJIE: Challenge.

Mr SPEAKER: Under the revised division standing orders we have a challenge from the member for Kawana to the party vote that is being issued by the government whip. In such case we will call a full division. Ring the bells for four minutes.

Whereupon the bells were rung for four minutes.

Mr SPEAKER: This is a full division post the party votes that were being tallied under the previous division. Members are reminded that they must be in their allocated seat, which is not doing much for social distancing.

AYES, 41:

ALP, 41—Bailey, Brown, Butcher, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Healy, Hinchliffe, Howard, Kelly, King, Lauga, Linard, Lui, Lynham, Madden, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, B. O'Rourke, C. O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pease, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Stewart, Trad, Whiting.

NOES, 30:

LNP, 29—Batt, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Boyce, Crandon, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Hart, Hunt, Janetzki, Langbroek, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McArdle, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, O'Connor, Perrett, Powell, Rowan, Simpson, Watts, Weir, Wilson.

NQF, 1—Costigan.

Pairs: Boyd, Robinson; Jones, Purdie; Mullen, Nicholls; Pegg, Stevens; Power, Bates.

Resolved in the affirmative.

ADJOURNMENT

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.51 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 10.52 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Bailey, Batt, Bennett, Berkman, Bleijie, Boothman, Boyce, Brown, Butcher, Costigan, Crandon, Crawford, Crisafulli, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Frecklington, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Hart, Healy, Hinchliffe, Howard, Hunt, Janetzki, Jones, Kelly, King, Knuth, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Lauga, Leahy, Linard, Lister, Lui, Lynham, Madden, Mander, McArdle, McDonald, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Mickelberg, Miles, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, O'Connor, O'Rourke B, Palaszczuk, Pease, Perrett, Pitt, Powell, Pugh, Richards, Rowan, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Simpson, Sorensen, Stewart, Trad, Watts, Weir, Whiting, Wilson