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FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SIXTH PARLIAMENT

Wednesday, 15 July 2020

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WEDNESDAY, 15 JULY 2020



The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

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

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

PRIVILEGE

Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House



Hon. CR DICK (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (9.31 am): I rise on a matter of privilege. Yesterday the member for Everton made the following statement in the House—

We did mention 64 times that the borders should be opened as per the program that the Premier originally put out. The Premier listened to our advice and opened the borders on 10 July as their business principles actually stated.

Not only is this statement patently false but also the shadow spokesperson for Treasury, the member for Everton, knew this statement to be false when he made it. The LNP, including the member for Everton, repeatedly called on the government to open Queensland borders ahead of schedule, including on 1 July. Mr Speaker, I will write to you further on this matter.

Speaker's Ruling, Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House



Mr SPEAKER: Speaking of matters of privilege, on 17 June 2020 the member for Chatsworth wrote to me alleging that the Minister for Transport and Main Roads deliberately misled the House on 21 May 2020. This matter relates to a statement made by the minister during a ministerial statement. On the information before me, I consider the minister has made an adequate explanation as to the basis for his statement under standing order 269(4). Therefore, I will not be referring the matter to the Ethics Committee for further consideration. I seek leave to incorporate the ruling circulated in my name.

Leave granted.

On 17 June 2020, the Member for Chatsworth wrote to me alleging that the Minister for Transport and Main Roads deliberately misled the House on 21 May 2020.

The matter relates to a statement made by the Minister during a Ministerial Statement.

The Minister said, 'The LNP talks about backing business, but history shows otherwise. They abandoned Queensland workers when they sent contracts overseas to build trains. We returned those contracts to Queensland, where they belong'.

In his letter to me, the Member for Chatsworth contended that this statement was misleading because it was the Bligh Labor Government that commenced the competitive procurement process which eventually led to an overseas contract for the trains.

I sought further information from the Minister about the allegation made against him, in accordance with Standing Order 269(5).

The Minister provided evidence that it was the Newman LNP Government who signed the contract of delivery for the trains.

Both the Member for Chatsworth and the Minister referenced the New Generation Rollingstock Train Commission of Inquiry Report.

The Report indicates that the Bligh Labor Government commenced the procurement process and was overseeing the process when the only local company, Downer EDI, withdrew.

The Report also indicates that it was during the Newman LNP Government's term that Downer EDI was prevented from re-joining the procurement process, and that the tender was awarded to Bombardier, an overseas company.

Consequently, the statement by the Minister does not contain factually incorrect material.

On the information before me, I consider the Minister has made an adequate explanation as to the basis for his statement under Standing Order 269(4).

Therefore, I have decided that the matter does not warrant the further attention of the House via the Ethics Committee, and I will not be referring the matter.

I table the correspondence in relation to this matter.

Tabled paper: Bundle of correspondence relating to the Speaker's ruling regarding an allegation that the Minister for Transport and Main Roads, Hon. Mark Bailey, deliberately misled the House [\[1164\]](#).

Speaker's Ruling, Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House



Mr SPEAKER: On 17 June 2020 the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy wrote to me alleging that the member for Callide deliberately misled the House on 20 May 2020. The matter relates to a statement made by the member for Callide during the adjournment debate. The member for Callide said—

It is now obvious that the Minister has not read Dr Rizzo's report. He has stated that there is no reference to the cost of repairing the Paradise Dam. Page 33 of the report, which I will table, says quite clearly that the 63 anchors recommended for Paradise Dam would have a cost of US\$15.75 million. That is approximately AUD\$25 million.

I sought further information from the member for Callide about the allegation made against him, in accordance with standing order 269(5). I have considered the matter. I am of the opinion that the member for Callide directly and accurately quoted Dr Rizzo's report, therefore his statement is technically factually correct. Accordingly, I find that the member for Callide has made an adequate explanation for his statement. Therefore, I will not be referring the matter to the Ethics Committee for further consideration. I seek leave to incorporate the ruling circulated in my name.

Leave granted.

On 17 June 2020, the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy wrote to me alleging that the Member for Callide deliberately misled the House on 20 May 2020.

The matter relates to a statement made by the Member for Callide during the Adjournment Debate.

The Member for Callide said, 'It is now obvious that the Minister has not read Dr Rizzo's report. He has stated that there is no reference to the cost of repairing the Paradise Dam. Page 33 of the report, which I will table, says quite clearly that the 63 anchors recommended for Paradise Dam would have a cost of US\$15.75 million. That is approximately AUD\$25 million'.

In his letter to me, the Minister contended that this statement was misleading because no works suggested, that can rely upon existing information to fix the dam, can better ensure the safety of Bundaberg within the same timeframe.

The Minister alleged that the Member for Callide had misinterpreted a report by independent expert Dr Paul Rizzo when making these statements.

I sought further information from the Member for Callide about the allegation made against him, in accordance with Standing Order 269(5).

The Member for Callide advised me he was relying on the report by Dr Rizzo, as the Minister alleged, and that the statement was factually correct.

I have reviewed the correspondence from both members, along with Dr Rizzo's report, and other reports related to Paradise Dam.

When reviewing the statement by the Member for Callide, I note that he is directly quoting Dr Rizzo's report, rather than asserting that Paradise Dam could be fixed for \$25 million. Therefore, the statement by the Member for Callide is technically factually correct.

On the information before me, I consider the Member for Callide has made an adequate explanation as to the basis for his statement under Standing Order 269(4).

Therefore, I have decided that the matter does not warrant the further attention of the House via the Ethics Committee and I will not be referring the matter.

I table the correspondence in relation to this matter.

Tabled paper: Bundle of correspondence relating to the Speaker's ruling regarding an allegation that the member for Callide, Mr Colin Boyce MP, deliberately misled the House [\[1165\]](#).

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

School Group Tour



Mr SPEAKER: I wish to advise members that we will be visited in the gallery this morning by student leaders and a teacher from Concordia Lutheran College in the electorate of Toowoomba South.

PETITION

The following lodged e-petition, sponsored by the Clerk is now closed and presented—

Place Names, Review

From 393 petitioners, requesting the House to discover and rename all places in Queensland named for British aristocrats and politicians who were in favour of slavery or who voted against the slavery abolition laws introduced in Britain in the early part of the 19th century [[1163](#)].

Petition received.

TABLED PAPERS

TABLING OF DOCUMENTS (SO 32)

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

The following statutory instruments were tabled by the Clerk—

Work Health and Safety Act 2011:

[1160](#) Work Health and Safety (Codes of Practice) (Stone Benchtop Industry and Coal-fired Power Stations) Amendment Notice 2020, No. 132

[1161](#) Work Health and Safety (Codes of Practice) (Stone Benchtop Industry and Coal-fired Power Stations) Amendment Notice 2020, No. 132, explanatory notes

[1162](#) Work Health and Safety (Codes of Practice) (Stone Benchtop Industry and Coal-fired Power Stations) Amendment Notice 2020, No. 132, human rights certificate

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Coronavirus, Update; Australian Football League



Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.35 am): In good news today, Queensland has no new cases of COVID-19. We have four active cases; all of them are being well managed. We have had no cases of community transfer since May and we want to keep it that way. This is a credit to every single Queenslander and I thank every single Queenslander. Our health response has enabled us to get on with our economic response.

I have even more good news. In breaking news for Queensland, I can reveal that the AFL has approached Queensland to move more of its teams and players here to Queensland. A short time ago I spoke to AFL CEO Gill McLachlan. Minister Kate Jones was also with me during the conversation. He is looking to book accommodation for hundreds of players and officials at Queensland hotels for two months. You can imagine what that means to those businesses. I stress that none of these measures can happen without strict quarantine protocols and the COVID management plan that has allowed the AFL season to proceed.

This is another way in which Queensland is helping Victoria. As everyone knows, AFL is more than a sport to Victorians. We know how they feel. Given the choice between not having a season and having it based in Queensland, I know what the fans would like to happen. It means more Queenslanders here can also go and see the games. It is another tick for the legacy of the Commonwealth Games and the Gold Coast's mighty Metricon Stadium. It is more fire in the belly for the Suns and the Lions. As I told Gill, if the season is based here, then perhaps he should be thinking about a grand final here as well. Negotiations between the AFL and the Chief Health Officer are continuing. The health and safety of Queenslanders must always come first.

Jobs



Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.37 am): The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on Queensland jobs and particularly on younger Queenslanders who have tragically been forced from workplaces in the midst of this unprecedented crisis. That is why my government will today allocate \$90 million to a package which will provide Queenslanders with the skills they need to find meaningful jobs and set up pathways for the future. I am determined to stop a cycle of generational unemployment where young people fall out of the labour market. My government will extend our Back to Work program, we will expand Skilling Queenslanders for Work and we will deliver priority jobs in the Great Barrier Reef catchments of our state.

COVID-19 has had a shattering impact on jobs for young Queenslanders, who we know have been disproportionately affected. The figures unfortunately speak for themselves. Between mid-March and late April, 15.6 per cent of Queenslanders aged under 20 lost their jobs, and one in 10 young people aged 20 to 29 also became unemployed during the same period. With the easing of COVID restrictions, we have seen jobs coming back. However, the number of jobs for people aged under 20 remains 4.3 per cent lower than before COVID, and for people aged between 20 and 29 jobs remain 7.7 per cent lower at the end of June.

My government's skills and industry summit held 18 months ago brought together industries, small business, universities, the training sector and the unions to ensure our state is ready and able to meet the workforce needs for our rapidly changing economy. It resulted in a clear pathway forward to equip Queenslanders with skills and training, but we have now entered a new era and, in a post-COVID economy, we need to give industry every opportunity to adapt and thrive.

We will extend our successful Back to Work program with a \$70 million boost that provides much needed support to businesses for another 12 months, to 30 June 2021. This is in addition to the \$239 million that has been paid out as part of that program since 2016. As part of this, we will offer businesses a new apprentice and trainee boost of up to \$20,000, which will be available to employers who take on an eligible apprentice or trainee under that scheme. This is good news.

I want to recognise the advocacy of Ai Group in advocating for further support for training during this time. Back to Work is a program that works. It has supported more than 22,600 new jobs with Queensland businesses since 2016, with nearly 80 per cent of Back to Work funding paid to small businesses. Currently over a quarter of all approved applications for the program are for apprentices and trainees. This added boost will hopefully mean even more jobs.

Back to Work payments are available to Queensland businesses that recruit a new worker who has been unemployed for at least four weeks. These payments provided employers with vital cash injections during the worst of the pandemic. Now they can help get our economy growing again as restrictions ease. We will further review Back to Work and our support after we know what the federal government's plans for JobKeeper are, with JobKeeper due to expire at the end of September.

Around 500 jobs will be created by a \$10 million extension to Skilling Queenslanders for Work. Interestingly, it was eight years ago this week that Campbell Newman announced that he was scrapping the hugely successful Skilling Queenslanders for Work program. I am sure we will have a lot more to say about that during the course of this morning. In contrast, today my government is redoubling our focus on skills and training as we continue to work to deliver Queensland's plan for economic recovery as we emerge from COVID-19.

Skilling Queenslanders for Work has a solid and proven track record for increasing workforce participation across the state and has provided job ready skills and training to Queenslanders who need it most. More than 30,000 people have found jobs thanks to participating in the program since 2016, and our additional investment in the initiatives will open doors to even more opportunities for Queenslanders while helping to drive our economy. It will also ensure we have the skilled workforce Queensland needs for the jobs now and into the future, helping our economy continue to move on from the pandemic.

Today I am also announcing my government will invest \$10 million to deliver priority environmental projects and jobs in the Great Barrier Reef catchments of our great state. The \$10 million Reef Assist program will provide unemployed and underemployed Queenslanders with temporary, nature based employment, delivering up to 200 jobs in hard hit regions like Mackay, Townsville and Cairns and across areas such as improving resilience to natural disasters, improving water quality, habitat restoration and weed and pest management.

Local organisations will be invited to identify shovel-ready projects, which could include practical, on-ground work such as stream bank rehabilitation, planting trees, pest and weed control and landscaping, to name a few. This policy has been developed following input from the LGAQ, AgForce, the Pew Charitable Trust and the Queensland Conservation Council. I thank them for working very closely with our government to deliver this outstanding opportunity for young Queenslanders. My government is firmly focused on getting Queensland's economy back on its feet. That starts with providing the opportunity for skills and training that will create and sustain jobs.

Resources Industry



Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.42 am): Queensland's resources sector continues to be an important contributor to the state's economy as we unite and recover from the global coronavirus pandemic. We know COVID-19 has further accelerated the demand

for new-economy minerals with the increased use of digital communication technology. That is why, as part of Queensland's economic recovery plan, we have announced \$10 million to supercharge exploration for new-economy minerals and support mine technology innovators to drive future mine jobs. We are also making important investments in projects that will deliver long-term benefits to the state and secure jobs for Queenslanders.

That is why I am pleased to announce today that my government will support the \$1.5 billion Australian Mines Sconi Project for North Queensland through our \$175 million Jobs and Regional Growth Fund. This project is anticipated to create 500 construction jobs over its two-year development phase and create 289 new, long-term positions once fully operational.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: It is a \$1.5 billion project supporting jobs, jobs and more jobs. We know that those opposite are against jobs. We support jobs and they sack people.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, members! Premier, will you please continue with your ministerial statement.

Ms PALASZCZUK: The project proposal is for a new mine to be located at Greenvale, approximately 250 kilometres west of Townsville, for the extraction of nickel, cobalt and scandium. Cobalt and nickel are both vital ingredients in the production of lithium-ion batteries, important for electric vehicles and the wider energy storage industry. The mine will also extract scandium oxide that is used in specialist aluminium applications across the aerospace and automotive industries.

While the government's support of the project is conditional on Australian Mines securing a 100 per cent offtake agreement and reaching a financial investment decision, the proponent is working towards these outcomes. These are the new economy minerals for emerging global industries and means jobs for North Queenslanders in future focused industries.

We are proud to support this project that will help us unite and recover for Queensland jobs. We are determined to be the leading global exporter of new-economy minerals, as the state did with LNG well over a decade ago.

Coronavirus, Health Update



Hon. SJ MILES (Murrumba—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (9.45 am): This morning I can update the House that 18 people have now come forward to say they visited the Crossroads Hotel in Casula. They have all been tested for COVID-19. I thank them for coming forward. Fourteen of those tests are now back and they are all, thankfully, negative. We are asking anyone who had been to that pub between 3 and 10 July to please come forward and get tested. It is highly likely that more than those 18 Queenslanders attended that pub in that week and we need them to get tested.

I am also pleased to report that Queenslanders are heeding the testing message. Some 6,778 Queenslanders were tested in the last 24-hour reporting period. That is a daily record for Queensland. All of them were negative. I would like to thank those 6,778 Queenslanders as well as our fantastic pathology and scientific services staff in both the public and private pathology sectors.

Like all states and territories, Queensland suspended non-urgent surgeries in line with the Prime Minister's March announcement in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In doing so, we were planning for a worst-case scenario—that is, one where our hospital systems would be overwhelmed just like many throughout the world. Thankfully, this has not become a reality in Queensland so far. All Queenslanders deserve credit for flattening the curve.


Now we can get on with Queensland's plan to unite and recover. Just as we want more Queenslanders back at work and more businesses open, we also want our doctors and nurses treating patients—doing what they do best—and our operating theatres open and busy. Thanks to their efforts, we were able to reintroduce non-urgent elective surgeries in late April—sooner than expected—with elective surgeries now routinely back to normal capacity.

Last month we announced a quarter of a billion dollars in extra elective surgery. This will mean hospitals can now provide non-urgent procedures outside of regular hours to get back to pre COVID-19 levels of elective surgery. This enhanced capacity will allow us to work through the backlog and continue to meet the clinically recommended time frames—that is, 90 days for category 2 procedures and 365 days for category 3 procedures. That means more people will be able to get their surgeries sooner.

We are already starting to see improvements to the backlog. In Mackay, Cairns and Townsville, 1,100, 2,500 and 700 patients respectively will benefit from the Queensland government's elective surgery blitz. The investment will require us to expand over and beyond our usual levels of activity. It will support operating lists outside of normal hours and through weekends to catch up.

Queensland Health is providing a record number of surgeries to Queenslanders who need them every year. Queenslanders are increasingly choosing our world-class public health system. Even with this relatively short suspension of surgeries, we predict 7,000 people may go past the clinically recommended time frame. At the same time last year, just 122 were waiting longer than those targets. Queenslanders delivered for us throughout this pandemic and now it is Queensland Health's turn to deliver for them.

Coronavirus, Training and Skills

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (9.49 am): The Palaszczuk Labor government knows that skills and training are crucial for Queenslanders to find lasting, decent, dignified employment. Prior to COVID-19, under the Palaszczuk Labor government, an additional 77,500 Queenslanders became fully engaged in education or work between 2015 and 2019.

The share of Queenslanders fully engaged in employment or study has increased to 64.5 per cent under our government. By contrast, during the Newman LNP government, the share of Queenslanders fully engaged in education or work fell by almost two percentage points.

The impact of COVID-19 on the Queensland and the Australian economies has, of course, been very dramatic. The economic statistics demonstrate that young people in particular have felt the impact of the economic crisis. In just two months the national unemployment rate has increased from 5.2 per cent to 7.1 per cent. For Australians aged between 15 and 24, the unemployment rate has increased to 15.3 per cent. The figures are similar for Queensland.


Behind every statistic there is a Queensland worker, family or business enduring the real impacts of COVID-19. The sooner we can get every Queensland worker working again, the sooner our economy can recover. Our Unite and Recover for Queensland Jobs package builds on our existing commitments to develop skills and training for jobs right across the state. The Grattan Institute estimates that 15- to 19-year-olds are the most likely to lose their job due to shutdowns of non-essential services and physical distancing measures. Those aged 20 to 29 are the next most affected group.

Investments in skills and training will help unlock future growth while providing immediate support to young people. We know that acute economic shocks such as pandemics can have profound, long-lasting impacts on young people. Now more than ever it is vital that Queenslanders have the skills they need to take advantage of new jobs in emerging industries.

The latest stage of the Palaszczuk government's Unite and Recover for Queensland Jobs package focuses on young people. Boosts to existing government investments such as free TAFE and free apprenticeships will provide greater incentives for young unemployed people to develop skills for emerging industries.

A focus on education and training projects will ensure young peoples' skills meet industry demand which is critical to the recovery of the youth labour market. This is why the Premier's announcement this morning to improve skills and training opportunities for young Queenslanders is so vitally important. Intergenerational unemployment is a debt that no economy—no society—can afford to pay. That is why the Palaszczuk Labor government is looking after young people now to ensure a brighter economic future for our state.

Cross River Rail

 **Hon. KJ JONES** (Cooper—ALP) (Minister for State Development, Tourism and Innovation) (9.51 am): We are not just rebuilding Queensland's economy; we are building a better Queensland. Only the Palaszczuk government has a strategy to lead our state out of the coronavirus crisis—with our unite and recover plan to create Queensland jobs.


I have said it many times in this House since COVID-19 hit: because we have managed the health crisis so well, we can get on with the job of building multibillion dollar construction projects that will enable us to ultimately recover more quickly. Today I am proud to announce that more than 150 apprentices and trainees have now cut their teeth on Queensland's largest infrastructure project—Cross River Rail. We are putting the 'train' back into 'training'.

Ms Palaszczuk: Hear, hear!

Ms JONES: Too good—I could not help myself, Premier. Throughout the life of the project, around 450 apprentices and trainees will get a start with on-the-job training on Brisbane's first underground. Today, the Minister for Employment and Training and I will meet some of the newest apprentices starting work at Albert Street. As we stand here today, workers are building the very first train station in Brisbane's CBD in more than 120 years. Just down the road, workers have started excavating 43,000 cubic metres of rubble from what will be a 50-metre shaft to the main station entrance of the new Albert Street station.

This work could not have come at a better time. Throughout COVID-19, Cross River Rail has continued to keep more than 2,000 workers in a job. This project continues to pump more than \$4 million a day into Queensland's economy—putting cash back in the pockets of local contractors and local workers. The LNP tore up the funding deal for Cross River Rail. We are the only side of the House that will continue to back this vital infrastructure project at the very time we need these jobs.

Coronavirus, Training and Skills

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development) (9.53 am): COVID-19 has hit every economy. No-one has been immune, including Queensland. The Palaszczuk government's response has been swift. We were the first state in Australia to declare a health emergency and the first to roll out economic support for our tourism industry. As we focus on our economic recovery, we are ensuring that Queenslanders have every tool available to help them get back to work.


As we continue to transition towards a post-COVID-19 economy, we know that skilling and training will be critical in ensuring Queenslanders can fill the jobs that are in demand. Along with free COVID-19 safe training to get businesses back up and running as our restrictions ease, we have also provided a wide range of free online training through TAFE Queensland and Central Queensland University. The free online courses cover skills in health support, community care, food service and customer engagement, as well as digital literacy and data security.

There have been almost 20,000 enrolments since the program came online in March. In June we launched a partnership with Go1, an international online training company based right here in Queensland, to deliver hundreds of online courses for free to Queenslanders and to Queensland businesses. It is a world first. Queenslanders can skill up in skills like CV writing, interview preparation as well as sales, finance and IT. The Netflix for training platform is available to small businesses, their employees and anyone whose job may have been impacted by COVID-19.

Today the Palaszczuk government has announced additional support for Skilling Queenslanders for Work. Up to 500 Skilling Queenslanders for Work trainee positions will be created, with an additional \$10 million investment. We are extending the popular Back to Work program, including for the first time an additional apprentice and trainee boost of \$20,000 for businesses who employ an eligible apprentice or trainee. Back to work has created almost 23,000 jobs across Queensland including in Mount Isa, where HardRok Engineering has been able to hire Jacob McLaren who started his boilermaker apprenticeship late last year. Elayne said that Back to Work was so helpful in supporting businesses at that time because so much money goes into training and skilling up new employees.

Queensland remains the national leader in providing the most comprehensive training response during this pandemic. Our extensive free training and skilling packages ensure that we remain a step ahead on the road to economic recovery. The Palaszczuk government has been unwavering in its commitment to supporting Queenslanders through this crisis and focusing on jobs.

Cairns Convention Centre

 **Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works, Minister for Digital Technology and Minister for Sport) (9.56 am): We are delivering on our plan to Unite and Recover for Queensland Jobs as the world faces tough times ahead due to COVID-19. Queensland's Far North and Cairns in particular have borne the brunt of the harsh global economic headwinds. It has been a challenging time for the local tourism industry with international borders closed, but Labor is investing in Cairns, delivering new infrastructure to make Cairns a world-class hub for maritime training and maintenance. We are supporting the Cairns Aquarium to keep its staff. We are supporting Cairns manufacturers through the manufacturing hub. We are now in full swing, delivering the \$176 million redevelopment of the Cairns Convention Centre.

This project is not just a lick of paint. We have local tradies delivering the world's best for Cairns. It is Queensland's largest regional tourism sector investment. It will catapult the convention centre to become an even brighter beacon of tourism for the region. The centre has already twice won the AIPC APEX award for 'world's best congress centre'—the highest international industry accolade. With these upgrades it is set to bring plenty more golds home to Far North Queensland.

The centre's manager estimates that the new centre can bring an additional \$50 million a year to Cairns from an extra 20,000 visitors. It will help lead Cairns through COVID-19 and beyond. I am advised that three conventions are already booked April through June, and there will be ongoing hospitality jobs in the beautiful new banquet and convention spaces—a huge boost for the city.


I recently travelled to Cairns to meet and talk with workers and suppliers who are on the front line of this project. Locals are benefiting thanks to the Palaszczuk government's Buy Queensland approach which supports local jobs and suppliers as we unite and recover. The managing contractor, Lendlease, is delivering on its target of an 85 per cent local workforce. I am pleased to advise the House that already 128, or 92 per cent of the 139 workers currently on the job, are locals—and we expect 570 full-time construction jobs as a result of the project.

The 44 local subcontractors and another 13 Queensland subcontractors are already appointed and contributing to this target by employing Cairns tradies—Cairns' tradies who, before long, will be cheering on the mighty Taipans NBL team who will be continuing to make the Far North proud from their newly refurbished home at the Cairns Convention Centre.

While those works are underway, we have been working closely with the Taipans and, thanks to the support of local MPs, we will make sure that they make it through the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic by setting up a temporary home and an exciting new event space in the Cairns CBD, so when the NBL season starts in just a few months the many Cairns locals who unite in the mighty 'orange army' will be able to cheer on their team, delivering them a home court advantage.

We will make sure that, whilst the international visitors cannot come to our state just now, locals are good to go. They are good to go and grab a celebratory drink at a bar in the city after a big win and continue to support the economic recovery of Queensland's Far North.


Resources Industry

 **Hon. GJ BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing) (9.59 am): These are certainly tough times across the world. Economies from Asia to Europe to the Americas are feeling the effects of the COVID pandemic. Thankfully, here in Queensland we have had a world-class health response. This is testament to the leadership of the Premier, the Deputy Premier and Chief Health Officer, Dr Jeannette Young, but it would not have been possible without the hard work and sacrifice of all Queenslanders. We should be proud of our response, which now means that we can start delivering our economic recovery plan for the state.

Our plan to unite and recover is focused on getting Queenslanders into jobs now and building economic resilience to position our state for a bright future in an uncertain world. That is why we are investing in projects that will deliver long-term benefits to the state and secure jobs for Queenslanders—projects such as the \$1.5 billion Australian Mines' Sconi project for North Queensland which, as the Premier said, we are supporting through our Jobs and Regional Growth Fund. The new mine near Greenvale will extract cobalt, nickel and scandium oxide to create 500 construction jobs and almost 300 jobs during its operation. These jobs will require a highly skilled workforce and provide apprenticeships for young Queenslanders in the growing new-economy minerals sector.

While the resource sector is a traditional strength of Queensland, our government believes that we can do more than dig up just minerals; we can process and manufacture them to become world leaders in battery production and new economy minerals. That is why our support for the project is conditional on Australian Mines securing a 100 per cent offtake agreement and ensuring the minerals are processed right here in Queensland. Australian Mines will establish its head office in Brisbane, and it expects to award key construction related contracts by the end of this year. The company estimates that construction should be complete by mid-2023. Once developed, Australian Mines believes the project will be one of the most cost-competitive cobalt-producing nickel operations not only in Australia but the world. The project means jobs for North Queenslanders in industries of the future.

Bruce Highway

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (10.02 am): The Bruce Highway is Queensland's backbone. It is the road that millions of Queenslanders depend on. It connects growing regional centres and carries tourists over 1,700 kilometres between Cairns and Brisbane. It is

longer than California by 450 kilometres, it is longer than the nation of Japan and nearly double the length of the United Kingdom. As Queensland's major economic artery, it moves freight between our ports and our regional communities from paddocks and pits to export markets, supporting hundreds of thousands of Queensland jobs.

You do not have to go back many years to find news stories reporting on the terrible state of the highway and the lives lost on it. The same articles often lamented the political infighting that stymied progress on appropriate funding for it. Since the election of the Palaszczuk Labor government in 2015, we have fought hard to make the Bruce Highway safer and less congested. The centrepiece of that effort is the \$12.6 billion Bruce Highway Upgrade Program with the federal government.

That program, delivered with federal government support, is supporting record investments in the Bruce Highway today. Upgrades worth billions of dollars are underway or about to start around Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, Rockhampton, Gympie, Fraser Coast and the Sunshine Coast, where there is a record roads commitment. These projects will make the highway safer, move freight quicker and support thousands of Queensland jobs. Bruce Highway upgrades are a core part of the \$23 billion, 21,500 job pipeline of roads and transport investments we are delivering to support Queensland's economic recovery.

The Palaszczuk Labor government is building a better Bruce, and this week we will honour another commitment to it. We said we would establish the Bruce Highway Trust to take the political fighting out of funding—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, members! Members to my left, the minister is not being provocative.

Mr BAILEY: A moot point, Mr Speaker. We have committed our share towards locking in \$1 billion in joint funding for upgrades every year. This Friday the Bruce Highway Trust will hold its first meeting. I am pleased to say there has been bipartisan support, apparently, for the trust. It is chaired by—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I cannot hear the minister on his feet.

Mr BAILEY: At least one side genuinely supports the Bruce Highway.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, I do not need the commentary to go along with it.

Mr BAILEY: Thank you, Mr Speaker. It is chaired by Mr Peter Garske, previous deputy chair of the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator and former CEO of the Queensland Trucking Association. He will be supported by deputy chair Barbara Madden, who has been nominated by the Leader of the Opposition and brings considerable experience to the role. The federal government will be represented by federal infrastructure departmental secretary, Simon Atkinson. The RACQ, Queensland Farmers' Federation, Local Government Association of Queensland, Transport Workers' Union, Queensland Trucking Association and the Queensland Tourism Industry Council are all members of the trust. The meeting will mark an historic turning point for the future of the Bruce Highway. The council will develop a new 15-year vision for the Bruce Highway and identify investment priorities that can be considered by state and federal roads ministers.

As we continue to implement our plan to unite and recover from COVID-19 for Queensland's economic recovery and look for ways to support new jobs, a new vision for the Bruce Highway will give Queenslanders the certainty they need in uncertain times.

Energy Industry, Infrastructure



Hon. AJ LYNHAM (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy) (10.05 am): Our publicly owned energy companies are investing in infrastructure and creating jobs as Queensland recovers from the global economic challenges following COVID-19. This financial year our publically owned energy businesses will invest more than \$1.8 billion on capital works, supporting nearly 4,000 jobs. They will train the next generation of energy workers, giving them the skills and training Queensland needs to maintain our reliable network. That is how you rebuild an economy, Mr Speaker: infrastructure and jobs.

In Central Queensland up to \$110 million is being spent on overhauling units at the Stanwell Power Station outside Rockhampton and CS Energy's Callide power station near Biloela. The Callide overhaul started last month and is creating work for about 200 contractors. A couple of weeks ago Stanwell commenced the overhaul of its Stanwell Power Station, supporting 150 jobs for Central Queenslanders. Our transmission business, Powerlink, has around \$120 million worth of work

underway, supporting a further 280 jobs. Nearly 5,000 insulators are being replaced on 660 transmission towers between Biloela and Kingaroy. Later in July, \$3 million worth of works will commence to replace insulators along the Wurdong to Boyne Island transmission line. Nearly 100 Central Queensland jobs are being supported in the \$34 million refit of the Collinsville to Proserpine transmission line.

With travel and other COVID restrictions easing, Powerlink has restarted \$67 million worth of works, supporting nearly 300 jobs. Work is underway refurbishing Powerlink's Nebo, Callide A and Calvale substations and replacing insulators on the Gin Gin to Wooroonga transmission line, supporting up to 152 jobs across Central Queensland and Wide Bay. Here in the south-east, Energex is investing \$121 million on its electricity distribution infrastructure, supporting dozens of direct and indirect jobs. Later this month Energex will commission a \$106 million powerline project between Palmwoods and west Maroochydore that will help meet the energy demand of the growing Sunshine Coast population.

Another \$15 million redevelopment is almost complete in my electorate at the Energex Stafford depot, and I look forward to visiting the 150 staff later this month. Our new clean energy generator, CleanCo, has committed to purchasing 320 megawatts from the Neoen solar farm just outside Chinchilla. Initial works such as access roads and site preparation are due to commence as early as this month with construction scheduled to commence in the fourth quarter of this year, generating 400 jobs in that region. CleanCo has also invested in building a new windfarm near Warwick as part of a precinct that will create another 400 jobs.

Queensland has a plan to unite and recover from COVID-19 and our efficient, reliable and, most importantly, publicly owned power network and generation fleet will play a key role. That is how you unite and recover—with affordable, reliable electricity from publicly owned assets.

Coronavirus, Local Government



Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (10.09 am): As Queenslanders unite and recover in the wake of the economic hit we have taken as a result of the pandemic, I wish to further update the House on how the Palaszczuk Labor government is partnering with councils in North Queensland to help boost jobs and enhance community infrastructure.

Two weeks ago I met with mayors and councillors in North Queensland to see projects they plan to undertake as part of our special COVID round of Works for Queensland. In Townsville, I met with Mayor Jenny Hill and her council, as well as the members for Townsville and Thuringowa, to inspect projects such as the upgrades to the irrigation system at the Townsville Palmetum, an aerator to improve water quality in the Ross dam, as well as visiting other projects, such as the Northern Beaches Leisure Centre pool in the electorate of Hinchinbrook. I am delighted to advise the House that all of the Townsville City Council's \$13.54 million of proposed projects have been approved and they can start creating and supporting almost 85 jobs straightaway.

In the Whitsunday region, Mayor Andrew Wilcox and the hardworking Labor candidate for Whitsunday, Tracey Cameron, showed me the successes Works for Queensland has already had in that beautiful part of the state. We also visited future Works for Queensland sites in Cannonvale, Proserpine and Airlie Beach—again, all of which have been approved. I know how keen the Whitsunday Regional Council are to start investing their \$2.72 million of COVID Works for Queensland allocation in supporting or creating 105 jobs in the area hard hit by the downturn in tourism.

I wrapped up my visit to North Queensland in Mackay where I joined the member for Mackay as well as Mayor Greg Williamson and Deputy Mayor Karen May in seeing the contribution previous rounds of Works for Queensland have made in the tranquil Queens Park. The extra COVID round of Works for Queensland will support or create almost 90 jobs in the region thanks to a \$6.93 million allocation. I am happy to report to the House that I have approved all of the Mackay Regional Council's proposed projects, including important works that we inspected at the Mackay Entertainment and Convention Centre as well as upgrades to community spaces, parks and waterways.

North Queenslanders are a resilient bunch, as we know. I look forward to continuing to work with them and their local government representatives as we unite and recover from the pandemic.

Ekka Strawberry Sundaes



Hon. ML FURNER (Ferry Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries) (10.12 am): When Queenslanders think of the Ekka, they think of that iconic strawberry sundae. It is one of the first things that comes to mind. There is nothing quite like it—special edition

strawberry and vanilla ice creams, fresh Queensland strawberries and a bit of cream on top of course. Members are licking their lips in anticipation now. We will not have the traditional Ekka this year, but I am 'berry' excited to announce that Queenslanders will be able to continue a 33-year tradition and enjoy a strawberry sundae thanks to the Palaszczuk government.

Our \$75,000 donation will allow the Prince Charles Hospital Foundation's The Common Good initiative to go on the road. Here is the scoop—there will be five pop-up strawberry sundae stalls around Brisbane during the scheduled 10 days of the Ekka from 7 August to 16 August. You will also be able to enjoy a strawberry sundae at home or in your workplace, with take-home packs of 20 or larger packs of 100 for sale online. Already more than 400 packs, or 11,500 sundaes worth, have been ordered. Every strawberry sundae raises much needed money for medical research. This year, the money raised from the sale of these sundaes will be used to help in the battle against COVID-19. The Prince Charles Hospital Foundation is hoping to sell 60,000 sundaes this Ekka season. So kids, ask mum and dad to get more than one strawberry sundae next month because you will be contributing to life-saving research.

I had the pleasure of visiting the Lick Ice Cream factory last week and I can tell the House that they are busy preparing the six tonnes of ice cream. This is a boost for our farmers as well.


Opposition members interjected.

Mr FURNER: I love the cries of adulation from members opposite when I mention farmers, because I am known as 'Furner, the farmer's friend'. This year's sundaes will use four tonnes of Queensland cream, 31,000 eggs and a load of delicious Queensland strawberries. Buying an Ekka sundae this year will not only help our farmers; it will also help our economy as we unite and recover and implement our plan for economic recovery in the wake of COVID-19.

In 2018 we assisted the strawberry industry through difficult times with a \$1 million package. Now we can all support The Common Good initiative. I understand the strawberry industry is today announcing a donation of 20,000 punnets to The Common Good to use in this year's sundaes. I commend the foundation, I commend the strawberry industry and I commend the Queensland farmers for coming together for the common good.


PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations, Professional Qualifications

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations) (10.15 am): In 1993 I had the privilege of attending the 10-week intensive Harvard Trade Union Program plus a two-week practical component to further my higher education with people from around the world. This is a highly sought after program and I was lucky enough to receive a scholarship to attend. I am advised that, while the program still exists today, it is very different to the one I completed more than 27 years ago. I have never claimed to have a master's degree or a graduate diploma. I have never used any letters after my name. The parliament website says 'Masters/Graduate Diploma Level—Harvard Trade Union Program'. It never mentions me obtaining a degree. I am proud of my education and proud of my work during this program. It was an incredible opportunity and has helped shape the person I am today.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Youth Crime

 **Mr PURDIE** (Ninderry—LNP) (10.16 am): I give notice that I will move—


That this House—

1. notes the LNP's policy to tackle juvenile crime in Queensland:
 - (a) introduce tougher laws and increased penalties to hold offenders accountable;
 - (b) require 24/7 monitoring of offenders on bail by Youth Justice, taking the pressure off police;
 - (c) three-strikes policy for repeat offenders;
 - (d) establish a community payback farm program with rehabilitation to break the cycle of reoffending;
 - (e) scrap Labor's failed youth bail houses; and
 - (f) introduce a justice reinvestment program for early intervention to reduce offending; and
2. calls on the Palaszczuk government to immediately implement the LNP's policy to tackle juvenile crime in Queensland.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr SPEAKER: Question time will conclude today at 11.17 am.

Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations, Professional Qualifications

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (10.17 am): My first question is to the Premier. Any other Queenslander who gets a job based on exaggerated qualifications or falsified qualifications would have their employment terminated. Why has the Premier not acted on the education minister's claim of having a master's from Harvard University when really all she has is a certificate of completion?

Ms GRACE: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I believe that contains some inferences that are incorrect and do not reflect the record. I take personal offence and I ask that it be withdrawn.

Mr SPEAKER: Member, you can take personal offence to that. Do you take personal offence?

Ms GRACE: Mr Speaker, I did say that I took personal offence and I ask that it be withdrawn.

Mr SPEAKER: The member has taken offence to the question as asked. I will give the Leader of the Opposition an opportunity to rephrase that question.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I withdraw. I will start again. My first question is to the Premier. Any other Queenslander who gets a job based on exaggerated or falsified qualifications would have their employment terminated. Why has the Premier not acted on today's reports about the education minister?

Ms GRACE: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Once again, the question was asked in exactly the same way in the beginning with regard to incorrect information about falsifying qualifications. My statement clearly said that I did not do that. I take offence and I ask that it be withdrawn.

Mr SPEAKER: I will take advice from the Clerk.

Speaker's Ruling, Question out of Order

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, I have heard you attempt to rephrase the question. I think the key here is the use of the word 'falsified', which suggests a dishonest intent. The member took offence. I gave you the opportunity to rephrase. I will rule the question out of order as it has been rephrased.

Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations, Integrity

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: My second question is to the Premier. The Crime and Corruption Commission has found instances of unethical behaviour, corruption risks, deleted emails, arguably dishonest acts, eroded integrity and failure to be accountable and transparent, all going on within the education department. Today it has been revealed that the education minister has embellished a certificate of completion of a masters. Why does the Premier consider the education minister's actions are acceptable for a Palaszczuk government minister?

Ms GRACE: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Once again, there are inferences in that question against the relevant section of the standing orders. I take offence and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, members. Leader of the Opposition, in a similar fashion to the first question asked, I will ask you to rephrase this question. I will give you one opportunity to do so. It is appropriate for the opposition to be able to seek answers to questions regarding the integrity of ministers. However, I think you need to consider the use of the word 'embellishment'.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: My question is to the Premier. Why does the Premier consider the education minister's actions are acceptable for a Palaszczuk government minister?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I think the actions of the minister putting forward new schools in Queensland is perfectly acceptable. I think the actions of this minister backing teachers is perfectly acceptable. I think delivering a record budget in Education is perfectly acceptable. What we have seen today is how the Leader of the Opposition cannot even ask a basic question under the standing orders. That is a failure of leadership to ask a basic fundamental question in the house of democracy.

I have absolute faith in the Minister for Education. The Minister for Education has made a solid explanation to this House, and those on the other side seek to misconstrue it. They look at twisting it. Let me say very clearly that the people of this state will have their say at the next election about who they support and who they do not support. On this side of the House we are focused on uniting and recovery in the face of the global pandemic.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Members to my left.

Ms PALASZCZUK: We have not heard an alternative plan from those opposite.

Mr Crandon interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Coomera will cease his interjections.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am sorry, they had one plan and that was to open the borders and put everybody at risk. On this side we will stand with the people of Queensland; we will put their health first. You cannot trust the LNP. They would put everything at risk. They would put every single Queenslander at risk. They should hang their heads in shame. Is it any wonder the backbench are talking about the Leader of the Opposition? Is it any wonder that anyone on that side of the House would go to the member for Kawana for any ounce of strategy—failure on every single account: the worst Attorney-General that ever existed in this state. The member for Kawana is the Leader of the Opposition's brain trust! Heaven help us.

Mr Mander interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Everton will cease his interjections.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Their strategy was to open the borders. Where would Queensland have been? They said 64 times that they wanted the borders open, putting everyone at risk—

Mr Mander: The Premier finally did it.

Ms PALASZCZUK:—including yourself, member for Everton. You were part of it.

Mr Mander: Absolutely.

Ms PALASZCZUK: There you are; he said it. I take that interjection. Shame on you.

Mr SPEAKER: Comments will come through the chair.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I will never put the health of Queenslanders at risk. If I have to take tough action again, I will.

Mr Mander: Well, close the borders again.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I absolutely will.

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: I remind members that comments will come through the chair. Member for Everton, member for Coomera, member for Kawana, you will cease your consistent interjections. Treasurer, I did note that you were questioning a member's presence in the House. There are ways to do that without doing it in the way you did. I ask you to cease those comments.

Back to Work Program

Mr STEWART: My question is of the Premier and the Minister for Trade. Will the Premier update the House on what the Back to Work program has achieved for workers and their employers around the state and what this program's focus will be going forward?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Townsville for his question because the member for Townsville cares passionately about his community and he cares passionately about jobs of—

Mrs Frecklington: Except for when it comes to crime.

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, you have the call.

Ms PALASZCZUK: So rude, disappointingly rude. They have no idea and no plan. Let me say very clearly that the member for Townsville is absolutely focused on jobs for Queenslanders, and our Back to Work program came out of those discussions we had at the time that the refinery was—

Mr Stewart: Queensland Nickel.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is right, it was Queensland Nickel where hundreds of people lost their job. Back to Work started as a regionally based program to get people back into work; it was begun to give businesses that extra cash to get people back into work.

I am pleased to say that in North Queensland some 3,242 Queenslanders have benefited from the Back to Work program. What do we want to do? We want to expand that program even more. We know how important it is in terms of work and recovering from COVID. This time we have announced \$20,000 especially to put on an apprentice or trainee. This is going to be a vital boost for our economy as we seek to recover and as we have eased our restrictions.

Of course, there were benefits across other parts of Queensland: in Central Queensland, 2,844 employees have been helped; in Far North Queensland, 4,336; in Mackay and Whitsunday, 2,339. Now there is the extension of \$70 million, and today we announced a very solid program focusing on skills and training for Queensland's recovery from COVID—\$90 million. It would be remiss of me not to re-emphasise the fact that when those opposite had a job-generating skilling program called Skilling Queenslanders for Work, the member for Surfers Paradise, who was Minister for Education at the time, scrapped that program. As I said, it was around eight years ago today that that program was scrapped. What we did was bring it back and thousands of people have gone through those programs. I remember being in my own electorate and people were getting the training to work in aged care, skills that are needed for a growing community.

What we want to do is focus this round of training and skills on our young people because young people have been hit so hard during this COVID pandemic. It is important that we give young people as much opportunity as possible to get back into work, and this is what our Back to Work program is doing. This is what Skilling Queenslanders for Work is doing. On this side of the House we back jobs; on that side of the House they cut jobs.

Under Treasurer, Appointment

Mr MANDER: My question without notice is to the Premier. A whistleblower has contacted the opposition and advised that the independent selection panel chaired by the director-general of Premier and Cabinet had recommended Leon Allen for the role of Under Treasurer when it was previously vacant; however, the member for South Brisbane intervened to ensure Frankie Carroll was appointed. Will the Premier immediately release the original selection panel's report so that Queenslanders can know the truth?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for the question. Frankie Carroll was selected as the nominee to be the Under Treasurer. He has now since moved to the Department of Regional Development. The new Under Treasurer is Rachel Hunter. If the opposition has any evidence or a whistleblower, it should refer that immediately to the CCC.

Reef Assist Program; Cairns, Tourism Industry

Mr HEALY: My question is to the Premier and Minister for Trade. Will the Premier detail how today's \$10 million Reef Assist announcement will help regions like Cairns deliver priority environmental projects and jobs? Can the Premier update the House on her recent meeting with the Cairns TNQ convoy?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Cairns very much for his question. I might address the second part of his question first, that is, the TNQ convoy which visited parliament. It was wonderful to see them here again. I really appreciate the time they spent visiting Brisbane and briefing ministers. I had the great opportunity of meeting with Nick, Sally and Wendy, and putting together their forward vision of the plan for Cairns, in which I know the member for Cairns has been intimately involved. As I said to them yesterday, we very much would like to show our support to Cairns. Last time, we indicated that we would have a community cabinet in Cairns.

I can today advise that there will be a community cabinet in Cairns next month. I will take the cabinet up there on Monday, 24 August and Tuesday, 25 August. I know that will be a great boost for Cairns but also an opportunity. I said specifically that I want ministers out meeting businesses, hearing firsthand anything more that we as a government can do to assist them. We know that Cairns was really hard hit and that especially young people have been impacted. I know that the member for Barron River, the member for Cook and the member for Mulgrave—yourself, Mr Speaker—look forward to having the cabinet there. We look forward to once again getting out on the ground and listening to

Queenslanders. We can only do that because of our strong health response. Where people in other countries are in lockdown and cannot go out and do these things, we can go out and engage with the community.

Secondly, I want to address the \$10 million Reef Assist Program. As I said, we are very passionate about getting young people back into work. We have seen that, in Cairns in particular, the number of young people impacted by COVID is very high. Through the work of those organisations that put a program to government, we now have constructed Reef Assist. It is about looking at our Great Barrier Reef catchments. The eligibility is from Mackay northward. We are targeting that area of Queensland to enable young people who may have lost their job, for example in hospitality, to get into some meaningful work which means a lot to them as well. I cannot think of a better job than helping to protect the Great Barrier Reef. There is so much work that needs to be done. This side of the House supports the barrier reef. We put in place the reef regulations. It is iconic not just to Queensland but also to the world. We want to do everything we can. In terms of those coastal catchment areas, from land rehabilitation to building walking tracks, we want to do everything we possibly can. There is also a great Skilling Queenslanders for Work program in eradicating the crown-of-thorns. We will continue to do everything we can to assist.

(Time expired)

Queensland Universities, Qualifications

Mr BLEIJIE: My question without notice is to the education minister. I refer to the qualifications of the education minister in state parliament.

Mrs D'ATH: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member for Kawana is holding up props.

Mr SPEAKER: I did not see that. Thank you very much, Leader of the House. You know the rules on props, member.

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. My question without notice is to the Minister for Education. I refer to the qualifications of the education minister. Can the minister advise if any Queensland universities offer a masters or graduate diploma award following attendance at a five- or 10-week course with no exams or assessment and whether it is impacted by the standard of the lecturers?

Ms GRACE: No, I cannot.

Ms Jones interjected.

Mr Dick interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The members for Cooper and Woodridge will cease their interjections.

Ms GRACE: I know that was a rhetorical question from the member. No, I cannot.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, members to my left.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I will wait for silence, members.

Ms Grace: Stupid question.

Dr Miles interjected.

Mr Bleijie: It was a stupid answer.

Mr SPEAKER: I asked for silence. The Deputy Premier is warned under the standing orders. The Minister for Education is warned under the standing orders. The member for Kawana is warned under the standing orders. The member for Kawana should withdraw the comment.

Mr BLEIJIE: I withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: It was unparliamentary.

Ms GRACE: I will withdraw as well.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, member for McConnel.

Health Infrastructure

Ms RICHARDS: My question is of the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on the government's program of health infrastructure projects and is he aware of any alternative approaches?

Dr MILES: I thank the member for Redlands for her question. We on this side of the House do not focus just on investing in more and better frontline services; we also build new, more and better health facilities. Those better facilities provide better places to work for our doctors, nurses, health professionals and their support staff, allowing them to deliver better and more advanced health services closer to people's homes. Importantly, they also create jobs for tradies in construction as we build them and allow us to train more apprentices here in Queensland, giving young people a great start to their careers. It is a key part of what we can do to unite and recover, to get more people into jobs, to help people to advance their skills and in the process build new, expanded, better hospitals.

I know that the member for Redlands, along with the members for Capalaba and Springwood, is very focused on our efforts to redevelop Redland Hospital. It was great to be at Redland Hospital recently to announce \$34.5 million for 713 parks in a new multistorey car park. In the process, that will create 70 jobs for locals as we unite and recover to create jobs for Queenslanders. That project is an important enabler so that once the car park is built we will be able to expand the hospital footprint into the existing car park.

We also are out to tender for the \$460 million expansion of the Logan Hospital and its \$18.87 million maternity refurbishment. Combined, it is the biggest ever hospital expansion in Queensland's history, with 1,000 jobs in that project. In Ipswich there is the acute mental health unit project with \$91 million to create 100 jobs. Right across this state, we are creating jobs for Queenslanders and apprenticeships for Queenslanders while also delivering new and better hospitals.

Those opposite did not plan for a single significant hospital infrastructure investment in their three years in government. They only ever completed projects started by Labor. It is Labor that is now delivering the health infrastructure projects of the future and in the process helping Queenslanders to unite and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, getting people back into jobs building our hospitals.

Department of Education, Integrity

Dr ROWAN: My question without notice is to the Premier. The Crime and Corruption Commission found serious cultural problems of silent compliance with wrongdoing and corruption risks in the education department and that lessons from past mistakes had not been learnt, and so I ask: who does the Premier hold accountable for this failure to ensure ethical behaviour in the education department? Is it the director-general or the Minister for Education?

Ms PALASZCZUK: As I said yesterday, and I will say it again: that report has been referred, along with another report from the CCC, to the Public Service Commissioner. I am not responding to any more issues in relation to that report until the Public Service Commissioner has afforded natural justice to all of the people in the Department of Education who were named in that report, and that is under the Crime and Corruption Act and the Public Service Act. I would expect all members to abide by that until the Public Service Commissioner has reached his decision.

Virgin Australia Airlines

Mrs GILBERT: My question is of the Treasurer, Minister for Infrastructure and Planning. Will the Treasurer update the House on how important it is to Queensland to have Virgin Australia continuing to fly into regional destinations, including my city of Mackay, and is he aware of any alternative approaches?

Mr DICK: I thank the member for Mackay for the work she is doing supporting her community in supporting a diversified, strong and competitive civil aviation industry in Queensland. The completion of the Virgin sale process, which we hope will be completed at the creditors meeting on 22 August, is good news for Queensland, particularly for our tourism industry and those who live in regional Queensland, including those people who live in Mackay.

The news that we received that the successful bidder, Bain International, is committed to retaining Virgin's headquarters in Queensland in Brisbane is also very welcome and the commitment of the government to invest \$200 million through the Queensland Investment Corporation has been pivotal in securing that deal. The self-evident benefits of this arrangement to save Queensland jobs, as many as we can, seem obvious to everyone except the members of the LNP, particularly the leader and the deputy leader who have spent every waking moment trying to undermine that deal. Let us be clear: if the LNP had had its way, if Virgin had ever flown again, which is questionable, it would have flown out of Badgerys Creek in Western Sydney.

Mr Mander: They were always going to fly again.

Mr DICK: I take the interjection from the member for Everton, who said, 'They were always going to fly again.' The administrator said publicly that Virgin was a matter of days away from collapse, so the member for Everton cannot be trusted in anything he says.

Mr Mander: Are you printing on both sides of the paper there?

Mr DICK: We should be doing everything we can to support Virgin flying—everything, every single thing. Well, I can read from a piece of paper; it is a pity the Leader of the Opposition cannot and ask a simple question in the parliament. We know that the National Party through the Deputy Prime Minister and the former National Party transport minister John Sharp, the chair of Rex, were happy to put in \$77 million—your colleagues, member for Everton, in Canberra—

Mr SPEAKER: Through the chair please.

Mr DICK:—no strings attached to support Rex, a regional airline owned out of Singapore, flying out of Sydney—no strings attached. They were happy to do a deal to support it, but the LNP did absolutely nothing to save Virgin. On a market capitalisation basis, that would have been a \$1 billion grant no strings attached to Virgin. Of course Virgin did not have a former National Party transport minister as the chair of the company, so I will take no criticism from the member for Everton. This is a party that has no idea what it is doing. It has no judgement on the borders, it has no judgement on Virgin, and it certainly has no judgement on the Queensland budget and how we manage the budget going forward. No-one believes the member for Everton. He is an absolute fraud when it comes to management of money. Only Labor can be trusted to support Virgin and the Virgin jobs.

Mr SPEAKER: Treasurer, I ask that you please withdraw that final statement. The use of the word 'fraud' is unparliamentary.

Mr DICK: I withdraw the word 'fraud' in relation to the deputy opposition leader.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: It has to be unqualified.

Mr DICK: I withdraw the word 'fraud', Mr Speaker.

Konnech

Ms SIMPSON: My question is to the Premier. Can the Premier explain why foreign owned company Konnech was given an important contract to produce the software to administer Queensland's elections using China based coders over every Queensland coding firm?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for the question. The Attorney-General has more details about that, but I can assure every Queenslanders that all of their data is kept here in Australia.

Tourism Industry

Ms SCANLON: My question is to the Minister for State Development, Tourism and Innovation. Will the minister update the House on how business has started to improve for the tourism industry thanks to the Palaszczuk government's health response to COVID-19?

Ms JONES: Do I have great news for Queensland: the Green Lantern is back from holidays, Superman is once again flying in the skies, and today Movie World has opened its doors again post COVID-19! This comes on the back of Sea World opening, as well as Wet'n'Wild. One thousand theme park workers have now returned to work today with the opening doors of Movie World. The theme parks on the Gold Coast support around 5,000 workers and it is so pleasing to see that Movie World has been able to open today in time for the second week of the school holidays.

I realise that you are a bit of a fan, aren't you, Mr Speaker? I just had a realisation, so you should be very pleased, Mr Speaker. All your mates are back. This is a very serious matter. This is about jobs for Gold Coasters. Our side of politics has been resolute in supporting our theme parks to reopen because we know that they support thousands of pay packets going to thousands of Gold Coast homes. I want to thank the member for Gaven for her advocacy on behalf of theme park workers. She has been resolute and consistent in talking to me about how our government can continue to support them and we are very proud to do so.

While we are opening the doors and using the entry, it seems that the only way that people are leaving the LNP on the Gold Coast is through the exit. Today in the *Gold Coast Bulletin* it has been revealed that more than 25 branch members from the Currumbin branch have now left the LNP. Why have they left the LNP? Because of the horrible and disgraceful way that the LNP hierarchy has treated

the former member for Currumbin. There has been a lot of talk this morning in the parliament about standards. Let us talk about standards. What has the former member for Currumbin said on the public record which she stands by today in the *Gold Coast Bulletin*? She said with regard to the bullying that she experienced as a former member of parliament—

I have experienced this on more than one occasion, sometimes in a mild-mannered way—

Mr Mander interjected.

Ms JONES: And you are laughing. I note the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is laughing about accusations of bullying—

Mr Mander: I'm laughing at the allegations of the Labor Party bullying Jann Stuckey in Townsville.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Everton, this is not an opportunity to make a statement. You are warned under the standing orders.

Ms JONES: Do you want to swear on a Bible? She said—

I have experienced this on more than one occasion, sometimes in a mild-mannered way and other times with considerable forcefulness.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Ms JONES: I think the Leader of the Opposition would be interested to know that the former member for Currumbin said this about one of her team—

Once I was bailed up against the wall in parliament prior to a vote.

My question to the Leader of the Opposition is: who? Which one of those bullyboys put her up against a wall in parliament? This goes to the leadership. It goes to the Leader of the Opposition's leadership. Was it the member for Surfers Paradise?

(Time expired)

Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations, Professional Qualifications

Mr LANGBROEK: My question without notice is to the Premier. The CCC found that a media release tabled in the House by the education minister contained information that was 'false' and 'designed to mislead'. What action has the Premier taken to ensure the education minister has corrected the record?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for the question.

Mr Hunt interjected.

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

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am happy to get further advice about this, but my understanding is that the fact that the CCC has tabled that report means that that now becomes the official record of the parliament. I am happy to get further clarification from the Clerk on that. Secondly, as I said, there is natural justice afoot for the Department of Education officials who are now being thoroughly investigated by the Public Service Commissioner. Once again I do ask people, especially members of this House, to respect that.

Skilling Queenslanders for Work

Mr WHITING: My question is to the Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development. Will the minister update the House on the success of the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program and what other views have been expressed about this program?

Ms FENTIMAN: I thank the member for the question. I have had the opportunity to join with the member for Bancroft and meet many of our Skilling Queenslanders for Work trainees in his part of the world. He is a huge champion for this program, as is every member on this side of the House because the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program creates jobs. It takes young people who previously were not able to find work and gives them a pathway into a job. That is what this government is all about.

Because we have managed the health crisis so well, we are now firmly focused on our economic plan to Unite and Recover for Queensland Jobs. The announcement today by the Premier of a \$10 million extension to Skilling Queenslanders for Work will mean 500 more Queenslanders will get an opportunity as a trainee to lead to work in the construction industry or in landscaping. These are great quality jobs for Queenslanders and that is why we back this program.

As the Premier mentioned this morning, it is eight years this week since Campbell Newman and his apprentice, the Leader of the Opposition, scrapped this program overnight. Organisations and Queenslanders right across the state were completely left in the lurch with no opportunities for skilling Queenslanders. Not only did the Leader of the Opposition cut this program once, when she was in opposition with the then member for Clayfield—she was the deputy leader; they went to the election to scrap it again. It was not good enough to cut the program once. The Leader of the Opposition had to cut the program twice.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Ms FENTIMAN: We still have not heard from the Leader of the Opposition whether she is going to continue the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program. We still have not heard what the LNP's position is on Skilling Queenslanders for Work. It has generated 30,000 jobs.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

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

Ms FENTIMAN: That is 30,000 jobs that would not be there if the Leader of the Opposition were in charge.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

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

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Leader of the Opposition, you are warned under the standing orders. I have given you clear guidance. There will be no further interjections.

Ms GRACE: The Leader of the Opposition is yelling untruths across the chamber about master's qualifications. I take personal offence and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The Minister for Education is abusing the standing orders with her irrelevant points of orders today. The Leader of the Opposition did not once reference the Minister for Education. If she makes that inference, that is her own issue—we all know it is; it is a big issue—but the Leader of the Opposition did not do it; the minister did it. I would ask that she stop abusing the standing orders to protect herself.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. However, in reference to your original point of order, Minister for Education, it is not on the record. They are interjections. The Leader of the Opposition has been warned over her interjections and that will be the end of the matter.

Ms FENTIMAN: Not only have those opposite cut this job-generating project twice, not only have they not said what their plans are for SQW if they are elected, but in what can only be described as shameless they rock up to Skilling Queenslanders for Work graduations and pretend that they support the program.

Ms Simpson: It has been announced! Just misleading the House.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Maroochydore!

Ms FENTIMAN: The member for Maroochydore has put on her social media that she supports the program. The member for Surfers Paradise turns up to Skilling Queenslanders for Work graduations. Michelle Landry, an assistant minister in North Queensland, turns up to spruik the program.

The fact of the matter is that those opposite have form when it comes to providing skills and training and jobs for young people. They have cut the program twice. That is 30,000 jobs that would not be here if the LNP had their way. They are happy to turn up to our programs which we fund, which deliver jobs for young Queenslanders, but they are not prepared to go on the record and say what they would do if they won the election. We know what they will do. They will cut programs like this. They will sack Queenslanders and sell our income-generating assets because what they do is cut, sack and sell.

Ingham Hospital, Upgrades

Mr DAMETTO: My question is to the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services. The Townsville Hospital and Health Service has developed a COVID-19 recovery proposed infrastructure program which includes upgrades to Ingham Hospital. These include renal services, a CT scanner and emergency department upgrades. Will the minister commit to funding these necessary upgrades to deliver better health outcomes for Hinchinbrook?

Dr MILES: I thank the member for Hinchinbrook for his question. He has been a passionate advocate for health services in his region, particularly Ingham Hospital. We have met a couple of times now to discuss the plans for Ingham Hospital. I can advise the member that I was in Townsville a week

or two ago and was able to meet with the chair and hear from him about those plans, not just for Ingham Hospital but for services right throughout the Townsville region. I am really pleased to confirm that in that briefing I was advised that they had considered the various projects the member has referred to in his question. They have, I recall, assessed that satellite renal services are probably the first cab off the rank in terms of those projects. They were in the process of finalising a concept brief and options analysis for consideration and I understand that that consideration will be over the coming weeks. Hopefully that will come to me for consideration. I will happily brief the member once again once I have that information.

It is likely we could source funding for it from the \$20 million North Queensland renal funding that I announced. I know how important it is that we deliver renal and dialysis services as close to people's homes as possible. Having to travel to get those services has a huge impact on people. We are focused on getting them there. Of course more acute patients are always going to have to travel to our bigger hospitals. It is great that we are expanding the dialysis service at Townsville Hospital from 17 to 30 chairs. That will allow for more people to get the services that they need there if they have more acute needs.

Last year we completed the power upgrade at the hospital which is an important enabler to getting newer equipment, such as CTs and that type of thing, in. We have the infrastructure in place at Ingham and I certainly look forward to seeing both the plans for local dialysis as well as the perhaps longer term plans for those other projects. Ingham Hospital is one of those hospitals where Labor planned for major investments. I think it was more than \$40 million that the previous Labor government invested there. We will continue to invest in hospitals like Ingham right across the state for better health services and, of course, to also create jobs in those communities.

Building and Construction Industry

Mrs MULLEN: My question is to the Minister for Housing and Public Works, Minister for Digital Technology and Minister for Sport. Will the minister update the House on how the Palaszczuk government is helping Queensland tradies stay in work and creating jobs whilst supporting vulnerable Queenslanders?

Mr de BRENNI: I thank the member for Jordan for the question. The member for Jordan knows that the Palaszczuk government is leading Queensland's economic recovery from COVID-19, with the construction industry playing a central role. Every day nearly 250,000 Queenslanders go to a job related to the construction industry. On this side of the House, we have a plan to help them recover from the pandemic, we have a plan to keep them in work and we have a plan for their future.

We are already delivering through the \$51.8 billion infrastructure guarantee announced by the Treasurer. We are delivering 870 jobs through the \$346 million education package announced by the Minister for Education just yesterday. We are delivering 570 jobs through tourism infrastructure and the Cairns Convention Centre and 572 jobs are being supported through corrections projects in facilities in places such as Rockhampton and Gatton.

We are delivering our plan to Unite and Recover for Queensland Jobs through a further \$276 million construction industry stimulus, which delivers the \$100 million Works for Tradies boost. The Works for Tradies boost means that our plan to unite and recover will deliver a total of over 680 new homes to vulnerable Queenslanders this year—at least 76 in the neighbourhood that the member for Jordan represents—delivering an extra 840 tradie jobs this year.

Today I am very pleased to announce the registration of interest is now open for the Works for Tradies program. The call is out to Queensland licensed builders who want to join with us in delivering more social housing and supporting more Queensland tradies into work. The call is out to be part of our plan to Unite and Recover for Queensland Jobs, to be part of our plan for the future and to be part of our plan for housing construction jobs.

That is not the only plan for housing and construction that is going around. I have been observing the shadow housing minister, the member for Burleigh. He has been wandering around the state and is starting to drop some hints about what the LNP's plan for housing might look like. It is looking like another LNP mess such as the LNP housing mess that we have been cleaning up since they were in office. Here is what we can expect to see from their plan.

We know they will privatise 90 per cent of public housing stock. We know they will slash construction projects back to an average of 74 new homes per year, which is just abysmal. We know they will establish exclusion zones for poor and vulnerable people in Queensland and we know that they will demonise social housing tenants with their abhorrent three-strikes policy. That is the sort of plan that the member for Burleigh will put in place for housing and construction in Queensland. It will

be a half-baked plan that will see more people on the streets, that will see service providers gutted and that will see cuts to the construction industry. Under an LNP housing and construction plan, Queenslanders can simply expect to say, 'Oh, Mr Hart!'

(Time expired)

Konnech

Mr LISTER: My question without notice is to the Premier. Can the Premier guarantee that foreign owned company Konnech, responsible for the troubled election management system, did not allow their Australia based or China based coders to access the electoral roll during data testing?

Ms PALASZCZUK: As I said, the Attorney-General can provide further details, but all of the data is held and stored in Australia. If you have any concerns about the Electoral Commission, you can write to them or the Electoral Commission can—

Mr Lister interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The Premier will put her comments through the chair.

Ms PALASZCZUK: If you are raising this—

Mr SPEAKER: The Premier will put her comments through the chair.

Mr Lister interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Southern Downs will cease his interjections.

Ms PALASZCZUK: The member has raised this allegation and it is a serious allegation.

Rookwood Weir

Mr O'ROURKE: My question is of the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy. Will the minister update the House on the progress of the Rookwood Weir project in Central Queensland?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for Rockhampton for the question. I think every sitting week he asks me a question about Rookwood Weir, because the member is so enthusiastic about Rookwood Weir. In fact, a couple of weeks ago I was up your way inspecting works at Thirsty Creek.

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

Dr LYNHAM: At Thirsty Creek, four council workers were working on the finishing touches. I met Phil McKenzie from Hartecs Group, which is one of the local companies that is benefiting from this once-in-a-generation project. Nearly 250 local businesses are already registered to work on the project. The Rookwood Weir project has already created 40 jobs and, as of yesterday, there are more coming because yesterday CMC broke ground on the site of the new \$15 million Riversleigh bridge, creating yet more jobs in the region. It gets better. The existing bridge will be replaced with the Riversleigh bridge, and Rookwood Weir will eventually deliver thousands of megalitres of water for farmers and businesses. Where is the money coming from? From the Palaszczuk government! We are the people with the plan to lead Queensland out of the pandemic and into economic recovery. Every dollar, every worker and every job is being delivered by the Palaszczuk Labor government.

I recall back in 2018 when Malcolm Turnbull—remember him?—stood on the bank of the Fitzroy River and promised \$352 million for the Rookwood Weir. What has happened since then? We have not seen a brass razoo! If those opposite are tired of hearing about it, I can tell you that I am tired of having to bring this up. Talk to your mates in Canberra—

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

Dr LYNHAM:—and stump up some money. Where are the hundreds of dams that the LNP promised when the member for Nanango was assistant treasurer? They promised hundreds of dams. What happened to the Connors River dam? We have never heard any more about the Connors River dam. They are all promises. They are all fiction. What we hear from the member for Nanango is absolute fiction. We have fiction, we have fallacy and we have falsehood. It is time that those opposite opened their eyes and saw that the only government that is building water infrastructure in this state is the Palaszczuk Labor government.

Mr Lister interjected.

Dr LYNHAM: We will continue to build water infrastructure and to lead this state out of COVID-19 and into economic recovery.

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

Konnech

Mr CRANDON: My question without notice is to the Premier. Can the Premier explain how she has confidence that foreign owned company Konnech's use of China based coders on the troubled election management system has not compromised the security of the Queensland election system?

Ms PALASZCZUK: My understanding is that the company is a US company. It has had rigorous assessments every step of the way. The Attorney-General has the details. My understanding is that the Australian Electoral Commission has also been involved and all of the data is stored in Queensland, in Australia.

Regional Queensland, Tourism Industry

Ms PUGH: My question is of the Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for the Arts. Will the minister update the House on the Palaszczuk government's plan for economic recovery and our investment in world-class tourism opportunities in our regions?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for Mount Ommaney for her question and for her commitment to our natural environment and, of course, the tourism opportunities that that presents, particularly for regional Queensland. As we in this House all know, COVID restrictions have had an impact on many industries, from the arts sector through to the tourism sector. Because we continue to manage the health crisis so well, the Palaszczuk government is able to focus our attention on our plan to Unite and Recover for Queensland Jobs.

As many more Queenslanders and visitors begin to return to our natural environment to visit fantastic places across Queensland and the assets that support that activity, we continue to see investment in the world-class tourism opportunities in our regions really become quite strong draw cards for those visitors. One example of that work is in Mon Repos, Bundaberg. The Palaszczuk government has invested more than \$17 million in the redevelopment of the world-class Mon Repos Turtle Centre, which was completed in 2019. If members get the chance to go there, they will see that it is absolutely spectacular. The centre reopened to the public on 13 June this year following the closure of the facility due to COVID-19 pandemic measures.

For the record, the project has contributed more than 45 full-time jobs to the Bundaberg economy and well over 100 local tradies have been involved throughout the construction of the centre. To support the state's plan for economic recovery, the Palaszczuk government is investing \$400,000 under the National Parks Works and Jobs Boost to convert the centre to renewable energy and further showcase it as a world-class sustainable ecotourism facility. That project is expected to support some 14 jobs.

Recently I was advised that a number of LNP members visited the centre. That is great; however, I have been waiting for a media statement from them, inviting visitors to the region to showcase and highlight that great centre in the Bundaberg region. Alas, there has been absolute radio silence. All we have ever heard from the member for Burnett and from those opposite is negative talk about the tourism opportunities in their region. That is all we have heard. The Palaszczuk government has a plan for economic recovery—

Mr Mickelberg interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Buderim will cease his interjections.

Ms ENOCH: Every time the LNP criticise regional tourism, they put that plan at risk.

Mr Mickelberg interjected.

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

Ms ENOCH: Those opposite have consistently talked down the fantastic tourism opportunities in this region. This is particularly disappointing at a time when we should all be promoting world-class experiences that are unique to Queensland. Only Labor has a plan to recover and rebuild the economy after COVID-19. The negativity of the LNP is a risk to that plan.

(Time expired)

Konnech

Dr ROBINSON: My question is to the Premier. Can the Premier guarantee that Konnech, Inc. does not have a connection to the Chinese Communist Party through its China based subsidiary Jinhua Konnech Inc.?

Ms PALASZCZUK: The Electoral Commission runs elections independent of either side of this House. If those opposite want to know who actually—

Mr Crandon: No concerns at all?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I do have concerns in terms of giving you the answer, which is that the person who approved—

Mr Crandon interjected.

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

Ms PALASZCZUK: The person who approved the tender was the former electoral commissioner, appointed by the member for Kawana. There have been rigorous assessments of this every step of the way, and the Attorney-General has all of the details.

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, Jobs

Mr HARPER: My question is of the Minister for Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. Will the minister update the House on how QFES has delivered jobs across Queensland as we recover?

Mr CRAWFORD: I thank the member for Thuringowa for his ongoing support, particularly in his electorate and the Round Mountain rural fire brigade as well as the Kirwan fire and rescue station that he has been a big supporter of.

Dr Robinson interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Oodgeroo will cease his interjections.

Mr CRAWFORD: As Queensland unites and recovers beyond COVID-19 QFES has kept delivering jobs for Queenslanders right across the state with capital works and fleet builds. We have increased our firefighter numbers, with nearly 150 recruits graduating in this term of government alone.

Dr Robinson interjected.

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

Mr CRAWFORD: The recruits are heading to stations like Port Douglas, Airlie Beach, Yeppoon, Gladstone, Toowoomba, Kingaroy and more. It includes delivering on our election commitment of 100 new firefighters; in fact, we have exceeded the 100. New QFES stations being built across the state are creating hundreds of local job opportunities for Queenslanders and also supporting local businesses, which is what the Palaszczuk government is all about.

The \$16.9 million state-of-the-art QFES headquarters at Charlton near Toowoomba in the Condamine electorate is the largest spend that QFES has ever had on a single facility. Local construction firm McNab was awarded the contract to build. I have been informed that there will be up to 300 locals working on that project over the next six months, including young Jack, who I met the other day, who has an apprenticeship because of this type of investment. The QFES spend on capital works has seen approximately 82 jobs supported by capital works.

Our plan to unite and recover in Queensland does not stop there. We are investing \$50 million to upgrade the QFES fleet. It means more red and more yellow trucks, and it means more jobs. All of our firefighting fleet, save for the most specialised, is built here in Queensland. The building of our fleet supports 136 jobs across our Queensland manufacturers.

Mr Speaker, as you are aware, we recently handed over two new type 3 firefighting pumpers that went to two Cairns fire stations, with a total value of \$1.6 million—highly specialised appliances made here in Queensland. Importantly, since the Palaszczuk government came to power we have built over 550 firefighting appliances or trucks for the state of Queensland; that is, over one-third of the entire QFES fleet has been replaced since the Palaszczuk government came into office.

This government is about supporting local businesses. It is about supporting local jobs. It is about creating jobs for Queenslanders. It is also about ensuring that our firefighters—staff and volunteer—have the best assets at their disposal when we need them most.

Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Declaration of Interest

Ms LEAHY: My question without notice is to the Premier. Can the Premier advise if the Minister for Local Government declared an interest in the Electoral and Other Legislation (Accountability, Integrity and Other Matters) Amendment Bill when it was considered by cabinet?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for the question. I do not know the premise of her question and I do not discuss cabinet deliberations, full stop.

Community Centres

Ms PEASE: My question is of the Minister for Communities and Minister for Disability Services and Seniors. Will the minister please provide an update on the Palaszczuk government's investment in community centre infrastructure?

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

Mrs O'ROURKE: I thank the member for the question and acknowledge her great advocacy for her community which has helped to secure more than \$220,000 in funding over two years for the operation of the new Wynnum Community Place, which will open its doors on Monday. During these uncertain global economic times, it is unfortunate to see at centres like the Wynnum Community Centre the real-life impact on Queenslanders. People need the practical support of assistance with food, training, financial planning and emotional support before they can get back to employment.

Investing in community centre infrastructure across the state is an important element of our plan to unite and recover from the global COVID-19 pandemic. From the Torres Strait to Toowoomba, this plan is well underway, with vital community infrastructure rolling out. Since 2017 we have constructed three new neighbourhood centres at Moranbah, Murgon and Inala and delivered upgrades to four centres in Mackay, Gatton, Ayr and Toowoomba. That is approximately \$14 million worth of construction work, creating approximately 47 construction jobs across the state.

We are just getting started. Right now, construction workers are on site building major multimillion dollar projects across Queensland, including the Women's Centre Townsville, Thursday Island Community Centre, the Oasis Townsville and the major upgrade of the New Farm Neighbourhood Centre. These four projects are progressing well and are all due to be completed in the coming months. Planning works are also underway for the Bowen Neighbourhood Centre and the Heights Community Centre in Wilsonton, which are due to start in the coming months, plus tendering out to the Kallangur Community Centre. Overall that is \$25 million invested in Queensland government projects under construction, creating around 100 construction jobs. I look forward to updating the House as our plan to unite and recover through the support of local community centres continues.

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: The period for question time has expired.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Further Answer to Question, Konnech



Hon. YM D'ATH (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (11.17 am): I rise to make a ministerial statement and respond to the questions put in question time around the Electoral Commission. I firstly say that any democratic system and any democratic electoral system requires the trust and confidence of its citizens in those systems. We have a very proud democratic electoral system in this state and in this country. As such, it is very important that elected members of parliament on all sides do their absolute best to ensure that the community has that confidence and trust. Any challenge to the integrity of our institutions, particularly our electoral institution, should be done with extreme caution and based on clear facts and evidence. To risk people not wanting to vote or to have their data held because of those accusations is a very serious path to go down.

Recent media reports claiming that offshore coders are able to access sensitive electoral data are false. Let me say that again: recent media reports claiming that offshore coders are able to access sensitive electoral roll data are false. All data within the electoral management system, including election results and elector details, is stored in an Australian based cloud system to the certified standard of our foremost cybersecurity agency, the Australian Signals Directorate—

Mr Mickelberg: So no-one accessed it from China?

Mrs D'ATH: Maybe you would like me to finish my statement then you will get your answer. All data within the election management system, including election results and elector details, is stored in an Australian based cloud system to the certified standard of our foremost cybersecurity agency, the Australian Signals Directorate, and is suitably secure.

The EMS is an administrative system that supports the processes required to conduct electoral events. It does not conduct electronic voting, count votes or determine election outcomes. I have been advised that Konnech Australia does not have access to the electoral roll. However, any person in

Queensland can access the electoral roll at an Electoral Commission Queensland office. It is a public record. All vote counting is undertaken by ECQ election staff and results are checked and verified through multiple stages prior to the declaration of election outcomes. Put simply, the hosting environment for the data is designed so that no-one outside Australia can access the electoral roll through the EMS nor can any individual outside of the ECQ publish or alter election result data.

The ECQ engaged Konnech Australia as the supplier to develop its new election management system following an open procurement process that commenced in 2015. The contract was entered into by the previous electoral commissioner. The ECQ has kept federal government stakeholders apprised of the progress of the EMS. Australian Electoral Commission representatives attended the system presentations of the two short-listed suppliers during the tender process in 2017. There has been an Australian Electoral Commission representative who sits on the steering committee overseeing the rollout of EMS since 2018.

In May 2019 the Australian Cyber Security Centre conducted an assessment of any potential risks relating to the development of the EMS to ensure that all required steps were being undertaken to safeguard the security of the system. The ACSC did not make any recommendations to the effect that intervention in the program such as a decision to terminate or postpone delivery was warranted. The local government elections were delivered in March and there were no cybersecurity issues associated with the development or use of the EMS for these elections. To ensure best practice, the EMS is subject to ongoing review and testing by cybersecurity experts. Ensuring appropriate security controls is central to the development of the system.

Having now absolutely clarified for everyone in this chamber that all data is stored securely here in Australia and not provided to any companies offshore, including Konnech Australia does not have access to the electoral roll, I now hope and expect every elected member of this parliament to now correct any social media posts or anything else they have said that puts fears into people and undermines our electoral system in Queensland. To do anything other than that is completely irresponsible.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr McArdle): I will read into the record those members who are currently on a warning. They are the Deputy Premier and the members for McConnel, Kawana, Everton, Nicklin, Nanango, Southern Downs, Buderim, Coomera and Oodgeroo.

CRIMINAL CODE AND OTHER LEGISLATION (WAGE THEFT) AMENDMENT BILL

Message from Governor



Hon. G GRACE (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations) (11.23 am): I present a message from His Excellency the Governor.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr McArdle): The message from His Excellency recommends the Criminal Code and Other Legislation (Wage Theft) Amendment Bill. The contents of the message will be incorporated in the *Record of Proceedings*. I table the message for the information of members.

MESSAGE

CRIMINAL CODE AND OTHER LEGISLATION (WAGE THEFT) AMENDMENT BILL 2020

Constitution of Queensland 2001, section 68

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

A Bill for an Act to amend the Criminal Code, the Industrial Relations Act 2016, the Magistrates Courts Act 1921 and the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2009 for particular purposes

GOVERNOR

Date: 15 July 2020

Tabled paper: Message, dated 15 July 2020, from His Excellency the Governor, recommending the Criminal Code and Other Legislation (Wage Theft) Amendment Bill 2020 [\[1166\]](#).

Introduction



Hon. G GRACE (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations) (11.23 am): I present a bill for an act to amend the Criminal Code, the Industrial Relations Act 2016, the Magistrates Courts Act 1921 and the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2009

for particular purposes. I table the bill, the explanatory notes and a statement of compatibility with human rights. I nominate the Education, Employment and Small Business Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Criminal Code and Other Legislation (Wage Theft) Amendment Bill 2020 [\[1167\]](#).

Tabled paper: Criminal Code and Other Legislation (Wage Theft) Amendment Bill 2020, explanatory notes [\[1168\]](#).

Tabled paper: Criminal Code and Other Legislation (Wage Theft) Amendment Bill 2020, statement of compatibility with human rights [\[1169\]](#).

I am pleased to introduce a bill to criminalise wage theft and create a simple, quick and low-cost wage recovery process for workers. This bill is for all Queensland workers who have fallen victim to wage theft and unpaid or underpayment of wages to provide a clear, quick and simplified way for them to recover their wages. It is hoped that the criminalisation of wage theft will deter employers from engaging in wage theft, particularly those who engage in it as a business model.

This bill responds to recommendations made in the report tabled on 16 November 2018 by the Education, Employment and Small Business Committee titled *A fair day's pay for a fair day's work? Exposing the true cost of wage theft in Queensland*. The committee's report set out the findings of the 2018 Queensland parliamentary inquiry into wage theft in Queensland. The report found that wage theft is endemic across Queensland, affecting 437,000 workers and costing them approximately \$1.22 billion in wages and \$1.12 billion in unpaid superannuation each year. The committee highlighted the bleak situation facing underpaid workers who must attempt to navigate the legal system to recover their wages, with approximately half of affected workers opting not to even pursue a claim. The report found that a lack of federal government action and an under-resourced Fair Work Ombudsman had significantly limited the wage recovery options for workers and failed to deter the most serious incidents of wage theft.

Submissions to the inquiry showed there was broad support for the criminalisation of wage theft and the development of options for simple, low-cost jurisdictions for workers to recover wages. The committee made 17 recommendations, all of which the government accepted or supported in principle. This bill will implement the committee's recommendations with regard to the criminalisation of wage theft and the establishment of an accessible small claims process for wage recovery matters for all Queensland workers. The committee recommended criminalisation of wage theft as a deterrent to employers engaging in this practice and to punish employers who deliberately underpay their workers.

As a proud former union official, I saw firsthand the devastating impact unpaid wages and wage theft have on workers and their families who rely upon their income to survive. As the Minister for Industrial Relations, I have also met countless workers who have told me about their experiences with unpaid wages and wage theft. As late as last week, I met with members from the United Workers' Union who bravely shared their powerful stories with me. This goes to show that, even during this global COVID-19 crisis, wage theft is occurring. Now more than ever, workers' pay deserves to stay in their pockets.

Since the committee tabled its report, more and more high-profile cases of wage theft and underpayment have continued unabated. Coles confessed to underpaying salaried employees about \$20 million over the past six years. Target admitted to underpaying staff about \$9 million. Bunnings underpaid its staff about \$4 million in superannuation entitlements. Woolworths underpaid employees up to \$300 million over 10 years. Super Retail Group admitted to not paying managers overtime to the tune of \$32 million. George Calombaris's MAdE Establishment underpaid \$7.8 million in wages and superannuation. Michael Hill announced that it would be making \$25 million worth of repayments to current and former employees. The list goes on and on and keeps growing. Behind the personal stories and these astounding figures are hardworking people who have been denied their rightful entitlements to pay and superannuation. This is wrong, heartbreaking and must be addressed.

Following the tabling of the committee's report, the Palaszczuk government has written multiple letters and made numerous submissions to the federal government advocating for it to criminalise wage theft. However, to date there has been no action in response and the time for action is now. Queensland is a Criminal Code jurisdiction. The intent of the Criminal Code is that it is an exhaustive statement of the law containing offences of general application.

Stealing is an offence of general application and has a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment. The offence of stealing has application for theft by a worker against their employer and includes an increased penalty to 10 years imprisonment in recognition of the special relationship of trust between an employer and worker. However, there is no corresponding specific penalty for stealing by an employer from their worker.

This bill proposes to rectify this historical difference by amending the definition of 'stealing' in the Criminal Code to ensure the offence and corresponding penalty applies to employers in relation to wages and entitlements. The offence of stealing occurs when an employer intentionally fails to pay the amount, when it becomes payable under an act, industrial instrument or agreement, to the employee or to the other person on behalf of the employee with an intent to permanently deprive the person of the amount.

Like other property offences, the amendments do not introduce a concept of 'recklessness'. It is not intended that the amendments will capture employers who act honestly. It is intended that the offence will capture a broad range of entitlements including unpaid hours or underpayment of hours; unpaid penalty rates; unreasonable deductions; unpaid superannuation; withholding entitlements; underpayment through misclassifying a working including wrong award, wrong classification or by 'sham contracting'; the misuse of Australian business numbers—my own daughter fell victim to that one; and authorised deductions that have not been applied as agreed.

The bill also contains amendments to increase the maximum penalty for fraud by an employer where the offender is the employer of the victim consistent with the penalty applying to fraud by an employee. The bill therefore provides for a maximum of 14 years imprisonment for fraud against a worker by their employer.

The amendments to the Criminal Code reflect the seriousness of wage theft and signal parliament's intention to provide a deterrent to those employers who deliberately underpay and take advantage of their workers. The committee also recommended that a simple, quick and low-cost system for wage recovery process be made available to assist workers who have been underpaid or unpaid. The bill seeks to implement this recommendation by amending the Industrial Relations Act 2016 to utilise the Industrial Magistrates Court and the quick and informal wage recovery claim procedure under the Fair Work Act 2009.

The amendments provide that wage recovery claims will be referred to conciliation prior to a hearing unless a party to the matter advises that they will not participate in conciliation. It is considered that genuine engagement of the parties in conciliation will result in the prompt and low-cost resolution of the majority of wage claims. If the parties cannot resolve the claim, then the conciliator can assist parties to narrow the scope of the matters in dispute which will significantly reduce the complexity and time required to resolve the matter when it progresses to the Industrial Magistrates Court for hearing and resolution.

If conciliation is not successful, Fair Work system workers pursuing a small claim of not more than \$20,000 will be able to access the small claims process under the Fair Work Act. Under this process, the Industrial Magistrates Court is not bound by rules of evidence and procedure, allowing for proceedings to be conducted informally without regard to legal forms and technicality and with legal representation only with the leave of the court. For claims above \$20,000, the Industrial Magistrates Court will use the Industrial Relations (Tribunal) Rules 2011 to facilitate a prompt, simple and more cost-effective process for the hearing and resolution of the claim.

While the primary objective of the bill is to provide Fair Work system workers with fairer access to wage recovery methods, the amendments to the Industrial Relations Act ensure that state system workers also have a clear pathway for wage recovery matters. For far too long the dishonest treatment of workers has gone unnoticed and unpunished. However, the time waiting for a national response on the scourge of wage theft is over. The Queensland government has no other option but to act now.

The combination of criminalisation of wage theft and the facilitation of quick, simple and low-cost wage recovery processes will assist workers to get a fair day's pay for a fair day's work, will make employers who engage in wage theft criminally responsible for their actions and will act as a deterrent for employers engaging in these practices. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. G GRACE (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations) (11.42 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.


Bill read a first time.

Referral to Education, Employment and Small Business Committee

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr McArdle): In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Education, Employment and Small Business Committee.

WASTE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING (PLASTIC ITEMS) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algerst—ALP) (Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for the Arts) (11.43 am): I present a bill for an act to amend the Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011 for particular purposes. I table the bill, the explanatory notes and a statement of compatibility with human rights. I nominate the Natural Resources, Agricultural Industry Development and Environment Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Waste Reduction and Recycling (Plastic Items) Amendment Bill 2020 [\[1170\]](#).

Tabled paper: Waste Reduction and Recycling (Plastic Items) Amendment Bill 2020, explanatory notes [\[1171\]](#).

Tabled paper: Waste Reduction and Recycling (Plastic Items) Amendment Bill 2020, statement of compatibility with human rights [\[1172\]](#).

I am pleased to introduce the Waste Reduction and Recycling (Plastic Items) Amendment Bill 2020. In November last year I released the Palaszczuk government's Plastic Pollution Reduction Plan, which included a commitment to introduce legislation in 2020 which would ban the supply of single-use plastic items starting with straws, cutlery, plates and stirrers. This bill delivers on that commitment to the people of Queensland. First, our government banned single-use lightweight plastic bags. Then we introduced the state's incredibly successful container refund scheme Containers for Change. Today we take the next step in our war on plastic waste.

In 2017 after becoming the environment minister I met a remarkable young girl from Cairns called Molly Steer, who had spearheaded the Straw No More campaign. She had managed to capture the attention of community leaders, her school and the broader Australian community by raising awareness of the impact single-use plastic straws was having on the ocean and its sea life in and around her region and more specifically the Great Barrier Reef. She started a movement that has had international reach—asking everyone to simply say no to straws and help eliminate this single-use plastic item from our environment.

Last year at the regional parliament held in Townsville I then met another dynamic young girl from North Queensland by the name of Emily Walker. She is a Straw No More ambassador. Her passion and contagious enthusiasm for seeing real change around single-use plastics was incredible. She was direct in her request to see a legislative solution to the impacts of single-use plastic in our environment.

The voices of these two remarkable girls have been joined by literally hundreds of schoolchildren. I have also had the privilege to meet through the Tangalooma EcoMarines program in South-East Queensland, led by the very driven Penny Limbach. These student ambassadors from local primary schools have led various environmental challenges including those focused on the impact of single-use plastic.

It is in the voices and conviction of our young people that we hear the call to action on single-use plastic, and it is in the introduction of this legislation that today we respond. In introducing this bill, I would also like to recognise the incredible hard work of Boomerang Alliance and acknowledge Toby Hutcheon, who is in the gallery today. Boomerang Alliance have championed the cause of banning single-use plastics and are the driving force behind Queensland's successful Plastic Free Places initiatives. The Palaszczuk government has proudly partnered with them to invest almost \$250,000 in Plastic Free Noosa, Plastic Free Townsville and Plastic Free Cairns. The success of those programs has been an important stepping stone towards the bill I am introducing here today.

This bill amends the Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011 to provide for the introduction of a ban on single-use plastic items. These provisions build on the existing ban on the supply of lightweight single-use plastic shopping bags that commenced on 1 July 2018. Single-use plastic items often end up as litter in the environment or as landfill. Sometimes they end up in recycling bins where they contaminate recyclable materials, reducing recovery rates. Such is the importance of removing these items from the market that more than 60 countries have now taken some form of intervention to reduce the availability of these items. Individual companies and small businesses are already taking their own steps to phase out the supply and sale of plastic straws and other single-use plastic items such as cutlery. Consumers are demanding change.

Consultation on options to reduce the impact of single-use plastic items, including the option to ban single-use plastic straws, stirrers, plates and cutlery, was conducted between 13 March and 30 April 2020. An extraordinary 19,622 submissions were received, with 94 per cent of these submissions supporting the introduction of the ban. This was an overwhelming response.

This bill makes it an offence for a person conducting a business to sell or give a banned item to another person except if that person conducts an exempt business or undertaking such as a healthcare business or school or is a business that supplies an exempt business. Exempting specific businesses recognises that some members of our community have permanent or temporary disability and healthcare needs which mean they need continued access to a single-use plastic item such as a straw. These exempt businesses, including pharmacies, hospitals, schools and medical and dental clinics, will be able to purchase and provide single-use plastic items to people who need them.

This bill also enables businesses that supply an exempt business to continue to do so. Allowing certain businesses and services to continue to provide items such as straws removes the need for a person to have to ask for a straw at a cafe or restaurant, where they may not feel comfortable doing so. While people will have to bring their own straws, it provides clarity for consumers, businesses and the regulator.

The Queensland Disability Advisory Council and the Council of the Ageing were directly involved in consultation on the ban, and I would like to thank them for their work in ensuring this important issue is properly addressed. Ahead of the ban's start date there will be continued consultation and engagement with the disability, aged and healthcare sectors to ensure there is appropriate messaging and awareness for businesses, carers, service providers and individuals. It is extremely important that people do not feel stigmatised or marginalised and that they can still receive the items they need in a safe environment, which is the outcome achieved in this bill.

As part of the government's plan for economic recovery from COVID-19 the bill provides flexibility concerning the start date for the ban, with commencement by proclamation. During consultation, 90 per cent of submissions supported a proposed date of 1 July 2021.

Regarding compostable items that might be sold to a business, this bill requires that information about the compostability of items must be provided, including whether it is suitable for home composting or to be composted through commercial processes. Compostability means that a product breaks down into organic materials and not microplastics, as many degradable bags and plastics do. This will ensure people have the right information and that waste materials end up being processed in the most appropriate way. It will also help reduce the contamination of food and organics collections sent to compost operations, as there will be clear information provided about the items' compostability when the business purchased them. Penalties will apply if false or misleading information is given about the compostability of items. To help businesses source suitable alternatives, a supplier list will be developed in consultation with key stakeholders to support businesses in making informed decisions about product options and what is best for them.

This bill provides a head of power for additional single-use plastic items to be banned by regulation; however, before any additional items are included in the ban, a full public consultation will be required. This will ensure that a proper process is undertaken and the views of the community and impacted sectors are heard and considered before any decisions are made. While there was significant support from the consultation submissions for other items to be included in the ban such as coffee cups, expanded polystyrene takeaway food containers and cups and other plastic cups, these items will not be included in the ban at this time; however, it gives us a good starting point for future consultation prior to any expansion of the ban.

This bill provides for a review of the efficacy of the ban no later than two years after the ban starts. This will allow us to measure the awareness of businesses and the community about the ban and the banned items and to determine the impact on people with disability and healthcare needs. Regular litter surveys will also be carried out to track the presence of these items in the litter stream and to start to baseline other items that may be identified for future interventions. This will help to prioritise actions at the right points in the supply chain and help meet the targets of the Waste Management and Resource Recovery Strategy and the objectives of the Palaszczuk government's Plastic Pollution Reduction Plan.

There is a groundswell of community support for Queensland's war on waste and a growing understanding of the long-term impact single-use plastics has on our oceans and waterways on sea life, birds and our environment more broadly. More and more Queenslanders are doing their part in reducing the amount of single-use plastic they accept in their lives and, as consumers, are consciously

deciding on the products they purchase. In addition, our young people have been raising awareness across our community, helping to shape a new generation of Queenslanders who seek to reduce and remove single-use plastics from our state. Today, with the introduction of this legislation, the Palaszczuk government takes the next important critical step in tackling single-use plastic and protecting our environment. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. LM ENOCH (Algeria—ALP) (Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for the Arts) (11.45 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to Natural Resources, Agricultural Industry Development and Environment Committee


Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr McArdle): In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Natural Resources, Agricultural Industry Development and Environment Committee.

BUILDING INDUSTRY FAIRNESS (SECURITY OF PAYMENT) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 14 July (see p. 1581), on motion of Mr de Brenni—

That the bill now be read a second time.

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (11.45 am), continuing: I want to quote part of the implementation panel's report to show just how tardy this minister has been in delivering Labor's election process. The executive summary on page 1 states—

The PBA reforms will require many head contractors to change their business practices. They will be prohibited from using retentions or project funds as part of their cash flow. Many will need to source additional capital by increasing debt or liquidating assets. This financial transition, whilst an intended consequence, will cause disruption. Some contractors may choose to restructure, others will be able to increase their asset base over time.

The Panel considers that the effective management of this financial transition is essential to the success of the reforms. Destabilisation of the sector through head contractor stress or failure will not be good for head contractors, subcontractors or the community as a whole.

This is the bit I want members to listen to. It continues—

Accordingly, we have made a recommendation there be three further phases to the introduction of the PBA reforms. This recommendation is based on analysis of data which estimates that around 63% of contracts that will be subject to a PBA are valued between \$1 million and \$3 million.

Sixty-three per cent of contracts are between \$1 million and \$3 million, so bank that away for a minute and we will talk further about that shortly. It continues—

By gradually reducing the contract value that is subject to a PBA, the financial impact can be managed to give all head contractors the best opportunity to transition their businesses towards improved viability.

I will come back to that in a moment, but while I have time I also wanted to talk about the contribution of Mr Richard Fields from Richard Field Constructions about young builders coming into the marketplace. He was asked by the member for Callide—

Throughout the duration of this inquiry we have heard the onerous and complicated conditions put on particularly small mum-and-dad business operators in regard to the reporting systems and requirements and so forth that even lawyers find difficult to understand.

Even lawyers find it difficult to understand. The member for Callide continued his question—

Would you care to give some comment on that and how this might affect small business operators?

Mr Field said—

Yes, certainly I can. I would first of all like to mention that I am a degreed construction manager.

He has a degree, unlike other people in this House. He continued—

I went to QUT for six years and I have a bachelor in construction management.

He has a bachelor in construction management. He further continued—

I have been a commercial builder for 25 years. I turn over \$12 million a year. I came out of a nationwide commercial building company where I did my cadetship for 10 years. Operating at this level with contract law and legislation has been very difficult for me, but I have managed it.

To give you an idea, before I speak to your point about small operators, I have managed it through working with a very specialist construction software accounting provider, which is called CSSP. I have invested, say, \$300,000 in over 15 years with this firm to manage my accounts ... I have a very advanced system. The people I have been working with with my software have not been able to, in two years, upgrade their system to make it PBA compliant and appropriately workable. It is very, very difficult for them. After two years they still have not done it and there is no reason to think they will be able to do it any time soon.

If I may now, with that context, answer your question, I think smaller builders that approach the PBA market with the \$1 million threshold will almost certainly see it as a barrier to entry and stay out of the market.

He is saying that builders may not even come into the market with this sort of liability over their heads. He continued—

That barrier to entry will reduce competition and will drive prices up. That is basic economic supply and demand. I do not think a builder rising through the market or a mum-and-dad operator will ever be able to comply with this properly. It will be very, very difficult for them.

The member for Greenslopes had something to add then. He said—

Mr Field, it sounds to me like you are highly educated and highly experienced. You seem to have fairly good business processes there. You have spotted a tool that you need for your business and you have invested quite heavily in that and probably quite wisely. You seem to me to be running a reasonably sophisticated business. While there may be less competition if this legislation goes through at that particular price point in the market, is that necessarily a bad thing? Do we want unsophisticated operators that cannot manage cash flow and that cannot manage complicated projects moving into that sphere of the market and potentially collapsing and doing the damage that this legislation is trying to avoid?

The member for Greenslopes thinks that builders who are operating in the \$1 million to \$3 million range are unsophisticated, do not know what they are talking about and maybe should not be in the marketplace to start with. That is what this government thinks about our mum-and-dad builders.

I will just go over the time line because, quite frankly, there are no actual time lines in any of the amendments that the minister mentioned last night. The only way you can find a time line is to go to the minister's speech. Basically, what is happening is that from 31 March next year these project bank accounts turn into project trust accounts, so nothing is really changing except the process for holding the money. These are government projects, and as we all know the government tends to pay its bill and hopefully that money flows down to subbies. The minister said in his speech—

From 1 July 2021, state government and hospital and health services' building contracts worth \$1 million or more will require a trust account.

Again, these are government jobs so the money should flow down. That is happening on 1 July 2021, so nothing really is happening until then. He then said—

From 1 January 2022, project trust accounts will be extended further to all private sector building and construction contracts worth \$10 million or more.

Finally, we are getting to the stage where this is branching out into the private sector but not until 1 January 2022. That is when it also pulls in statutory authorities, local government and government owned corporations.


We remember that the election commitment was in 2015, the bill came into the House in 2017, we are now in 2020 but this is not going to apply to those projects until 2022. In fact it is not going to trickle down to those \$1 million-plus projects in the private sector until 1 January 2023. We all know that the Labor government promise made in 2015 was that all subbies would be paid on time, every time, but it is taking them eight years to achieve that at the end of the day. We know that 63 per cent of contracts are in that price range, but it will take them eight years to achieve that.

Members might think that we could build a coalmine in less than eight years—well, this government cannot—or that we could build a dam in less than eight years. This government cannot do that either. In fact the Minister for Natural Resources told us today that the Rookwood Weir is a once-in-a-generation dam. The Labor Party thinks you can build a dam once in a generation; that is the reality of it. Apparently, it only takes 10 weeks to get a master's degree though so they are pretty efficient at that sort of thing.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr McArdle): Member for Burleigh, come back to the bill.

Mr HART: The LNP stands behind a royal commission type investigation into the building industry. That is what we really need to see here because at the end of the day there are issues even on a federal level that need to be dealt with. This government have done nothing about ongoing professional development for our builders to teach our builders how these programs could work. That is a very important issue that they should be tackling. They should be having the conversation—just as I have had the conversation—with our federal colleagues about ASIC issues and the phoenixing of companies. Our Deputy Premier has got an issue in that—

(Time expired)

 **Mr KING** (Kurwongbah—ALP) (11.54 am): I rise today to make a contribution to the Building Industry Fairness (Security of Payment) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2020. I have to comment on the previous speaker. I know that he is keen for things to happen, but we like to get things done properly and that may take some time. I know the member who was speaking previously likes to rush things, and I saw a billboard of him trying to rush the border opening recently. That was a bit of an own goal, so let us just get this right.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr McArdle): Stop the clock. Member for Kurwongbah, you are about 30 seconds into your speech and you are way off target. Come back to the bill, please.

Mr KING: Thank you for your guidance, Mr Deputy Speaker. The Palaszczuk Labor government does believe in a fair go, and we believe in workers getting paid and paid on time. Over recent decades, the Australian building industry has become increasingly deregulated. This has resulted in inferior and potentially dangerous building products coming to the market with end users often having to pay for mistakes in the supply chain. We have done work around that as well.

Recently, we have seen a growing number of building companies collapse, leaving their workers and subcontractors unpaid. That is why we introduced security of payment legislative reforms in 2017. These reforms included a project bank account requirement that came into effect for government building contracts valued between \$1 million and \$10 million as phase 1. Phase 2 will see the PBA framework roll out across the private sector.

At the end of 2018, further provisions of the legislation commenced relating to progress payments, adjudication of disputes and subcontractors' charges, as well as new penalties for withholding retention payments at the conclusion of contracts without good reason. To evaluate the effectiveness of these new laws, the minister established a Building Industry Fairness Reforms Implementation and Evaluation Panel in May 2018. The panel conducted significant consultation with government and the building industry in its evaluation, and the 20 recommendations in its report have helped inform the bill before us now.

Those recommendations fell under three broad themes: managing industry's transition to implementation of security of payment reforms with a focus on the financial aspect; simplification of the new framework; and improving protections in the contractual chain. As well as implementing the panel's recommendations, other objectives of this bill include implementing the recommendations of the Special Joint Taskforce that investigated subcontractor non-payment in the Queensland building industry; enhancing Queensland's security of payment legislation and further extending protections for industry; improving the QBCC's ability to address fraudulent behaviour; strengthening Queensland's building laws; implementing reforms arising from the Queensland Building Plan to strengthen the certification and inspection process and improve professional standards and compliance in the certification sector; implementing reforms arising from the *Building confidence* report, such as enhancements to the regulation of architects and registered professional engineers; and ensuring the continuation of external review rights for decisions about transition plans for retirement village schemes.

As the chair of the Transport and Public Works Committee, I can also speak to our consideration of this legislation which was referred to us on 5 February this year. We received 23 submissions and took a lot of evidence from a range of stakeholders over two days of public hearings. We tabled our report on 20 March with 12 recommendations, including that the bill be passed. I would like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow members of the committee, those who made submissions to our inquiry and gave evidence at our hearings, the department of public works and, as always, our hardworking Parliamentary Service staff for all of their contributions to the report.

Around half of our 12 recommendations related to clarifying terms and definitions within the bill, including a review of how proposed exemptions should apply under section 15E and in amendments to the Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act 1991. I will just go briefly through some of the other recommendations. Recommendation 3 was that the bill be amended to include measures to prevent the use of multiple contracts on the same or adjacent land in relation to small-scale residential construction work. Recommendation 6 was that clause 63 be amended to ensure the account


nominated by the subcontractor is under the control of the subcontractor. Recommendation 7 was that the bill be amended to ensure that all relevant contractors are protected by the trust regime. Recommendation 8 seeks a reconsideration of the need for section 55B(6) of the bill relating to reports, records and information. Should it be considered necessary, the committee believes that may be better aligned with subdivision 2 dealing with special investigators.

In relation to recommendation 11, the minister considered undertaking a review of the role of property developers in the building and construction industry including consideration of the impact of their financial and operational capacity, ethical behaviour and work practices. Our final recommendation extends on this to suggest that such a review be conducted in consultation with all industry stakeholders and, finally, that the minister should report the findings in a timely manner. Obviously COVID-19 has affected us all and time lines may change. I am really pleased that the minister agreed to all those recommendations and No. 12 in principle. I thank him for that.

I want to acknowledge here that both government and opposition members on the committee were in strong agreement that more should be done to make sure workers, in particular subcontractors, in the building and construction industry get paid. However, I was a little surprised and disappointed to note in the statement of reservations by the opposition members they bemoaned the committee made no recommendation about training and development. I am surprised that opposition committee members signed off on this statement considering our committee sought additional information from the department in relation to how adequate education and training would be provided to the building and construction industry throughout Queensland on the proposed changes in the bill. This is captured in the report in section 2.10.8, 'General education and training'. The department also gave a fulsome reply on just what training and communication activities they would be providing upon passage and implementation of the bill. As a result of this information, no recommendation was required. I am surprised that opposition committee members did not remember this at the time.

Like the considered decisions we have taken in dealing with the COVID-19 crisis, our government has first considered and then acted on advice from experts in progressing our security of payment reforms—reforms that will continue to bring about the cultural change that we, the Palaszczuk Labor government, began years ago. It is essential that we support Queensland's building and construction industry, which contributes close to \$50 billion and employs around a quarter of a million people across our state. This bill builds on our security of payment laws and will further ensure that workers, including subcontractors, will get paid.

As an electrician by trade, I have always worked closely with subbies and I know how stressful and uncertain their employment can be. Too often stress can manifest in mental health issues, and we know where that can lead. In this worrying new COVID-19 world we live in, it is important that we in government eliminate as many outside stressors as we can for workers and their families because, as I said, all workers deserve a fair go and that means being paid on time. We are not just talking the talk; we are walking the walk, and we fully expect big business, including those in the building and construction industry, to do the same. That is what this legislation is about and that is why I am proud to commend this bill to the parliament.

 **Mr SORENSEN** (Hervey Bay—LNP) (12.03 pm): I rise to speak to the Building Industry Fairness (Security of Payment) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2020. We have discussed this topic many times in the House. Over time we have tried to do something about it but the issue still continues. It is the LNP's position that everyone deserves to be paid for their work and also for the goods they buy in order to complete a job. Previously the government has tried and has failed to address the security of payment to subbies.

It is incomprehensible that subcontractors are very wary about state government public works jobs in my electorate of Hervey Bay. I have witnessed firsthand what late payment and non-payment to Queensland tradies can do. It can destroy lives. As the chairman of the committee said, these people can develop mental problems when they do not get paid. Often they have other bills to pay because they have purchased materials to use on the job. Some of them really suffer. It is very true that mental problems can result from that as well. It destroys lives and livelihoods and, most importantly, it destroys jobs.

Security of payment reform has been talked about forever and the government must get it right. The government has failed previously with poor legislation that does not protect subbies. Many businesses in Hervey Bay drive past local government owned properties that have benefited from their goods, but they have never been paid. One example was the town hall on the Fraser Coast. This project was funded by the state government and the local government, but many people were left out of pocket. Another one was a school manual arts building; subbies were left out of pocket and many other

businesses were left holding debts when the contractors went broke. In one case one bloke had to go and buy a number of roller doors to install. He then wanted to go back and take them out because the company had gone broke. I said, 'You can't do that because they are fixed into the building.' Honourable members should try telling people that when they are sitting in front of them worrying about how they are going to pay for those doors. It is really concerning and it is very difficult. I hope we can go some way to solving that problem.


In 2018 the LNP recognised that subcontractor late payment and non-payment is a nightmare which destroys jobs and does nothing for the growth of Queensland businesses and business confidence. It just does not help at all because people lose that confidence. In my area they are very wary of government jobs because of this. Sometimes there is no guarantee and I just hope we can solve that problem. However, I know there are some areas where that might not happen. To give an example, one SunWater contract stated that they would only pay for a job when it had finished at a certain time. One contractor who was owed about \$300,000 had to wait about four months to get paid. These people had fuel bills, maintenance bills et cetera that they had to pay, but then they had to wait four months because the government would not pay until that deadline was reached. I believe that is going to be a problem in the future.

I wonder if insurance for these contractors and subbies is going to cost more. In the case of building certifiers, after legislation was changed their insurance bill went from about \$4,000 up to about \$40,000. In my area the cost of insurance for building certifiers was anywhere between \$35,000 and \$60,000; it just went through the roof, and that cost is passed on to the cost of building a house. It should have been that only some certifiers could certify 20-storey buildings as there were a lot of little certifiers that only certified houses. There is a big difference between a house on the ground and a 20-storey building. That would have meant a lot more if they had done that and the insurance company would not have been so blatantly cruel to them.

Along with the non-payment issues, fraudulent practices and false statutory declaration activities and company collapse have been pretty pandemic within the industry lately. The LNP felt compelled to call for an inquiry into the building and construction industry. The Labor government tried to address these issues with the Building Industry Fairness (Security of Payment) Bill in 2017, which introduced project bank accounts—the PBAs—but these were for work between \$1 million and \$10 million. As evidence of how weak this legislation is, most people could go broke for a lot less than \$1 million. How many people have a spare million dollars?

The issues of non-payment of contractors, company collapses and allegations of fraud continued through 2018. The LNP called for a commission of inquiry into all aspects of the building industry, but the government did not support our approach. Eventually, the government was forced to establish a special unit to investigate non-payment, compliance and allegations of fraudulent activity. Hundreds of thousands of dollars were lost in my electorate, with honest tradies holding the debt. My secretary did a lot of investigation into some of the companies that were given some of these contracts. They were a bit dodgy. While one minute a company falls over, the next minute it starts up again via another member of the family with a \$2 company. I really would like to see a little more pressure put on some of those areas. It is amazing. If you go through the system and follow some of these contractors who have gone broke, you find that they are working again in a few months under a different name, be it the brother, sister, husband or wife. It just goes around in a circle. If you have not seen it, just ask my secretary. She will tell you all about it, because she did a fair bit of research into it. It was amazing just to see what happens out there and how it gets covered up. If we could cut out some of those dodgy operators, we would solve a hell of a lot of problems.

The minister talks about contractors and some of the developers. I do not share his thoughts that every developer is dodgy. There are a lot of good developers out there. I know of a lot of good developers who paid all their workers and did all the right things. Just take one glance across this room. Who is the biggest developer in Queensland? It is the government. We have to get it right. No matter who is in government, we have to get this right. People have come to me saying, 'It was a government job. It should have been safe but it was not.' They went bust. When people are sitting across the desk nearly in tears because they do not know how to pay the bills, it is really concerning. They are some of the things that have happened to me. I believe that we will have another bill in the future. I will not be here but, anyway, it has been good to know you.

 **Mr BROWN** (Capalaba—ALP) (12.13 pm): I thank the member for Hervey Bay for his contribution. I hope the LNP preselect his secretary, because it sounds like she is on the ball when it comes to Hervey Bay! By way of advice to the LNP, it sounds like Ted's secretary is on to it and will be a good representative for that area.


I support this bill because trust equals confidence, and confidence equals certainty in the economy—certainty for tradies and employers to put on that apprentice and create more jobs. Capalaba is an area known for its tradies. At 17.6 per cent, Capalaba represents the biggest area in the ABS occupation statistics for technicians and trade workers, well above the Queensland average. They love the lifestyle. They have a trailer for their tools and a trailer for their boats and caravans. That is why in my time as the member for Capalaba I have fought hard to support tradies. We are restoring Alexandra Hills TAFE to be the skills hub for plumbers with an extra \$15 million to ensure the plumbing workshop is created for years 1 to 4, and there is more training than ever before for electricians and plenty of other trades. We have also negotiated on big contracts and big projects, particularly in terms of the Walker Group and Toondah Harbour, to ensure that 15 per cent of workers are apprentices and that the companies first go to local tradies and contractors when that project starts.

I also have seen the effect of non-payment. I hear those opposite complaining about the length of time it took for this bill to eventuate. It is eventuating because of a Labor government. It would never happen under those opposite. This is nothing new. I also note that members opposite say they are for the principle of a fair day's pay for a fair day's work, but just look to the Leader of the Opposition's comments in terms of the wage theft inquiry being a waste of money. The principle of supposedly standing up for a fair day's pay for a fair day's work comes and goes. Members opposite say in this place that they are happy to support it, but when it comes to practical measures to understand the effects in our economy of stealing workers' or subcontractors' wages, they complain about the cost.

I have seen this situation with family friends. A family friend owned a successful building business. He was a fantastic builder. Non-payment from principal contractors led to his business going under. Unfortunately, that led to the breakdown of his marriage. The effects of this go much further. The mental state of those affected is brought up time and again. I know this goes further than marriages splitting up, such as to people taking their own lives.

It is important that we bring back trust into this area. It is important that that leads to confidence and certainty, because that is what tradies want. Tradies want to know when they turn up to a job that when they do the job they will get the wages. Only the Labor government and this minister, the member for Springwood, have taken up the charge. There is no doubt that it is a lot of work. There are a lot of hurdles to get over with this; it is a completely different system. The problem is one that only the Labor government and this minister have tackled head-on. What does that mean for our economy? Members need only look to the Deloitte report to see the effect it will have—2,373 jobs over 20 years, injecting a massive \$12.6 billion into our economy. That results in an ability to employ that local apprentice and put on that extra staff to ensure we get the work done.

I particularly want to acknowledge the extra measures that see more powers for the QBCC to target unscrupulous contracting and practices which affect not only subcontractors but also customers. We have heard story after story of customers being left out of pocket when big contracts, or even their houses, collapse under the failure of these principal contractors. It is important that we get it right, not only for subcontractors but also for customer certainty in the industry. It is a Labor government that tackles these issues, whether it is the introduction of the wage theft bill or the building fairness bill. We want to ensure that subcontractors get the money they deserve. It is only a Labor government that delivers that. I fully support this bill.

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (12.18 pm): I will focus my contribution to the debate on the Building Industry Fairness (Security of Payment) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill around four areas, but I will start in response to the member for Capalaba. For the member for Capalaba to somehow mock the shadow minister and indeed this side of the House for demanding a fair day's pay for a fair day's work ridicules what we all seek to do—that is, bring about legislation that ensures that everybody is treated in a fair manner, and that means everybody. That means the person who loads up their trailer every day to go out to work and who will never be a head contractor but relies on that to make a crust and that means the developer who puts everything on the line every time they embark on buying a project site and trying to get an approval and develop something on a site for the betterment of the community and indeed for themselves. That is everyone.

It seems as though much of the commentary that has been in this parliament has derided those people who want to develop. They have been chastised. Effectively they have been called crooks because they cannot donate to one side of politics because somehow that corrupts the political process. What we see here by some of the commentary is a reflection that those opposite do not believe that everybody in the construction industry deserves a fair go. I am not involved in the construction industry and neither is my family, but one of my best mates gets up every day and he goes to work as a builder. By no means is he top end of town and by no means is he a large-scale builder, but he tells me about


the battles he faces every day in having to arrange those subcontractors and in having to make sure that he warrants their work every time he puts his name on a front board, and he knows, having worked for bigger developers himself, what it means not to be paid.

I say to those opposite: the calls from the shadow minister and indeed this side of the House to get this legislation right—and soon I will touch on the commission of inquiry—and the calls to improve things are not something that should be taken lightly, and I take the project bank accounts as a classic example. To suggest that because project bank accounts have operated on government contracts and that that somehow makes them foolproof and they cannot be improved with the private sector shows a complete lack of understanding of the real world. I say to the minister that there are ways that it can continue to be improved and, fundamentally, that involves the red tape and administrative burden that will be put on some of these smaller builders and developers.

We all should want to have a system that protects people and ensures that they get paid a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. Likewise, we should not have a scenario where people are walking away from jobs because they do not believe they can comply. The greatest gift we can give anyone in any sector but particularly building and construction is certainty—certainty that when they are quoting on a job they are not going to be stomped on by the unions, certainty that when they are quoting on a job they will be paid, certainty that when they are quoting on a job they will not have a level of regulation that has been described by people in both the finance and legal sector as being very heavy and very difficult to understand. That is why the LNP will continue to say that more needs to be done in this area.

We acknowledge the special task force and we have acknowledged some of the improvements that have been made, but I say again that we will continue to offer the hope of a full-blown commission of inquiry because that will be what truly gets to the bottom of the wrongdoings but it will also get to the bottom of improving the administrative burden that will continue to choke people wanting to go forward and deliver projects in the most affordable means with the greatest level of protection.

Finally, I come back to where I started. A fair day's pay for a fair day's work is not a mortgage that one side of politics has on another. It is not a mortgage for one sector of an industry over another. It should apply to every person who takes a risk in some way, shape or form to carve out a living for their family, and that is something that everyone in this House should strive to achieve.

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (12.24 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Building Industry Fairness (Security of Payment) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill before us. Just to follow up on a couple of points raised by the member for Broadwater, I want to caution the other side. When I hear them say that we need to get rid of red tape and get rid of administrative burden, I hear them saying, 'We need to get rid of protections for working Queenslanders.' I just remind them that that is what Queenslanders hear sometimes when they say that. If those opposite do stand for the principle of a fair day's wage for a fair day's work, then I look forward to them supporting wholeheartedly the stolen wages legislation that the Minister for Industrial Relations has just introduced.

It is important to say that it is a timely moment that we are debating this bill because we are launching the unite and recover plan for Queensland, and this is one plan that will create more jobs in this time when we are under such economic stress. It will bring forward investment in infrastructure in Queensland and it will support many different Queensland industries, and that includes the construction and building industry. The construction industry will be a crucial part of the unite and recover plan in Queensland. For example, I point out the Works for Tradies program that will keep many skilled tradies in work—electricians, plumbers, builders, bricklayers, you name it—as they build 215 public housing properties throughout Queensland, and that is expected to keep 240 skilled tradespeople in work.

The unite and recover plan is about building a stronger Queensland, and this bill is about building a stronger Queensland as well. I want to commend the minister for this pursuit over many years of reform in this sector along security of payment. It has been quite a lengthy, sophisticated and thorough reform process that he has brought and that he has pursued. What is very clear is that this bill is part of that process, part of that reform that delivers security of payment to our subcontractors, to our builders and to our tradies. This bill says that it is not acceptable for them to live with non-payment or underpayment, it is not fair that our subbies have to bear the financial risk for many projects and it is not fair that their homes and their livelihoods and their marriages, as the member for Capalaba has noted, would be put under risk and under strain from non-payment. It is very clear, but we need to keep on saying it. What we need to see in Queensland is that subbies, contractors, builders and tradies being paid on time, every time and in full. This bill will build that confidence in the industry and, as the member for Capalaba and the minister have said, this part of the reform will create and support over 2,000 jobs. When you have that confidence, you can put on those people. That confidence allows tradies, builders and subbies to get on with their jobs. The confidence in this bill allows them to spend less time worrying and more time building.

This bill also continues the reforms that we have seen in our home park sector and our retirement park sector, and once again this is a reform that has been delivered continuously through hard work over many years by the Palaszczuk government. I once again commend the ministers. Minister Enoch and now Minister de Brenni have worked hard for many years on this particular issue. It is an issue that is close to my heart. I have thousands—literally thousands—of older Queenslanders living in these villages in my area. I have many friends who live in these villages such as Pat McLoughin from Palm Lake in Deception Bay and Trevor and Veronica Andrew from Pacific Palms in Burpengary East. These issues are hugely important for them—that is, how their villages are run and how they get that access to fairness.

Through the reforms in this bill we have introduced fairness to how these villages are run. We have given the residents a voice, whether it be by empowering their committees to have a say on a rent rise issue or giving them, for the first time, a clear dispute process to resolve any issues. We have built transparency by making sure that we have a much fairer and more accountable rental increase process. That is hugely important.

This bill continues the reforms introduced in December 2019 when we brought in regulations to deal with significant changes in village operations such as closures, redevelopments and transitioning to a new operator. The amendments in this bill ensure that significant changes in village operations occur in a manner that is clear, orderly and fair. They do this by requiring the operator to prepare a plan for transition to a new operator, a village closure or a village redevelopment. What is very clear—and I have seen this for many years—is that the government is still working closely with our stakeholders to establish the form, the process and the regulations to implement these changes.

In conclusion, this bill keeps delivering on a range of reforms throughout the construction and building sector and the home parks and retirement villages sector in Queensland. It keeps building that confidence, it keeps building that strength in these sectors and it allows us to keep making life better for Queenslanders. It is important to have confidence in these sectors as we move through our unite and recover plan. I commend the bills to the House.



Mr PERRETT (Gympie—LNP) (12.31 pm): I rise to speak on the Building Industry Fairness (Security of Payment) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2020. Everyone deserves to be paid for the work they do. That also means being paid in a timely way. Late payment and the non-payment of tradies continues to be an ongoing concern within the Queensland building and construction industry. I doubt that there would be one region within this state where tradies have not been troubled with payments. The building and construction industry plays an important role in our economy. The sector contributed \$46 billion in the 2017-18 year and employed more than 230,000 people. Construction in the Gympie region is one of the top three industry sectors contributing to our gross regional product. However, it was reported last week that in 2018-19 it had taken a hit and shrunk from \$209 million to \$191 million.

In 2018-19 Queensland recorded four straight quarters of decline in construction work done, which has continued into this year with a further three consecutive quarterly falls. Compared to the peak under the LNP in 2013, trend quarterly construction work done has fallen by nearly half, a fall of \$8.2 billion. Under these conditions it is important that we put in place structures that ensure that contractors and subcontractors are paid.

When presenting the Building Industry Fairness (Security of Payment) Bill in 2017, the minister told us that it was an historic moment. The minister impressed on us that it would herald a new era of fairness in the building and construction industry. The reality is that the government was all talk on the topic. Its legislation was weak. Within two years the government was forced to establish a Special Joint Taskforce to examine the ongoing issue of non-payments and fraudulent behaviour. It also had to acknowledge that it needed to streamline the existing account structure for project trust accounts. Unfortunately the terms of reference were too narrow and the time frame too tight for a full investigation to be undertaken. More work needs to be done. That is why the LNP remains committed to a commission of inquiry should it gain office in October 2020.

The centrepiece of the act was the introduction of a dedicated account which held money in trust for subcontractors. These project bank accounts, or PBAs, were established for government building contracts valued between \$1 million and \$10 million. In anticipation that it would require further amendments, the LNP called for the implementation panel to assess the merits of the PBAs before it was rolled out to the private sector. At the time the government argued that it was not required. Despite this it was eventually obliged to put it in place, and the panel has made 20 recommendations which the government has accepted.


Two years ago in 2018 the LNP recognised that there were significant continuing issues with late and non-payment for subcontractors. They continue to hamper the growth of Queensland businesses. The LNP felt compelled to call for an inquiry into the building and construction industry with the growing list of issues, such as non-payment issues, fraudulent practices, false statutory declarations, illegal phoenixing activity and company collapses, endemic within the industry. In Gympie the collapse of Ri-Con Contractors Pty Ltd is just one of the many prominent examples of the impact this has had on a community. It has left hundreds of thousands dollars owed to many Gympie businesses. Thirty businesses and individuals around the Gympie region were owed money.

Brisbane Electrical Contractors and Engineering were the hardest hit, with an estimated \$236,000 owing. Initial reports were that O'Brien Plumbing Gympie was due \$116,000. Tim Bothams of O'Brien Plumbing said it is \$41,000 more than that, making it almost \$160,000. Cooroy Engineering was due \$36,000; Evans Painting and Rendering Contractors was owed \$33,000; CPM Engineering was owed \$25,000; and Cardale Concrete Pumping was owed more than \$25,000 the report revealed. Campbells Truck and Bobcat and Landscape Supplies, Nicks Read Mix and Quarry Boys Gympie were owed between \$5000-\$17,000 each. All Areas Rendering, CavSheds, CBD Corporation, Cooroy Sheet Metal and Tank Works, Fishy's Earthmoving, Gympie Blinds, Gympie Garage Doors, Gympie Landscape Supplies, Suncoast Road Marking, Superior Skip Bins, The Water Man and Tim Spring Transport were also owed money. These businesses are among more than 300 unsecured creditors, including subcontractors, across Gympie and the Sunshine Coast who are owed millions.

Gympie Regional Council had engaged Ri-Con Contractors to deliver the Kilkivan Equestrian Centre and the Gympie Youth Precinct. These projects were funded by taxpayers and ratepayers money. It stands to reason that the council would keep a close check on how funds were being spent. It is called due diligence. I received complaints from subcontractors alleging they were not paid, despite Ri-Con providing the Gympie Regional Council with statutory declarations confirming otherwise: that the subcontractors had been paid. It was alleged to me that the statutory declarations provided to the Gympie Regional Council were false. I wrote to the Police Commissioner requesting an investigation by the fraud squad. I was then advised that it was referred to the Financial and Cyber Crime Group.

I also wrote to the former chief executive of the Gympie Regional Council pointing out that I had been told that the council was made aware that subcontractors had not been paid. Astonishingly, the Gympie Regional Council's response indicates that it did not seek any sort of verification of the statutory declarations. Any reasonable person would regard this as government meeting the practical expectation of the community. I was advised that council does not have the full schedule of payments made and when they were made and it was not fully aware of the circumstances around the signing of the declarations. This raises serious issues about the conduct of due diligence obligations, oversight, governance and business within the council. Councils conduct business with taxpayers' and ratepayers' money. Gympie ratepayers deserve a better oversight of the spending of their funds. Tradies, contractors and subcontractors also deserve better.

We should also be cautious about heavy handed governments imposing more red tape and compliance on our lives and businesses. I am always concerned about overreach and whether it conflicts with plain common sense, as well as imposing additional costs, ensuring compliance, audits and duplication with other responsibilities. The Master Builders Queensland are concerned about the effectiveness of the PDS and the administrative burden and amount of red tape to establish and maintain trust accounts and mandatory account reviews. They need simplification. The LNP believes that the building and construction industry needs systemic reform to encourage cultural change and improve payment outcomes across the industry. We are talking here about the expectation of our community when it comes to protecting workers, protecting tradies, contractors and sub-contractors who should be paid. I support the bill.

 **Mr MADDEN** (Ipswich West—ALP) (12.39 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Building Industry Fairness (Security of Payment) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2020. This bill amends a number of acts, including the Building Industry Fairness (Security of Payment) Act 2017, to implement the recommendations of the Building Industry Fairness Reforms Implementation and Evaluation Panel report. The bill amends the Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act 1991 to implement the recommendations of the Special Joint Taskforce report. The bill also amends the Building Act 1975, the Professional Engineers Act 2002 and the Retirement Villages Act 1999. The bill was introduced to parliament by the Minister for Housing and Public Works, Minister for Digital Technology and Minister for Sport on 5 February 2020 and referred to the Transport and Public Works Committee for consideration. The committee made a number of recommendations, including that the bill be passed.


In my short contribution to the debate I will focus on the amendments in the bill to the Retirement Villages Act 1999. In Queensland there are 323 retirement villages. There are a number of retirement villages in my electorate of Ipswich West. I am always happy to assist the residents of those villages. Therefore, I was pleased that in 2017 the government introduced a wide range of amendments to the Retirement Villages Act to improve consumer protection for Queensland's seniors and build consumer confidence in the retirement village industry. The government has been working closely with stakeholders to establish the approved forms, processes and regulations to progressively implement those legislative changes.

In December 2019, the Retirement Villages (Closure, Transition and Redevelopment Plans and Other Matters) Amendment Regulation 2019 and the Retirement Villages (Transitional) Regulation 2019 were made to implement amendments about significant changes to village operations such as closures, redevelopments and transitioning to a new operator. Those changes were welcomed by residents of retirement villages in Queensland. The amendments ensured that significant changes in the operations of retirement villages occur in a manner that is clear, orderly and fair to the residents. The changes do that by requiring an operator to prepare a plan for transition to a new operator, a village closure or a village redevelopment. The amendments to the Retirement Villages Act 1999 contained in this bill preserve the provisions of the transitional regulation and ensure that the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal continues to have jurisdiction to review chief executive decisions about transition plans.

As detailed in the committee report, the explanatory notes identify that, under part 2, division 5 of the Retirement Villages Act, scheme operators who propose to transition control of a retirement village to a new scheme operator must prepare a transition plan that is provided to the chief executive for approval. The department advised that the proposed amendment in this bill addresses a minor inconsistency that was noted during the implementation of the 2019 amendments to the Retirement Villages Act. It is intended that decisions by the chief executive in relation to transition plans be reviewable by the Queensland Civil and Administrative Review Tribunal. However, decisions made under this division were not given an explicit right of review. This differs from comparable provisions for closure plans and redevelopment plans.

The Retirement Villages (Transitional) Regulation 2019 fixes this by enabling QCAT to review those decisions until 11 November 2020. An amendment to the Retirement Villages Act is required to preserve that right beyond this date. The explanatory notes state that the proposed amendment maintains the transparency and procedural fairness of chief executive decisions in relation to transition plans by ensuring a right of review of decisions. The explanatory notes also state that the policy objective to preserve this right beyond the expiry date of the Retirement Villages (Transitional) Regulation cannot be addressed without legislative amendment. That is why this amendment has been included in the Building Industry Fairness (Security of Payment) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill.

In closing, I thank the Minister for Housing and Public Works, Minister for Digital Technology and Minister for Sport; the members of the Transport and Public Works Committee; the committee secretariat; the submitters; and Hansard. With the global economy hit hard by COVID-19, it is great to see that this parliament is dealing with matters other than COVID-19 that are also important to Queenslanders. During these difficult times we need to unite and join together in the recovery of our economy and kickstart the Queensland economy. I commend the Building Industry Fairness (Security of Payment) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2020 to the House.


 **Mr MICKELBERG** (Buderim—LNP) (12.45 pm): I rise to speak on the Building Industry Fairness (Security of Payment) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2020. This bill is the latest ALP attempt to address concerns around fraudulent behaviour in the building and construction industry. As stated by my colleagues today, the LNP's position is clear: every Queenslander deserves to be paid for the work that they do; a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. However, it is clear that the longstanding issues in relation to subcontractors not being paid and fraudulent behaviour have not been resolved to date. Since being elected in 2017 I have been approached by a number of local electricians, plumbers and other subcontractors looking for help to resolve instances of unacceptable behaviour and alleged insolvent trading.

For my constituents Steve and Gina Atkins, Minister de Brenni's inability to address that issue means that they are now owed more than \$120,000 and are being pursued by liquidators in relation to payments made to them by a collapsed builder who was allegedly trading while insolvent. Mr and Mrs Atkins feel let down by the Palaszczuk Labor government, the building industry task force and the QBCC. Perhaps most disappointingly, after writing to the government in early April, my constituents are yet to receive from Minister de Brenni a response addressing their concerns.

Actions speak louder than words, so it is easy to understand why many Queenslanders have no confidence in the Palaszczuk Labor government to look out for the interests of tradies and other subcontractors. It is time for the minister to take action because, so far, all we have had is talk. In 2017 the minister said that the legislation he introduced then would result in an era of fairness in the building and construction industry, but the evidence suggests otherwise.

I note that the LNP will not be opposing this bill. However, we have considerable concerns in relation to a number of aspects of the bill. Given the consistent examples of non-payment issues, fraudulent practices, false statutory declarations, illegal phoenixing activity and company collapses endemic within the industry, the LNP has called for a commission of inquiry into the building and construction industry. The joint task force has not adequately addressed all of those concerns, given its narrow terms of reference and the tight time frame for the full investigation to be completed. As a consequence, the LNP has committed to a commission of inquiry should we gain office in a little over three months.

The objectives of this bill are sound and that is why we will not be opposing it, but unfortunately, as we have seen so many times over the past five years, this Labor state government's response to the issue has been to create a burdensome and complex mess of red tape that does not resolve the issue that it seeks to address. Therefore, my message to the minister is simple: if you want to restore faith and trust in the building industry, you need to listen to the genuine concerns of people. It is unacceptable that the very contractors this bill seeks to protect have been waiting more than three and a half months for a response that addresses an issue directly related to the bill.

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (12.48 pm): I support the Building Industry Fairness (Security of Payment) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The question is: what is this bill really all about? What is at its heart? The answer is contained in the title of the bill: fairness. It is about fairness for subcontractors and fairness for small businesses. That is what Labor does. At the core of our values is fairness. We have seen that recently in our attempts to balance the scales, not just in this industry but also with the introduction of the Small Business Commissioner to ensure fairness for small retailers and hospitality businesses. Our small business adaptation grants give another example of the Palaszczuk Labor government trying to balance the scales and get fairness for small business.

The bill demonstrates something else that is very important, which is that ours is a government that listens to industry. Last week, Minister Shannon Fentiman and I had a great opportunity to visit Variety Living in Coorparoo and speak to Brenda. The business had received a small business adaptation grant. Fairly early on in the shut-down period, Brenda rang me and expressed the view that there needed to be some support for small businesses. I undertook to take that to the minister and I am pleased that we have rolled out those grants.

At the time I said to Brenda, 'There has to be something in this grant process so we are not simply handing money out to small businesses for basic bills. We have to somehow tie it to growing businesses and making businesses more robust, successful and capable of weathering the global pandemic.' Brenda said to me that she was actually glad that we went through a fairly rigorous process because she was now using this grant to grow her business and to employ more people. Similar to this bill, that is all the result of a government that listens to the sector.

At the core of this bill, as the member for Capalaba rightly pointed out, is confidence. When small business subcontractors know that they are going to get paid, when they know they are going to get paid on time and in full every time, they have confidence. They are able to do good cash flow management and they are able to do good business planning. When that occurs, businesses will grow and will continue to do that very important thing that small businesses do—that is, to employ people. That is exactly what we need at this time of a global pandemic.

I turn my attention briefly to the statement of reservation from the LNP. I had the opportunity to be a part of this committee for a short period of time while this bill was under consideration, so I participated in that. It is an area that I am very passionate about. I have seen the impacts of this in my electorate. I have seen what happens when things go wrong. I have seen the pressure that is put on people.

It was really interesting to read through the statement of reservation because, despite the opportunities that the LNP members were afforded to raise the concerns which they outline in the statement of reservation, none of those were raised during the committee process. I think we are seeing opposition for opposition's sake—going away and thinking, 'We have to say something negative about this,' but ultimately coming in here and supporting the bill.

The member for Burleigh pointed out in this speech that, in his view, this has taken too long. This is a continuation of work that we have already rolled out in the public sector. We have stopped. We have taken a check. We have listened to what the industry has had to say. We have listened to people at both the top and the bottom. We have done everything we can to get this right. We certainly do not apologise for listening to the industry, we certainly do not apologise for implementing industry-changing reforms, and we certainly do not apologise for taking the time, where there were things that were not foreseen, to get things right.

We are prepared to sit down with industry to listen to them to get things right. I am surprised that the member for Burleigh takes that view, because if he wanted to see the results of rushing and not listening he would only have to cast his mind back to the mercifully very short time that he was on the government side of the House to find numerous examples of what occurs when you rush legislation and do not listen.

The member for Burleigh will sit there, as the members on his side always do, and tell you that they can do it cheaper, they can do it better, they can do it faster—all sorts of wonderful things. The problem is that the public just do not believe them. When they go to the ballot box, they do not get those opportunities.

Those opposite always claim that they have thought of everything first. At least they are a step ahead of the Greens. On occasion they do think of things first: they thought of sacking people and cutting services first. They are at least ahead of the Greens. The Greens are constantly handing in Labor's homework, claiming it as their own and reckoning that they have invented it. Here is some homework that the Greens do not want handed in. I table two articles for the benefit of the House.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Australian* online, dated 25 June 2020, titled 'Greens defend taking "security cash" despite push for ban' [\[1173\]](#).

Tabled paper: Article from *In Queensland* online, dated 15 July 2020, titled 'Professional punter takes \$100,000 gamble on Queensland Greens' [\[1174\]](#).


The Greens, like all political parties, are happy to accept political donations, but, as they accept those donations, they run around condemning other parties for doing so and they claim some sort of moral high ground. It is a completely and utterly hypocritical thing to do.

Mr Mickelberg: Hear, hear!

Mr KELLY: It sounds like we are on a unity ticket there. I will take the interjection.

Mr Madden interjected.

Mr KELLY: I will take that one, too. I want to come back to the bill. At the core of this bill is the matter of fairness—fairness for subcontractors, fairness for small business—and only Labor is delivering that and only Labor will continue to deliver that. Just today we have had the Back to Work announcements, the expansion of Skilling Queenslanders for Work grant and the increases in free TAFE. All of this is designed to help small business and to help small business create jobs. Only Labor will deliver fairness for small business, and only Labor will deliver the support that small businesses need to create jobs as we unite and recover.

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (12.55 pm): The building and construction industry plays an important part in Queensland's economy, contributing over \$46 billion in 2017-18 and employing more than 230,000 people. The building industry will be the backbone of the Queensland economy as we go forward from COVID-19. While the introduction of PBAs has been the centrepiece of the government's reform, I note that Master Builders Queensland have indicated that they still hold grave concerns about the effectiveness of the PBA regime and the true cost to the building industry.

One of the things we have to be very careful of when we introduce legislation into this House is what sort of red tape we are imposing on those hardworking small businesses. Those small businesses are family owned small businesses right throughout Queensland, especially in my area in regional Queensland, who rely on a construction industry and also rely on making sure they get paid. They also rely on not having as much red tape as we have seen some industries having to cope with when legislation comes before this place.

It is very hard. Most of the people involved in the construction industry in my seat of Gregory are family owned small businesses that are well established and are continuing to employ people in the seat of Gregory. The administrative burden and the amount of red tape associated with establishing and maintaining trust accounts, records and manager account reviews need simplification. Substantial improvements should be made prior to the private sector implementation. As an initial phase of the PBA

is applied only to government contracts, their effectiveness at this point is unproven. Furthermore, the actual cost to the building industry, when the added costs to the principals, the builders and the subcontractors are taken into account, remains unclear.

COVID-19 and what we have been through over the last six months has been extremely damaging to our economy. We need to start building our economy and making sure that we have small businesses, like our construction industry in regional Queensland, not burdened with red tape. We also believe that a fair day's work deserves a fair day's pay. I think everybody in this House is in agreement with that. If subcontractors are not being paid, we need to make sure those people who are not paying are taken to task.

This does not affect just the building industry. I have a couple of cases in the seat of Gregory. A major civil construction company in Longreach is owed hundreds of thousands of dollars for work it has done on roads on the Landsborough Highway. That is affecting this business, and it is one of the major employers in town. It needs to have the confidence to go forward. We need to ensure they are paid by these companies that take on these big projects and then subcontract out to the smaller, well established, family owned businesses. Another family in Emerald has been owed hundreds of thousands of dollars after a solar farm went into administration. They were a construction business undertaking fence building around a solar farm, and when the solar farm went into administration they were not paid. These are local families who live in local towns who employ local people. Most importantly, they need to have the confidence that they will be paid—the confidence that the big companies that take on these big projects will pay their subcontractors.

The building industry plays an important role all over Queensland. We have heard time after time that when companies go into administration the first people who suffer are our subcontractors. Those subcontractors deserve to have certainty. This has been going on for a long time.

The LNP has a strong history of working side by side with industry to streamline government practices and help generate jobs. When last in office, we pursued reform measures designed to make it easier and more efficient for the industry to conduct business. In anticipation that Labor's Building Industry Fairness (Security of Payment) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017 would require future amendments to be made workable, the LNP called on the implementation panel to assess the merits of the application of Labor's project bank accounts—PBAs. At the time, the government said it was not required, although eventually it was obliged to put it in place.

In 2018 the LNP recognised that subcontractors' late payment and non-payment remained a challenging issue continuing to hamper the growth of Queensland businesses, with non-payment issues, fraudulent practices, false statutory declarations and, most importantly, illegal phoenixing activities which we have seen right around Queensland. Although some elements were examined by the Special Joint Taskforce, it was considered that the terms of reference were too narrow and the time frame too tight for a full investigation to be undertaken.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.00 pm.



Mr MILLAR: Finally, when we introduce legislation we have to make sure that it results in less red tape and is less onerous on small business owners who desperately need a clear direction when it comes to what they are trying to achieve. While I support what we are trying to achieve here, I ask the minister to review this over the next six months to see whether it has an impact on small contractors that have to set up trust accounts and work with additional red tape. It is hard enough being in small business these days with all the red tape. I call on the minister to review this to make sure the red tape is reduced.



Mr MOLHOEK (Southport—LNP) (2.01 pm): I rise to speak briefly in respect of the Building Industry Fairness (Security of Payment) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. It is my privilege to say that I was on the original committee that reviewed the first round of security of payments legislation that was introduced into the Queensland parliament during the last term of this Labor government. I note that on that occasion what was introduced was a trial involving government contracts and the establishment of project bank accounts for projects of \$10 million or more. That trial was to run for about 12 months, but has run for closer to three years. Here we are now finally reviewing the security of payments legislation that was proposed some years ago.

I put on the record that I was disappointed with some of the proposals at that time. While I certainly embrace the need to have much stronger systems in place to ensure that people are paid, I felt that the first round of legislation really did not go far enough and really did not provide any significant change or hope to more than 70 per cent of tradespeople who work across Queensland. In fact, it really only looked after a niche group of people who worked for large contractors that had government contracts.

I note at page 6 of the explanatory notes that there are three proposals with respect to trade accounts or retention trusts. From July 2020 government and hospital and health services building contracts valued at \$1 million or more will now require retention accounts. From July next year—it is a carrot that we are dangling off in the distance—project and retention trusts will apply to local government and private sector building contracts valued at \$10 million. Almost three years on, we really have not dealt with private sector contracts. From July 2022 we are holding out a carrot, an incentive, that contracts over \$1 million will be captured by this legislation.


My concern is that to a degree this legislation creates false hope. It still does not provide a secure payment pathway for the thousands of tradespeople across the state who undertake everyday jobs—those who are perhaps doing a \$20,000 or \$30,000 job or taking on a \$200,000 home renovation project or an owner-builder building a new home on someone's land worth \$300,000 or \$400,000. This legislation really does not provide the security that is needed and only deals with big projects.

There have been some spectacular failures in recent times with large companies in Queensland going under. As I argued some two or three years ago when this legislation was first introduced and will state again, some of the money collected by the Queensland Building and Construction Commission in insurance premiums every year, instead of being siphoned off into general revenue by the state government as a profit, could have been set aside for a true insurance scheme to provide contractors and tradies with the security they need to be paid. When there are spectacular failures or even minor failures, there would then be money there to pay these people.

I do not believe that project bank accounts or retention trust accounts do anything but provide more red tape. We heard testimony in the committee hearings when I was on the committee when this was first introduced that essentially all this does is create entirely new levels of red tape and paperwork and that tradies and contractors will find a way to get around it. We heard testimony that for large companies this probably adds one or two per cent to the total cost of projects and results in no real benefit. It restricts and ties up some of their cash flow. All it simply does is add to the cost of construction. As outlined on page 6 of the explanatory notes, for smaller contracts it is not going to be one per cent on a \$1 million or \$2 million contract or one or two per cent on \$3 million or \$4 million contract; it is likely to be a higher percentage given the significant time it will take administratively to set up these accounts, process the paperwork and keep separate accounting records for each project.

I said last time we looked at this legislation and I will say it again, I feel that there are aspects of this legislation that are quite disingenuous. In a sense, it provides false hope. It is a great marketing pitch from the minister to say, 'We are going to make sure that all tradies across Queensland are going to be paid.' I would guess that the reality would be that at least 50 per cent and maybe 70 per cent of tradies across Queensland are not covered by this legislation. I am disappointed that the legislation does not deal more broadly with proper payment processes for tradespeople. There is a part of me that even wonders why we need to have this legislation. Any company in Australia is subject to the laws of the land, be they a tradesperson, a retail shop, a dentist, a doctor, a tourism operator or in some other business. There is a reasonable expectation that people should be paid. If people do not pay their bills, they should be prosecuted.

There is a part of me that asks: why don't we look with greater rigour at existing terms of payments and contracts? I note that even the state government itself at times in recent years has not been the most prompt payer of bills. There have been many occasions when we have heard from constituents and people around the state complaining that the government has been slow to pay.

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (2.09 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Building Industry Fairness (Security of Payment) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2020. To emphasise the words of my colleague the shadow minister for housing and public works, the Liberal National Party firmly believes in the principle that everybody deserves to be paid for the work that they do. Such a principle has never been more important than right now as Queensland continues to deal with the significant economic and jobs crisis resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Every job is essential and every job is critical as we continue to rebuild Queensland's economy. Whilst finding, or holding, a job remains one of the highest priorities for every Queenslanders during this crisis, it is imperative that Queenslanders are not only paid for the work that they do but also paid in a timely manner.

The late payment, and even non-payment, of tradies is an issue that affects communities right throughout Queensland. It is an issue which is especially important for my electorate of Moggill where, on statistics compiled prior to the onset of COVID-19, almost 65 per cent of all blue-collar workers in the electorate of Moggill are employed in the construction industry. I take this opportunity to briefly

acknowledge the many outstanding and hardworking local builders, electricians, plumbers, carpenters and other skilled tradesmen and women, and subcontractors, in my electorate of Moggill. That being said, there are aspects of this bill which will potentially have significant detrimental impacts on builders and construction companies of all sizes which the Palaszczuk government needs to consider. I will elaborate further on this shortly.

Turning to the specifics of the legislation before the Queensland parliament, I note that some of the main objectives of this proposed legislation are to implement the recommendations of the Building Industry Fairness Reforms Implementation and Evaluation Panel; implement the recommendations of the Special Joint Taskforce that investigated subcontractor non-payment in the building industry; enhance Queensland's security of payment legislation and further extend the protections for industry; and improve the Queensland Building and Construction Commission's ability to further address fraudulent behaviour in the industry.

It is important to understand and appreciate just why it is that the 56th Parliament of Queensland has been called upon yet again to address the issue of security of payments, having previously legislated on this in 2017 during the 55th Parliament. As most in this House will recall following an election commitment made in 2015, it was not until late 2017 that the Palaszczuk state Labor government passed its Building Industry Fairness (Security of Payment) Bill 2017 to address late payments and non-payments of Queensland tradesmen and women in the building and construction industry.

By 2018, as the non-payment of contracts, company collapses and allegations of systemic fraud plagued the industry, the Liberal National Party called for a commission of inquiry into all aspects of the building industry. Not surprisingly, the union-controlled Palaszczuk state Labor government did not support our calls but were forced into reluctantly establishing a Special Joint Taskforce to investigate non-payment complaints and allegations of fraudulent activity. It is this legislation before the Queensland parliament today which seeks to implement the Palaszczuk state Labor government's response to the recommendations that stemmed from that task force report.

With respect to security of payment reforms, I note that amendments are proposed in order to simplify the framework, improve protections and oversight, and manage the financial transition for project bank accounts before it can be applied to private sector contracts as recommended by the evaluation panel.

I also wish to briefly reflect on the Special Joint Taskforce investigation into complaints of fraudulent behaviour within the industry relating to subcontractor non-payment. The task force report provided 10 recommendations to enhance the Queensland Building and Construction Commission's enforcement ability, ensure the integrity of industry participants and increased cooperation among regulators. I note that these recommendations will be implemented primarily via amendments made to the Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act 1991. Such reforms and such amendments are important because, as the local Liberal National Party state member for Moggill, I have received feedback from many constituents regarding the efficacy and less than optimal processes in engaging with and being able to have matters resolved by the Queensland Building and Construction Commission.

Only recently I received correspondence from two constituents in the electorate of Moggill, both pensioners, who outlined their difficulties and understandable frustration in having the Queensland Building and Construction Commission address their concerns in a timely manner in order to assist in progressing their complaints regarding alleged fraudulent behaviour. I have also had similar concerns raised by local builders.

I believe almost every member in this House would be well aware of some difficulties and limitations that Queenslanders experience in trying to properly resolve issues via the Queensland Building and Construction Commission. Therefore, steps that can be taken to especially enhance the Queensland Building and Construction Commission's enforcement ability and to ensure the integrity of industry participants absolutely deserves our support.

I also wish to address a significant aspect of this legislation which the Palaszczuk state Labor government continues to ignore—that is, the substantial adverse impacts that will be felt by builders through mandating the use of the project bank accounts model which can potentially occur in the private sector into the future. Local builders in my electorate of Moggill and across the western suburbs have contacted me and shared their very real concerns that such a model will have not only on their industry but also on their small business viability. These concerns are real.

I take this opportunity today to put that on the record on behalf of those who have contacted me in the electorate of Moggill. We are talking about the small to medium sized businesses, the mum-and-dad owner-operators, who are genuinely worried that the imposition of project bank accounts will be enough to shut down their businesses, jeopardising both jobs and economic activity when Queensland can least afford it.

As local business owners tell me, the Palaszczuk Labor government's reforms are in some aspects too unbalanced, with bias against the builder-owner small businesses. Again, I raise these concerns on their behalf because there has been significant feedback not only from those in my electorate but also from those in other parts of the western suburbs of Brisbane.

As one local builder told me, unless it is the client who funds the project bank account before the work commences, many of these small to medium building businesses simply do not have the cash flow or a significant pool of funds to pay up-front. Such concerns were also provided to the Transport and Public Works Committee by Master Builders Queensland, which submitted—

... we continue to hold grave concerns about the effectiveness of the Project Bank Accounts (PBAs) regime and the true costs to the building industry.


Similarly, the Property Council of Australia submitted—

The Property Council maintains the position that the current PBA model will not achieve the Government's stated objectives and that the reforms will have a perverse impact on the industry.

As I said, the concerns of Queensland builders are real. As local builders have told me, the mandating of project bank accounts in the private sector could be the straw that will break an industry that is already doing it hard. Indeed, one builder has even gone as far as to say that they are at the point where they are prepared to close and leave the industry altogether because of how unbalanced and unworkable these forthcoming changes are.

In closing, whilst the Liberal National Party will be supporting this legislation today, the Liberal National Party still holds concerns about the project bank account processes, as I have outlined, which the Liberal National Party's shadow minister for housing and public works has also outlined. Finally, I would like to place on record the concerns which were well articulated by the deputy chair of the Transport and Public Works Committee, Ted Sorensen, and the Liberal National Party member for Callide, Colin Boyce, which included the length of time taken by the Palaszczuk state Labor government to address these issues; the burdensome nature of the reforms; the need to simplify administrative procedures; and the omission of any recommendation relating to the need for ongoing professional training and development.

It is only the Liberal National Party that has a strong history of working together with industry to streamline government processes and help create jobs. It is only the Liberal National Party that remains committed to a full commission of inquiry to ensure all issues can be properly assessed and addressed in our building and construction industry.

 **Ms SCANLON** (Gaven—ALP) (2.19 pm): I rise to support the Building Industry Fairness (Security of Payment) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The Palaszczuk government knows that in order for Queenslanders to have secure, stable and well-paid jobs the industry they work in must be fair, safe and sustainable. It is not unreasonable to expect that when you do a job, when you deliver a service, you get paid. For subcontractors in the building and construction industry, this often is not the case.

This industry employs approximately 240,000 Queenslanders and contributes around \$46 billion to our state's economy. It is an industry that needs confidence and certainty of work, but when dodgy bosses and shady operators withhold payment there can be serious consequences. So many tradies in my community have found themselves without pay from shonky companies. I have previously spoken about a Nerang business that was left \$88,000 out of pocket and had to let 30 staff go after they were left empty-handed following the collapse of a well-known building company.

In 2017 the Palaszczuk government consulted widely with industry and the community to seek feedback and later released the Queensland Building Plan, which committed to reforms across 10 key areas. I thank the minister for continually coming down to the Gold Coast and listening to subcontractors in my community. The government has delivered a significant number of these reforms, including: the first phase of project bank accounts; strengthening minimum financial requirements; a new Plumbing and Drainage Act; and comprehensive legislation to address nonconforming building products.


This bill further delivers on our plan by introducing a project trust framework, which enhances the present project bank accounts. This new framework requires head contractors to only open one project trust account per project and one retention account per contractor where cash retentions are withheld.

Currently, three accounts must be established per contract if cash retentions are withheld, so these changes are focused on streamlining administration. The QBCC will take on a greater oversight role which will reduce the workload of principals. The benefits of the project trust framework will be extended to private sector and local government contracts; however, acknowledging COVID-19 has caused significant economic disruption, the implementation will occur gradually to give head contractors plenty of time to prepare.

The bill also introduces the requirement for head contractors to produce a supporting statement with every payment claim they make to their principal. This will declare to the principal that the head contractor has met their obligation to pay subcontractors on the job. If they have not paid the subcontractors and there could be a legitimate reason why they have not, the reasons must be stated. Failure to provide the supporting statement or including false or misleading information will attract a penalty. This reform is a recommendation of the Building Industry Fairness Reforms Implementation and Evaluation Panel and Special Joint Taskforce as a way of deterring contractors from making false declarations.

This bill also makes it clear that it is a certifier's primary duty to act in the public interest, thus avoiding potential conflicts of interest with a client. Finally, this bill will strengthen regulators' oversight of architectural and engineering professions by providing stronger investigation and oversight powers to their governing boards.

For too long Australian tradies have been ripped off, taking a significant toll on families, particularly on the Gold Coast, both financially and mentally. As the minister mentioned in his introductory speech, suicide is the leading cause of death for Australians between the ages of 15 and 44. Between 2001 and 2013, over 2,500 men in the construction industry took their lives; 562 of these were men in Queensland. Research commissioned by Mates in Construction found that construction workers were at a higher risk of suicide than most and that a lack of job security was a key contributing factor to poor mental health. We on this side of the House believe that if you do the work you should get paid on time, in full, every time. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (2.23 pm): Over the last five years the Queensland building industry has seen significant reform. Some of these reforms have been brutal on the industry. Many times that has been lost on this minister, who clearly has no industry experience. In the interests of transparency, I acknowledge that I am still a registered builder in the state of Queensland under the QBCC Act. I do not feel that that hinders my contribution, but I thought it was important to put that on the record.

Mr de Brenni: Build us a barbeque.

Mr BENNETT: And a great builder I was, Minister. We all remember the way the government gleefully used the term 'BIF bill', and it certainly was intended to take a big stick to the industry. These reforms have included the introduction of project bank accounts, PBAs, changes to security-of-payment laws and minimum financial requirements. The industry is now faced with further changes, largely as a result of earlier initiatives not operating as intended. Late payments and non-payments to our tradies remain an ongoing concern in the building and construction industry.

It is important that industry stakeholders' concerns about the proposed changes be acknowledged. There is real concern that the BIF reforms will increase the level of red tape for builders and subcontractors, because there is still no evidence that the PBAs have played any part in ensuring that the thousands of subbies involved in the 100 PBA projects were in fact paid 'in full, on time, every time', as was promised by the minister. The administrative burden and the increased amount of red tape associated with establishing and maintaining trust account records and mandatory account reviews still needs work to simplify it. This must be rectified prior to the private sector implementation, because we now know that PBAs and changes to progress payments have come at a significant cost to the principals, builders and subcontractors involved in our increasing building sector.

This bill makes many commonsense amendments—amendments we flagged up to five years ago—where changes were needed to the trust account model. Overwhelmingly, the implementation of these legislative provisions, as highlighted time and time again, will simply increase cost, red tape and risk, undermining any beneficial outcomes resulting from the bill's implementation. While a number of the proposals reflect some of the recommendations, *An evaluation of Queensland's building industry fairness reforms report* identified, problematically, that many changes go well beyond that which was recommended. We have heard industry concerns that the constrained timeframes for consultation, coupled with the lack of any cost/benefit analysis, has the potential to again lead to a need for further amendments in the future.

It has been raised many times that the majority of projects affected by this legislation will fall within the \$1 million to \$3 million price range. Anyone who truly understands the building industry knows that this is typically the price category in which mum-and-dad builders operate. Disappointingly, the little analysis that has occurred to date only reviewed what large commercial builders are doing and how PBAs have impacted them. No analysis has occurred regarding the impact on small businesses once these reforms are rolled out.

I note stakeholders believe that the bill as drafted will act as a deterrent for small business to take on any project that requires a project trust account, as the administrative requirements are a burden that cannot be absorbed by this part of the industry. This will have ramifications for housing supply and other affordability issues. I guess having a proliferation of large union dominated builders in Queensland is possibly the actual agenda of the minister—who knows?

The committee made more recommendations. Most relate to the clarity of definitions and exemptions, including account structures. We have heard many times of the difficulties people have trying to absorb and understand terms and references in the legislation. What we must remember is that the building and construction industry is a huge contributor to our economy. In 2017 it employed 230,000 people and contributed \$46 billion. Historically, this industry has failed to deal with high rates of insolvency and regular examples of non-payment issues. These recent reforms have not instilled confidence that real reforms being proposed will be effective or that anyone from the government has even considered the true cost to the building industry. We will see reforms and more amendments in the future.

Key industry stakeholders have determined that 90 per cent of head contractors reported increased administration costs, with more than half reporting increases of more than three per cent of the project cost. These are real costs that have now been added to the construction sector. More than half of those who set out to help subcontractors also suffered increased administration costs. Builders have incurred an additional cost of approximately \$12 million in the current rollout of PBAs, which means someone else has to pay—mainly, currently, taxpayers—but when this process is burdened on the private sector, home owners and mums and dads will pay the price. It will be interesting to see how we talk about housing affordability aspirations going forward when these increased costs really hit home.

It is hard to forget that the minister cherry-picked items out of reports and commissioned analyses bragging about cost benefits, because that clearly is not reflected by what stakeholders are telling us now. Maybe that is why the private sector rollout has been kicked into the long grass well past the next election. For five years the government has bumbled around with these reforms, and although industry has offered many suggestions during the committee process, much has been ignored. This leaves me with no doubt that more amendments will be required to continue to reform this really serious issue.

I want to address the minimum financial requirements as they exist and what is being proposed. On behalf of those many builders and subbies who have reached out with problems, I say again that I told you it was going to happen and I told you it was going to be tough. The industry warned it was going to be an overreach and so complex that we should expect significant disruption to the industry. That has certainly occurred.

Talk of a new due diligence requirement on contractors and jail time for breaches are examples of a government and a government agency out of their depth. The QBCC already regulates financial requirements to a high level and deals with consequences of licensee failures, so I wonder why we have to take such a big stick. The MFR are highly regulated by the QBCC. A single determined failure can result in a licence being suspended—in some cases, to the demise of these small businesses. This is not really a fair outcome and certainly does not conform to the application of natural justice.

I will give an example of the impact. In 2018-19, the QBCC undertook 630 financial audits of licensees resulting in 123 licence cancellations and 267 licences being suspended. The government was warned that contractors are not accountants. Despite all the hype, full compliance in every aspect is still difficult to achieve. I challenge all members of the House to reach out to the contractors in their electorates and at least try and understand what it is they will be voting on shortly before imposing these problematic reforms on their constituents. They really do not understand what the ramifications are.

While the minister continues to destroy the construction industry with a lack of vision and courage, what he does do is surround himself with union hacks and Labor mates. It is important to reflect on how this has worked out, because the minister talks a big game but he cannot even get his

own house in order. In the last five years the QBCC has continued to struggle, so how do we expect these reforms to progress when last month we saw the Audit Office report into the QBCC expose significant problems? Page 2 of that report stated—


Progress is hindered by a lack of data, resources, skills, and capability. Managing licences needs a more targeted compliance program to be fully effective. The current program, while driven by agreed priorities, is too operational ... There is a risk that fraud in relation to licence applications could go undetected.

Page 5 stated—

Its operational and management reporting are currently not sufficient to understand performance and enable informed decision-making. QBCC has not evaluated any of its core regulatory functions due to a lack of evaluation skills and ability.

That is a 44-page document. I have taken only small snippets out of it but I am not cherry-picking. The report is quite damning and it exposes that the QBCC continues to not be all that it can be for the industry. While we continue to put these serious reforms in place and ask the QBCC to change its direction to be risk driven as opposed to reactive, we all would agree that we in this House have so much more to do to make effective policy reforms in relation to the construction sector because it clearly was in need of reform.

I want to acknowledge the minister's genuine attempt to engage with this sector. With all of the things within the building fairness review, I would have thought we would have progressed further. However, here we are with the project bank account reforms—another suite of legislative reform. After much consultation and stakeholder engagement, we should have the best laws in the country—not laws that we all acknowledge will need to be back here with more amendments to get them right. This is a piece of reform that has already been flagged to fail in some way. We on this side of the House make this commitment to respect this industry. We have to do so much more and we have to get this right.

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Theodore—LNP) (2.32 pm): I rise to speak on the Building Industry Fairness (Security of Payment) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2020. I will keep my comments reasonably brief today but I feel I had to speak on this bill because I have a fair few subcontractors and a lot of builders in my electorate and over the years they have expressed their concerns about what is actually transpiring in the industry. Everybody deserves to get paid for a fair day's work. LNP members and I am sure government members all agree with this. We deserve to get paid for a fair day's work, but there are some who withhold pay from their subcontractors.


I was dealing with an issue to do with an electrician recently. Due to unforeseen circumstances surrounding COVID, it came to his attention that he was going to be out of pocket by almost \$100,000. There was nothing sinister or anything like that; he had just purchased a lot of equipment for his electrical business and unfortunately when COVID hit it hurt his bottom dollar. Most of the businesses in my electorate are small to medium sized businesses and a lot of them employ only a few people. Therefore, they have reputations they have to live by because they get their jobs on that reputation.

I have some very good and very proud builders in my area, but they feel that some of the ideas that have been put forward by the government will make it difficult for them to exist. There will be extra red tape and extra paperwork. As I said, a lot of them are mum-and-dad builders. They are individuals who struggle to keep their costs down. It should be noted that the vast majority of individual builders are doing the right thing; however, there is always a small minority of rotten apples that hurt the industry. One of the complaints I get from builders and subcontractors is that they feel that a lot of the time the QBCC is a toothless tiger and that it struggles with its role as the overarching body. The member for Burnett certainly highlighted that from the auditor's report.

A builder of many years decided to sell his business and pack up shop. He said that he got to a point where he was absolutely fed up with dealing with the QBCC when it came to individuals who did not want to pay him. For instance, someone made up a story about an issue to do with a shower door and so they blocked their final payment. This is a real problem that builders face. He said that, whilst the QBCC would support the claims of the customer, the poor old builder had to go out there on numerous occasions to try to fix the problem but was denied access many times. He was absolutely frustrated with the process so he gave up. He eventually said that there was no point continuing in that trade if that was his future. He has two younger sons who were keen to get into the building trade, but he has done his best to talk them out of it. As mentioned by other members in this chamber, the building trade is one of the cornerstones of our economy and is worth \$46 billion to our economy. Those figures were taken back in 2017-18.

It is crucially important that we get this right. A lot of builders have said to me that the additional red tape will only hurt them in the long run. There should be far tougher prosecutions for those who do the wrong thing. What also needs to be looked at is the way some customers treat builders and try to

deny payments. That is something that the government and all parties should be looking into. There are obviously rotten apples out there, but fundamentally the vast majority of builders do the right thing by their customers and their subcontractors. We need to make sure there is fairness in the system to ensure that the construction industry in this state remains profitable and very strong for years to come.

 **Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works, Minister for Digital Technology and Minister for Sport) (2.37 pm), in reply: I thank members for their contribution throughout this very important debate. The Building Industry Fairness (Security of Payment) Act 2017 is nation leading in effecting real cultural change to get tradies paid for the work that they do. Since Campbell Newman and the LNP gutted building industry regulation, the Palaszczuk government has taken great strides to ensure Queensland subbies and tradies are paid in full, on time, every time. We have all listened to the stories of everyday tradies—and we have heard many in the House over the last 24 hours—who have lived through the hardship of non-payment and who have shouted out for real change in their industry. The difference for those tradies in Queensland is that this Labor government is doing something about it. We are doing something careful, considered, measured and effective.

This bill sets the agenda for the years to come. It delivers increased protections to all participants in the contractual chain, be they subcontractors, head contractors or suppliers. It gives more powers to stamp out dodgy operators by strengthening protections against excluded persons and it takes a tough stance to prevent phoenixing.

We all know that non-payment hurts Queensland businesses; so does late payment. In these uncertain economic times getting paid on time and in full is more important than ever. Today the Queensland government is standing with the building and construction industry and we are saying this to tradies across Queensland: you deserve to get paid in full, on time every time; you deserve the certainty of getting paid for the work that you do and you deserve a system that will not let you down.

I would like to thank the member for Burleigh for reading back to me my articles, the committee report and my media releases. It is good to know that the member reads them. Mr Deputy Speaker, through you I ask the member for Burleigh: does the LNP think that the industry will not be ready for project trust accounts, as we have heard from some of those opposite, or do they think the government is not going fast enough with these reforms?

Mr Power: Both at the same time.

Mr de BRENNI: I take the interjection of the member for Logan. They think both at the same time. I ask: what would the LNP do in the face of a global financial crisis caused by a pandemic? As the member for Logan points out, we all ask the LNP to make up their minds on this issue.

The member for Burleigh asked why government contracts need to bother with security of payment. In fact, it was the member for Hervey Bay who reminded him that Recon Construction recently collapsed on the Fraser Coast. They were contractors on a local government project.

Mr Hart: I didn't say that.

Mr de BRENNI: The member for Burleigh wonders why we need project trust accounts on government projects. I tell him and all members opposite that the answer is this: it is so that the government stimulus ends up where it is designed to go, and that is in the pockets of Queensland tradies.

Members opposite, including the member for Burleigh, raised some concerns about education and training. I want to address those valid questions and the suggestions that the government has taken no action on the matter of training as proposed by industry stakeholders. I want to clarify that the bill establishes the requirement for licensees to undertake training, in particular around—and before—holding retentions in the project trust account regime. The requirement to hold retention amounts in a trust commences for licensees at the time they become covered by the project trust account framework. Upon full implementation, on 1 January 2023, all parties covered by the project trust framework that seek to withhold a retention must establish a trust to hold those funds. Before establishing that trust they must undergo training on how to properly administer a retention trust account. That required training will be established by regulation. As has been the case in all of this reform work, it will involve extensive consultation and genuine engagement with industry before implementation. For clarity, the requirement to undertake training will not arise until it is prescribed by regulation.

The member for Gympie raised some concerns about builders issuing false statutory declarations. They are concerns shared across the industry and I think shared across the House. He raised concerns about the ability to investigate and prosecute those builders who submit false statutory declarations. I am pleased to inform the member for Gympie that this bill does introduce two new important reforms to address concerns of subbies worried about false statutory declarations.

Firstly, the bill provides that contractors must provide a supporting statement detailing that they have paid and what they have paid their subbies, and that includes stronger penalties for those who provide false or misleading information. Secondly and importantly, we are giving the Queensland Building and Construction Commission the power to themselves prosecute those licensees who provide false information directly rather than the QBCC needing to refer that through another agency to the Queensland Police Service. That is a significant and important reform and power for the commission.

We have continued to work with industry directly and through the Ministerial Construction Council to ensure that these reforms shift where the power lies so that tradies get paid for the work they do in full, on time every time. Since 2015—and yes, we have been working through this methodically over a number of years—we have been rebuilding confidence in the industry brick by brick. These are deeply entrenched issues. They take time to unravel and understand and resolve. They will take time to repair.

I say this to those opposite and to all Queenslanders: Queensland continues to lead the nation in payment protections for the building and construction industry. No other state or territory has progressed as far in ensuring that subcontractor payments are held in trust. What we have established in Queensland in the Building Industry Fairness (Security of Payment) Act provides a model for all other states and territories. Western Australia recently released a draft bill for a new security payment regime for their industry. Many of the provisions in the WA bill adopt a very similar approach to that taken in Queensland's security of payment regulation, for example, the regulation of contracts, payment claims, adjudication, retention trust framework and licensing of building practitioners. However, it remains the Palaszczuk government that has moved furthest and progressed most efficiently on this work to support the jobs of Queensland tradies. In fact, I am advised that in New South Wales they have decided not to progress anything of further substance in this area.

I want to touch on remarks made by the member for Hervey Bay, who raised concerns about builders who go bust only to reappear as a new company in a matter of days. We all know of this as phoenixing. The good news for tradies is that our reforms are closing many more loops on illegal phoenixing practices. Through the QBCC we will publish a list of excluded individuals. There will be nowhere for those dodgy operators to run and nowhere for them to hide. In addition, those excluded individuals will not be permitted to be site supervisors. They will no longer be able to financially benefit from ripping off tradies or showing up to rip off more tradies again down the track.

I turn to the amendments that will be moved during consideration in detail. There has been substantial industry engagement about these laws; that is true. I am pleased to see this and I thank the committee for taking the time to listen to the industry when making recommendations about security of payment reform. Yesterday I tabled the government's response to the committee report, which confirms government support for recommendations 1 to 11 in full and recommendation 12 in principle. To give effect to these recommendations, I will be moving a number of amendments during consideration in detail of the bill.

Rolling out trust accounts to all projects over \$1 million will require businesses to operate differently. That is true; they will need to operate differently. Our government recognises that COVID-19 has had an impact on the construction industry. That is why we committed to the \$50 billion infrastructure guarantee. That is why we announced \$276 million in building industry stimulus. It is also why I am proposing extra time be offered before the new trust framework starts, particularly for the smallest licensees in the state. I propose amendments to the bill to accommodate this change. This includes introducing an additional phase where the new framework will apply to those projects that currently trigger the project trust account. All other phases will remain the same.

The commencement of these phases will take place via proclamation, providing certainty but also flexibility as we face the most uncertain time in living memory and we face an uncertain global economic future. It will give industry and the regulator the important time it needs to implement the new streamlined trust fund arrangements. I want to reiterate and stress that the trust account framework that is being passed by this House today is streamlined, is simpler, is more efficient and will support job creation.

There will be a significant number of amendments, primarily to definitions to ensure they are fit for purpose and that the laws apply appropriately. The committee recommended that we go through in great detail all of the definitions to make sure they are contemporary and fit for purpose going forward, and we have done that. The changes ensure trust protections are provided to workers who need them most and that protections operate as intended. The bill provides for exemptions in certain circumstances, and we do not want dubious operators taking advantage of those. Amendments, therefore, will tighten the language around exemptions. Further amendments are proposed to give

clarity and flexibility to this transition process. Amendments are also proposed to remove an unnecessary notification obligation and to streamline the process for giving an account review report to the regulator of the QBCC.

Effective licensing frameworks make sure that our building and construction industry workers have the right skills and capabilities to deliver quality buildings that we live, work and play in. As standards and technology improve, it is sometimes necessary to introduce new classes of licences. I am proposing an amendment to offer businesses an additional six months to prove they meet the licensing requirements, provided they have already submitted their applications.

Another amendment will better support licensees to transition into a new licence class by giving the QBCC the ability to place a condition on a licence simply restricting the scope of work that may be performed commensurate with their skills and experience, particularly where a person undertakes a specialised function.

An amendment is also proposed to ensure that plumbers and other relevant tradespeople who installed fire collars prior to licence changes in December 2019 will not face prosecution for that work. The committee recommended that the definition of 'fire protection' be amended to include passive fire work, including an amendment to give clarity about what is defined as fire protection work. Removing references to redundant licences or work that is regulated elsewhere is something we can do now to support the introduction of the new framework.

Following industry feedback the committee identified that, while the QBCC Act is amended through this bill, it presents an opportunity to remove the exemption under section 8 of schedule 1A of the QBCC Act as it is no longer needed.

An amendment to the bill is proposed to include a statutory review of the role of property developers in the building and construction industry. This will also deliver on an important recommendation made by the committee. Further amendments are proposed to correct minor typographical and drafting errors.

In conclusion, I thank everybody who has contributed to this bill. I would again like to thank all of the stakeholders who have engaged in this process. I also express my sincere thanks to the staff of the Department of Housing and Public Works. I thank the staff of the Queensland Building and Construction Commission, my staff, the parliamentary staff and, of course, the committee and fellow members for their contributions and the thorough review of the proposals.

These reforms will benefit tens of thousands of hardworking men and women in the construction industry. These reforms will restore much needed confidence in our industry, particularly among small and medium sized businesses and amongst mum-and-dad operators, who deserve certainty of payment. These are businesses like those represented by organisations such as the Air Conditioning and Mechanical Contractors Association, Master Electricians Australia, the Master Plumbers' Association of Queensland and the National Fire Industry Association, which wrote to me on 13 July and said—

We are writing as the leading trade professional subcontractor associations in Queensland to provide our support for the Building Industry Fairness (Security of Payment) Reforms.

...

We have collectively, been briefed on the Amendments that are due to be proposed as part of the Parliamentary debate on the reforms and we support them. We recognise that these laws will be a significant and genuine step forward for our industry.

As a society we would not ask a nurse to work 10 hours and get paid for 3. Yet this has been the reality for electricians, plumbers, air conditioning workers, sprinkler fitters, painters, plasters and rest of the subbie community for too long. As you are aware, the very first meeting of the Master Electrician Associations 83 years ago addressed the issue of getting paid for work which has been undertaken. We all know people who have lost their job, their business and who have tragically taken their life because of circumstances such as these.

We look forward to Queensland taking the biggest step forward on subbie payments in our nation's history ...

Finally, the COVID-19 pandemic has been a new challenge that has seen the building and construction industry come together to keep working. We know that the spirit of cooperation and mutual benefit can and will flow through to the implementation of these reforms.

Once again, on behalf of Queensland tradies and those contractors who do the right thing, I commend the bill to the House.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clause 1, as read, agreed to.

Clause 2—

Mr de BRENNI (2.54 pm): I move—

That clause 2 be postponed.


Motion agreed to.

Clause 2 postponed.

Clauses 3 to 33, as read, agreed to.

Clause 34, as read, agreed to.

Clause 35—


 **Mr HART** (2.55 pm): My understanding of this clause is that it relates to transitional arrangements for those project bank accounts already in place, transitioning to project trust accounts. I note that the explanatory notes say that the amendment makes clear the requirement to establish a project bank account 'may' not apply immediately but an amendment of a contract 'may' trigger the application of sections 13 and 15. Can the minister explain in what circumstances they may be triggered and why they might not be triggered?

Mr de BRENNI: The member is referring to the amendment of section 21 and asking when a contract may require the establishment of a project bank account. Project bank accounts only apply in respect of certain conditions that require their establishment, essentially around the introduction of the phased requirements. They are only required under certain tranches at particular times.

Clause 35, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 36 to 50, as read, agreed to.

Clause 51—

 **Mr HART** (2.58 pm): Clause 51 relates to the transition to air-conditioning mechanical licences inside the plumbing trade. While the LNP agrees that there needs to be a longer transition period than was originally intended in the legislation the minister put forward, there still will be increasing problems with this particular section in that we have a lot of existing air-conditioning technicians who now find that they need to retrain themselves in mechanical services. We hear through all of our offices that this is a major issue to these tradespeople. Some of them have been doing these trades for 20 and 30 years. They have never required this sort of training in different aspects of the plumbing trade to do their trade in air conditioning, but suddenly they are now required to do that.

The feedback I get from the industry is that the TAFE courses are not available for people to do this training. The only place that they can apparently do it at the moment is in the Service Trades College. I understand that there is quite a wait for that training to take place and these people have been told that it is a very expensive process. We are finding people who are now saying, 'I don't want to do this anymore. I've done this for 20 or 30 years. I'm in a niche market. I've been doing this particular job now for a long time. I've never had to learn to be a plumber to do this before. Now I have to.' I think this is going to be a bigger problem for the government. I am hoping the minister can tell us that he is looking deeper into this and coming up with a solution.

Mr de BRENNI: I thank the member for Burleigh for the question. I understand his question much better than the previous question that was put to me about mechanical services. As members are aware, at the start of this year Queensland hospitals, aged-care homes and shopping centres received a boost to safety standards. I do not think that we can understate the importance of those mechanical services systems working efficiently, effectively and safely. We have seen cases in Queensland and in other places in our nation where ineffective or poor workmanship on mechanical services systems have led to significant illness and in many cases death. In response to that, a number of licences were introduced earlier this year to provide greater safety in those buildings. One of them was a medical gas licence and the other one was the mechanical services licence.

All new entrants, contractors and nominee supervisors who carry out mechanical services work are now required to hold a mechanical services licence. We did work closely with stakeholders in the development of that licence and we are in the middle of transitioning to that at the moment. That does require for some participants in the industry who have a significant history to update their skills and

update their technical capability to ensure that they are contemporary and are able to ensure the safety of Queenslanders. Importantly, the laws do recognise existing licensees who are already performing that work under their current licence. The transition period gives existing site supervisors and workers time to undertake any training needed to meet the new requirements. We have extended the transition period by a further six months and we have included some amendments in the regulation and technical qualifications so that we can provide additional time to do that.

During the grace period workers can continue to work on mechanical services systems. We will continue to work with the industry associations. They can do that provided they continue to be employed by an appropriately licensed contractor or a contractor to which an exemption from holding a licence or a prosecution exists under the act. By 1 January 2022 anyone performing mechanical services work will need to hold an appropriate licence, and I think that provides a very reasonable amount of time to transition. There is support in the industry and, as the member for Burleigh and I have discussed on a number of occasions, we will continue to monitor the situation and provide support to those licensees.

Clause 51, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 52 to 60, as read, agreed to.

Clause 61—



Mr de BRENNI (3.03 pm): I move the following amendments—

2 Clause 61 (Amendment of s 2 (Commencement))

Page 78, lines 10 and 11—

omit, insert—

(1) Chapter 9, part 1, divisions 1 to 4 commence on a day to be fixed by proclamation.

3 Clause 61 (Amendment of s 2 (Commencement))

Page 78, line 14, 'divisions 2 to 4'—

omit, insert—

divisions 1 to 4

I table the explanatory notes to my amendments and statement of compatibility with human rights.

Tabled paper: Building Industry Fairness (Security of Payment) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2020, explanatory notes to Hon. Mick de Brenni's amendments [\[1175\]](#).

Tabled paper: Building Industry Fairness (Security of Payment) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2020, statement of compatibility with human rights contained in Hon. Mick de Brenni's amendments [\[1176\]](#).

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 61, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 62—



Mr de BRENNI (3.03 pm): I move the following amendment—

4 Clause 62 (Amendment of s 3 (The main purpose of Act))

Page 78, lines 16 to 18—

omit, insert—

Section 3(2)(a)—

omit, insert—

(a) requiring the use of statutory trusts for particular contracts related to the building and construction industry; and

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 62, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 63—



Mr de BRENNI (3.04 pm): I move the following amendments—

5 Clause 63 (Replacement of ch 2 (Project bank accounts))

Page 79, lines 11 to 17—

omit, insert—

building means a fixed structure that is wholly or partly enclosed by walls or is roofed.

6 Clause 63 (Replacement of ch 2 (Project bank accounts))

Page 79, line 19, 'work designed by a person'—

omit, insert—

work wholly or partly designed by a person

7 Clause 63 (Replacement of ch 2 (Project bank accounts))

Page 80, lines 4 to 6—

*omit, insert—***contracted party**, for a contract, means the party to the contract who is required to perform work under the contract, whether by—

- (a) carrying out the work personally; or
- (b) directly or indirectly causing the work to be carried out.

8 Clause 63 (Replacement of ch 2 (Project bank accounts))

Page 80, after line 15—

*insert—***mechanical services work** see the *Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act 1991*, schedule 2.**9 Clause 63 (Replacement of ch 2 (Project bank accounts))**

Page 81, line 9 to page 83, line 13—

*omit, insert—***8A Meaning of project trust work**(1) **Project trust work** means any of the following work—

- (a) the erection or construction of a building;
- (b) the renovation, alteration, extension, improvement or repair of a building;
- (c) the provision of lighting, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, water supply, sewerage or drainage in connection with a building;
- (d) any site work (including the construction of retaining structures) related to work of a kind mentioned in paragraph (a), (b) or (c);
- (e) the preparation of plans or specifications for the performance of any other work mentioned in this subsection;
- (f) contract administration if carried out by a person for the construction of a building wholly or partly designed by the person;
- (g) fire protection work within the meaning of the *Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act 1991*, schedule 2;
- (h) site testing within the meaning of the *Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act 1991*, schedule 2 and classification carried out in preparation for the erection or construction of a building on the site;
- (i) the carrying out of a building inspection;
- (j) the inspection or investigation of a building, and the provision of advice or a report, for the following—
 - (i) termite management systems for the building;
 - (ii) termite infestation in the building;
- (k) work performed by an architect under the *Architects Act 2002* in the architect's professional practice if the work is associated with a building;
- (l) work performed by a registered professional engineer under the *Professional Engineers Act 2002* in the engineer's professional practice if the work is associated with a building;
- (m) work performed by a surveyor under the *Surveyors Act 2003* in the surveyor's professional practice if the work is associated with a building;
- (n) electrical work under the *Electrical Safety Act 2002* if the work is associated with a building;
- (o) the erection of scaffolding that is associated with a building;
- (p) earthmoving and excavating that is associated with a building;
- (q) certification work performed by a building certifier under the *Building Act 1975* in the certifier's professional practice if the work is associated with a building;
- (r) the assessment of energy efficiency of a building;
- (s) work performed by a fire safety adviser under the *Building Fire Safety Regulation 2008* if the work is associated with a building;
- (t) the laying of wet pour rubber, including the laying of a blended mix of graded rubber particles and binder to provide a continuous surface if the work is associated with a building;
- (u) the installation of prefabricated components of a building;
- (v) mechanical services work that is associated with a building.

- (2) **Project trust work** also includes work prescribed by regulation to be project trust work.
- (3) However, **project trust work** does not include work prescribed by regulation not to be project trust work.

10 Clause 63 (Replacement of ch 2 (Project bank accounts))

Page 85, lines 3 to 13—

omit, insert—

- (2) However, **protected work** does not include any of the following work—
 - (a) the drilling for, or extraction of, oil or natural gas;
 - (b) the extraction, whether by underground or surface working, of minerals, including tunnelling or boring, or constructing underground works, for that purpose;
 - (c) work prescribed by regulation not to be protected work.
- (3) To remove any doubt, it is declared that project trust work is protected work unless the work is prescribed under subsection (2)(c).

Note—

The scope of work that is protected work is broader than the scope of work that is project trust work.

11 Clause 63 (Replacement of ch 2 (Project bank accounts))

Page 90, lines 4 to 7—

omit, insert—

- (a) over the following amounts—
 - (i) amounts paid by the contracting party to the contracted party under a contract (the **project trust contract**) for which a project trust is required;
 - (ii) amounts paid by the contracted party to subcontractors for the project trust contract;
 - (iii) amounts deposited in the project trust account as required under this chapter; and

12 Clause 63 (Replacement of ch 2 (Project bank accounts))

Page 93, lines 20 to 27—

omit, insert—

- (1) A contract is eligible for a project trust if—
 - (a) the contracting party is the State; and
 - (b) more than 50% of the contract price is for project trust work; and
 - (c) the contract price is \$1 million or more but not more than \$10 million.
- (2) Also, a contract is eligible for a project trust if—
 - (a) the contracting party is a State authority that has decided a project trust is to be established for the contract; and
 - (b) more than 50% of the contract price is for project trust work; and
 - (c) the contract price is \$1 million or more.
- (3) In this section—
State does not include a State authority.

13 Clause 63 (Replacement of ch 2 (Project bank accounts))

Page 95, lines 1 to 9—

omit, insert—

- (2) The separate contracts are taken to be a single contract (the **larger contract**) for the purpose of applying this division.

Example—

The larger contract would be eligible for a project trust if the contract would be eligible for a project trust under section 14.

- (3) To remove any doubt, it is declared that the exemptions under subdivision 3 apply only to the larger contract and not to the separate contracts.

Note—

If the separate contracts are for small scale residential construction work under section 15C, the exemption under section 15C does not apply to exclude the separate contracts from being taken to be a single contract under subsection (2).

- (4) This section does not apply to separate contracts entered into as a result of separate tender processes.

14 Clause 63 (Replacement of ch 2 (Project bank accounts))

Page 98, lines 14 to 27—

*omit, insert—***15E Contracts for professional design, advisory or contract administration work**

- (1) A project trust is not required for a contract if the only work to be carried out under the contract is advisory work or design work carried out, either directly or indirectly, by—
 - (a) an architect under the *Architects Act 2002*; or
 - (b) a registered professional engineer under the *Professional Engineers Act 2002*; or
 - (c) a building designer; or
 - (d) a person who carries on a business as a landscape architect.
- (2) Also, a project trust is not required for a contract if the only work to be carried out under the contract is contract administration carried out, either directly or indirectly, by a person mentioned in subsection (1) for the construction of a building wholly or partly designed by the person.
- (3) In this section—

advisory work means—

 - (a) the inspection or investigation of a building; or
 - (b) the provision of advice or a report about a building.

building designer means a person who holds a licence of a class mentioned in the *Queensland Building and Construction Commission Regulation 2018*, schedule 2, part 11, 12 or 13.

design work means the preparation of plans or specifications for project trust work.

15 Clause 63 (Replacement of ch 2 (Project bank accounts))

Page 99, lines 1 to 13—

omit, insert—

- (a) the first day a project trust would, apart from this section, be required for the contract (the **trigger date**); and
- Note—*
- If the effect of an amendment of a contract is that the contract becomes eligible for a project trust for the first time, the trigger date is the day the amendment takes effect. See section 14A.
- (b) the day practical completion for the contracted work is expected to occur.
- (2) If a project trust is not required for a contract because of subsection (1), the contracted party must review the application of this section to the contract each time an amendment of the contract is made that is likely to affect the day practical completion for the contracted work is expected to occur.
 - (3) In this section—

amendment, of a contract, includes any variation of the contract or change in the contract price.

practical completion, for contracted work for a contract, means—

 - (a) practical completion as provided for under the contract; or
 - (b) if the contract does not provide for practical completion—when the contracted work would reasonably be estimated to be completed—

16 Clause 63 (Replacement of ch 2 (Project bank accounts))

Page 99, lines 26 to 30—

omit, insert—

Once a project trust is required for a contract under section 12, the trust is established by the first of the following being made after the trust is required—

- (a) payment of an amount from the contracting party to the contracted party under the contract;
- (b) payment of an amount from the contracted party to a subcontractor beneficiary for subcontracted work under the contract;
- (c) a deposit in the project trust account as required under this chapter.

17 Clause 63 (Replacement of ch 2 (Project bank accounts))

Page 106, lines 3 to 7—

omit, insert—

- (4) The account nominated by the subcontractor beneficiary under subsection (2)(b) must be—
 - (a) controlled by the beneficiary; and
 - (b) if the beneficiary is also required to establish a project trust for its subcontract—the account for the project trust for the subcontract.

18 Clause 63 (Replacement of ch 2 (Project bank accounts))

Page 115, line 27, 'an approved'—

omit, insert—

a

19 Clause 63 (Replacement of ch 2 (Project bank accounts))

Page 116, lines 25 to 28—

omit, insert—

(a) over the following amounts—

(i) retention amounts withheld in the form of cash under particular contracts;

(ii) deposits in the retention trust account as required under this chapter; and

20 Clause 63 (Replacement of ch 2 (Project bank accounts))

Page 119, lines 28 and 29—

omit, insert—

(a) a contract that is not also a subcontract for another contract; or

21 Clause 63 (Replacement of ch 2 (Project bank accounts))

Page 124, line 5, 'contracted party'—

omit, insert—

contracting party

22 Clause 63 (Replacement of ch 2 (Project bank accounts))

Page 127, line 28, 'amount'—

*omit.***23 Clause 63 (Replacement of ch 2 (Project bank accounts))**

Page 132, lines 10 to 14—

omit, insert—

(3) In this section—

24 Clause 63 (Replacement of ch 2 (Project bank accounts))

Page 138, line 14, 'an approved'—

omit, insert—

a

25 Clause 63 (Replacement of ch 2 (Project bank accounts))

Page 150, lines 12 to 24—

*omit.***26 Clause 63 (Replacement of ch 2 (Project bank accounts))**

Page 154, line 20, 'approved'—

*omit.***27 Clause 63 (Replacement of ch 2 (Project bank accounts))**

Page 155, lines 17 to 19—

omit, insert—

(5) The auditor must give the commissioner a copy of the account review report, in the approved way, within 20 business days after completing the relevant review.

Maximum penalty—50 penalty units.

(6) When complying with subsection (5), the auditor must also give the trustee a copy of the account review report.

Maximum penalty—50 penalty units.

28 Clause 63 (Replacement of ch 2 (Project bank accounts))

Page 156, lines 16 to 25—

omit.

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 63, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 64 to 71, as read, agreed to.

Clause 72—



Mr de BRENNI (3.05 pm): I move the following amendment—

29 Clause 72 (Amendment of s 97 (Withdrawing from adjudication))

Page 165, lines 9 to 12—

omit.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 72, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 73—



Mr de BRENNI (3.05 pm): I move the following amendments—

30 Clause 73 (Insertion of new ch 3, pt 4A)

Page 166, after line 30—

insert—

- (2A) However, the claimant may not give a payment withholding request to a higher party, for the adjudicated amount, that is a resident owner.

31 Clause 73 (Insertion of new ch 3, pt 4A)

Page 167, after line 18—

insert—

- (6) In this section—
resident owner see section 61(5).

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 73, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 74, as read, agreed to.

Clause 75—



Mr de BRENNI (3.06 pm): I move the following amendments—

32 Clause 75 (Insertion of new ch 3, pt 6A)

Page 172, line 28, before 'following'—

insert—

the

33 Clause 75 (Insertion of new ch 3, pt 6A)

Page 173, line 7, '(ii)'—

omit, insert—

(iii)

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 75, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 76 to 81, as read, agreed to.

Clause 82—



Mr de BRENNI (3.06 pm): I move the following amendments—

34 Clause 82 (Insertion of new ch 8A)

Page 185, lines 9 and 10—

omit, insert—

211B Continued application of former chapter 2 for particular building contracts

35 Clause 82 (Insertion of new ch 8A)

Page 185, lines 20 to 27—

omit, insert—

- (2) Chapter 2, as in force on the commencement, does not apply in relation to the building contract.
(3) Former chapter 2 continues to apply in relation to the building contract despite its repeal.

Note—

While former chapter 2 continues to apply to the building contract, the requirement to establish a project bank account under former section 13 might not apply to the building contract until an amendment of the contract. See former section 15.

- (4) However, former chapter 2, part 5

36 Clause 82 (Insertion of new ch 8A)

Page 186, line 1, 'Transferring existing project bank accounts'—
omit, insert—

Transitioning**37 Clause 82 (Insertion of new ch 8A)**

Page 186, lines 12 to 19—
omit, insert—

- (2) If a project bank account is required for the building contract under former section 13 as applied under section 211B and the head contractor has not yet opened accounts at a financial institution for the project bank account, the head contractor may transition to the new scheme by opening a project trust account and, if necessary, a retention trust account for the contract as required under chapter 2.

Note—

The requirement to establish a project bank account under former section 13 might not apply to the building contract until an amendment of the contract. See section 211B and former section 15.

- (3) If a project bank account is required for the building contract under former section 13 as applied under section 211B and the head contractor opened accounts at a financial institution for the project bank account before the commencement, the trustee for the project bank account may transition to the new scheme by complying with the following requirements within 6 months after the commencement—

38 Clause 82 (Insertion of new ch 8A)

Page 187, line 3, '**old account**'—
omit, insert—

old retention trust account**39 Clause 82 (Insertion of new ch 8A)**

Page 188, line 23, 'building'—
omit.

40 Clause 82 (Insertion of new ch 8A)

Page 188, lines 31 to 33—
omit, insert—

- (3) However, section 14A still applies for any amendment of the contract.
- (3A) If section 14A applies to an amendment of the contract, a reference in that section to section 14 is taken to be a reference to section 14 as in force when a project trust would have, apart from subsection (2), first been required for the contract.

Note—

For a contract entered into before the replacement of chapter 2 by the amendment Act, see section 211B.

41 Clause 82 (Insertion of new ch 8A)

Page 189, line 7, 'building'—
omit.

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 82, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 83—



Mr de BRENNI (3.07 pm): I move the following amendments—

42 Clause 83 (Replacement of ch 9, pt 1, divs 2 and 3)

Page 189, after line 29—
insert—

Division 1 Extended application of project trusts and retention trusts**213 Amendment of s 14 (Particular contracts for project trust work)**

- (1) Section 14(1)(a)—
omit, insert—
- (a) the contracting party is the State or a hospital and health service; and
- (2) Section 14(1)(c), 'but not more than \$10 million'—
omit.

43 Clause 83 (Replacement of ch 9, pt 1, divs 2 and 3)

Page 190, line 26—

omit, insert—

(2) Section 14(3)—

44 Clause 83 (Replacement of ch 9, pt 1, divs 2 and 3)

Page 191, line 21—

omit, insert—

Section 14(1) to (3)—

45 Clause 83 (Replacement of ch 9, pt 1, divs 2 and 3)

Page 192, line 3 to page 193, line 8—

omit, insert—

(1) Section 32(1)—

omit, insert—(1) A retention trust is required for a retention amount withheld from payment under a contract (the **withholding contract**) if—

(a) the contracting party withholds the retention amount in the form of cash; and

(b) a project trust is required for—

(i) if the withholding contract is a subcontract—the head contract for the subcontract; or

(ii) otherwise—the withholding contract.

(2) Section 32(5)—

omit, insert—

(5) In this section—

head contract means a contract that is not also a subcontract for another contract.

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 83, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 84—

**Mr de BRENNI** (3.07 pm): I move the following amendments—**46 Clause 84 (Amendment of sch 2 (Dictionary))**

Page 193, line 27, '200C'—

omit, insert—

198A

47 Clause 84 (Amendment of sch 2 (Dictionary))

Page 194, after line 14—

*insert—***mechanical services work** see section 8.**48 Clause 84 (Amendment of sch 2 (Dictionary))**

Page 195, line 1—

omit.

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 84, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 85 to 108, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new heading—

**Mr de BRENNI** (3.08 pm): I move the following amendment—**49 Part 6, division 2, heading (Amendments commencing on assent)**

Page 224, lines 20 and 21—

*omit, insert—***Division 2 Miscellaneous licensing amendments**

Amendment agreed to.

Clauses 109 and 110, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—



Mr de BRENNI (3.08 pm): I move the following amendment—

50

After clause 110

Page 225, after line 21—

insert—

110A Insertion of new s 30CA

After section 30C—

insert—

30CA Meaning of fire protection work

- (1) Work is **fire protection work** if it is any of the following work for a building or part of a building—
 - (a) the installation, restoration, repair or maintenance of fire protection equipment;
 - (b) the preparation of a certificate, statement or record relating to the installation, restoration, repair or maintenance of fire protection equipment;
 - (c) the preparation of a certificate, statement or record stating whether fire protection equipment meets a standard, requirement or specification;
 - (d) the design of fire protection equipment;
 - (e) the inspection or investigation of, and the provision of advice or a report about, compliance with the *Building Act 1975* or the Building Code of Australia relating to fire safety.
- (2) However, the following work is not **fire protection work**—
 - (a) the installation, repair or maintenance of a battery-operated smoke alarm in a building that is a class 1a or 2 building under the Building Code of Australia;
 - (b) work of a type prescribed by regulation not to be fire protection work.
- (3) A regulation under subsection (2)(b) may prescribe work that is the installation, restoration, repair or maintenance of fire protection equipment mentioned in definition **fire protection equipment**, paragraph (b), (c), (d) or (e) only if the work is any of the following—
 - (a) work of a value of no more than \$1,100 performed personally by the owner of the land on which the work is performed;
 - (b) work on a class 1a building of a value of no more than \$11,000 performed personally by the owner of the land on which the work is performed, if the work is authorised under a fire protection occupational licence held by the owner;
 - (c) certification work performed by a building certifier under the *Building Act 1975* in the certifier's professional practice;
 - (d) work performed by a registered professional engineer under the *Professional Engineers Act 2002* in performing a professional engineering service under that Act;
 - (e) electrical work under the *Electrical Safety Act 2002* relating to a fire or smoke detection system, heat or smoke alarm or another alarm system or emergency warning and communication system;
 - (f) work performed by a local government or the State.

Amendment agreed to.

Clauses 111 to 115, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clauses—



Mr de BRENNI (3.08 pm): I move the following amendment—

51

After clause 115

Page 227, after line 7—

insert—

115A Amendment of s 35 (Imposition of conditions etc. on grant of licence)

- (1) Section 35(2) and (3)—
renumber as section 35(4) and (5)
- (2) Section 35—
insert—
 - (2) However, the commission may grant a licence subject to a condition that restricts the scope of work for the licence (a **restrictive condition**) only if—
 - (a) the licence is a new class of licence under section 42A(1)(a); and
 - (b) the commission is satisfied the applicant for the licence does not have adequate experience in all of the scope of work for the licence.

- (3) The restrictive condition must not restrict the scope of work for the licence to the extent the applicant for the licence has demonstrated experience in the scope of work to the satisfaction of the commission.

115B Amendment of s 36 (Subsequent imposition of conditions etc.)

- (1) Section 36(4)—
omit.
- (2) Section 36(5), 'or varying'—
omit.
- (3) Section 36(5), 'or vary'—
omit.

115C Insertion of new s 36A

After section 36—

insert—

36A Vary or revoke conditions

- (1) The commission may, by notice given to a licensee, vary or revoke a condition imposed on the licensee's licence under section 35(1) or 36.
- (2) A notice varying a condition of a licence must inform the licensee of the licensee's right to apply for a review of the commission's decision to vary the condition.

115D Amendment of s 42A (Exemption from s 42 for up to 6 months)

- (1) Section 42A, heading—
omit, insert—

42A Temporary exemption from s 42 for up to 12 months for new classes of licence

- (2) Section 42A(2)—
omit, insert—
- (2) Section 42 does not apply to the relevant person for carrying out, or undertaking to carry out, relevant work for the first 6 months after the new class of licence is established.
- (3) Also, if the relevant person applies for the new class of licence within the 6-month period mentioned in subsection (2), section 42 does not apply in relation to the person for carrying out, or undertaking to carry out, relevant work until the application is decided or withdrawn.
- (4) To remove any doubt, it is declared that while section 42 does not apply to the relevant person under subsection (2) or (3)—
- (a) the person is not prohibited from carrying out, or undertaking to carry out, relevant work under section 42(1); and
- (b) the person is not stopped from being entitled to monetary or other consideration for carrying out relevant work under section 42(3).
- (5) If the application mentioned in subsection (3) is not decided or withdrawn within 12 months after the new class of licence is established, the application is taken to be refused at the end of the 12 months.

115E Amendment of s 42C (Unlawful carrying out of fire protection work)

Section 42C—

insert—

- (3A) Further, subsection (1) does not apply to a person who, immediately before the establishment of a new class of licence, registration or authorisation mentioned in subsection (1), was carrying out work within the scope of work for the new class of licence, registration or authorisation in a circumstance prescribed by regulation.

115F Amendment of s 42CA (Unlawful carrying out of mechanical services work)

Section 42CA—

insert—

- (3A) Further, subsection (1) does not apply to a person who, immediately before the establishment of a new class of licence, registration or authorisation mentioned in subsection (1), was carrying out work within the scope of work for the new class of licence, registration or authorisation in a circumstance prescribed by regulation.

Amendment agreed to.

Clauses 116 to 118, as read, agreed to.

Clause 119—



Mr de BRENNI (3.09 pm): I move the following amendment—

52 Clause 119 (Insertion of new ss 53BA and 53BB)

Page 232, line 1 to page 233, line 22—

omit.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 119 omitted.

Clause 120, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—



Mr de BRENNI (3.09 pm): I move the following amendment—

53 After clause 120

Page 233, after line 27—

insert—

120A Amendment of s 67AB (Meaning of tier 1 defective work and carry out tier 1 defective work)

Section 67AB(1)(b), examples for paragraph (b)(ii), from 'a fire protection' to 'the system'—

omit, insert—

fire protection equipment that does not meet the requirements of the Building Code of Australia for the equipment

Amendment agreed to.

Clauses 121 to 123, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—



Mr de BRENNI (3.10 pm): I move the following amendment—

54 After clause 123

Page 234, after line 27—

insert—

123A Insertion of new s 115D

After section 115C—

insert—

115D Review of role of developers

- (1) The Minister must ensure a review is conducted of the role of developers in the building and construction industry.
- (2) The Minister must appoint a panel of not more than 4 appropriately qualified persons to conduct the review.
- (3) The Minister must give the panel directions or a terms of reference to guide the review.
- (4) The Minister must table in the Legislative Assembly a report on the outcome of the review as soon as practicable after the review is completed.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 124, as read, agreed to.

Clause 125—



Mr de BRENNI (3.10 pm): I move the following amendment—

55 Clause 125 (Amendment of sch 1 (Transitional and validating provisions))

Page 236, after line 8—

insert—

79A Validation of work—installation of fire collars

- (1) This section applies in relation to work that is the installation of a fire collar—
 - (a) that was carried out by the holder of a relevant licence before the relevant commencement; and
 - (b) to the extent the work would, if it were carried out by the holder on the relevant commencement, have been authorised for the holder's licence under an amended provision.
- (2) The holder is taken to have held a licence of the appropriate class for carrying out the work.

(3) In this section—

amended provisions means the following provisions of the *Queensland Building and Construction Commission Regulation 2018*, schedule 2, as in force on the relevant commencement—

- (a) part 18, section 2(2);
- (b) part 25, section 2(3)(b);
- (c) part 26, section 2(7);
- (d) part 30, section 2(2)(b);
- (e) part 36, section 2(2);
- (f) part 47, section 2(2);
- (g) part 48, section 2(2).

relevant commencement means the commencement of the *Queensland Building and Construction Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation 2019*, section 12.

Note—

The date of the relevant commencement is 13 December 2019.

relevant licence means a licence of any of the following classes—

- (a) plumbing and drainage;
- (b) the licence class of install and maintain for a special hazard suppression systems licence;
- (c) the following licence classes for a sprinkler and suppression systems (reticulated water-based) licence—
 - (i) install and maintain;
 - (ii) install and maintain—restricted to commercial or industrial type;
 - (iii) install and maintain—restricted to domestic or residential type;
- (d) the licence class of install and maintain—extra low voltage for a fire detection, alarm and warning systems licence;
- (e) gasfitting;
- (f) refrigeration, air conditioning and mechanical services including unlimited design;
- (g) refrigeration, air conditioning and mechanical services including limited design.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 125, as amended, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—



Mr de BRENNI (3.11 pm): I move the following amendment—

56

After clause 125

Page 237, after line 27—

insert—

125A Amendment of sch 1A (Exemptions from requirement to hold contractor's licence)

Schedule 1A, section 8—

omit.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 126—



Mr de BRENNI (3.11 pm): I move the following amendments—

57

Clause 126 (Amendment of sch 2 (Dictionary))

Page 237, line 29, 'definition'—

omit, insert—

definitions *fire protection system*, *fire protection work* and

58

Clause 126 (Amendment of sch 2 (Dictionary))

Page 238, after line 2—

insert—

fire protection equipment, for a building, means equipment for protecting all or part of the building from fire that consists of, or is a system comprised of, 1 or more of the following—

- (a) a portable firefighting appliance, including, for example, a wheeled fire-extinguisher, fire hose or portable fire-extinguisher;
- (b) a fire hydrant system, with or without a pump;

- (c) a fire hose reel system, with or without a pump;
- (d) a fire or smoke detection system, heat or smoke alarm or another alarm system or emergency warning and communication system;
- (e) a fire suppression system or fire sprinkler system, whether solid-based, liquid-based or gas-based;
- (f) a fire door, fire shutter or fire damper assembly;
- (g) a fire or smoke wall;
- (h) a fire collar;
- (i) a fire penetration joint or seal;
- (j) emergency lighting.

fire protection work see section 30CA.

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 126, as amended, agreed to.

Insertion of new heading—



Mr de BRENNI (3.11 pm): I move the following amendment—

59 Part 6, division 3, heading (Amendments commencing on 1 July 2020)

Page 238, lines 22 and 23—

omit, insert—

Division 3 Auditing amendments

Amendment agreed to.

Clauses 127 to 133, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new heading—



Mr de BRENNI (3.11 pm): I move the following amendment—

60 Part 6, division 4, heading (Amendments commencing by proclamation)

Page 240, lines 19 and 20—

omit, insert—

Division 4 Amendments about excluded individuals

Amendment agreed to.

Clauses 134 to 153, as read, agreed to.

Schedule 1—



Mr de BRENNI (3.12 pm): I move the following amendments—

61 Schedule 1 (Acts amended)

Page 252, lines 3 and 4—

omit, insert—

Part 1 Miscellaneous amendments

62 Schedule 1 (Acts amended)

Page 254, after line 13—

insert—

7A Section 35H, heading, 'heath'—

omit, insert—

health

63 Schedule 1 (Acts amended)

Page 255, lines 5 and 6—

omit, insert—

Part 2 Amendments about certificates of classification and alternative solutions

Amendments agreed to.

Schedule 1, as amended, agreed to.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stewart): The House will now consider postponed clause 2.

Clause 2—



Mr HART (3.12 pm): This clause takes away any dates that are in the bill which means that the bill becomes law at proclamation. Proclamation is for the minister to decide and not for the parliament to decide. I would like an explanation from the minister as to why these dates have been removed. There was a regulation circulated when the bill was first put in place. That regulation stated some dates. Those dates have been pushed back by six months. That is only contained in the minister's speech and not in the legislation that is being considered by this House.

It should be the right of all members of parliament to listen to set dates and for the industry to understand when these things will actually come into force so that they can plan for it. I acknowledge that they have quite a while, in fact until 1 July 2023, before project bank accounts are fully implemented, but this should be in the bill and it should not have taken eight years for this to come to the parliament. I would like an explanation from the minister as to why this is by proclamation rather than set dates.

Mr de BRENNI: I thank the member for Burleigh for the question. I go back to my commentary in my second reading speech where I outlined the words in the letter from, among others, the Master Electricians. I will reflect on those again. It says, as you are aware, the very first meeting of the Master Electricians Association 83 years ago assessed the issue of getting paid for work which has been undertaken. There has been a cultural problem in the Australian construction industry that has been progressively getting worse, but it is not a new feature. It has existed for decades. It had become the norm that late payment was used as an instrument of control over subcontractors, where non-payment was used as a method of extracting compliance or extracting agreement for other conditions that were unfair, and it has existed for a very long time. Resolving the cultural issues, unpacking the legal parameters and the complex contractual environment that exists in the construction industry, cannot be done overnight.

In late 2015, I think it was in December, the Palaszczuk government embarked on a considered review of project bank accounts and their operability in Queensland. It was not until 2017 that we started to introduce project bank account legislation. To provide an opportunity to assess and evaluate its effectiveness, we imposed it on the government as a principal first. That approach was an approach that was adopted not just by our government, but it was an approach that was adopted by industry as a way of identifying the impact and properly observing the framework to identify whether it continued to work. We did that in an environment of significant activity around construction companies shutting down their businesses and leaving subcontractors unpaid.

There were calls at that time from the opposition to speed it up and slow it down. Again I am not sure which one they wanted. We are having that conversation again today. The Palaszczuk government has stayed the course. Our objective remains, and has always been, to ensure that tradies get paid on time, in full, every time. If we are going to get there as a state, if we are going to continue to lead the nation, if we are going to continue to implement this framework which has been recommended by the national Review of Security of Payment Laws and, as I mentioned before, is being emulated by the Western Australian government and others and has been heralded by subcontractors as the most significant step towards security of payment, then we have to do that in a careful, measured and considered way. That is why we will continue the phased introduction.

The phased introduction serves a number of purposes: it allows us to perfect the system over time; it allows licensees to develop their skills and knowledge around the framework; and it allows for the finance sector, particularly the banks, to establish their software products and their trust account instruments to support the implementation of the framework. Importantly, as well, it allows for the impact of COVID-19, and its impact on the construction industry in particular, to be taken into consideration when we turn on each of these phases.

Our commitment is from 1 March next year to apply the trust account framework to government building contracts over \$1 million and then from 1 July 2021 to expand to government and hospital and health services and construction contracts valued at \$1 million or more. We will introduce the new framework right across the sector and then expand its application from 1 July 2021.

We do not know what position the Australian economy will be in because of COVID. The approach by proclamation is the ordinary approach for implementing a phased introduction of legislative reform. Earlier in the year we took the unusual step of outlining some proposed dates in regulation. It is just as well that we took that approach, because doing it that way and not having it imposed in legislation has allowed us the agility to set a new implementation time frame that the industry tells us is reasonable and achievable as a result of the global pandemic. That is why we have taken the approach

of delaying the full introduction only by six months, introducing an additional step and also allowing some extra time for the majority of the sector to become prepared, get through the global pandemic and get back to business as soon as they possibly can.

I move the following amendment—

1 Clause 2 (Commencement)

Page 20, lines 8 to 15—

omit, insert—

- (1) Sections 115D and 115F are taken to have commenced on 1 January 2020.
- (2) The following provisions commence on a day to be fixed by proclamation—
 - (a) parts 2 to 5;
 - (b) part 6, divisions 2 (other than sections 115A to 115F and section 125), 3 and 4;
 - (c) part 9;
 - (d) schedule 1.
- (3) Also, section 125, to the extent it inserts new sections 80 to 82, commences on a day to be fixed by proclamation.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 2, as amended, agreed to.

Third Reading



Hon. MC de BRENNI (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works, Minister for Digital Technology and Minister for Sport) (3.21 pm): I move—

That the bill, as amended, be now read a third time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Long Title



Hon. MC de BRENNI (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works, Minister for Digital Technology and Minister for Sport) (3.21 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.

CORRECTIVE SERVICES AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 17 March (see p. 623).

Second Reading



Hon. MT RYAN (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services) (3.21 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I take this opportunity to thank the committee for their consideration of this bill and for their report. I note the committee made one recommendation, which is that the bill be passed. I also thank key stakeholders for their valued feedback and for taking the time to meet with me and officers from my department on important aspects of this bill. By working together we are best placed to achieve outcomes that are in everyone's best interests and, importantly, in the interests of community safety. I particularly note feedback from the Queensland Homicide Victims' Support Group and thank the CEO, Brett Thompson, for taking the time to discuss a number of community safety aspects of the bill.

This government will always put community safety first. Indeed, examples of amendments to boost safety and security in this bill include a proposal to increase the maximum penalty for serious assaults on corrective services officers and a new offence prohibiting staff from having intimate

relationships with offenders. This amendment addresses the corruption risk of inappropriate relationships identified during Taskforce Flaxton hearings conducted by the Crime and Corruption Commission. It recognises the seriousness of the corruption risk associated with inappropriate relationships.

Firstly, I will turn to the amendment to increase the maximum penalty for serious assaults on corrective services officers. This government has zero tolerance for violence. Queensland Corrective Services manages people with some of the most complex needs in the community. The nature of the correctional environment means incidents can and do occur and that sometimes officers need to put themselves in situations that can be dangerous. Should this happen, highly trained staff swiftly respond to control the situation and restore the security and good order of the correctional centre. Staff in Queensland Corrective Services are trained in de-escalation techniques, control and restraint, weapons and first aid. They are supported by an array of safety and security equipment, including body worn cameras, tactical and riot gear, chemical agents and other weapons. This amendment will ensure that, in circumstances where a prisoner commits a serious assault, they will face a maximum penalty of 14 years. This maximum penalty will send a strong message to prisoners who are intent on assaulting a custodial officer that they will face tougher consequences for their actions.

I take this opportunity to thank the staff of Queensland Corrective Services who are working on the front line of community safety for the actions they take day in and day out to protect our community. I also acknowledge the Together union for working with the government to make this important change to the Criminal Code. I acknowledge the continual and strong advocacy of the member for Maryborough. His dogged determination and support for corrective services officers is to be commended. This amendment delivers a strong deterrent and again sends a strong message that this behaviour is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

I propose to move amendments during the consideration in detail stage of the bill that include a change to the timing of the commencement of amendments relating to the Parole Board Queensland, relocating the intimate relationships provisions of the bill, removing the clause regarding section 110A and trespass provisions under the Summary Offences Act 2005. Additionally, the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy has outlined to me the importance of fixing an oversight created by recently commenced amendments to the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004. To address that oversight, I will move amendments on Minister Lynham's behalf.

I will also move amendments to the Public Health Act 2005 and the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011. These amendments will support the government's ongoing response to COVID-19 by providing stronger penalties for persons who contravene public health directions, creating a new statutory position of Deputy Chief Health Officer and enabling Queensland's contract tracing officers to assist efforts in other states and territories to contain the spread of COVID-19. I table the supplementary explanatory notes and statement of capability for these amendments.

Tabled paper: Corrective Services and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2020, explanatory notes to Hon. Mark Ryan's amendments [\[1177\]](#).

Tabled paper: Corrective Services and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2020, statement of compatibility with human rights contained in Hon. Mark Ryan's amendments [\[1178\]](#).

The COVID-19 health pandemic has affected the operations of this bill. Two measures in the bill relating to the Parole Board Queensland were brought forward in the COVID-19 emergency response regulations. These two measures were required to respond to a significant increase in parole applications as a result of the pandemic. As all COVID-19 amendments are temporary, it is proposed to keep these amendments in the bill as originally intended to permanently support the improved operations of the Parole Board Queensland.

I propose relocating the intimate relationships offence to make it clear, as stated in the explanatory notes, that the offence applies to any staff member and not just those working in corrective services facilities. Further, I intend to remove clause 15 of the bill because, put simply, as governments around the world work towards response to and recovery from the COVID-19 health pandemic, it is not considered a priority of this government.

I intend to move amendments to address a gap in the trespass provisions of the Summary Offences Act. Part 2 of the Summary Offences Act outlines a number of offences that prohibit a person or persons from unlawfully entering or remaining on a place used for a business purpose. The existing offence provisions do not prevent authorised industrial officers from entering workplaces in accordance with the terms of their appointment, but they do not allow for those officers to remain at the location. The proposed amendments remedy this gap. The proposed amendments also clarify that the trespass

offences do not prevent workplace health and safety entry permit holders from entering and remaining in a workplace in accordance with their appointment. This amendment updates the definition of 'authorised industrial officer' under the act to reflect terminology used in other legislation.

In relation to the amendments to the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004, the amendment I will move today will restore the ability of the chief executive who administers the general resources functions under the act to appoint authorised officers. Recent amendments made by the Resources Safety and Health Queensland Act 2020 inadvertently removed those powers and provided them exclusively to the CEO of Resources Safety and Health Queensland, a newly established statutory body. I understand it is critical that the chief executive administering the general resources function of the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004 is able to appoint authorised officers to carry out those functions while the CEO of Resources Safety and Health Queensland appoints authorised officers to carry out safety and health related functions.

I will move amendments to the Public Health Act and the Hospital and Health Boards Act to support the government's ongoing response to COVID-19. Since the commencement of the COVID-19 emergency, the Chief Health Officer's workload has been extraordinary. The Chief Health Officer has made over 60 public health directions, considered many individual requests for exemptions to the public health directions, approved plans and checklists and declared numerous COVID hotspots.

Amendments to the Public Health Act and the Hospital and Health Boards Act will create the position of Deputy Chief Health Officer and will allow the Chief Health Officer to delegate functions to her deputy and to other appropriately qualified public officers. Not all of the Chief Health Officer's powers will be delegable. Only the Chief Health Officer will be able to issue public health directions. However, the Chief Health Officer will be able to delegate their functions including those that arise under a public health direction, such as granting exemptions, approving COVID-19 plans and checklists, and declaring COVID-19 hotspots.

Amendments to the Public Health Act will increase the penalties for those individuals who breach a public health directive to 100 penalty units or six months imprisonment. The increase in penalty will be a strong deterrent and protect Queenslanders from the public health risk posed by persons who breach public health directions. The term of imprisonment is consistent with the approach taken in other states and territories. Further, the amendments will authorise contact tracing officers to exercise their functions outside Queensland, or in relation to persons outside Queensland, so that they may assist other jurisdictions, such as Victoria, to prevent or minimise the transmission of a notifiable condition.

I will now provide an overview of the remainder of the bill. This bill supports the government's key objective—keep communities safe in *Advancing Queensland's priorities: our future state*. The bill responds to the immediate risks identified in the Crime and Corruption Commission's Taskforce Flaxton report, supports the government's implementation of recommendations from the Queensland Parole System Review and enhances operational efficiencies for Queensland Corrective Services and the Parole Board Queensland.

In addition to these important corrective services amendments, the bill introduces two significant policies associated with unregistered firearms and the possession and use of replica firearms. The bill also includes amendments to the Racing Integrity Act 2016 to provide certainty that the information that the Racing Integrity Commission and a relevant agency may share is not limited to information about racing bookmakers and associates. Rather, the information has a broader application in fulfilling the functions of the commission and the relevant agencies.

This bill pays particular attention to ensuring the measures included are compatible with the new Human Rights Act 2019 and fundamental legislative principles. These are important safeguards that ensure individual rights and liberties are protected and that any limitations are strictly necessary.

The bill brings into effect a permanent, ongoing firearms amnesty for Queensland. It supports an agreement of the Ministerial Council for Police and Emergency Management ministers to establish a permanent nationwide firearms amnesty by late 2020. The amnesty will allow any firearms or prescribed items to be handed in to a police station or an approved licensed dealer without fear of prosecution. This is all about keeping Queensland safe.

The bill also makes amendments in relation to replica firearms, including gel blasters, that look like real firearms. This is about creating a safe framework that protects the community, supports small businesses and allows people to continue to safely enjoy a popular pastime. While the majority of gel blaster owners behave responsibly and do the right thing, in recent times there has been a spate of incidents involving the misuse of gel blasters. This government asked the Police Commissioner to look into what steps could be taken to enhance community safety, and the police recommended that we

need to remind people who transport a replica firearm, or a gel blaster that looks like a real firearm, that it should be carried in a suitable bag or case away from public view; that gel blasters that look like real firearms and replica firearms should be kept safely secured when not in use; and, finally, that owners of gel blasters that look like real firearms and replica firearms should have a reasonable excuse for their possession, such as being a member of a gel blaster club and/or taking part in club activities.

This bill paves the way for a sensible set of regulations that support a greater level of community safety, support small businesses and allow people to continue to safely enjoy a popular pastime. The Weapons Act will be amended to give support to a new Queensland Police Service policy which will be fully introduced through regulatory change to address the possession of replica firearms. All replicas of firearms, including deactivated category A, B and C firearms, will be captured by this policy.

The amendments in the bill will clarify when a person will have a reasonable excuse to possess a replica firearm. For instance, a person can have a gel blaster if they are taking part in club activities. The bill makes it clear that it is a reasonable excuse for a member of an association that carries out recreational activities to possess a replica to take part in those recreational activities. The bill also makes it clear that a collector with a collector's item can have a replica as part of their collection.

While the bill makes it clear that these two specific circumstances are a reasonable excuse to possess a replica firearm, it puts no limits on what other circumstances may also be considered a reasonable excuse. For example, in most circumstances it would be considered a reasonable excuse for an RSL to have possession of a deactivated category A, B or C firearm as part of the history and memorabilia of that RSL. Likewise, an active member of an historical re-enactment association who possesses a replica firearm for use as part of re-enactment activities would also be considered to have a reasonable excuse. In addition, authorised officers in the Queensland Police Service will have the ability to approve an alternative means of storage if it is as least as secure as otherwise required by legislation. This may cater for when such items are stored by being mounted to a wall.

The Queensland Police Service has worked closely with key stakeholders including clubs, associations and retailers in the development of this policy position. There has been extensive consultation and meetings with key stakeholders. Queenslanders and those stakeholders were invited to have their say on a government website as well, and I thank people for taking part in that survey. Around 4,000 people took part, and their feedback has helped form these amendments. Further, the Queensland Police Service has implemented the Stop and Think awareness campaign to enhance community safety.

I will now turn to the corrective services amendments included in this bill. The Corrective Services Act 2006 sets out the authority for Queensland Corrective Services to humanely contain, supervise and rehabilitate almost 30,000 prisoners and offenders across Queensland. This operation is complex, spanning across 11 high-security and six low-security correctional centres, 13 work camps, 36 community corrections district offices and more than 150 reporting centres right across our great state.

Since mid-2016, review and reform of Queensland's correctional system has been a significant focus to ensure that the delivery of corrective services remains strategic, innovative and evidence based. A key review guiding the development of this bill is Taskforce Flaxton. The Crime and Corruption Commission's Taskforce Flaxton report made 33 recommendations to reform Queensland's anti-corruption framework for correctional centres, improve oversight mechanisms and safety, increase accountability and raise performance standards. This government supported all 33 recommendations and, as part of our response, we are progressing the implementation of amendments in this bill. This highlights the government's commitment to ensuring all departments act with the highest standards of integrity, ethics, accountability and transparency.

Another key review that has driven reform elements included in this bill is the review of the Queensland parole system. The Queensland Parole System Review, the Sofronoff review, made 91 recommendations, including amendments relating to the Corrective Services Act. This review resulted in the government's \$265 million commitment to implement a comprehensive overhaul of Queensland's parole system. This bill makes amendments to further the government's implementation of the review's recommendations.

Finally, to complement the amendments recommended by these reviews, a number of amendments have been requested by the Parole Board Queensland. With the independent Parole Board Queensland in operation for two years, it is timely to progress amendments that will increase efficiency, as well as the operation of the no-body no-parole laws. The bill also makes amendments to support the safe, efficient and effective operations of Queensland Corrective Services, including the repeal of outdated provisions that are no longer applicable.

In relation to the amendments that respond to the recommendations of the Taskforce Flaxton report, this bill introduces alcohol and drug testing for corrective services officers or recruits in response to recommendation 18 of the review. The testing aims to identify staff with substance abuse problems, as those under the influence are more likely to engage in problematic decision-making and behaviour. This is a corruption risk for Queensland Corrective Services outlined by Taskforce Flaxton.

The bill also provides the authority to require staff to submit to a search at a corrective services facility before they enter or at any time. This amendment responds to recommendation 20 of the Taskforce Flaxton report and is aimed at limiting opportunities for contraband to be introduced into corrective services facilities. To complement this amendment, definitions of general and scanning searches in the act will also be expanded to allow for additional search methods such as using an lonscan to detect traces on a person's clothing. This will apply to searches of staff and other visitors and is further aimed at preventing contraband. Any introduction of contraband such as illicit drugs puts staff and prisoners at risk. In response to recommendation 22 of the Taskforce Flaxton report, this bill provides a clear authority for Queensland Corrective Services to destroy forfeited things or contraband, where appropriate. Sound seizure and disposal practices reduces the risk that seized items can be diverted and recirculated back into the correctional environment.

In response to recommendation 30 of the report, the bill authorises the appointment, role and function of Queensland Corrective Services's Professional Standards and Governance Command inspectors to investigate misconduct or corrupt conduct alleged against staff. However, this amendment will not take away external referral pathways, including to the Queensland Police Service or the Crime and Corruption Commission.

In response to recommendation 32 of the report, the bill provides Queensland Corrective Services with a discretion to refer matters to police that could be dealt with either as an offence or as a breach of discipline. Importantly, this discretion will not apply to sexual offences or offences with a maximum penalty of 14 years or more, which must be referred to the Commissioner of Police. These amendments are only the first step and will be supported by more detailed regulation and operating procedures to ensure consistent operation across all corrective services facilities.

Importantly, to reflect community expectations and enhance community and correctional environment safety, this bill includes three new offences. As previously outlined, this bill includes an offence prohibiting a staff member from having an intimate relationship with an offender, with a maximum penalty of 100 penalty units or three years in prison. Also included is an offence which prohibits a parolee or offender required to wear an electronic monitoring device from removing or tampering with that device, with a further penalty of up to 30 penalty units or three months imprisonment. There is also an offence prohibiting a person from unlawfully interfering with a Queensland Corrective Services staff alcohol or drug test sample, with a maximum penalty of 100 penalty units.

I will now address some additional amendments included in this bill that will enhance corrective services operations and safety. The bill includes amendments to the Corrective Services Act to ensure Queensland's corrective services legislation is responsive and flexible and supports staff, prisoner, offender and community safety. The bill will provide flexibility in the management of prisoners on maximum security orders by allowing, where appropriate, alternate accommodation outside a maximum security unit. The bill also clarifies these orders can be put on hold while a prisoner is at an authorised mental health service.

The bill expands late discharge provisions to released prisoners. This will allow a prisoner released to parole to request to temporarily stay at a corrective services facility—for example, where it is late in the day and there is no transport or where there is a natural disaster. The bill provides clarity on the authority of a corrective services officer to execute a warrant and arrest a prisoner unlawfully at large such as where a parole order has been suspended or cancelled. The bill provides the express authority for the chief executive to approve or refuse deposits into a prisoner's trust account. This will allow appropriate monitoring and response to suspicious payments.

The bill will clarify and expand the definition of a law enforcement agency to enable criminal justice agencies to perform their function as established in law. This will support ongoing interagency cooperation with agencies such as the Australian Border Force by streamlining visiting and interview abilities in Queensland's corrective services facilities.

I will now address the proposed amendments that relate to the Queensland Parole System Review and the Parole Board Queensland. This bill supports several amendments that respond to key recommendations of the Queensland Parole System Review. With regard to the recommendation in relation to the eligibility of prisoners to transfer to low security prison facilities, the Queensland

Corrective Services commissioner has advised that certain prisoners will be restricted and will not be eligible to be placed in low security facilities. Indeed, the government's position was made very clear at the time of the Queensland Parole System Review—the Sofronoff reforms—that the government did not accept that recommendation of the Sofronoff review.

In response to recommendation 85 of the review, this bill will allow persons registered on the victims register to apply for an extension to the time limit of 21 days for submissions. This will ensure a greater opportunity for victims to be involved in the parole process by providing additional time for them to make a considered submission. I thank the Queensland Homicide Victims' Support Group for their feedback in relation to this amendment.

In support of recommendations 33 and 59 of the review, this bill will provide a framework to enable children to establish and maintain relationships with a parent who is incarcerated. This framework will apply to certain prisoners, and certain prisoners only, and will always prioritise community safety.

In support of recommendation 81 of the review, this bill provides that a person on the victims register will be notified of a prisoner's discharge or release as soon as practicable after Queensland Corrective Services is made aware. This bill also includes several amendments to enhance the operation of the Parole Board Queensland, including in its consideration of no-body no-parole matters. The no-body no-parole process will be strengthened to ensure a quorum of five members will hear all no-body no-parole applications and, further, to clarify the relevant transcripts that must be considered in the determination of any prisoner's cooperation in locating a victim's remains. The Parole Board Queensland's general operations will also be enhanced by streamlined quorum requirements for less complex matters and longer-term acting appointments.

In relation to parole, this bill includes amendments to the suspension and cancellation of parole orders, including allowing the board to determine when a reconsidered decision to suspend or cancel a parole order takes effect. This will ensure that there is time to notify any victim and proper consideration can be given to release arrangements such as travel and accommodation. It also ensures the board can prioritise immediate suspension requests and decisions. This will ensure those matters that present risks to community safety are prioritised over others. It further enables the board to also cancel a parole order following a request by Queensland Corrective Services for an immediate suspension. This will streamline the decision-making process, eliminating the need for a second decision on cancelling a parole order, if the information leading to a suspension would also warrant cancellation.


I now turn to the amendments relating to the Racing Integrity Commission and information sharing. This bill includes amendments to the Racing Integrity Act 2016 to relocate section 98A, which provides that the commission may enter into information sharing arrangements with relevant agencies to assist the parties to perform their functions. Section 98A will be relocated to a new chapter 2, part 6A headed 'Information sharing' and will be renumbered as section 53A. This will clarify that the information that may be shared has a broader application in fulfilling the functions of the parties which is provided for in the provisions, and is not restricted to information about racing bookmakers and associates. The bill also provides for consequential amendments to section 3A of the Racing Integrity Regulation 2016 to update the references from section 98A to section 53A.

The amendments proposed in this bill represent a significant step in the government's response to recent reviews into Queensland's correctional system. Further, these amendments relating to criminal justice legislation in Queensland will make our communities safer. Of course, nothing is more important than that. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Ryan, adjourned.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Coronavirus, JobKeeper

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (3.48 pm): I give notice that I will move—

That this House:

1. notes:

- (a) the dramatic impact of COVID-19 on Australia's economy and the critical role of economic support measures including the federal government's JobKeeper program;

- (b) the comments of economists including Reserve Bank Governor, Dr Philip Lowe, that, 'it's very important that we don't withdraw the fiscal stimulus too early';
 - (c) that nearly 900,000 Australian businesses and organisations and 3.3 million workers are at risk if JobKeeper is withdrawn too early;
 - (d) that there are more workers on JobKeeper wage subsidies in Cairns than anywhere else in Queensland, and that six of the 10 areas with the most businesses signing up to JobKeeper are on the Gold Coast;
 - (e) the administrative blunder which led to the federal government spending \$60 billion less than initially announced on the JobKeeper program;
 - (f) that the JobKeeper program as currently administered fails to include arts workers, casuals employed for less than 12 months, local governments, temporary migrants, partnerships with two genuinely active participants, and universities, amongst others; and
2. calls on the Morrison federal government to extend JobKeeper payments to workers not currently covered by the program; and
 3. calls on the Morrison federal government to extend the JobKeeper program beyond the current six-month period, rather than ceasing this much needed support to workers and businesses on 27 September, as currently proposed.

MOTIONS

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders



Hon. YM D'ATH (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (3.50 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That, notwithstanding anything contained in standing and sessional orders, the Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure and Planning be permitted to immediately move the motion of which the Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure and Planning has given notice earlier today, with the following time limits to apply—

- three minutes for all members; and
- total members before question put—20.

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

AYES, 48:

ALP, 43—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Healy, Hinchliffe, Howard, Jones, Kelly, King, Linard, Lui, Lynham, Madden, McCallum, McMahon, McMillan, Miles, Mullen, B. O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pease, Power, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Stewart, Trad, Whiting.

KAP, 3—Dametto, Katter, Knuth.

PHON, 1—Andrew.

Ind, 1—Bolton.

NOES, 34:

LNP, 34—Batt, Bennett, Boothman, Crandon, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Gerber, Hart, Hunt, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McArdle, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O'Connor, Perrett, Powell, Purdie, Robinson, Rowan, Simpson, Sorensen, Stevens, Watts, Wilson.

Pairs: Lauga, Bleijie; Mellish, Weir; C. O'Rourke, Bates; Pegg, Boyce.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Coronavirus, JobKeeper



Hon. CR DICK (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (3.57 pm): I move—

That this House:

1. notes:
 - (a) the dramatic impact of COVID-19 on Australia's economy and the critical role of economic support measures including the federal government's JobKeeper program;
 - (b) the comments of economists including Reserve Bank Governor, Dr Philip Lowe, that, 'it's very important that we don't withdraw the fiscal stimulus too early';
 - (c) that nearly 900,000 Australian businesses and organisations and 3.3 million workers are at risk if JobKeeper is withdrawn too early;
 - (d) that there are more workers on JobKeeper wage subsidies in Cairns than anywhere else in Queensland, and that six of the 10 areas with the most businesses signing up to JobKeeper are on the Gold Coast;

- (e) the administrative blunder which led to the federal government spending \$60 billion less than initially announced on the JobKeeper program;
 - (f) that the JobKeeper program as currently administered fails to include arts workers, casuals employed for less than 12 months, local governments, temporary migrants, partnerships with two genuinely active participants, and universities, amongst others; and
2. calls on the Morrison federal government to extend JobKeeper payments to workers not currently covered by the program; and
 3. calls on the Morrison federal government to extend the JobKeeper program beyond the current six-month period, rather than ceasing this much needed support to workers and businesses on 27 September, as currently proposed.

When the year 2020 began, no-one could have foreseen the health and economic tornado that was about to tear through every society and every economy on the planet. There are now in excess of 13 million cases of COVID-19 worldwide, including more than 10,000 in Australia. The recent outbreak in Victoria and the lockdown that has been reimposed in that state provide a stark reminder of the challenges we still confront.

National cabinet has demonstrated what can be achieved when governments come together in a bipartisan way in the national interest. I commend the Commonwealth government for their decision to introduce JobKeeper to keep many workers attached to businesses. Unfortunately, hundreds of thousands of workers in Australia were not covered by JobKeeper, and they are noted in the motion. They were left abandoned—abandoned—by the Morrison coalition government.

The Commonwealth government has announced its intention to end the JobKeeper program in September, although there were some public comments in the media that it will be extended. COVID-19 continues to inflict a heavy toll on small businesses and their staff. They confront not only the daily challenges of restrictive trade but also the looming cliff that the end of JobKeeper represents. In Queensland 185,745 companies applied for the JobKeeper program in the three months from April to June. They, together with the hundreds of thousands of workers they employ, are counting on that funding to keep the doors open.


Queenslanders who have built their businesses through their own initiative, who have prided themselves on their self-reliance, now find themselves at risk of being overwhelmed by events which they did not initiate and over which they have no control. Without concerted action from all governments but most particularly the Commonwealth—the Morrison government—many well-run businesses will be swept away. The Morrison government now faces a stark choice: retain the safety rail at the top of the cliff or park the ambulance at the bottom.

There can be no longer any reasonable argument about the vital role of government in the economic reality we confront. Workers and businesses do not have the time for an ideological debate about whether governments could continue to intervene: they must. The cost of removing that support would be the long-term damage wrought on our economy by more businesses failing and more workers joining the long-term unemployed.

The issue now is whether the Morrison government holds firm to the safety net or stands aside and watches the carnage unfold. This is a motion that deserves clear, unequivocal and universal support from all members of the parliament. This is a moment for us to come together on behalf of all of those Queenslanders who look to us to stand up for them, to advocate on their behalf, to offer some hope against the rising tide of their anxiety.

This motion calls on the House to urge the Prime Minister to stay his hand, to continue to marry good policy with compassion and empathy, to expand that compassion and empathy to others, to understand the enormous challenges still confronting small businesses and the Queenslanders they employ, to do the right thing and to avert the looming September catastrophe and extend the JobKeeper program. I commend the motion to the House.

(Time expired)

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (4.00 pm): In addressing this motion I must again point out, as we seem to be doing just about each and every sitting week now, the absolute lunacy of having a business program motion on a Tuesday morning that sets out that we are limited in our debate on a range of bills. The cognate transport debate yesterday is an example. We did not even get through half of the speaking list before the bills were guillotined. Yet here we can suddenly find an hour for the Treasurer to spruik—

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Glass House, I do not see anywhere in the motion where it talks about the business program or the workings of the House. You will need to come back to the motion and the contents of the motion.

Mr POWELL: As I was just saying, we can somehow find an hour for the Treasurer to speak on a motion that—

Mr SPEAKER: Member, you need to speak to the motion. You are speaking about finding time to do the motion. I do not want to debate the matter with you. The motion itself will have to be the subject of your contribution.

Mr POWELL: Thank God for the Morrison federal government, which had the foresight to put in place JobKeeper and JobSeeker programs so early in the piece when COVID struck. The Prime Minister and his team put in place a safety net for all of those workers who suddenly found themselves without work.

Mr Furner interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The minister for agriculture will cease his interjections.

Mr POWELL: Compare that to the record of those opposite in this economic crisis, who had to be dragged kicking and screaming to deliver the small business grant program—the last jurisdiction to do so. And when they did, they only put \$100 million into it so that, as small businesses throughout this state went off to find the paperwork required to meet the requirements of that grant program, they found that it closed 72 hours after it opened. It was completely and utterly oversubscribed because it was completely and utterly underfunded. Compare that instead to what the Morrison federal government has done with their economic stimulation through JobKeeper, JobSeeker and a range of other programs.


Government members interjected.

Mr POWELL: I hear those on the other side of the chamber harping on, but the reality is they have been caught out. They have been shown to be the laziest, slowest and most inept responders to the economic crisis we are facing. Why is that? The reality is we were already in an economic disaster zone before COVID even hit.

Ms Enoch interjected.

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

Mr POWELL: We had the highest unemployment rate, the lowest business confidence and the highest level of bankruptcies of any jurisdiction, and that was even before COVID. They are desperate on the other side. Why? Because they know their economic mismanagement is what is costing Queenslanders and Queensland employees. It is not the Morrison government because, heaven forbid, had they not been there Queensland would have been down the tubes.

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (4.03 pm): I rise to support the motion put forward by the Treasurer. COVID ripped through all of our communities and businesses and we are a long way from recovery. Communities like mine up and down the Queensland coast are relying on the Queensland Palaszczuk government's unite and recover packages and plans. They are also calling on federal government support to get us all post COVID in reasonable economic shape.

Yesterday, the Mackay *Daily Mercury* reported on data from the Australian Treasury and ATO that reflected on the cessation of JobKeeper and the effect that would have on the 4740 postcode. This includes the electorate of Mackay and surrounding suburbs. The eye-watering data shows that 6,426 locals may be forced into unemployment; up to 1,691 businesses may be forced to close; and a staggering \$9,638,700 could be lost from the local economy each fortnight.


In my region, locals want to be in work. We want our businesses to open up, stay open and survive and thrive. Like all other Queenslanders, locals in my region want to have the dignity of supporting themselves and contributing to their community through work. I have spoken to many businesses in my community, and they are relying on JobKeeper to keep their doors open and their well-trained staff employed. To source new staff once they get back up and running will be an additional financial burden on their business. Staff who are trained and understand the business are a value to any business.

Darren Smith, general manager of the Magpies Sporting Club in Mackay, supports many affiliated junior and senior teams across various sports. He manages their events, bistro and restaurants. The club supports 66 staff to run club facilities. This equates to 66 local families in work, including mums, dads, young people with their first start in life and retired people. They are working as cleaners, waitstaff, cooks, security, front desk and all the jobs that keep their club functioning. The club opened when there

were only 10 patrons. They were losing money, but they know how important the emotional networking their club provides is. They have continued to keep their club in operation. They have lost over \$1 million because of COVID. The club is relying on \$48,000 each week in JobKeeper payments to support their staff, and this supports all of those individuals.

Scott and Casey Cronin, owners of Fiesta Rentals, a party hire equipment service in Mackay, rely on JobKeeper to keep their three staff going. They lost their casuals. They need to keep their staff because, when it comes to putting up marquees, they want to make sure they stay up. They need to make sure that these payments stay in place—


(Time expired)

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (4.06 pm): Thank God for the Scott Morrison LNP government in Canberra, which is doing the heavy lifting with regard to the economic impact of COVID. The Queensland Labor government was very late to the party with regard to multiple areas of help, particularly for small business. As I understand it, they were the last state to come to the party with any measure of small business assistance that the public were asking for. We have seen a small business program that has been appallingly handled by this Labor government. I still have small businesses who say to me that they got nothing from this government. Even though they had viable businesses, they do not employ people so they are not entitled to access the small business adaptation grants. Others tried to apply in the first round, but it crashed out and they were not able to get access. Now they find they are unlikely to get access in the next round as well.

It is interesting that we have a federal government that stepped up to the plate in a significant way with JobKeeper grants, which were significant in keeping hope alive and the opportunity to keep trading or to enter back into trading for many businesses. They also stepped up to the plate with regard to assistance for the HomeBuilder grant. What is this lazy, inept and completely useless Labor government doing? They are administering the federal funding. If you look online, you will find that it is expected that an online application form will be available in early August for the HomeBuilder grant—which is federal funding, as I understand it, but being administered by this lazy, useless and inept Labor government here in Queensland. That is just completely typical.

We see this lazy, inept and useless Labor government come in here and move this motion because they cannot organise the business of government. They use parliament like a plaything. There are permanent gags with respect to important legislation that we have never seen happen in 150 years of this parliament. This lazy and inept government, which does not want to be held accountable for its decisions, has gagged this parliament permanently with standing gags at the start of every sitting of parliament, but they can flip in here and move a motion at their whim.

We stand against this state Labor government and their ineptitude, but we stand with the federal LNP government in the work that they have been doing with JobKeeper and other important measures right throughout the regions. I mention the real concern about how slow it has been for this government to even pass on the federal government assistance through the building program.

 **Mr HEALY** (Cairns—ALP) (4.09 pm): I rise obviously to support the motion. The Cairns community has been one of the hardest hit by the COVID pandemic. Cairns tourism providers were among the first in Australia to feel the economic impact of this train wreck of a virus. The Palaszczuk government responded quickly and effectively to the COVID-19 crisis, especially in Cairns. It was in Cairns that the Palaszczuk government announced the first major response package launched by any Australian government or territory. Back on 18 February, the Palaszczuk government announced \$27.25 million in aid, including nearly \$5 million for the tropical far north and Gold Coast regions, a deferral of leases for businesses on the Cairns marina and a raft of fee waivers for fisheries, jetties, marinas and liquor licence holders.


The careful easing of restrictions by our government has thrown a lifeline to Cairns businesses as more Queenslanders have been encouraged to become tourists in their own backyard. Likewise, the careful reopening of borders as part of the Palaszczuk government's unite and recover strategy will provide a much needed shot in the arm for our community.

No region in Australia has been immune to the economic consequences of COVID-19. On top of the Palaszczuk government's measures to support the Cairns economy, one measure which has kept the Cairns unemployment rate from rising even higher is the federal government's JobKeeper program. More than 180,000 Queensland businesses have applied for JobKeeper. According to the federal

government data, Cairns has had the most JobKeeper applications amongst all postcodes in Queensland. More than 3,600 businesses in Cairns have applied for JobKeeper—a higher number than the 3,048 businesses in the CBD in Brisbane.

JobKeeper has played a critical role in keeping Cairns workers and businesses afloat. More than any other federal government measure, it is JobKeeper that has helped build a bridge to economic recovery. Of course the program does not go far enough as it excludes arts workers, short-term casuals, temporary migrants and other workers who underpin the Cairns economy. The program will not go far enough if it is withdrawn at the end of September, as the Morrison government has previously proposed. What makes the Morrison government's recalcitrance all the more difficult to swallow is the fact that they have spent \$60 billion less on the program than they said when it was announced.

The last thing Cairns businesses want to see is a second wave undoing the government's hard work and pushing businesses that are currently on life support over the edge. We call on the Morrison government to extend JobKeeper to include workers not presently covered and, crucially, to extend JobKeeper beyond the looming cliff at the end of September.

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (4.12 pm): The arrogance and hubris of the Treasurer at the current time is shown in this motion that we are debating about saving jobs through JobKeeper in the areas of Cairns and Barron River—but certainly not Mulgrave, Mr Speaker; I am sure it is not under threat whatsoever. JobKeeper is a wonderful Morrison initiative that has saved Australia's economic position. We had input from economists that \$263 billion has been put into the economy by this federal government, yet the Treasurer has come in to try to drag a few points out of it late on a Wednesday afternoon when he could have done it in his ministerial statement. He is desperate to get some JobKeeper money to save the seats of Cairns and Barron River at the election in three months time. It is funny that he is calling on the federal government. He is putting out the begging bowl, as Labor always do, for the federal government to save their hides.


Cairns has been affected, but this job denial program did not start with COVID. This job denial program started with Acland mine not getting the approval. Even Labor senators say that the Acland mine provides jobs for Queensland and we would not need JobKeeper. We had Adani and we had to drag them kicking and screaming over Adani because they would not go near it because of the power of the left faction—

Mr CRAWFORD: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance.

Mr SPEAKER: I will be the judge of relevance and I believe that the member is straying and coming back in equal amounts.

Mr STEVENS: I am talking about jobs and I will talk about jobs until I am blue in the face in this House because it is important for Queensland. JobKeeper will keep people in jobs. It has been demonstrated that the government have to rely on JobKeeper coming forward because they have not progressed Adani, as I mentioned before. This would put jobs in the Galilee Basin for Queenslanders. The people in the north know that, and that is why they are complaining about Cairns and Barron River. I assume the member for Barron River will be speaking shortly to try to save his job as well. I am sure he will plead with the federal government and Scott Morrison to save his bacon. Unfortunately, that is all this government know how to do—that is, cry to the federal government for funding—and this is another cry.

Scott Morrison has done a great job supporting our economy. As I said, they have spent \$263 billion to keep us all going along but it does not go on forever. It is my money, it is taxpayers' money, it is your money. At some stage, there will be a dropdown in support. What we see is a federal government responsibly supporting our communities right across Australia, including Queensland. That will continue, but we do not know how long that COVID is going to go for or that JobKeeper will have to keep going.


 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (4.16 pm): I rise to support the motion. North Queensland has been hit hard by COVID-19. Our government has responded quickly and effectively to the COVID-19 crisis, especially in North Queensland. Our government had the first major response of any state or territory back in February, with the initial \$27 million package that has now been boosted to nearly \$6 billion assisting Queenslanders through business grants and a range of other assistance. Since then, our government has provided the following in Townsville: \$42 million in loans supporting over 3,400 jobs; \$21 million in Works for Queensland projects, which the other side objects to all the time, which are supporting nearly 300 jobs; \$9 million in payroll tax refunds to 357 businesses like the Brothers Leagues Club in Thuringowa; and \$2 million in grants supporting 250 small businesses.

The federal government's JobKeeper has been an important lifeline. There have been 548 businesses in my electorate which have benefited from that, but it does not go far enough or cover enough workers. Unemployment in Townsville has increased as a result of COVID. JobKeeper does not cover short-term casuals, temporary migrants or other workers crucial to the North Queensland economy, and only two days ago they pulled JobKeeper from childcare workers.

Across Australia 900,000 businesses and 3.3 million workers are at risk if JobKeeper is ripped away suddenly in September. Credible economic institutions, including the Reserve Bank, have repeatedly highlighted the significant uncertainty Australian businesses and workers are facing. The RBA governor, Philip Lowe, said it was very important that we do not withdraw the fiscal stimulus too early. Chris Richardson from Deloitte Access Economics has urged the Morrison government not to withdraw supports too soon.

I have spoken with local businesses in my area, including recent conversations with the manager of Cactus Jack's. They have three restaurants in Townsville and 200 workers. He told me that if JobKeeper is taken away in September they might need to shut the doors. They need certainty for their business and their staff. We cannot forget that the Morrison government was dragged to the table kicking and screaming on the wage subsidy program, delaying it for weeks and needlessly putting jobs at risk. JobKeeper was announced as a \$130 billion program but it is now the biggest underspend in Australian government history and was subject to the \$60 billion bungle.

The success of JobKeeper—for those lucky Australians it covers—and the massive underspend should be reason enough to extend it beyond September and to those not covered. This is not a normal jobs market. The federal government cannot go back to business as usual because there just are not enough jobs for people to apply for because of COVID. Millions of people across Australia and here in Queensland will suffer if JobKeeper ends in September. I urge the LNP on the other side to pick up the phone and get the PM to keep JobKeeper going.

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (4.19 pm): We all know the famous saying, 'Socialism is a wonderful thing until you run out of other people's money.' The other one that comes to mind is, 'Fail to plan; plan to fail.' I find it quite ironic because we were given a few minutes notice of this particular motion—

An opposition member: Four minutes.

Mr MINNIKIN: Yes, four minutes; I take the interjection. Of course, I am rising to speak against this absurd motion. I will read the first point. It states—

I give notice that I will move—

That this House:

1. notes:

- (a) the dramatic impact of COVID-19 on Australia's economy and the critical role of economic support measures including the federal government's JobKeeper program;

Let's have a look at some recent history. We have had Andrew Fraser, Jackie Trad and now the member for Woodridge, Cameron Dick, who have said debt is a tool. We have now had an absolute succession of democratic socialists who would not know their left from their right hand when it comes to economic management. This is a desperate ploy 107 days out from an election to waste an hour of this chamber's time in going through with a motion that is completely absurd.

Let's have a look at the pulse of the Queensland economy. I listened with interest to the previous speaker, the member for Thuringowa. If that was not a 'I'm in desperate, desperate trouble' speech I do not know what is. He rattled off Cactus Jack's and a whole range of other businesses that have been affected by the economic conditions.

Mr Harper interjected.


Mr MINNIKIN: I ask the member for Thuringowa: why are they being affected by the economic conditions at the moment? It is not just because of the COVID-19 situation. The economy of Queensland was absolutely in the you-know-what long before this insidious pandemic surfaced.

Mr Harper interjected.

Mr MINNIKIN: Why is it that Queensland is a basket case economically? When you look at what has been done in the last couple of years with new taxes—and, member for Thuringowa, you were part of the government that has supported that including a 17.3 per cent increase in rego—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stewart): Your comments must come through the chair, please.

Mr MINNIKIN: There was also a \$1.3 billion rise in the waste tax. There was also \$103 million in new taxes for the grey nomad campervan tax. LNG royalties were up \$476 million. This is why we have a Labor state government that are on their knees economically. They are desperate to try and latch on to any mechanism that the Morrison federal government can provide to try to yet again bail them out of the economic mess that they have bred themselves over the last 5½ years. This has not happened in the last few months. We had the highest unemployment numbers in the country long before COVID. We have record bankruptcies. This is an absolute joke of a motion.

 **Ms SCANLON** (Gaven—ALP) (4.22 pm): I rise to support the motion moved by the Treasurer. It is disappointing to hear the member for Chatsworth say that standing up for workers is a waste of this chamber's time. Six of the 10 areas with the most businesses signing up to JobKeeper are on the Gold Coast. According to analysis based on Treasury and ATO data, up to 2,420 businesses in the 4211 postcode in my community may be forced to close their doors, which could mean approximately 9,000 local workers may be forced into unemployment and over \$13 million could be ripped out of our local economy each and every fortnight if this JobKeeper payment is not extended. That is just in the 4211 area. I want to be clear that I support the move by the federal government to implement a wage subsidy. It is something many of us were advocating for and it has provided critical economic support for working people and businesses within the Gold Coast community. Our concern is that the 27 September deadline will leave families in the lurch if this is not extended.

Tourism is one of the Gold Coast's largest industries. We absolutely accept the rationale for keeping our borders shut, but there is no denying the huge economic impact this has on businesses and jobs. To put it into perspective, international visitation in the March quarter of this year was down 34.3 per cent compared with the previous year on the Gold Coast, and this was just a result of the initial effects of COVID-19. The flow-on effects for this industry are enormous.


Minister Fentiman and I recently visited a business in Coomera that had received a \$10,000 grant from our government and heavily relies on providing first-aid training to theme park employees. I recently phoned a constituent whose husband drives a truck for a business that provides linen to hotels and understandably is extremely worried about his job security after September.

Yesterday I received an email from Tracey, who lives in Mount Nathan and runs her own travel agency business, pleading for the JobKeeper payment to be continued. Since March she has lost money as a result of having to refund holidays to clients who are no longer able to travel internationally along with commission charged, leaving her with little to no income. This is not a multimillion dollar company; it is a small local operator that has existed for 14 years.

What is also concerning is the nearly 30,000 casuals on the Gold Coast who could have missed out on the JobKeeper payment because they were employed for less than 12 months by a single employer, some of whom also were not eligible for the JobSeeker payment. A lot of these workers were already on a minimum wage. We are seeing the result of this financial stress with the Nerang Neighbourhood Centre reporting that they have seen a doubling of the number of families needing to obtain low-cost and no-cost food boxes.

We know that economists like Reserve Bank Governor Dr Philip Lowe, have warned that it is incredibly important that we do not withdraw fiscal stimulus too early. We also know that the federal government has spent \$60 billion less on the JobKeeper payment than initially announced, so we are pleading with the federal government to use this to extend this important payment.

(Time expired)


 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (4.25 pm): Every time we rise in this place, we should do so with a thirst to do better for the people we represent; we should do so by effecting change in the areas that we are able to change. This motion we are debating today will go for an hour. The government will go round and round in circles. Despite this parliament cancelling sittings—even after the new COVID time line was given, we have had another sitting cancelled—and not finding the time to hand down a budget, it will waste an hour on nothing more than a point-scoring game to try to belt Canberra.

This government has only two items in its playbook: it belts Canberra and it belts the legacy of a government that was in office over half a decade ago. The public accepted the fact that this government did not have an agenda in 2015 because, quite frankly, not only did the public not expect this government to win but this government did not expect to win. That slack will only be cut for so long. Now in the middle of a pandemic where a government does not have a clear economic vision, where

the musical chairs have delivered a Treasurer who does not know the debt level, who does not know the levers at his control and whose only response to a ballooning debt is to pull out a dollar bill and say he is going to print in black and white, is it any wonder that people lose faith?

One of the items in this motion talks about the pain in Cairns. This motion is right when it talks about more people being on JobKeeper in Cairns. However, I just came from a delegation to Cairns. Do honourable members want to know what they talked about? They were asking: can there please be an extension on the land rent waiver, the tour operator fee, the port business relief, the commercial tour operator support—things that this parliament has control of.


Do I believe that JobKeeper has been an incredible program that has saved the livelihoods of people in businesses? You betcha! Do I believe that that program should continue for those who are impacted, for those people in those areas who face losing everything? You bet I do! If this parliament believes that its only responsibility is to stand up and play silly games with Canberra at a time when people are yearning for us to deliver an infrastructure vision, a planning vision and an economic vision—they do not want a government to come in and play silly games or a government that was allowed to have no vision for the first half a decade. With a few months to go, this government is running out of time and running out of lives.

 **Mr O'ROURKE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (4.28 pm): I rise to speak in support of this motion. Just last week I visited several businesses that had received the Queensland government small business COVID-19 grants. I was talking to Simone, one of the local shop owners. She has five staff. She was talking about how things are going pretty well at the moment but she was worried that there is a bit of a bubble. She needs JobKeeper to continue because she was uncertain about her future. She has five staff, including a few school aged kids, and plays a really important role.

I also caught up with Dave. He is one of our local publicans and a really good bloke. He was saying that businesses really need that support into the future to look after their staff until they get back on to their feet. He is concerned that if JobKeeper stops in September, particularly in the hotel and hospitality industry, they will no longer be able to maintain current staffing. He is concerned about the flow-on impact of that, be it reducing the number of hours for existing staff or laying off staff. The issues compound from there—not as much money in town, other businesses slowing down, unemployment rising—and there is a continual flow-on impact across the community.

Dave also spoke about some of the practical issues. Going into the Christmas season, local businesses will not be able to afford to have Christmas parties and the like. Things like that have an ongoing impact. The hospitality industry—pubs, clubs et cetera—does more than just provide drinks and service; it provides a meeting place to bring the fabric of our community together. It is so important that we support all of these businesses and the people involved.

I really encourage both state and federal LNP members to talk to people on the ground who really are hurting and to listen to what they have to say. They really want our communities to continue, but they are doing it tough. The federal government made a budget error of some \$60 billion. It was already earmarked. Now is the opportunity. I call on the federal government to provide certainty for our businesses and extend the JobKeeper program beyond the current six months instead of finishing it on 27 September. We need to look after our small businesses, workers et cetera. This is just so important to keep our economies going. I commend the motion to the House.


 **Mr JANETZKI** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (4.31 pm): I want to mirror the contribution of the member for Broadwater. This motion wastes another hour. This waste began last sitting with a similar motion. A couple of months ago the Premier stood beside ScoMo waxing lyrical about how wonderful ScoMo was doing. The mood on that side of the House has changed as the economic narrative begins to run away from them. We have a Treasurer who this week did not rule out new taxes and has not revealed this government's priorities when it comes to a budget. The narrative is starting to move away from this government as the people realise that it is only the federal Morrison government that has ever done anything substantive to help the people of Australia, in particular Queensland, through this crisis.

I recall back in March, when I was watching queues of people lining up at Centrelink—winding their way through the inner streets of Toowoomba—that it was the Morrison federal government that came out with JobKeeper. At the same time, this state Labor government was frozen and not able to work out its small business grants. Applications were opened and then were shut without notice. The state government had no clear vision about where its economic narrative was going. It was the leadership of the federal Morrison government that helped those people winding their way around the inner streets of Toowoomba in the Centrelink queue while members of this government sat on their hands.

This motion wants to talk about economic stimulus and economic support packages. Members opposite do not look at the Morrison federal government. The Morrison federal government has it covered. Members opposite need to start looking at their performance because, when it comes to fiscal stimulus, it is not just about JobKeeper, Jobs Finder and JobSeeker; it is about what this government is doing to stimulate this economy.

In Toowoomba and right across Queensland, there is a range of projects on which this government could bring forward spending to deliver stimulus out of Queensland. Why is this state Labor government not delivering stimulus on the ground for infrastructure right here, right now, in my part of the world? I refer to inland rail, roads, the Gore Highway from Goondiwindi to Toowoomba, the Warrego, the New England. Get behind a Fernleigh project that will deliver prosperity to the western suburbs of Toowoomba or a road along Boundary Street that will connect Highfields to Westbrook right along the western fringe of Toowoomba.

Why is this government constantly throwing stones at Canberra and the federal Morrison government when it was only that government that stood up and helped those people standing in the Centrelink queues in Toowoomba? Why does this government not stand up with the Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce and TSBE, get behind local projects and start to deliver real financial stimulus for infrastructure projects not just in the Toowoomba region but right across Queensland?

 **Mr BROWN** (Capalaba—ALP) (4.34 pm): The Capalaba electorate has been hit particularly hard by the COVID virus. I congratulate ACTU secretary Sally McManus for designing, fighting for and winning JobKeeper for the people of Queensland. I congratulate the Scott Morrison government.

Opposition members interjected.


Mr BROWN: Hear me out. I am going to congratulate Scott Morrison for listening to Sally McManus and implementing this program.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr BROWN: Yes, it was good. The Leader of the Opposition could learn something, because I doubt that, if she were faced with the same crisis, she would reach out her hand to the QCU and do the same thing. She would shut the door and do the complete opposite. I congratulate Scott Morrison for listening, sitting down and implementing our JobKeeper program. I also congratulate our Premier on acting first to stimulate our economy around COVID-19. We were the first to act and we made sure that we were looking after Queenslanders.

I particularly point to one measure that shows the stark difference between us and many other states and the federal government—that is, pandemic leave. We implemented that first. When the virus hit again in Victoria, Victoria's Daniel Andrews had to bring in pandemic leave. The federal government looks after IR and should look after these casual workers in terms of providing pandemic leave to ensure they do not turn up to work. We have had so many outbreaks, be it at abattoirs, pubs or supermarkets, because sick casuals have shown up for work. It is this state Labor government and this Premier who had the foresight to bring in that leave before COVID even occurred here in Queensland. I congratulate the Premier on that.

JobKeeper needs to be reviewed and targeted. There are many stories of workers who had one shift but who now get \$750. The federal government has had time to complete a review. We say that no worker should be left out and that it should continue. The contrast is stark. I saw an ad from my old pub, the Alexandra Hills Hotel, that called for staff recruitment at the moment. That is because JobKeeper was not rolled out to casuals. The hotel lost a whole heap of casuals. Because of our good efforts to bring the virus under control and to open up pubs again, the hotel has to re-employ former casuals or train new casuals because those former workers have gone on to new careers. It is a shame that casuals employed for fewer than 12 months did not get JobKeeper in the first place. We just have to look at the numbers for Capalaba. Over 5,000 workers are affected by JobKeeper. Close to \$10 million has been provided to support our local community. I support this motion, because I support the businesses and workers in my area. I commend the motion to the House.


 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (4.37 pm): How delusional are members opposite? We really start to wonder when we see a conga line of under-pressure backbenchers with prepared speeches standing up here trying to defend the indefensible from this government. This government has done nothing to help businesses in my patch on the Gold Coast. In fact, a lot of people on the Gold Coast tell me that they think this Labor government is deliberately trashing our economy so that it can blame the federal government for everything. Of course, it is Scott Morrison's fault that everything happens in this country! Quite frankly, JobKeeper has saved this state and this country. It was nobody else's idea but the federal LNP. The problem with members of this government is that when they look at history and do not like it they just go out and reinvent it. They write a whole new story—complete fairy tales.

This state was trashed before COVID-19 came along. We were already heading for \$90 billion of debt. This government will now use COVID as an excuse to push the debt out to \$100 billion, because it likes burning through other people's money. The credit card is starting to run out. If this government is that concerned about JobKeeper continuing, why does it not do something about it? What is to stop it from funding something similar? Absolutely nothing. When we look at the federal government's HomeBuilder scheme, for instance—

Ms Jones interjected.


Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stewart): Order! Pause the clock. Member for Cooper, you need to be in your allocated seat if you are going to interject.

Mr HART: When we look at the wonderful HomeBuilder scheme that the federal government came up with that gives people \$25,000 to put towards building a house, that was announced on 4 June. Scott Morrison and the Treasurer of Australia went out and said, 'Here's this \$25,000. We're going to pass it through the states. States, get on board. Let's encourage our building industry.' This government took until 3 July to sign on to that process. It took it well over a month. It was the last government in Australia to sign on to it and now apparently it cannot organise the paperwork for another month, and it will now be August before people can fill the form in. It appears as if this government is deliberately putting the state of Queensland under financial pressure so it can blame the federal government. I really do not know what is going on here and I am sure that those opposite do not know what is going on, and that is the problem.

 **Hon. CD CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (Minister for Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (4.40 pm): I support the motion moved by the Treasurer. COVID-19 has been felt very hard in Cairns, as members who have spoken before me have said. Prior to COVID-19 Cairns had one of the lowest unemployment rates in Queensland, if not the lowest unemployment rate around. JobKeeper has been a big saviour for a lot of employers and employees. We have seen staged openings which have been working well, but when you speak to a lot of businesses in the Cairns region they still have a large number of their workforce on JobKeeper. They want to keep their workforce. Some of these are very highly skilled employees. They are skippers of catamarans, they are aircrew that work for various aviation companies, they are highly trained baristas and they are highly skilled in a range of industries.


We know that it will not be until international tourism returns in all of its glory again that we will see Cairns and Far North Queensland really firing like it did only around six months ago. The big tourism operators in Cairns often report to me that they generally run at around 70 per cent to 75 per cent of their clientele being international tourists—companies like Skyrail, Quicksilver and some of the big ones like that. Obviously we need those international borders to open. We understand why those international borders cannot open at this stage. At the moment Cairns is relying very heavily on JobKeeper. As reported by the member for Cairns earlier, there are more JobKeeper applications in Cairns than the Brisbane CBD—3,607 versus 3,048. Each one of those people is working for industries that are either in tourism or directly supplying tourism. They might be limousine operators and drivers. Not everyone can be reskilled overnight and trained how to drive an excavator or how to do other skills like that in which some of these employees are very specialised.

We are not attacking the JobKeeper program. We are quite happy and we are very supportive of the Prime Minister in introducing it. We simply ask that the Prime Minister acts with compassion and takes into consideration Queensland, particularly areas such as Cairns. Until we see those international markets come back, we need to continue this funded program going forward. All of the communities of Cairns would be highly supportive but especially the business community and the tourism community—my neighbours, my friends, a number of people whom I know who are on this program. They are heavily reliant on it to continue. I support the motion and thank the Treasurer for moving it.

 **Mr McDONALD** (Lockyer—LNP) (4.43 pm): What are we really doing here this afternoon? With a government that is facing integrity crisis after integrity crisis, a government that had the highest unemployment of any state in the nation, a government that had the highest level of bankruptcies, a government that had the lowest level of business confidence and a government that through this pandemic has had inconsistent messages, it is no wonder it is looking for a distraction, and what better distraction than the federal LNP government. Speaker after speaker on the government side of the House has said thank you to the federal Morrison government, and I am going to stand with them and say thank you to the federal Morrison government for the JobKeeper program and the wonderful leadership that it has shown through this pandemic.

In March when the Prime Minister first started making announcements about restrictions I rang Scott Buchholz, our great federal member for Wright, and said, 'Scotty, what are you doing? What are you doing with all these things? It's going to kill business.' He said, 'Jimmy, we are making all of these decisions based on the best health advice.' At the time, I started to do a bit of research and find out what was going on around the world and I can tell members that the direction and leadership that the federal Morrison government gave was the best in the world. While Scotty reassured me, he said, 'I know we are hurting businesses, but soon we will put in place mechanisms to see those businesses come through.' The actions it took on the best health advice saw the curve flatten and the mechanisms that it has put in place, including the JobKeeper program that this Labor government is thanking the Morrison government for, were wonderful mechanisms that saw so many businesses remain open.

Through times of crisis—and this pandemic is like no crisis we have faced before—the community wants good leadership, and good leadership is based on consistent messages. We have a Labor government in Queensland that is giving inconsistent messages—inconsistent messages around schools, inconsistent messages around jobs, inconsistent messages on the easing of restrictions, inconsistent messages on the borders. It is no wonder Queensland has the lowest business confidence of any state in Australia. It is no wonder that Queensland businesses are struggling under this Labor government. It is only an LNP Deb Frecklington-led government come November that will get Queensland working again.

 **Hon. KJ JONES** (Cooper—ALP) (Minister for State Development, Tourism and Innovation) (4.46 pm): In rising to speak to this motion I want to follow up from the former member's contribution, and that is that under a Deb Frecklington government the borders would have been opened and we would have had Victorians here with coronavirus.

Mr Mander: They're open now. The borders are open now.

Ms JONES: If we had listened to the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, who likes to shout all the time generally as a contribution, as I have experienced in the last 10 years—and if you talk more he just shouts louder; really gentlemanly behaviour by the member for Everton—

Opposition members interjected.

Ms JONES: No. If those opposite want to talk about inconsistent positions, 1 July, 10 July, 1 July, 10 July. That is what those opposite said 64 times, so do not come in here and lecture us about inconsistency.

Mr Mander: What date did it open?

Ms JONES: One thing that we have been absolutely consistent on—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Everton.

Ms JONES:—charmer—is that our position is to keep Queenslanders safe and to keep Queenslanders in work. That is why we have said that we support JobKeeper. In actual fact, it was federal Labor that called on the Scott Morrison government to implement something like JobKeeper which had already been implemented in England.

Mr Mander: Here comes the comedy act!

Ms JONES: Just read the newspaper. If those opposite read the newspaper, they would see that that is absolutely factually correct. We welcome it. We welcomed it at the time. We said that it was good policy that came out of the national cabinet, which our Premier has supported more diligently and more loyally than any other Premier in this country. That is what she has done—supported the Prime Minister 100 per cent.

All we are saying is that we think that this is a good program that needs to continue, particularly for the trade exposed industries such as tourism, trade, international education and major events while the country's borders continue to be closed by the national government. We know that if the second wave that Victoria is experiencing were to spread around the country then some of the things that we have been able to open up here in Queensland because of our unite and recover plan and because of the strong leadership of the Premier and the Deputy Premier to guide us through these tough times would be at risk. We do not want this to end, and everyone in the country is saying that, even the member for Leichhardt, Warren Entsch—we have known each other a long time; we get on well—when he basically told a whole room full of tourism organisations in Cairns that it is a done deal. We just want to make sure that it is a done deal. If you support JobKeeper, support our motion. Let us show a bit of bipartisanship here for the first time in the Queensland parliament.


An opposition member: Trust ScoMo!

Ms JONES: If you support ScoMo, as you call him—I will take that interjection—then vote with us. Why don't we send a message to Canberra that both sides of the House in Queensland support JobKeeper and support the tourism industry. Why is it so hard just once to act a little bit bipartisan? Because you do not know how to do it! You do not even know how to do it.

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

Ms JONES: Those opposite have shown that time and time again. Support us, support JobKeeper, support the people of Queensland.

(Time expired)


 **Mr MICKELBERG** (Buderim—LNP) (4.49 pm): I rise to speak to Labor's latest pathetic attempt at political pointscoreing with its motion here today. Extra spending is required to support Queenslanders during this crisis. All levels of government have an obligation to step up and support the heartbroken restaurant owners, the selfless charities that are battling to stay afloat and our parents and seniors. The Morrison federal government has stepped up with around \$260 billion worth of support, which equates to about 7.3 per cent of Australia's annual GDP. Let us contrast that with the Palaszczuk Labor government's support of \$4.8 billion, or 1.3 per cent of annual gross state product, and it is pretty clear to see who is doing the heavy lifting in the coronavirus response. It is time for the Palaszczuk Labor government to step up and do more in the economic response that is required to support our communities through these most challenging of times. It is not a time to be playing petty politics and shifting responsibility.

The Reserve Bank Governor has said that Queensland should use its balance sheet to support the economic recovery. Of course Queensland should do more, just as the federal government has done. The question is why are the Premier and the Treasurer unwilling to do more? Perhaps it is because the state budget was straining under the weight of a colossal nearly \$90 billion debt long before this pandemic hit. As the Queensland Audit Office stated in its report to parliament—

The financial performance of the Queensland government has reduced over the last two financial years, with expenses incurred increasing at a greater rate than revenue.

The Audit Office also said government needs to maintain a strong balance sheet to provide it with stability, flexibility and capacity to deal with emerging financial and economic pressures and a strong foundation for providing services to the community—emerging financial pressures, emerging economic pressures just like the coronavirus pandemic that we are experiencing now. The Queensland economy was on its knees long before this pandemic hit. In January the CommSec State of the States report showed construction in Queensland at 26 per cent below the decade average. Queensland had the highest unemployment rate in the country, youth unemployment of 14.3 per cent, higher than any other state or territory, and Queensland had the lowest business confidence on record—all before the coronavirus hit. Put simply, Queensland is not in a position to do more because of the Palaszczuk Labor government's financial mismanagement over the last five years.

Sound financial management may not be as sexy as a Cross River Rail funding announcement, but if the government paid more attention to managing the state budget in a responsible and conservative manner then we would all be able to do more to help the desperate small businesses, the families and the charities just as the Morrison LNP government is doing now.

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development) (4.52 pm): We know our small businesses are doing it tough. This pandemic has wreaked havoc on their ability to trade, their customer base and their supply chains. I have met with chambers of commerce in so many Zoom meetings over the past few months, from Cooktown to the Gold Coast, and the message I have heard loud and clear is that they need JobKeeper to continue. I have met with unions and business associations and the message is the same: we need JobKeeper to continue. They need certainty because if there is going to be a cliff in September they need to start planning now.

Sectors like tourism, hospitality and retail are likely to be feeling the impacts of this crisis for years, not months, to come. Queensland businesses absolutely need more certainty and support from the federal government. It is time for the Morrison LNP government to lead and provide businesses with that much needed information about what is going to happen post 27 September.

I am pleased to say that the Palaszczuk government has absolutely stepped up to support our small businesses. We were the first government in the country to announce a stimulus package back in February. We are the only government to provide, in addition to small business grants, \$1 billion in

no-interest loans. We need the federal government now to provide certainty to small businesses, to small businesses that are the backbone of our state's economy and create jobs for close to one million Queenslanders. But what have we heard from those opposite? Have they picked up the phone to their federal counterparts, their mates, and said, 'What is going to happen post 27 September?' Have they phoned their mates down in the Canberra bubble to tell them that small businesses are hurting now and they are going to be hurting post September?

Mr Hart: Are you jealous that we have mates down there?

Ms FENTIMAN: Have you picked up the phone to your federal counterparts?

Mr Hart: Yes, I have actually.

Ms FENTIMAN: Well, that is wonderful news. I take that interjection from the member for Burleigh. Apparently he has been lobbying his federal colleagues to support our motion here today. It will be really interesting to see if the member for Burleigh supports this motion given that behind closed doors he is saying that is exactly what he has been telling his federal counterparts. Those opposite would rather spend their time being the mouthpiece for their mates in Canberra than stand up for Queensland businesses calling on their federal counterparts to provide certainty to businesses that need it now.

Last time we were here in parliament the Leader of the Opposition was saying, 'Open the borders. Open the borders'—64 times! How many times has the Leader of the Opposition come into this place and said, 'I've spoken to the Prime Minister about making sure JobKeeper continues'? Zero! She is happy to wax lyrical, criticising the Premier, calling on borders to open. We know with the outbreaks we have seen in Victoria how devastating a second wave would be for businesses, but she will not pick up the phone, call the Prime Minister and say that we need JobKeeper to continue because Queensland small businesses are hurting. Shame on those opposite.



Mr MANDER (Everton—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (4.55 pm): Thank goodness for Scott Morrison and Josh Frydenberg. Thank goodness they are running the national economy. Thank goodness that what this Labor government wished for, which was Bill Shorten as Prime Minister, never happened. In the week leading up to the last federal election nearly every one of those on the front bench were advocating for Bill Shorten. Thank goodness that did not happen. We are in the safe hands of Scott Morrison and Josh Frydenberg.

I trust Scott Morrison and Josh Frydenberg's ability to manage the economy as they have so far. A person I do not trust to manage the economy is the current Queensland Treasurer, the member for Woodridge, a Treasurer who does not know the debt level of this state, a Treasurer who does not know the number of public servants in the state when he makes an announcement that we are going to put a cap on those public servants so the announcement meant nothing, a Treasurer who does not know one of the key fiscal principles associated with the Public Service which is that the Public Service was not to outgrow the population rate. It has basically doubled that rate.

How would a Treasurer who does not know those facts have any idea about navigating the state's way into economic recovery? We can have absolutely no confidence whatsoever that he can do that. This is a Treasurer who does not understand what suppresses the economy or saps business interest. Nine new or increased taxes have been introduced over the last five years.

Let us remember what the Treasurer said yesterday in question time when we gave him a chance to rule out whether there will be any new taxes going forward. What did he say? He said, 'Not at this time.' Not at this very moment of time, when he answered the question, are they thinking about raising taxes. They will do exactly what they did when they sold assets. They said that they would not do it and then in the new term—bang, straightaway—'let us hit them once again. Let us break those promises.'

This is a Treasurer who we cannot trust. This is a Treasurer who has no numbers or details. I know who I trust. I trust the Prime Minister of this country and the federal Treasurer. They will do what is right for the people of Queensland and what is right for the people of Australia. I prefer this Treasurer though. The former treasurer, the member for South Brisbane, had far more intelligence, but this Treasurer is more fun to play with because he has no idea about what he is doing. He is the king of fluff, the king of jargon and pompous ceremony, and is very light on detail. Those opposite have no idea.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Youth Crime



Mr PURDIE (Ninderry—LNP) (5.00 pm): I move—

That this House—

1. notes the LNP's policy to tackle juvenile crime in Queensland:
 - (a) introduce tougher laws and increased penalties to hold offenders accountable;
 - (b) require 24/7 monitoring of offenders on bail by Youth Justice, taking the pressure off police;
 - (c) three-strikes policy for repeat offenders;
 - (d) establish a community payback farm program with rehabilitation to break the cycle of reoffending;
 - (e) scrap Labor's failed youth bail houses; and
 - (f) introduce a justice reinvestment program for early intervention to reduce offending; and
2. calls on the Palaszczuk government to immediately implement the LNP's policy to tackle juvenile crime in Queensland.

The highest priority of any government is the safety and security of its citizens. On this most important priority, the Palaszczuk Labor government is an epic fail. Every Queenslander has the right to feel safe. Communities right across Queensland—from North Queensland and regional Queensland to South-East Queensland—are gripped by crime. Hardworking Queenslanders, families and retirees who have worked hard all their lives should not be prisoners in their own homes. Long before we were dealing with the coronavirus pandemic, Queensland was suffering from a youth crime epidemic and you do not need to be an epidemiologist to trace the source. There is a clear path. A litany of failures from this government has led directly to this epidemic and they do not have the ability, the capacity or the will to even flatten the curve.

It all started in June 2016 when they removed the bail offence for juvenile offenders and amended the Youth Justice Act to make detention a last resort. In September 2016, they transitioned 17-year-olds into the youth justice system and started moving 17-years-olds from adult prisons into youth detention facilities that were already at capacity. In 2019, thanks to *Four Corners*, we learned, unsurprisingly, that detention facilities could not cope and that juvenile offenders were being held in maximum security watch houses.

As a knee-jerk reaction to that, in September 2019 Labor introduced another bill, the priority of which was to remove further barriers to juvenile offenders getting bail. At that time I warned the government that that was transferring the problem from Youth Justice back onto the streets and onto our police. The thin blue line has never been thinner. Communities across Queensland have had a gutful and our hardworking police have had an absolute gutful. They are working tirelessly and are doing everything they can to keep our communities safe, but their hands are tied behind their backs thanks to this soft-on-crime Labor government that cuts them off at the knees at every turn.

That is why last week I was proud to stand with Deb Frecklington and announce our comprehensive plan to crack down on youth crime. Ours is a plan that covers the whole cycle of youth offending, with investment in early intervention to divert kids away from the justice system before they enter into a life of crime. We will have tougher laws to empower our police to take back control of the streets and take action against juveniles who are breaching their bail. We will have 24/7 monitoring by the youth justice department of offenders who are on bail.

Our frontline police and rapid action patrol groups should be targeting organised crime, drug traffickers and paedophiles, not babysitting kids on bail as they are now. We will have mandatory detention for recidivist offenders who continually thumb their noses at the law, which is a harsh penalty that hopefully will act as a strong deterrent to stop the revolving door of youth crime. Our community payback farm program is designed to break the cycle of crime, to rehabilitate offenders and give them the skills they need to earn or learn. The people of Queensland know that only a Deb Frecklington led LNP government will unite people across Queensland in our fight against crime and help them, their families and their community recover from Labor's youth crime epidemic.



Hon. MT RYAN (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services) (5.02 pm): Youth crime is a serious issue and it is our government that takes it seriously. On this subject the LNP is a rudderless ship with a mutinous crew, floundering in a toxic sea of failed leadership. It is a leaky LNP boat that foundered on the Queensland border, holed by its own self-interest and disregard for the safety of Queenslanders. Navigate your way through the LNP's history and you will be swamped by a tsunami of broken promises. It is a shipwreck. In government, the LNP broke a promise to provide \$20 million for extra police to patrol safe night out precincts.

Mr Mickelberg interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Buderim.

Mr RYAN: The LNP made that promise to the president of the Queensland Police Union but did not deliver.

Mr Mickelberg interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Buderim, you interjected immediately after I cautioned you. You are warned under the standing orders.

Mr RYAN: That led to Police Union President Ian Leavers being featured in a TV ad criticising the LNP. Under the LNP, 110 senior police positions were abolished and more than 200 police personnel lost their jobs. 'We won't sell government assets,' they said, all the while developing a sneaky plan to sell off the police academies and privatise the state's prisons. 'We will boost police training and resources,' they said and then they cut firearms training, driver safety courses and taser training and they cut back on vital equipment and resources for our police.

The LNP does not learn from its mistakes. They have made so many that they cannot remember them all. It is called the goldfish effect. You cannot learn from the past if you cannot remember it. That is the only explanation for the LNP's thought-bubble youth crime policies. For example, the LNP talks tough about bringing back breach of bail as an offence. The problem is that you cannot bring back something that never was, yet they are bringing that back. Bizarrely, they have dusted off the Newman government's old failed crime plan. They want to do a sequel, *Boot Camps II*, and the critics have quickly lined up to throw rotten tomatoes. The Police Union's Mick Barnes reckoned it sounded like 'something that's out of Campbell Newman's era, minus the pink jumpsuit'. Professor Kerry Carrington said that the LNP's policies 'would have the opposite effect of reducing crime'.


Even the opposition leader seems to have doubts about her *Boot Camps* remake. First she said it was about rehabilitation, but the very next day she said that *Boot Camps II* was about retribution for the 'worst of the worst' or a form of payback. When it came to the cast of this dodgy sequel, the opposition leader was simply *Clueless*. When she was asked who would be staffing these 'payback farms', the opposition leader replied, 'People.' I kid you not, Mr Speaker. It just gets *Dumb and Dumber*. We have seen *Boot camps I*. It flopped at the ballot box. According to the critics, *Boot Camps II* is also a dud. I reckon the LNP should have another go and then it will be three strikes, and we know what they want to do with that. This would be a joke if it were not so serious.

In stark contrast, the Palaszczuk government is serious about youth crime. Police prosecutors are successfully launching appeals in cases where it is clear that bail should not have been granted. There were two more winning appeals just this week. We are maintaining our 100 percent strike rate when it comes to appealing bail decisions. Our police are having great success targeting and prosecuting youth offenders. We are also addressing the complex circumstances that cause young people to offend in the first place. We listen to the experts, including police officers and the esteemed former commissioner, Bob Atkinson.

The LNP does not care about what works. They only care about themselves, outrageously cherry-picking statistics to create fake news and scare the community, yet when in power they were too scared to publish the annual crime statistic reports. For the LNP, with their recycled Campbell Newman crime policy, it is *Back to the Future*. *Boot Camps II* is destined to sink without a trace. I do not think it will even go to video.

In contrast, this government is taking real action. We are protecting the community. We are protecting Queenslanders. It is all part of our plan to unite and recover. We are supporting our police in the work that they do. We are supporting them with additional resources that are being deployed right across the state. On the weekend, with the commissioner I announced additional child protection offender register coordinators, almost doubling the number of child protection offender register coordinators. That will make a big difference in the government's approach to keeping the community safe and, obviously, will support the broader work that our Queensland Police Service does in protecting kids and keeping them safe.

We are very proud of our record when it comes to supporting our police. We ensure that they have the resources that they need to keep us all safe. Of course, we will continue to strengthen the law to make sure that the police have all the levers that they need to pull and apply to ensure that our community remains safe. I oppose the motion.

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (5.07 pm): I rise to support the motion moved by my colleague the member for Ninderry. Whilst the minister might like to dwell on the past, Mr Speaker, I can assure you that on this side of the House we are focusing on the future because we have a plan to address juvenile crime in this state. We have a plan that will actually get to the bottom of the problem and address the issues.

I can tell the House that the level of frustration in the Townsville community around juvenile crime is at unprecedented levels. Over the past four years, the city has had its heart ripped out. To say that residents have had a gutful of this incompetent Labor government is an understatement. The Premier, the Minister for Police and the three Townsville Labor members of parliament have all stuck their heads in the sand and denied that the problem exists. They have downplayed the issue, trotted out the spin doctors and tried to pull the wool over the eyes of North Queenslanders. As a proud North Queenslander, I can say that we are not going to fall for that trick. We are not going to stand by and watch this incompetent Labor government continue to flounder and dither when it comes to addressing crime issues in the north.

In the last month alone, we learnt that this government has been funding lawyers to find holes in the recently amended Youth Justice Act—that is, the amendments that the member for Thuringowa said would fix the revolving door on youth justice. As I revealed to the people of Townsville on Tuesday, this government has given up on crime in Townsville and the editor of the *Townsville Bulletin* agrees. It must be true when not one of the Townsville Labor MPs had the decency to respond.

I have good news for the people of Townsville: the LNP has listened and, unlike the sitting Labor MPs and at least one other candidate, we were not fooled by this government's belated and inadequate statements. I table page 6 of the *Townsville Bulletin* of 19 March to prove that this government succeeded in pulling the wool over the candidate's eyes.

Tabled paper: Bundle of media articles from the *Townsville Bulletin* regarding juvenile crime [1179].

When a judge describes the Department of Youth Justice in the *Gold Coast Bulletin* as 'talk, no action', it is time for something to be done, and that is exactly what the LNP will do. Unlike those opposite, we have listened to the people of Townsville, and that starts with our outstanding candidates for the upcoming election, like Glenn Doyle in Mundingburra, a current serving inspector of police. Hasn't he seen the debacle unfold in recent years in Townsville! Hasn't he seen the anguish on the victims' faces firsthand when he has been out and about as a serving police officer! The LNP candidate for Thuringowa, Natalie Marr, has an outstanding track record of standing up for the community in her role with Crime Stoppers.

From Cape York to Coolangatta, this government has failed on crime. It is the LNP that wants to introduce tougher laws and increases to penalties to hold these offenders accountable. It is the LNP that knows that young offenders on bail should be monitored 24/7. It is the LNP that will draw the line in the sand and say, 'Three strikes and you are in detention.' Why? Because we know that people have had enough of waking up in the morning to check to see if their car is still there. We will stand up for victims. We know that if you are old enough to break into a house and steal a car, then you are old enough to take responsibility for your actions. We have these juvenile offenders running around Townsville. In one case that I know of, one of these young offenders has 225 offences in his criminal history. Let me repeat that: 225 offences for a juvenile offender. How many homes does that equate to—or vehicles stolen, or assaults in that community? These are serious offences. Offenders need to be held to account.

The minister might want to sit there tonight and call all of this fake news, but I can assure the minister that it is far from fake when you talk to the victims of crime in Townsville. They are living this nightmare every single day and every single night. We are hearing stories of people who have had their cars stolen on three, four and five occasions. They are in despair at the lack of action and the lack of commitment from this government to do something about it.

When a motion similar to this was moved in February, I provided the government with cold, hard facts, and those charges have continued to this day. There have been more than 12 unlawful entries a day. It is not good enough.

(Time expired)



Mr STEWART (Townsville—ALP) (5.12 pm): This inept opposition has a proven track record on broken promises. They promised more police, then sacked more than 300 police personnel. They promised more police resources, then cut millions off the police budget. This government will always do the right thing and back our police.

When it comes to approved police strength, there are 710 police working hard in the community right across the Townsville police district, an increase of 104 since we came into government. That is more boots on the ground. Our police are more mobile, more agile, more visible and more responsive, and they are doing a great job each and every day to keep our community safe. I back them 110 per cent.

We promised more police and we delivered them. More than 50 police are already actively patrolling the streets of Townsville as part of Operation Romeo Seville. Townsville police out on the streets are getting results as I speak. Figures from the end of May show that Operation Romeo Seville has led to the arrest of 696 offenders on 2,507 charges. They are backed by the State Flying Squad, State Intelligence, the Road Policing Command, the Rapid Action and Patrol Group, the Tactical Crime Squad, the Property Crime Squad, the CIB, Child Protection and Investigation Unit and our general duties officers.

What has the LNP delivered? A failed boot camp experiment, an experiment that wasted millions of dollars. In the LNP's first budget, Townsville police were told to tighten their belts. Senior police were warned that extra cars and computers would not be provided for new police officers—new police coming out of the Townsville police academy that the LNP planned to sell. In that budget, funding for new operational equipment for police fell from \$77.5 million to \$53.8 million. That LNP budget for new and upgraded equipment, including vehicles, boats and traffic cameras, was the lowest in three years.

Those opposite failed to stand up to their federal colleagues to fund one of the most successful youth programs, Project Booyah's Framing the Future. The LNP voted against our amendments to get tough on bail. At the time when car thefts were on the rise, what did the LNP do? They slashed the police auto theft squad from 18 to three, axed funding to the National Motor Vehicle Theft Reduction Council and failed to fund a trial of automatic numberplate recognition—another broken promise. Our government restored all of that funding and more.

We are delivering body worn cameras to every uniformed first responder police officer in Townsville. When parliament sat in Townsville in September last year, the LNP had only one half-baked police policy: an unfunded, ill-thought-out helicopter.

Due to an error in the time allocated to the member, Mr Speaker authorised the incorporation of the remainder of the speech.

The experts crunched the number and found out that the LNP's one helicopter would be in the air for only an hour a day.

It was pathetic.

Because under this government, we have delivered two new helicopters for North Queensland.

Not one, but two.

A \$43 million investment.

And unlike the LNP's pie-in-the-sky promise, our helicopters will be in the air for a lot longer than an hour a day.

The biggest threat to safety in Townsville is the LNP.

Because under the LNP, there may not be a RAP—a Rapid Action Patrol Group in Townsville.

Nothing is sacred when it comes to the LNP's track record to cut, sell and sack.

Let's look at the LNP's own WRAP sheet.

They cut the jobs of more than 330 police personnel.

Cut the Police budget in Townsville in their first budget.

Wanted to sell the very academy that trains police recruits; and

Had a sneaky plan privatise the Townsville prison.

Cut, Sack, Sell—that's all they know.

It's a shameful legacy.

They promised to boost police training and resources.

Then they cut training courses, firearms training, driver safety courses, taser training, and cut back on vital equipment.

They promised to address youth offending.

And came up with a failed boot camp experiment to breed fitter, faster criminals—an experiment that wasted millions of dollars.

And like a classic scene from Ground Hog Day, they want to do it all over again, and again, and again, and again. Did I say again?

They will never learn from their mistakes.

The LNP voted against our amendments to get tough on bail.

In our five-point plan to crack down on youth offending, we promised tougher on action on bail.

Already, we've see a 100% strike rate in North Queensland where the courts have revoked bail for serious young offenders.

They refused to publish annual crime figures.

This government brought them back.

The LNP will promise the world, but mark my words, they will never deliver.

Speaker, the Palaszczuk Government delivers on our promises.

And we have a plan for Queensland.

Our plan is to build safer communities and stronger regional economies in places like Townsville and to create jobs for Queenslanders at a time when jobs and job security are more important than ever before.



Mr NICHOLLS (Clayfield—LNP) (5.15 pm): It is always a pleasure to follow the member for Townsville. As a former headmaster, he should be aware of the dangers of plagiarising speeches. If he looks at the speech of his colleague the member for Cook—

Mr SPEAKER: Sorry to interrupt your flow, member for Clayfield. The clock needed to be reset to five minutes.

Mr NICHOLLS: I am always grateful for your generosity, Mr Speaker. Long may it remain. The member for Townsville has plagiarised the member for Cook's speech of 19 February this year, word for word. He cannot even come up with his own words for a five-minute speech. What he has failed to address and what he fails to deal with is his total lack of support for a dedicated police helicopter for Townsville. Where has he been on that for the last 3½ years? He has been nowhere with respect to that. Where was he when we put a thousand extra police on the payroll between 2012 and 2016? Where was he when we put portable iPads on the payroll? Where was he when we had tougher laws introduced and when we took on the outlaw bikie gangs and had police's backs? Where was the Labor Party? First they voted in favour of it, then they voted against it. When it comes to being tough on crime, this Labor Party is all talk.

It is often said that addressing causes and responses to crime, and in particular juvenile crime, in Queensland is complex and there are no easy solutions, but there is one simple step that can start the process of dealing with juvenile crime. Just one thing needs to happen, and that one thing is to elect an LNP government. It needs to happen because a change in government will mean that we have a premier, in the member for Nanango, who actually realises we have a crime problem, a leader who listens to the community. The Leader of the Opposition and the shadow ministers—and I have seen them here and I have been with them—attend meetings of Queenslanders throughout the state to hear their concerns and the stories of the impacts of crime on Queenslanders. Compare this to the Premier, who only earlier this year, according to media, told her own caucus members there was no crime problem and her MPs should stop complaining about it. Forget about the Premier not listening to the opposition and forget about the Premier not listening to the voters of Townsville, Gold Coast, Cairns, Aspley, Mansfield or Redlands or my own electorate of Clayfield; she does not even listen to her own caucus.

The causes and responses to crime are complex. No-one denies that. It is often said that in order to fix a problem it needs to be acknowledged as a problem in the first place. The very first step is to acknowledge the existence of a crime problem—something that Premier Palaszczuk refuses to do. This Labor government and its members refuse to acknowledge the problem despite the statistics. Since 2014-15 robbery is up 93 per cent, armed robbery up 86 per cent, unlawful use of a motor vehicle up 77 per cent, unlawful entry up 30 per cent and shop stealing up 69 per cent. On 19 February this year I highlighted statistics in my electorate of Clayfield. Only last week, the local myPolice North Brisbane website reported a spike in unlawful entry of motor vehicle offences in North Brisbane. The community liaison officer said—

Intelligence officers in North Brisbane have detected a recent spike in the number of vehicles that have been unlawfully entered, and number plates being stolen from parked vehicles.

Disturbingly those figures also show an increase in drug offences in both the Hendra and North Brisbane region.


Clearly, there is a problem from Cairns to Currumbin and from Clayfield to Cunnamulla. The only person who does not think there is a problem is Premier Palaszczuk. An LNP government will address the crime problem. It will do so in a considered and comprehensive way. It will put the safety and security of law-abiding citizens first. It will do this by giving police the powers they need. Importantly, hardworking, honest police will know that an LNP government has their backs—we will support you, we will not go weak at the knees and we will stand by you, just like we did when we took on the bikie gangs in Queensland.

I am glad policies I announced at the last election form part of our plan. These include removing the 'detention as a last resort' provisions of the Youth Justice Act. This allows courts the freedom to ensure the penalty fits the crime. In particular, I support the \$7 million two-year trial in terms of justice reinvestment. The reality is that the only way we will see youth unemployment and juvenile crime both drop and community safety increase is if an LNP government, led by Deb Frecklington—

Mr SPEAKER: The member's time has expired.

Mr NICHOLLS:—is elected to get Queensland working again.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Clayfield, I will ask that you ensure that you resume your seat when your time has expired.

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (5.21 pm): I rise to speak against this motion. When I first read this motion I thought that this is their last arrow—a law and order moral panic. Those opposite have no other credible policy options left with just 12 weeks before voting opens. They have abandoned the field on jobs. They have outlined no coherent or proven policies to get Queensland back into work.

They have given up on a decent policy on the Queensland economy. The only economic policy they had was to open the borders—get the economy going by letting Victorians flood into Queensland. Some 64 times the Leader of the Opposition trumpeted her only economic policy—open the borders. When this moral panic arrow falls short they will have nothing. They will go to the election without anything to offer the people of Queensland except their own lack of judgement.

I reflect on what we have done in my communities over 20 years in terms of the issue of youth justice. We know that the only way to resolve these issues is through years and years of hard work within the community—a range of in-depth, integrated, labour intensive and time intensive programs. We have to build up trust between local families and state agencies. Most importantly, we have to listen to the community and provide solutions that are driven by the community.

The Queensland Youth Partnership Initiative has delivered school holiday activities and support services at North Lakes to curb antisocial behaviour and reduce crime. Minister Farmer and I visited this program at North Lakes. We saw how it is based on a local partnership.

Ms Farmer: Great program.

Mr WHITING: I thank the minister for that. It highlighted the partnership between the local YMCA, the Westfield shopping centre and the council. Another program that works is the Community Youth Response program. The program targets the highest risk offenders, bringing together after-hours services, providing intensive supervision and providing an alternative education bridging program. Other locally based programs that work are restorative justice conferencing and the Transition 2 Success program.

The figures speak for themselves in terms of the Transition 2 Success program. Of participants who completed a course, 75 per cent did not offend within six months and 67 per cent did not offend within 12 months. All of these programs and community based partnerships that work intensively with young people in the Moreton Bay area are having a positive effect. We have seen a 23 per cent decrease in the number of 10- to 17-year-old offenders. What we are now left with in the Moreton Bay area are hardcore repeat offenders.

Compare this to the LNP policies on youth justice which are just woeful. This is the last arrow in their quiver and it can be knocked down with just a couple of minutes research. Take for example what the member for Everton said on ABC Radio on Friday. He said that they would be monitoring young people on bail 24 hours a day. We are already doing that. We have introduced 24/7 co-responder strike teams. As part of these teams, police and youth justice workers are on the road together. They are already on the ground across the Moreton Bay area targeting antisocial and criminal behaviour. Over 340 young people across the state have been supported by co-responder teams since May.


Let us quickly look at the LNP proposal for boot camps. I remind people what the 2014-15 Auditor-General's report said the last time the LNP brought in the boot camp program. The report said the cost—

Mr Harper interjected.

Mr WHITING: Sixteen million dollars. I take that interjection. The report said it was originally \$7.4 million, but clearly other things were discovered. The member for Kawana made his own decisions on who was awarded contracts and without documentation. The Fraser Coast boot camp went to the 10th ranked and most expensive offer. The North Queensland boot camp was allowed to have a 15 per cent profit margin. They received an extra \$875,000 in payments. They received additional security staffing from the state to work on their enterprise and \$240,000 to upgrade a private residence.

What was the recidivism rate? It went through the roof. This is the kind of mess that the LNP would create with their boot camps proposal and their youth justice proposal. They only seek to generate problems not solutions.

(Time expired)

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (5.26 pm): We have seen the failures under this do-nothing Labor government time and time again. Those failures have seen crime skyrocket in our communities. Since the Palaszczuk Labor government came into office in 2015 we have seen crime in Queensland skyrocket. As mentioned earlier, robbery is up 93 per cent, armed robbery up 86 per cent, the unlawful use of motor vehicles up 77 per cent and shop stealing up 69 per cent. On the Gold Coast, in some areas the figures are even worse. Shop stealing, for example, is up more than double at 144 per cent. Assault has increased by 127 per cent. Serious assault is up by 118 per cent. We can all remember those terrible circumstances where young people have lost their lives and many of the alleged offenders—in those cases youth offenders—have previous serious crimes to their names.

Labor's catch and release laws are an abhorrence. Labor's recent amendments do nothing to fix the broken youth justice system and skyrocketing crime caused by Labor. Labor has retained the presumption in favour of bail. Youths can be granted bail even if they pose a risk of reoffending and absconding. Unlike Labor, the LNP has committed to scrapping the presumption in favour of bail, altogether. The LNP has committed to removing the principle of detention as a last resort. Under Labor we see amendments after amendments to the Youth Justice Act, but no real solution to youth crime. Labor's priorities are all wrong.

I remember the youth bail house intended for Jacobs Well and to house 12 offenders was in an area that has no public transport. Where was it going to be put? They were going to close the Jacobs Well Environmental Education Centre that caters for almost 6,000 students a year. Imagine the impact on the education about our environment of the tens of thousands of young people that that would have caused. Imagine the impact on that community that that would have had.

Youth bail houses are a breeding ground for youth crime. As at April this year there has been a total of 1,164 critical instances. Some 59 of those youth reoffended while housed in bail houses. Some 84 per cent—that is 121 out of the 145 youths in those places—have reoffended after residing in bail houses. We are told that the level of reoffending for at least half of the young people residing in those bail houses is around nine offences per young person. These failed bail houses do not provide value for money, costing about \$2,600 per teenager—double that of regular jails.

I recall the proposal by the Attorney-General to spend \$10 million on something like 10 youth offenders in Townsville a few years ago, arguing that wrapping services around them and their families would cut crime in Townsville by 44 per cent. That was the quantum of crime that these youth were responsible for. Good luck with that. That spend was a total fail, but it pales into insignificance because this bail house thought bubble will cost taxpayers more than \$70 million.

The LNP will close down every single bail house that has caused misery to their communities and failed rehabilitation of young offenders committing crime. We will implement tougher laws. We will monitor youth offenders in bail 24/7. That is right: we will monitor them 24/7. We will introduce mandatory detention for third convictions. We will establish a community payback farm program. We will scrap youth bail houses and we will trial justice reinvestment. We will give our police the tough laws and extra resources they need. Youth crime actually fell under the LNP, but it skyrocketed under this Labor government.

Mr Ryan interjected.

Mr Purdie interjected.


Mr CRANDON: We will break the cycle of youth crime and hold repeat offenders accountable. At the end of the day it is about the important issue of community safety.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Minister for Police and member for Ninderry, you are both warned under the standing orders for quarrelling across the chamber.

Mr CRANDON: Labor's soft stance on youth crime is failing residents in crime riddled areas such as the Gold Coast, Townsville and Cairns, and it is infiltrating suburbs around Brisbane as well. Repeat offending is a major issue, with 10 per cent, as I said before, of juvenile offenders responsible for 44 per cent of all proven offences in the 2018-19 statistics.

The only way to fix the crime crisis is to change the government and vote for the LNP—a Deb Frecklington-led LNP government. Labor are soft on crime—always have been and always will be. The people of Queensland are paying for Labor's crime crisis through increased property crime and rising insurance bills.

Mr SPEAKER: Before calling the next speaker, I remind members that it is not appropriate to use people's names in this place. We have official titles. Names can be used in conjunction with those titles but cannot stand alone.

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (5.31 pm): I always like to contribute in the 'scream'. They cannot be taking their motion too seriously. It is the member for Everton's motion, yet he could not even speak for five minutes on it. I rise to speak against the motion moved by the LNP and their ship of fools who have a legacy of failure in the youth crime space. They hid their crime statistics; we report them. This is the same mob who have a shameful history of never actually doing anything of substance in their time under Campbell Newman.

Let us start with the boot camps—\$16 million of taxpayers' money wasted, resulting in 70 per cent recidivism. The member for Clayfield wants to talk about helicopters. We have two of them! We can talk about a certain helicopter ride by 'Lord Farquaad', the ever smiling member for Kawana, who should hang his head in shame, flying to the boot camp in that helicopter—'hello Bronwyn Bishop!'—at taxpayers' expense. Perhaps he needed the chopper to bring back the thousands of dollars donated by the very people who ran Lincoln Springs—shame, shame, shame!

Just weeks ago the Leader of the Opposition was in Townsville to offer up their new plans, with a rebadged boot camp. Yes, they dusted off the Campbell Newman boot camp plans with a—wait for it, members—'farm stay'. They cannot be serious. This is not being tough on crime. Sending them off to a 'farm stay'. Did you see the interview? What a train wreck. The LNP candidate for Mundingburra—and there are some questions to be asked there—is the same bloke who ran TSCAG. I am sure the member for Mundingburra has some questions about perhaps being led up the garden path. He was responsible for reducing crime in Townsville. He did not know where to look. He stood behind the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Purdie interjected.

Mr HARPER: He looked down and then he looked to the side.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Thuringowa, resume your seat. Member for Ninderry, you are warned under the standing orders. You are interjecting. You can leave the chamber for one hour.

Whereupon the honourable member for Ninderry withdrew from the chamber at 5.34 pm.

Mr SPEAKER: Members, I have made myself clear. When warnings are issued, there are to be no interjections from those members.

Mr HARPER: The LNP candidate did not know where to look because the leader was asked who will run the farm stay. 'Well,' she said, 'um, um—people. People will run it.' When asked what these young people could do, she offered up, 'Um, um—fencing. They could learn fencing.' For goodness sake, the LNP do not have a plan. This is a thought bubble written on the back of a coaster.

Our government knows that locals should have a say in how we respond to youth crime and we have listened. Locals wanted and petitioned for on-country programs in Townsville, and that is exactly what we have delivered. Young people have been referred already.

Community safety comes first in Townsville and young people must be held accountable. We have implemented tough new bail laws to ensure that if young people are an unacceptable risk to the community they must be refused bail. I ask the LNP: do they support community safety? Do they?

Mr Crandon interjected.

Mr HARPER: You do? Good.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Coomera will cease his interjections.

Mr HARPER: I will take the interjection. Why do they oppose strengthening of the bail laws? If a young person continues to reoffend, they will be held accountable.

Mr Nicholls interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Clayfield will cease his interjections.


Mr HARPER: The Newman government introduced an offence of finding of guilt for another offence while on bail, and the court ruled that it did not work. Results are clear: 90 per cent of those offenders reoffended within 12 months—another fail under the LNP. Our strong bail laws nullify the LNP's breach of bail because those serious offenders—the hard nuts who we are going after—will not get bail. Making breach of bail an offence is a waste of the court's time. Further offences committed on bail are considered seriously and dealt with by the courts and penalties applied.

Mr Crandon interjected.

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

Mr HARPER: Our five-point plan to crack down on youth crime was announced in March: offenders posing a risk to the community must not get bail; a police blitz on bail and appealing court decisions—a 100 per cent success rate I hear, Minister. Our 24/7 co-responder model is already happening. In Townsville last week that co-responder team attended 40 jobs, conducted 32 street checks, completed 17 address checks—this is 24 hours a day. This is what we are doing under our government. We are empowering local communities in the war on crime with \$2 million for local crime action committees in 10 places, a further \$200,000 on top of substantial investment in the Townsville Stronger Communities Action Group.

That is the government investment and our reforms are working. What we are left with is a hard core group of offenders. We are going after them. We will go to Townsville and do something about it. The LNP have a legacy of failure. They never, ever achieved anything in their time in government.

 **Mr O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (5.37 pm): I rise to support the motion moved by the shadow minister for police. Once again, I want to bring to the attention of this parliament the experiences of people in my part of the Gold Coast as they deal with a surge in crime. That is everything from hooning—and we saw another incident along Turpin Road last week, with a P-plate vehicle crashing into a fence—to break and enters, theft, domestic violence and other assaults. I am constantly hearing the frustration of my community at the level of crime that seems to be accepted by this government.

Police openly admit to people how overstretched and under-resourced they are. They feel helpless, constantly going through the cycle of apprehending someone only to have them walk free the next day. Youth crime is a particular concern and people want something done about it. In the last month alone I have spoken to a number of locals who have been dealing with the effects of a weak government response to youth crime. One person in particular—Shane, who lives just around the corner from my office in Labrador—got in touch with me after his family home was broken into. This happened within the 40 minutes that his wife, Maria, had gone to drop their children off at school.

Four teenagers kicked in their door and stole over \$10,000 worth of their belongings. On getting back to the house, his wife noticed one of the teens standing on their nature strip. When she realised what they were trying to do, she tried to lock them in and take photographs of them. They knocked her over as they broke out of the house, and she ended up with a black eye. The police knew exactly who it was from the photos because they already had a lengthy rap sheet. Despite that, they were released within 24 hours and went on to steal from the local IGA within days. Those four were aged between 13 and 15.

Shane and his wife have had the locks changed in the whole house. They bought a safe and they now use four different keys to get in the door, but he said it is worth it to just make his family feel secure. His wife is now always on edge, especially at night. These teens might think it is all a bit of a joke, but it has left this family feeling unsafe in what Shane now describes as Fort Knox.


In another story from Arundel, my friend PJ got in touch after her house was ransacked. They had multiple smashed windows. The house was pulled apart with every drawer opened, their stuff was spread out everywhere. iPads, phones, jewellery, sunglasses and other irreplaceable items were all taken. PJ's daughter, Billie, is only young and she has been really rattled by the event, as has the rest of their family. Almost two weeks later, although the police have fingerprints nothing has been done due to the backlog of cases. Police in this case believe it could be the kids they arrested only weeks ago.

I have mentioned before the Messenger group chat I am in with local residents of one street, who are sick of some teenagers who are terrorising their neighbourhood at the back of Labrador off Freeman Street. These kids are jumping on the roof of the bus stop and abusing bus drivers. They attempted to rob a food delivery driver. They deliberately released one of the resident's birds and they have even stolen a car. There is no consideration for the residents of this area. Their intent is to keep making trouble. Last week, further north of my area there were reports of juveniles jumping on and damaging the solar panels at a local community centre as well as a crime spree at Paradise Point. A number of youth there have been accused of terrorising local shopkeepers, even threatening one with an electronic device believed to be a taser.

Then, of course, there is the heartbreaking story of Parkwood teenager Jack Beasley. It is one I have shared before with this House and publically, but I will keep mentioning it because 'Jacko' must not be forgotten. Jack was stabbed to death in Surfers Paradise not long before Christmas last year,

only months after graduating from Pacific Pines State High School. He had his whole life ahead of him. His parents, Brett and Belinda, back our changes to the law because they do not want to see any other family go through what they have. Their campaign against knife crime is inspirational, and I am proud to support them.

These crimes leave behind fear, grief and instability, let alone the loss of property; yet it seems to have no impact at all on those who commit them. These stories paint the picture of what is being experienced by my community on the Gold Coast. There is deep frustration at the lack of action and lack of consequences for offenders. The current approach is clearly not working. Our plan is tough but it gets the balance right. It gives real consequences and deterrence along with early intervention and rehabilitation, and the government should adopt it immediately.

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (5.42 pm): The issue of youth crime is not a simple matter. There is no-one in this chamber or the community that supports crime. This side of government has done an incredible amount of work to support victims of crime as well as investing in reducing crime in this state. You cannot put it down to a simple slogan or simple plans that are announced, as the opposition like to do, time and time again, but you would expect that the newly appointed shadow police minister could at least find five minutes to talk about the LNP's plan instead of sitting down after 3½ minutes. There is clearly no substance there whatsoever.

The fact is that when you talk about plans, the LNP's plan is so comprehensive—according to the media release that the LNP put out headed 'Deb's comprehensive plan to crack down on youth crime'—that it could not even make it into their plan for Our Plan for Queensland, so it is sort of like a plan for a plan. Of the six policies that are there, there is nothing about law and order. You have to go searching and you find it under 'news'. They only extend to some quotes in a media release; that is how extensive their plan is.

'The reality is that, sadly, no legislation creates good parents, good families, individual responsibility. People will continue to make poor choices, no matter who is in government.' They are not my words: they are the words of the Redcliffe LNP candidate who, on 7 July, put that on her Facebook page while proudly talking about the LNP's wonderful youth justice policy. That candidate, who likes to come out and support our youth organisations and youth housing and talks about all the wonderful work they are doing, then walks out the door and talks about being tough on crime. 'We're just going to lock up these little thugs.' The inconsistencies of those opposite are just never-ending.

We now hear about their community payback farm program. You can call it a farm, you can call it a boot camp: the reality is that it is the same thing. In fact, there were horses at the boot camp. We know that because you can watch the professionally filmed clip the former attorney-general and member for Kawana made. He used \$15,000 of taxpayers' money to fly two helicopters, including the film crew, out to the boot camp to film these horses and what was happening at this boot camp. It was a ridiculous amount of money. In fact, it was budgeted at \$2 million but it blew out to \$16.7 million.

Mr Ryan: Was that before or after the children's escape?

Mrs D'ATH: Well, it was so good and so effective that some kids got to go back numerous times. They just kept going back to the boot camp. I guess they enjoyed it. They thought it was a great experience.


The problem is that these things on their own do not change behaviour because, no matter how good that experience, when they go back they get placed back into the same family and the same community with the same issues. You need to actually listen to the evidence and the experts and you need to invest. We hear that they are going to introduce mandatory detention for third convictions. They have not said how much money they are going to put into new youth detention centres. Where are they coming from? How many beds are going to be created?

Mrs Gerber interjected.

Mrs D'ATH: But hold on! No, they actually support justice reinvestment. They are going to trial it, even though it has been happening all over the state. Justice reinvestment includes youth justice conferencing. That was one of those policies they scrapped when in government. Justice reinvestment is a redirection of money from prisons to fund and rebuild human resources and physical infrastructure. As stated in the Australian Law Reform Commission's report—

Justice reinvestment suggests that prisons are an investment failure, 'destabilising communities along with the individuals ...

It appears that the Leader of the Opposition has seen the light. She actually understands what justice reinvestment is. They are so inconsistent in their approach. 'Lock 'em up, build more detention centres.' 'No, we're going to do justice reinvestment.' 'No, no, no. No laws help, it doesn't matter who's in government.' They have no plans; they have no policies.

 **Mr JANETZKI** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (5.47 pm): Setting aside the economy for one minute, if there is one issue that has exemplified the abject failure of this Palaszczuk Labor government it is the issue of crime. With the lacklustre performance of the Attorney-General just then, it is not surprising it has been such a failure over the last five years. The crisis that began in crime and youth justice began the very day the Palaszczuk Labor government took power in Queensland in 2015.

Since that time we have had a series of failures, humiliations and backflips. It is a very long list, but I am going to run through a few of them for the benefit of the House. Firstly, we have 17-year-olds in the youth justice system introduced without a plan. The Queensland Police Union said there was no plan. We warned there was no plan. What did that lead to? The watch house crisis, where at one stage the Brisbane watch house had more kids than adults. Shame on this Palaszczuk Labor government for their failures on youth justice, bringing 17-year-olds into the youth justice plan without a proper plan or any idea for the future. They defunded Crime Stoppers. Who would have thought that would be possible? They defunded Crime Stoppers and they left the volunteers hanging out to dry.

Mr Ryan interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Pause the clock. Minister for Police, you are already under a warning. You can leave the chamber for one hour.

Whereupon the honourable member for Morayfield withdrew from the chamber at 5.48 pm.

Mr JANETZKI: Youth justice has seen thousands of pages of reviews and hundreds of recommendations. We have had over \$500 million invested into the youth justice system, and what do we see in our detention centres and prisons? Riots, lockdowns, assaults—

An opposition member: Overcrowding.

Mr JANETZKI: We have seen overcrowding. We have assaults on our hardworking security guards, our hardworking public servants.

We have seen the humiliation of the catch and release laws. In August last year, those on that side of the House stood up and argued for the catch and release laws. That was in August last year. Within 10 months, they quietly came back into this House and amended those laws. Prior to that we had the police minister up in Townsville criticising lawyers. He is a lawyer I believe, but he went up there and criticised lawyers for simply applying the Palaszczuk Labor government law before they snuck back in and changed it again.

We have had bail houses, and \$70 million will be spent on bail houses by 2022-23. Does this House realise the reoffending rate in bail houses? It is 83 per cent; 121 out of 145 offenders have reoffended. They talk over there about the Newman government. In the last year of the Newman government, as detailed in the Childrens Court report that was released at the end of 2015, we had seen a five per cent drop in young offenders being charged. This government want to stack that record against an 83 per cent failure—because that is what it is. That is the reoffending rate out of bail houses. It will cost \$70 million by 2022-23 for an 83 per cent failure. How can they possibly compare the record on youth justice and crime in this state?

Then we go to Townsville, which is ultimately ground zero for this particular problem, and that is why the policy was released there last week. We have seen members and ministers go missing in Townsville for so long. They finally found their voice on a couple of occasions when we were sitting in Townsville, but otherwise it has been the *Townsville Bulletin* running the campaign there. Here are some headlines from the last couple of years: 'QLD Police Minister Mark Ryan silent on children bail trips', 'Approach to youth crime a shambles', 'Why crime has Townsville Labor MPs in trouble', 'MP fails on crime yet again', 'Less chat and more action', 'Crims free pass' and my favourite 'Premier clueless on justice needs'.

If there is one leader in this House who is not clueless on justice and who has a plan for the future, it is the member for Nanango. She launched the crime and justice policy in Townsville last week because it is time that we start to put the safety of our community front and centre in this state. That is why we will do 24/7 monitoring of youth offenders on bail, we will introduce community payback farm programs, we will scrap the bail houses and divert that money that is associated with the failure of bail houses into justice reinvestment to finally help children overcome their particular problems and get their lives back on track, and we will toughen the law. Youth justice became a crisis in this state the day the Palaszczuk Labor government was elected and it will remain so until the election of the Frecklington Liberal National government on 31 October, and that moment cannot come soon enough.



Hon. DE FARMER (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety, Youth and Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (5.52 pm): Here we have the last desperate attempt of the LNP to get some attention for their youth crime policy. They sent it out. They had the opposition leader trying to get it through every media outlet. It was a blitz. She thumped her chest. She was outraged. She was appalled. The LNP were going to fix youth crime once and for all, but how embarrassing for them that, within 24 hours, it was clear their policy had completely bombed. People said that it was tired and that it was the same old, same old.

The ABC news said, 'The most surprising thing about the LNP's self-described "crackdown" on youth crime is not so much its hard-line approach, but rather its familiarity.' We had the Police Union saying that it was a rehash of Campbell Newman's failed policies minus the pink jumpsuits. Amnesty said, 'Sadly, the Queensland opposition have completely missed an opportunity to get smart on crime.' One youth advocate said that it was 'a policy which doesn't even have a skeleton, let alone any flesh on the bones'. In fact it was so sketchy in detail that the member for Ninderry could not even take up five minutes talking about it. Others were concerned that the LNP was locking into flawed policy. The Queensland Law Society wanted to know about the three strikes policy which they say does not stop crime. 'How will it actually work?' they asked. A Cairns sports boss, whose club was repeatedly targeted by young offenders, was 'not sure whether mandatory sentencing is the answer'.

The community has every right to be concerned about the so-called youth crime policy because the LNP have form when it comes to this—when it comes to just making things up because they sound good. We know their boot camps were a total failure. When you came out of them, you were 65 per cent more likely to reoffend. What about their breach of bail policy, which I notice they did not mention in their motion because they are probably too embarrassed? It was supposed to deter reoffending but instead, of the small number of people actually charged, 90 per cent reoffended within 12 months. I repeat: 90 per cent.

We can therefore understand why everyone is a bit sceptical. While the LNP trot out one-liners to go to the community's concerns about youth crime, this government has been absolutely committed to changing the story for youth justice, to doing the things that work because that is what the community expects us to do.

Although youth crime has gone down 30 per cent in the last 10 years, if it is your grandma who had been assaulted, if it is your neighbour who had her car stolen or if you were held up at the local convenience store, I can understand that those statistics do not mean anything to you. The majority of offences we are seeing now are committed by a small number of offenders. In fact, 10 per cent of offenders commit 44 per cent of the crime. That is why earlier this year we announced a five-point plan which cracks down on these hardcore offenders. Those initiatives are all in place. We are going after those hardcore offenders.

Our new bail laws, which the LNP voted against, mean that, if a young person is at risk of reoffending or a threat to the community, they will be detained. Since we were elected in 2015, we have increased our detention centre capacity by one-third. How many beds did the LNP build when they were in government? Zero. The LNP have absolutely no track record when it comes to doing something about youth justice.

We know that we have to break the cycle of reoffending. It is why in the last two years we have made a half billion dollar commitment to taking youth crime out of the too-hard basket once and for all and we have invested in programs that break the cycle. For instance, 66 per cent of young people taking our Transition 2 Success program do not reoffend, and 77 per cent of young people taking our restorative justice program—which the LNP scrapped—do not reoffend or reduce the magnitude of their reoffending. These are the figures the community want to see. They want to have faith that what their government is doing is working. In 2018 I asked former police commissioner Bob Atkinson to report to me on the way forward for youth crime, and his report has informed all of our actions. One of the most important things that Bob said was that everything we do in youth justice must be bookended by community safety and community confidence.

The figures speak for themselves: 30 per cent fewer offenders over 10 years; 19 per cent fewer offenders in the 12 months to 31 March 2020; and nine per cent fewer proven offences in 12 months to 31 March 2020. We do not want to hear that terrible things have happened to people in the community who have been victims of crime. Some of the cases that members opposite talked about are terrible cases that caused terrible tragedy in the community. The community do not want us to throw away one-liners; they want us to do the things that work. That is what we are doing and the evidence speaks for that. The victims and the community deserve no less.

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

AYES, 37:

LNP, 34—Bates, Batt, Bennett, Boothman, Crandon, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Gerber, Hart, Hunt, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McArdle, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O'Connor, Perrett, Powell, Robinson, Rowan, Simpson, Sorensen, Stevens, Watts, Wilson.

NQF, 1—Costigan.

PHON, 1—Andrew.

Ind, 1—Bolton.

NOES, 44:

ALP, 43—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Healy, Hinchliffe, Howard, Jones, Kelly, King, Linard, Lui, Lynham, Madden, McCallum, McMahon, McMillan, Miles, Mullen, B. O'Rourke, C. O'Rourke, Palaszczyk, Pease, Power, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Saunders, Scanlon, Stewart, Trad, Whiting.

Grn, 1—Berkman.

Pairs: Lauga, Bleijie; Mellish, Weir; Pegg, Boyce.


Resolved in the negative.

CORRECTIVE SERVICES AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 1674, on motion of Mr Ryan—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (6.03 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Corrective Services and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I would first like to address the matter of clause 15, the seven-day early release possibility for inmates. I heard the minister remarking that amendments concerning this would be moved. I think it is vital that we do mention this provision was included in the bill. The very fact that the government was contemplating this move is entirely consistent with their prioritisation of the rights and interests of offenders, inmates and criminals over those of victims and of a society that expects something to be done about the rampant crime in our midst. The idea that a bureaucrat rather than a judge should be able to vary the sentence of an inmate to allow them to leave up to seven days prior to the completion of their sentence is entirely out of step with the thinking of reasonable, everyday Queenslanders.

When I mentioned this provision of the bill to some of my constituents I was greeted with horror. It was universally condemned. I cannot understand why the government would persist with this kind of hand-wringing over criminals rather than over those who are victims of crime, those whose communities are suffering from crime and those whose economic interests, families and safety are compromised by the crime in our midst. It sends the wrong signal that a government would prioritise in a legislative instrument like this bill the early release of offenders when people in places like Townsville, Cairns and my own electorate of Southern Downs are complaining about crime. I believe the perception of members of my community is that not enough is being done and that there are lots of bleeding hearts out there who concern themselves with the welfare and rights of those going before the courts and those perpetrating crimes against them, but there is only lip-service at best for those who are victims of those crimes.

For example, in Goondiwindi one of the difficulties is that petty crime and car theft is rampant on the streets at times. The offenders steal cars and then roll them into the Macintyre River. I think we could forgive the good folk of places like Goondiwindi, Townsville and Cairns for being more concerned about their interests, their hard-earned possessions and property, the safety of their communities and their families than the plight of inmates who may be released from jail up to seven days early so they can catch the right flight home. I think that was the pretext that we were given.

I would like to also say that clause 62, which deals with gel blasters, is another amazing and unfathomable move by this government. If I recall correctly, earlier on we heard the minister talking about how this was a move that was good for community safety, for users and for small business. Nothing could be further from the truth. If we talk about community safety, there are already laws on the statute books which enable police to deal with people who brandish replica firearms or go about

armed in order to cause menace or alarm people. I have spoken to local police in my neck of the woods and none of them have been lying awake at night biting their fingernails worrying about the progress of reform in the area of gel blasters.

In terms of the users, my sons have gel blasters. We live on a farm property to the east of Stanthorpe. They have some gel blasters and I really enjoy using those gel blasters to play with them. I am not home that often. I spend a lot of my time on the road. I am usually in a motel in Millmerran, Allora or Goondiwindi most nights of the week. When I get home the idea that we can run around the backyard, hide behind some trees and shoot each other with gel balls is wonderful because it gives expression to what I would sometimes like to do in this House.

Mr Langbroek interjected.

Mr LISTER: I take the interjection from my honourable friend the member for Surfers Paradise. Yes, my wife, Belinda, is a better shot than I am. As a family we enjoy using them. The use of gel blasters is an entirely innocuous pastime. Earlier on I spoke to one of my sons on the phone and I told him that this bill was coming up. I finally disclosed to him—I had been putting it off because I did not want to upset him—that the Labor government may take his gel blasters off him. That is what this amounts to. Honourable members should see a nine-year-old boy who has been told that he is going to be deprived of some of his favourite possessions because of the whimsy and capriciousness of this rump of a government.

We have no gel blaster club in Stanthorpe. I speak for many people in my electorate who are too far away from a gel blaster club—if one exists at all—to be able to fulfil the requirements under this bill that they be a member of a gel blaster club in order to retain possession of them. This is madness; it is overreach. It is a thought bubble which has clearly not been dreamt up by the police force. However, I would not put them on the spot and ask them if this was a police proposal rather than a ministerial one. It is clearly not going to do anything for community safety. It is hurting users.

The last thing that the minister mentioned was small business. We have a gel blaster shop in Warwick and I was speaking to the proprietor of that shop. He is working hard in a retail business that he started himself trying to make a living for his family. He is trying to pay taxes to pay for politicians and for all of the welfare and health services, police officers and teachers that we oversee in this House. I do not know how the minister could possibly believe that this move to outlaw gel blasters is in any way consistent with the interests of small business. In saying that, I know I speak for the operator of that business in my electorate.


If we return to the community safety matter, is it not instructive that there is a bill upon the table of this House that was introduced a long time ago proposing to deal with violent criminals and their unlawful use of firearms? That bill has not seen the light of day since it was considered by the committee. If the government were truly interested in community safety, that bill would be up for its second reading debate. Instead, we are talking about toys. We are talking about depriving my nine-year-old son, his six-year-old brother—I think he is yet to find out about this—and hundreds of thousands of other Queenslanders and Australians like them of their gel blasters.

Lastly, the Queensland Living History Federation made a very thorough and commendable submission on this bill in the committee process. It was very interesting to see that in 2012 it was granted a five-year exemption from having to have normal licensing arrangements for its replica firearms, its innocuous firearms and the ones that fire a puff of smoke and a bunch of paper for re-enactments and so forth. The Queensland Living History Federation do a great deal of good in the community to keep alive the traditions and stories of our history. It irritates me to see that they as well have been caught up in this net; this fetishist obsession with clamping down on gun owners, as we saw when gun shops were closed on a whim. What exactly did that achieve during the COVID lockdown? They have said, 'If we cannot have another five-year exemption, could we just have a special licence category?' The Queensland Living History Federation's submission states—

Our request that a new class of licence for re-enactors be created to specifically address our activities has been rejected, on the stated basis that it is too difficult to amend the Act.

This government makes an art form of amending acts! How many amendments were moved to the prior bill? I have heard legendary stories about 200 amendments in one sitting to a bill for which the current education minister was responsible. Was that the racing one? If that is the sort of insulting rebuff that a great institution like the Queensland Living History Federation gets from this government when it comes up with a sensible proposal, what hope do any of us have?

The bill also contains a number of good measures which we will support, but the LNP will oppose clauses 15 and 62. In summing up, this government has its priorities all wrong. The people in my electorate of Southern Downs are aghast to see how this government prioritises nitpicking around gel blasters when we have rampant crime on our streets and nothing is being done about that.

 **Mr RUSSO** (Toohey—ALP) (6.12 pm): Well, the member for Southern Downs has misled his poor children! I put it on the record.

Mr Lister: I haven't misled the House, though!

Mr RUSSO: No; I think it is worse to mislead your children. The principal purposes of this bill are: to respond to the immediate risks identified in the Crime and Corruption Commission's report *Taskforce Flaxton: an examination of corruption risks and corruption in Queensland's prisons*; and to improve operational efficiencies for Queensland Corrective Services. Further, the bill creates a permanent firearms amnesty and includes amendments on replica firearms. I would like to speak in support of this bill.

The Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee in its report No. 65, tabled in this assembly on 29 May 2020, recommended that the bill be passed. The bill supports the implementation of recommendations from the Crime and Corruption Commission's Taskforce Flaxton report, with several immediate priorities identified which will assist Queensland Corrective Services to execute its duties within Queensland prisons. Queensland Corrective Services operates with a workforce of approximately 4,700 frontline staff who supervise almost 30,000 prisoners and offenders across Queensland every day. Corrective services officers have a difficult job and work with some of the most challenging people in our society.

The government is committed to providing safe environments not only for the workforce but also for visitors, support workers and personnel, prisoners and offenders. Several strategies have been implemented to increase safety in the complex operational community and correctional environments. A significant amendment is the increase in funding to provide for an increase in staffing levels and the rollout of body worn cameras and load-bearing vests across Queensland's prisons.

Like any other workforce, corrective services officers should be able to attend work, perform their job and return home to their families without experiencing physical threats and violence. Further safety strategies would improve prisoner and offender directed approaches to provide for the installation of additional bunk beds, more effective and efficient procedures through demand management strategies, provide for an extension of prison industries from five to seven days, and the implementation of a modified unit routine to alleviate overcrowding pressures. There would be additional investment in educational programs for prisoners and offenders with a focus on violence reduction and prevention programs. Programs would also provide for the provision of relevant tools, training and de-escalation techniques for staff.

The Corrective Services and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2020 includes a new offence under the Criminal Code to appropriately respond to assaults on working corrective services officers by a prisoner. Prisoners who assault corrective services officers should be held accountable and be liable to receive the maximum penalty for their actions. The amendment makes it clear that if a prisoner seriously assaults a corrective services officer while in a correctional centre with any aggravating circumstances resulting in causing bodily harm to the officer, or if the prisoner is, or pretends to be, armed with a dangerous or offensive weapon or instrument, the maximum penalty of 14 years imprisonment can be applied. Clarity is necessary to provide a strong deterrent to this type of behaviour occurring in a closed environment and to give reassurance to corrective services officers of the importance of their health and safety.

The legislative amendments in the Corrective Services and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2020 respond to risks identified in the Taskforce Flaxton report. While the government recognises that the vast majority of corrective services officers do the right thing, these amendments will rightly authorise and strengthen the authority for alcohol or drug testing of corrective services officers, allow for searching a staff member at a corrective services facility and allow Queensland Corrective Services to destroy forfeited things, to investigate alleged staff misconduct or corrupt conduct and to deal with an offence as a breach of discipline.

To address the risk of inappropriate relationships between staff and prisoners or offenders, a new offence attracting strict penalties has been introduced which will prohibit a staff member from being involved in an intimate relationship with a prisoner or offender. Currently, the chief executive can require an offender to wear a device for monitoring an offender's location. The bill proposes to amend the provision to also allow the chief executive to direct an offender to permit the installation of a device,

such as a battery charger, which would allow the monitoring device to continue to function. It would make it an offence for an offender to remove or tamper with an electronic monitoring device or associated equipment without having a reasonable excuse.


Under further amendments to the bill, victims of offences who are on the victims register are to be notified of a prisoner's discharge or release as soon as practicable, and they will also be allowed to apply to the Parole Board Queensland for an extension to provide a submission. The government's swift implementation of legislative amendments to support the Taskforce Flaxton recommendations highlights a commitment to ensuring that all government departments act with the highest standards of integrity, ethics, accountability and transparency.

The Corrective Services and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2020 makes amendments regarding two Queensland Police Service policies, and they are the regulation of replica firearms and the creation of a permanent firearms amnesty. While offences exist for using replica firearms in public, the possession of them has never been regulated in Queensland. There has been an increase in the number of replica firearms being seen in public and causing alarm when people mistake the replicas for real firearms. This is a problem that needs addressing as sightings of these replicas in public spaces around the community create a drain on police resources and increase the risk of a police shooting.

The amendments are not seeking to ban participation in popular pastimes and will allow the recognition of reasonable excuses for why someone would be carrying a replica firearm, such as a gel blaster, in public and will also look at other measures such as the safe storage and carriage of these items. Whether something is or is not a reasonable excuse will depend on all of the circumstances at the time, though essentially it is whether a reasonable person would consider it a reasonable excuse to possess the item. The majority of stakeholders hold the view that regulation creates a safe framework that protects the community, supports small businesses and the industry, and allows people to continue to safely enjoy participation in the activity.

A permanent firearms amnesty was resolved at the Ministerial Council for Police and Emergency Management meeting in late 2019. Firearms amnesties are a proven, effective means of reducing the number of unregistered firearms in the community. This bill contains amendments which create a permanent, ongoing firearms amnesty for Queensland. The amendments provide that a person cannot be prosecuted for the unlawful possession of a firearm, or a prescribed item, if they are at or proceeding directly to a police station or approved licensed dealer for the purpose of relinquishing the firearm or item.

There is also a condition that, when practicable, the person must notify the dealer or police station prior to attending. This condition will allow police to determine whether that is, in fact, what they are doing and it is not a false claim being made. If the person who is surrendering the firearm provides their details to a firearms dealer, then the dealer can apply to transfer ownership of a relinquished firearm to themselves to resell. However, if no details are provided to the dealer at the time of surrender of the firearm, then the firearm is to be given to police for forfeiture to the state. This is important to avoid any risk of the scheme being used to launder firearms. I support the committee's recommendation and commend the Corrective Services and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2020 to the House.

 **Mrs GERBER** (Currumbin—LNP) (6.21 pm): This evening I rise to speak on the Corrective Services and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. From the outset, as a member of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee I want to put on the record my thanks to the committee staff for their assistance during the bill's consideration by the committee. By way of background, in December 2018 the Crime and Corruption Commission released a report titled *Taskforce Flaxton: an examination of corruption risks and corruption in Queensland prisons*. The report focused on identifying corruption and risks of corruption in Queensland prisons. As a result of this investigation, the Crime and Corruption Commission found that there were significant corruption risks in Queensland prisons and that our existing anti-corruption framework is not effectively preventing, detecting or dealing with these risks.

On 29 May 2020 the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee recommended that the bill be passed. On this side of the House the LNP has some reservations about certain aspects within the bill—namely, the regulation of gel blasters and the early release of prisoners on parole. I will get to these in detail, but first let me talk to some of the aspects of corruption within corrective services to which the bill relates.

From the outset I want to say that as a former prosecutor with nearly 10 years experience I know how important it is that our criminal justice system is free from corruption, but it also must be run effectively. The Taskforce Flaxton report published in 2018 highlighted that overcrowding in our prisons

increases the occurrence of prison assaults, including serious assaults against staff in our prisons. Our prisons are overflowing and bursting at the seams, but Labor's only solution to prison overcrowding is doubling up—putting a mattress on the floor of a single cell and forcing two prisoners in the one cell. This practice of doubling up is only making the violence and corruption worse.

The Palaszczuk Labor government claims that it has a zero tolerance policy for violence in Queensland's correctional facilities, but its inaction on this issue clearly shows it does not have a plan to fix it, like so many other issues across our state. Queensland's overcrowded prisons mean prisoners are returning to our streets more violent than ever and putting communities like mine at risk. If Labor cannot control our criminals in prison, how does it expect to rehabilitate them and return them to society?

On this side of the House the LNP will always stand up for an improved justice system. That is part of the reason I am standing in this chamber here today. I want to keep our community safe. Corruption in our corrective services system is unacceptable and now is the time for the police minister to take full responsibility for his failure in managing Queensland's prisons. What we have is an embattled police minister who is failing in his role and putting the safety of the community at risk. Only the LNP believes in delivering the resources our prisons need to reduce the risk posed by recidivist offenders and to keep our communities safe.

Appallingly, the bill also seeks to allow for the early release of prisoners on early parole. In May this year Labor was caught out trying to let prisoners out on parole early during the first full sitting week as part of its Justice and Other Legislation (COVID-19 Emergency Response) Amendment Bill and the LNP opposition called it out for what it was—Labor going soft on criminals. The Palaszczuk Labor government did a complete backflip and announced it would be scrapping the unpopular policy. This get-out-of-jail-free pass of early parole was officially scrapped during consideration in detail, well after the LNP had signalled it would oppose it. Again, we see that Labor is prioritising prisoners ahead of community safety and victims of crime. On this side of the chamber our view is always that if you do the crime you do the time. Labor needs to get its priorities in order and scrap this unpopular policy once and for all.

This brings me to the part of the bill proposing to regulate the gel blaster industry. The committee received many submissions from those who had an interest in the gel blaster industry and these submissions voiced a frustration towards the proposed regulation of the industry, arguing that the changes were not necessary. In the 2017 case of Comptroller-General of Customs v Clark CFP Pty Ltd, Magistrate Shearer defined gel blasters as a toy. He went on to say that, despite their appearance, gel blasters are only capable of firing water based pellets and should therefore be classified as projective toys.

It baffles me that the Palaszczuk Labor government is prioritising the strict regulation of toys over a crackdown on weapons and firearms crime committed by violent and organised criminals. Although gel blasters are unregulated, this does not mean there are no legal mechanisms to hold people to account who use them inappropriately. There are currently a number of offences a person can be charged with in the event they misuse their gel blaster. In effect, this provision is unfair as it compels people to arbitrarily be a member of an association and will disenfranchise those who live in rural areas who do not have access to gel blaster clubs.

Labor's proposed regulation of the gel blaster also has a large impact on many small businesses. According to the industry, Queensland small businesses supply an estimated 600,000 gel blasters per year to people across Queensland. It is expected that regulation will negatively impact the 150 gel blaster small businesses that operate in Queensland. At a time when we must support our small businesses, Labor is legislating to take business away from them. Unlike Labor, the LNP cares about small business. We want to see small businesses prosper rather than be hindered by red tape and narrow regulation.

The implementation of the proposal is also poorly thought through. There is no talk of any buyback for owners who have to turn their gel blasters in because they have no gel blaster club in their area that they can join.

Unlike Labor, which wants to regulate toys, the LNP has a real plan to crack down on organised criminal gangs that are terrorising Queenslanders right across the state. The LNP introduced tough new gun laws to prevent high-risk individuals such as organised criminal gangs, terrorists and those with a history of violence from acquiring, using or possessing a firearm, but Labor members of the committee chose to play politics and refused to support it.

Currently a perpetrator can do a drive-by shooting with a real gun, shoot up your car or shoot up your house and if the victim is fortunate enough not to be inside the car or house the maximum penalty that that perpetrator can be charged with is property damage. Why is Labor not moving to fix this gap in the legislation?

They are more concerned about regulating toys. Labor is focused on cracking down on toy guns and content to go easy on criminals who shoot real firearms, like those on the Gold Coast who used firearms in a public car park outside a busy shopping centre. It is no wonder the bikies are back and terrorising communities like the Gold Coast. All Labor seem to care about is putting the rights of criminals before community safety. Only an LNP government will restore the tough laws that made the Gold Coast a safer place. That is what we should be focusing on, not the regulation of toys for which there are already indictable offences available in the event of misuse.



Mrs McMAHON (Macalister—ALP) (6.30 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Corrective Services and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Before I do so I have to recover from the dizziness caused by the flip flopping in the speech by the member for Currumbin: we have too many people in prison, we need more people in prison.

A government member: It is confusing.

Mrs McMAHON: How much money did those opposite allocate to building prisons when they were in government? None at all. There is quite a bit in this bill to speak to and as a member of the committee that considered it I thought I would use the limited time that I have to point out some of the key components. A significant component of this bill puts into legislation many recommendations of the Crime and Corruption Commission's report titled *Taskforce Flaxton: an examination of corruption risks and corruption in Queensland prisons*. There were a number of recommendations in the Taskforce Flaxton report and this government has agreed to implement in principle all of the recommendations. This bill addresses a number of the risks identified in the report and is a key component in the government's response to that report, along with the commitment to delivering stage 2 of the Southern Queensland Correctional Precinct. The member for Currumbin might like to know we are actually increasing the capacity in our corrective system.

Included in this bill is the authorising of the chief executive to require corrective services staff to submit to alcohol and drug testing, strengthening powers to undertake general or scanning searches of staff at a facility at any time, improving property and exhibit handling practices and assisting both the Queensland Corrective Service and Queensland Police Service's Corrective Services Investigation Unit in establishing greater clarity in investigating incidents at correctional facilities.

With respect to alcohol and drug testing, it was specifically highlighted in the Taskforce Flaxton report as a present and very real corruption risk. The CCC identified that drug and alcohol testing could identify staff with substance abuse problems, assist in the detection of contraband and identify staff who are more likely to engage in problematic decision-making and unreasonable use of force due to being under the influence of alcohol or drugs. I understand that for many this will be seen as an overreach in the workplace. I get it.

Issues with substance abuse may be for very personal and troubling reasons. However, ultimately it is a workplace, it is a position of power and there is a duty of care to those in custody. When one wears a uniform it carries with it a key community safety expectation that one's behaviour must be beyond reproach. I have spent most of my life in workplaces where I was subject to regular random drug and alcohol testing. It comes with wearing a uniform. It comes with representing a key role within the community. I certainly saw it as part of the trust relationship that I had with the broader community. My job was easier when the community had faith in my ability to do my job unhindered and unencumbered, and being subjected to such testing regimes was my way of being deserving of such faith.

The issue of staff searches is a little bit different, but it is paramount when one considers the workplace and the corruption risks around contraband. The idea of prisons being drug and contraband free is pivotal not only to prisoner and officer safety but also to the rehabilitation process. I am pleased that the least invasive manner of searching, a scanning search, is the primary method of searches and that it is done in a manner that causes minimum embarrassment to the person.

The introduction of a new offence prohibiting a staff member from having an intimate personal relationship with a prisoner or offender is also a result of the Taskforce Flaxton report. Taskforce Flaxton found that such behaviour compromises the correctional system and places the safety of other staff, prisoners and the community at risk. Inappropriate relationships provide the basis for smuggling of

contraband, aiding prisoner escapes and supporting organised criminal activities. The offending behaviour includes sexual conduct or other physical expressions of affection or sexual contact or the exchange of written or other forms of communication of a sexual nature.

I will now turn to other aspects in this bill outside the Taskforce Flaxton report, such as the inclusion of the corrective services workforce as people protected under section 340 of the Criminal Code in relation to serious assault, just as other public officers are protected under that same section. Given the nature of the population that corrective services officers work with, they are at a high risk of assault. I have spent some time working as a custodial officer supervising police prisoners as well as corrective services prisoners and it is a high-risk workplace. Spitting or throwing bodily fluids at another person is a particularly vile act. It is especially malicious as it places the victim under significant and prolonged stress while they await the outcome of infectious disease testing.

Outside the scope of corrective services, this bill will introduce changes to the Weapons Act and regulations. Firstly, it creates the establishment of a permanent firearms amnesty. In 2019 a Ministerial Council for Police and Emergency Management meeting resolved that a nationwide permanent firearms amnesty should be established by the end of 2020. The aim of a permanent firearms amnesty is to reduce the number of unregistered firearms in the community by making it easier for people to hand them in. This reduces the risk of firearms falling into the wrong hands. Under the provisions a person will not be prosecuted for the unlawful possession of a firearm if they are at or in the process of proceeding directly to a police station or approved dealer to relinquish that item.

Another significant change is the regulation of replica firearms. While offences exist for using replica firearms in public places, such as going armed so as to cause fear, the possession of them has never been regulated. The growing concern is the emergence of gel blasters which meet the definition of replica under the Weapons Act as they look like real military style weapons but do cause little physical harm. I understand that many young people, families even, like to use gel blasters to participate in combat style games, much like paintball activities before them. In and of themselves they are not harmful activities. They encourage movement, fitness, team work and the like. Gel blasters are readily available online and available at many retailers, including in my electorate. Anyone can buy them. That does not change.

Away from organisations, competition and private property there is a growing concern about how these items are perceived in public places. For those not familiar with gel blasters, unlike paintball and airsoft items, gel blasters look in almost every way identical to fully automatic machine guns and come in many other forms such as handguns, rifles and shotguns. They are realistic. Mr Kirk Yatras, president of Firearm Owners United, indicated that the everyday layperson would have difficulty differentiating it from an actual firearm. This can clearly cause problems.

Since 2017 Queensland police have identified 352 incidents involving the public reporting their concerns about gel blasters, thereby causing police to investigate. This has resulted in some 85 offences detected. Keep in mind that possessing these items is not an offence so it was how these toys were used that constituted an offence. These are considered toys, but their use in public spaces can be concerning, so much so that other states, including states with LNP governments, have outright banned the use of gel blasters. We are now the only state where gel blasters can still be bought, sold and used.

We do not want to go that far. We believe that, with some level of regulation, active participation in such hobbies can and should continue, a retail industry can and will continue, and the community can also be kept safe. Amendments to the Weapons Categories Regulation will make replica firearms restricted items—not category R weapons, but restricted items. That means that when they are not being used for their intended purpose they are to be locked away. They will not have to be stored in the sorts of receptacles that firearms are stored in, but they will have to be secured. They should not be carried in public without a reasonable excuse, such as attending an organised group or activity or participating in a recreational activity involving gel blasters. Obviously entities such as gel blaster retailers, re-enactment groups and RSLs would be considered to have reasonable excuses for the possession of those items.

Extensive consultation has occurred and representatives of key gel blaster industry groups have expressed their support for the changes that provide their organisations with certainty and legitimisation in the face of the gel blasters being banned in other states. I acknowledge that there are a number—

(Time expired)



Mr ANDREW (Mirani—PHON) (6.40 pm): I am pleased to speak on the Corrective Services and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2020. The bill has been introduced in response to the Crime and Corruption Commission's Taskforce Flaxton review that looked into corruption risks in Queensland prisons and made recommendations for better ways to prevent, detect and deter corrupt conduct in prisons. I thank the secretariat and the committee for their work on this bill.

Provisions in the bill will require corrective services staff to submit to alcohol and drug testing, and grant powers to the chief executive to carry out searches of corrective services officers suspected of an offence. The bill will also broaden the power of the Ethical Standards Unit to allow for better prevention of and earlier intervention in corrupt conduct across a wide range of areas, including complaints management, investigation, witness support, COVID operations and risk management.

Section 295 of the act provides for cases where there is an incident, which is defined as a death, serious injury, escape, riot or other event involving prisoners. The bill's provisions state that two inspectors will be appointed. I believe that that provision needs to be amended to stipulate that at least one of those inspectors should be someone who is not employed by the department. Such a provision would ensure the investigation is not only independent but also seen to be independent. Independence in decision-making and investigations should be paramount when it comes to the suspected corrupt conduct of public officials.

I have some minor reservations around the provision that implements blanket restrictions for particular categories of prisoners from access to accommodation in low-security facilities. Research has constantly shown that recidivism rates are lower for prisoners who have been rewarded for good behaviour by participation in forms of gradual release and preparation for their progressive re-entry into the community. Justice Walter Sofronoff QC commented on this policy in the Queensland Parole System Review report. Referring to when a prisoner is released back into the general population, he stated—

It is vital that there be adequate preparation for such release. Being accommodated in a low security facility, with the potential for resettlement leave, is in my opinion an essential part of ensuring the community safety.

The Queensland Productivity Commission's recent inquiry into imprisonment and recidivism found that Queensland has the lowest proportion of prisoners held in low-security settings of any state in the country. On average, 92 per cent are detained in high-security settings. The last time I was privy to such information and went to the Capricornia Correctional Centre, prisons were at 136 per cent occupancy. Prisoners were crammed in. They were topping and tailing in cells. That means the overwhelming majority of prisoners spend their time living in an artificial and highly regulated environment. They are institutionalised and completely unprepared for the challenges and problems encountered outside the walls of high-security prisons.

The privileges associated with low-security placement can also be one of the best incentives for prisoners to demonstrate positive and responsible behaviour while in prison. Removing that pathway altogether may prove to be counterproductive in the long term and will do little to help corrective services officers to manage prisoner behaviour, which is difficult enough at the best of times.

Under the bill, the new definition of 'restricted items' is fairly broad. It will reclassify any replica weapons, deactivated firearms or museum piece, as well as any pieces found in RSLs and gel blasters as restricted items. The inclusion of replicas of category A, B, C, D and H and deactivated firearms as restricted items is not supported by any community incidents. Therefore, I am not sure that their reclassification under the bill is strictly necessary. However, I am aware of numerous issues reported around the use of gel blasters, so some restrictions placed on their use is definitely needed. I believe that should be in the form of fines. We have been fining pubs and clubs under the COVID-19 measures. It has been easy enough to throw that out.

Ms Leahy interjected.

Mr ANDREW: I take that interjection. In this situation we could have used fines. The genuine reason for having a gel blaster is basically about being a kid. Anyone else who does the wrong thing could be taken into the justice system and fined for perpetrating an act that causes civil unrest. However, I acknowledge that gel blasters are very popular, that there are hundreds of thousands in this state and that it would have been difficult to take them away.

The best thing about gel blasters is that they take young kids away from their screens. People are on their screens all the time and gel blasters give kids an opportunity not to be. Not all kids want them, but I say good luck to the ones who do have them. They should be able to go out and play with


them, as long as it is not affecting anyone. That is how the situation should be. Therefore, I hope that the new regulations around their use are made flexible enough to allow people to continue to participate in what I am told is usually a very enjoyable and relatively harmless outdoor activity.

I am broadly supportive of the objectives and provisions in the bill. In particular, I welcome clause 63 of the bill, which establishes a permanent amnesty for the surrender of firearms to police officers or licensed firearms dealers. I am a licensed firearms dealer. During amnesties, people have dropped firearms at my door at night because they were frightened of being incarcerated for a mandatory one year for possessing an illegal weapon. It is a great thing to have an open amnesty.

Say someone pulls down their shed and finds Uncle Sam's weapon behind a post or somehow hidden in the structure. Under this provision, they can hand that weapon in. Not everyone has a firearms licence. This is a great thing because people are very worried about how they would hand in a weapon to a dealer or at a police station. It is sad that that cannot be done anonymously, as some may choose not to drop in their weapons. They may throw them away or discard them somehow so that their faces are not seen and their names and addresses are not recorded. It is sad because that is how people feel. They do not want to be labelled and so on. They do not want to be looked at by the law simply because they have found a weapon that they want to hand in. They come to me and say, 'Would we give it in? Probably not.' We need to get those weapons out of the system.

I do not think anyone is trying to run weapons around the place. Earlier someone spoke of laundering weapons. I do not see that at all, especially not in country areas. I am not sure about the cities, because I do not live there. The well documented success of the last two amnesties in Queensland is testimony to how important it is that people be allowed to hand in their firearms.

In conclusion, I pay tribute to the work of custodial officers at the Capricornia Correctional Centre. They do a great job. In coming years the government is going to increase the number of cells by 348. When I spoke to the minister during the estimates process last year, I was surprised to learn that it costs \$640,000 for each cell. Although a cell is a very small room, obviously that is needed. Again, I acknowledge the committee for the work we have done. I hope we do not take things too far with kids' toys.

 **Ms McMILLAN** (Mansfield—ALP) (6.49 pm): Community safety is paramount. I was really fascinated to hear some of the comments by the member for Mirani. Whilst he is a very good person, I have to query the rationale around putting gel blasters in the hands of children to distract them from screen time. As we know, there are many other avenues to distract our children from screen time, such as a very good biology book or a tennis racquet and a ball. Introducing gel blasters to children to get them away from screen time is drawing a long bow. The other concern that I have is the number of women and children who are dying in Australia as a result of domestic violence, so any opportunity we have to remove some of these replica weapons from the streets is important. The principle at the forefront of everything is that community safety is paramount, as I mentioned, and that principle is at the forefront of everything this government does.

In relation to the permanent firearms amnesty, in November 2019 the Ministerial Council for Police and Emergency Management meeting resolved that a nationwide permanent firearms amnesty should be established by late 2020. This bill contains amendments which create a permanent, ongoing firearms amnesty for Queensland. Under the provisions, a person will not be able to be prosecuted for the unlawful possession of a firearm or a proscribed item if they are at, or proceeding directly to, a police station or approved dealer to relinquish that item. The Weapons Regulation will contain a condition that, when practicable, the person must notify the dealer or police station prior to attending. This is important, as we know, to assist police if a person intercepted by police in possession of a firearm falsely claims to be on their way to relinquish it. It allows police to make inquiries to determine if that is in fact what they are doing.


The bill also addresses the issue of gel blasters. The government has established a framework designed to support the gel blaster community into the future. All elements of the framework have been formulated with two objectives (1) to support the interests of retailers and individuals who are a part of this growing recreational activity and (2) to support the community's safety. The framework is based in commonsense arrangements that accommodate these two objectives. The framework actively encourages the owners of gel blasters to join recreational clubs so that they can enjoy the pastime with other enthusiasts in a safe environment. In relation to community safety, the framework has adopted commonsense proposals put forward by police. For example, gel blasters should be stowed securely in the owner's home and, when being carried in a public area, gel blasters should be hidden from view in a case or bag so as not to cause alarm.

It is important to note that the framework the government has introduced is partly in response to a worrying increase in the number of incidents involving the misuse of gel blasters. The government recognises that the vast majority of gel blaster owners use them responsibly. That is why the framework is based on supporting gel blaster recreational activities. In this regard, the framework encourages owners to join a gel blaster club, as that would constitute a reasonable excuse for owning one. The framework is not designed to punish responsible owners of gel blasters; it is simply a way of promoting the interests of enthusiasts as well as ensuring community safety.

Unlike the LNP, this government has no plans to ban gel blasters. 'I think Fair Trading should look into banning them,' Deb Frecklington MP, Leader of the Opposition, said on 7News Brisbane on 30 August 2018. That would be incredibly disappointing for the member of Kawana, who told parliament that he owned a number of gel blasters himself.

Queensland Corrective Services has a workforce of approximately 4,700 frontline staff that supervises almost 30,000 prisoners and offenders across Queensland every day. These operations are complex. Corrective services officers work with some of the most challenging people in our society. The government is committed to keeping our corrective services officers safe. Like any other workforce, corrective services officers should be able to attend work, perform their job and return home to their families without experiencing physical threats of violence. One assault on a corrective services officer is one too many. Ensuring their safety is a priority for this government.

A number of safety strategies have been implemented to increase officer safety in our prisons, including funding to increase staffing levels, the rollout of body worn cameras and load-bearing vests across Queensland prisons, and investment in violence reduction and prevention programs. Building on this work, the Corrective Services and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2020 includes an amendment to the Criminal Code to clarify the maximum penalty for a prisoner who seriously assaults a working corrective services officer. The amendment makes it clear that if a prisoner seriously assaults a corrective services officer in a correctional centre with aggravating circumstances, the maximum penalty is 14 years imprisonment. This legislative clarity is necessary to provide a strong deterrent to this type of behaviour and give reassurance to corrective services officers of the importance of their health and safety. As I said at the outset, community safety is of paramount importance to the Palaszczuk government. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr PURDIE** (Ninderry—LNP) (6.55 pm): I rise this afternoon to start my contribution on the Corrective Services and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2020. Almost two years ago, in December 2018, the Crime and Corruption Commission released its Taskforce Flaxton report, which examined corruption risks and corruption in Queensland prisons. Most notably, the CCC held that there were significant corruption risks in Queensland prisons and that the existing anti-corruption framework was not effectively preventing, detecting or dealing with those risks. This prompted the CCC in making 33 recommendations with the view to raise standards of integrity within Queensland corrective services facilities.

I note that the contents of this bill are designed to adopt some of those recommendations in the report, as well as implement recommendations from the Queensland Parole System Review and to improve operational efficiencies for Queensland Corrective Services and the Parole Board Queensland. I can confirm that the opposition will not be opposing the bill; however, there are aspects of this bill which the LNP will be opposing which I will address throughout my speech.

It is true that corruption is rife within Queensland prisons and it is true that Labor's inability to reduce overcrowding in prisons has only fuelled the corruption. There is no doubt that corruption lowers public confidence which then undermines the important principles that strike at the heart of democracy. Latest figures obtained by the LNP show the extent of the overcrowding in Queensland prisons. In August 2019, the majority of prisons were over capacity. Borallon Correctional Centre was operating at 133 per cent capacity, Capricornia Correctional Centre was operating at 122 per cent and Woodford Correctional Centre was operating at 137 per cent. If anyone thinks overcrowding is not still an issue, then let me read some lines which featured today in the *Australian*. It states—

Overcrowding in facilities has become so bad that solitary confinement is now viewed as a time to find some peace and quiet for prisoners who are forced to share a cell with a retrofitted bunk bed or mattress on the floor ... Long-serving prison officers say they have never seen so many assaults.

Obviously the government has done nothing to prevent overcrowding. In turn, it goes without saying that corruption will remain prevalent in Queensland prisons. The CCC warned the Palaszczuk Labor government of the signs of corruption. The CCC warned that overcrowding increases the risk of

corrupt conduct through greater volatility in the correctional environment which reduces the capacity of custodial officers to maintain order and security, and increases the risk of excessive use of force to deter poor behaviour.


In March 2019, after the publication of the report, the police minister announced that the Palaszczuk Labor government would be taking back control of two privately run prisons—Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre and Southern Queensland Correctional Centre—in a bid to boost staff safety, at a cost to taxpayers of \$111 million. I question why we are seeing so much volatility in Queensland government run facilities nearly two years after the report was handed down. Queensland Corrective Services officers have continued to be victims of malicious attacks by prisoners.

On 10 June 2020 three prison officers at Borallon jail were injured by a prisoner just a day after a code black riot was called. On 16 June two prison officers were punched in the face by a prisoner at Townsville jail while they were trying to hand out medication. More concerning, on 3 July 2020 a prison officer was stabbed in the face with a shiv during a dramatic hostage situation at Arthur Gorrie. This happened two days after the Labor government took back control of the prison. I am advised that there have been seven assaults on corrections officers in Queensland in the past week. These stories are shocking and surely if the minister truly believed that one assault is too many then he would do something about this. Prison overcrowding does not mean more assaults, it means prisoners will be returned to the street.

Debate, on motion of Mr Purdie, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Rural Fire Service; Bushfire Strategy

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (7.00 pm): It is the time for hazard reduction burning by our rural fireys once again. I am proud to say I have four rural fire brigades protecting property in the Coomera electorate: Cedar Creek Wolffdene Rural Fire Brigade, Rocky Point Rural Fire Brigade, Ormeau Rural Fire Brigade and Wasp Creek Rural Fire Brigade. We all remember how devastating the fires were less than 12 months ago. I know that in our area we dodged a bullet.

In conversation with my local volunteers, I was alarmed to hear that what they used to do in terms of hazard reduction burns in decades past—doing everything in our region in a five-year cycle—has not been able to be done for the past 15 years. An LNP government will change all that. We will introduce a 10-point plan to overhaul Queensland's bushfire strategy to improve public safety and protect property. As Leader of the Opposition, Deb Frecklington, said when introducing the plan—

The LNP will take decisive action to get Queensland bushfire-ready in wake of the incredible tragedies we have seen in New South Wales and Victoria.


In a bushfire-prone state like ours, the government must stop at nothing to ensure communities are kept safe.

The LNP will make sweeping improvements to Queensland's bushfire strategy to make the state more prepared and more able to respond in emergencies. The LNP's 10-point plan for bushfires includes: introducing a one-stop shop for streamlined approval process, establishing a single point of contact for landholders and councils to submit all bushfire mitigation inquiries and permits; implementing a deemed approval after 15 business days under a right to burn model, meaning properly made applications will be automatically approved after 15 business days to give landholders and councils certainty; and introducing new KPIs to achieve 98 per cent of hazard reduction activities because there are currently no KPIs holding government departments to account on hazard reduction burns. Between 2016 and 2019 only 54 per cent of hazard reduction burns planned had been completed. There has also been a 30 per cent reduction in completed overall hazard reduction activities.

The LNP will trial a traditional burning program run by Indigenous rangers. The program will not replace the Rural Fire Brigade's role in managing and coordinating hazard reduction burns. It will compliment pre-existing efforts by combining the two. We will establish a natural disaster cabinet committee to monitor preparations. It will be chaired by the emergency services minister and the QFES commissioner. It will monitor the progress of state departments and landholders.

Monitored grazing in state forests and some national parks will also be implemented. We will establish urban based rural fire volunteer brigades, like those in Sydney and Melbourne. We will restore local control to rural fire brigades. We will establish a rural fire board to be made up of elected rural fire brigade members from across Queensland. We will review aerial firefighting capability and do a stocktake of aviation fire assets in Queensland.

Cairns Electorate, Works for Queensland Program


 **Mr HEALY** (Cairns—ALP) (7.03 pm): As part of the Queensland government's economic recovery strategy—unite and recover for Queensland jobs—on 19 May this year the Premier announced \$200 million for a COVID Works for Queensland program to be delivered this year and next. Last week in Cairns I had the pleasure of accompanying the Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Stirling Hinchliffe, whilst he announced a wide range of works that will be undertaken by the Cairns Regional Council and funded from the Palaszczuk government's Works for Queensland program. The \$200 million program was allocated among all Queensland councils to support the delivery of job-creating new infrastructure, maintenance or minor works projects, including the bringing forward of planned/budgeted maintenance or capital works, that are focused on: one, essential services; two, economic development; and, three, community wellbeing outcomes. In Cairns, the Cairns Regional Council received an allocation of \$7,420,000 towards shovel-ready and ready-to-go projects expected to support or create around 70 jobs.

The planned projects include remediation of sewerage pump stations, refurbishment of water reservoirs, replacement of water mains, footpath construction and, very importantly, the installation of drainage and turf surface treatment to Fogarty Park in the centre of the Cairns CBD which will allow for its all-weather use for markets and other very important community events. The long-term economic benefits these projects will deliver will go a long way to helping Queensland unite and recover. With regional council workers not being covered by the federal government's JobKeeper payments, this investment guarantees jobs and potentially new ones.

Across Queensland there are 520 projects being funded under the COVID Works for Queensland program, which is expected to create or support more than 4,600 jobs, which is fantastic in the current environment. In addition to this, I also had the Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development in Cairns, not just meeting with key stakeholders and small business owners, but announcing some of the recipients of grants as part of the first round of the Small Business COVID-19 Adaptation Grant Program. I congratulate the owner of—and I need to stipulate this—Prawn Star, Danny Moore, who was one of the thousands of small business operators who shared in the \$96 million from the first round of grants, which are fantastic. Small businesses in Cairns have been doing it tough and the small business grants are helping them keep their doors open.

It is absolutely vital that people are acutely aware that this initiative, along with the Works for Queensland program, is part of the overall strategy that the Palaszczuk Labor government continues to roll out in particular in regional Queensland to support jobs and businesses in not just my city of Cairns but across the great state of Queensland.

Caloundra Electorate

 **Mr McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (7.06 pm): I rise tonight to talk about the state seat of Caloundra—a seat that earlier this year had a voting population of 37,200; a seat ignored by Labor over many years. Caloundra faces a number of concerns. First of all is Caloundra Road, known locally as the longest car park on the Sunshine Coast. This is highlighted by the congestion at the Caloundra Road-Nicklin Way roundabout on a daily basis. The seat has the town of Landsborough where the Labor Party planned to build a rail overpass. If that overpass goes where it is planned to go it will cause economic and personal chaos for those who live and work in Landsborough. The seat also has Pumicestone Passage, a body of water that is a Ramsar site—a site that must be protected for future generations to come; a site that offers beauty and relaxation on a daily basis.


The Liberal National Party has chosen Stuart Coward to stand on behalf of the party in the forthcoming election campaign. Stuart is fighting for the above and much more. Stuart is married to Jackie and they have three children. He graduated from Caloundra State High School in 1985 and worked at a variety of local businesses in his early years. He became an executive member of the Caloundra Chamber of Commerce and chairman of Tourism Training Queensland on the Sunshine Coast. For 12 years he owned and operated businesses right across the Sunshine Coast. For the past 16 years he has been the executive officer of STEPS, a charity dedicated to those who are disabled and giving them opportunities in society and through work. He supports local organisations like CareFlight, Sunny Kids and Wish List.

Stuart knows that Caloundra is at a crossroads. Stuart understands that Caloundra's future depends upon the next state member and the people of Caloundra. He brings determination. He brings hard work. He brings passion. Stuart regularly attends local events, listening to the people of Caloundra

and understanding their concerns. He does phone canvassing, again listening—an important quality in any politician. He listens to what is taking place on the ground. He conducts listening posts right across the electorate to draw in information to ensure he understands the concerns faced by the people of Caloundra.

Mr Coward knows it will be a tough battle, but he is determined to put his best foot forward. He is determined to show the people of Caloundra that he is somebody they can trust. He is asking them to trust him come 31 October this year and to become the member for Caloundra come 1 November 2020. I can guarantee that he will do an excellent job and act on behalf of and in the best interests of the people of Caloundra in doing so.

Jordan Electorate, Jobs

 **Mrs MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (7.09 pm): We know the economic and health impacts of COVID-19 continue to sweep the world. It is frightening to see the number of cases growing worldwide, and the recent outbreaks in Victoria and now New South Wales show us quite starkly that the battle is far from over. In Queensland, we have done a very good job in tackling COVID-19, thanks to our hardworking health professionals, the incredible leadership shown by our Premier and of course the diligence and patience of all Queenslanders—something I have seen in spades from the people of the Jordan electorate. Our economic recovery will require continued resilience. It is important to know that it is and will be a tough road ahead, but I am very proud of our government's strategy to rebuild Queensland's economy, create jobs and lead Queensland out of the pandemic.


I warmly welcomed the Premier's announcement yesterday regarding the construction of four new schools in Queensland—and I was particularly pleased to see that one of those will directly benefit new students in the Jordan electorate. The new primary school for North Maclean-Greenbank within the Greater Flagstone Priority Development Area not only is the first school to be built in this area in 127 years but will be the first of a number of new schools which have been identified to be delivered in the PDA as this area develops further. I know that the wonderful Greenbank State School is growing fast. I have worked closely with the member for Logan to press for a new primary school in this area—and our government is delivering with a brand-new \$66 million primary school which will welcome students in term 1, 2022. This will also support our local economic recovery, with almost 220 jobs in the construction phase alone. I cannot wait to see new students walking, cycling and scootering to this brand-new school in a couple of years.

Construction has also started on a brand-new \$10.6 million three-storey building for Springfield Central State High School, delivering 16 new learning spaces and two new external multipurpose courts—and all due for completion in early 2021. Of course, construction will also soon begin on our \$44.5 million Springfield Central park-and-ride, which will not only deliver around 1,100 carparks in the station precinct but also create 44 jobs for our local economy.

There is the Centenary Highway-Logan Motorway interchange upgrade, with \$15 million in funding and the creation of 15 jobs. I look forward to shortly sharing a further update on this much needed and welcomed project for our community. Of course there was the announcement of \$37.5 million for a jointly funded upgrade to extend the four-lane section of the Mount Lindesay Highway from Stoney Camp Road to Chambers Flat Road, supporting 80 jobs and continuing the incredible focus, importance and funding our government has placed on the Mount Lindesay Highway.

These are all projects that I have championed and supported in my very first term in the Queensland parliament and which are being delivered by the Palaszczuk Labor government. Locally in the Jordan electorate we are well placed to unite and recover, with key infrastructure projects that will not only create jobs but also provide certainty for when life resumes to something closely resembling normal.

Burdekin Electorate, Molongle Creek

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (7.12 pm): The Burdekin electorate is home to so many gems, and one of the best is Cape Upstart. Over the years 'the cape', as it is affectionately known, has grown since the first huts appeared there early in the 20th century to now being an idyllic getaway for over 200 families and their friends. Those families pay their council rates, their electricity bills, their boat registration and other state charges while also voluntarily keeping this slice of paradise clean and a haven for wildlife. Despite almost 120 years of families taking a break at the cape, it is still largely only

accessible by water. Every weekend families and groups of friends use Molongle Creek to travel to the cape. Actually, let me correct the record: every weekend, when the tide is high enough, families and groups of friends travel to the cape via Molongle Creek.

Despite promises made in the lead-up to the 2017 election, using Molongle Creek is still a lottery. In fact, just over a week ago, one local was asking if a 2.09-metre tide was sufficient water to allow passage of a 4.5-metre tinny. Anyone with any knowledge of boating would know that a 4.5-metre tinny should be able to access most creeks in Queensland on most tides—not at Molongle. What if it is not a 4.5-metre tinny but a vessel used by Burdekin Volunteer Marine Rescue? What if a child is injured at the cape and needs medical attention? Well, right now, they either have to wait for up to 24 hours or, if severely injured, rely on the rescue chopper from Townsville.

Despite the promises, users of Molongle Creek will now wait until mid-2021 at least for all-tide access and, despite promises, the dredging that would provide a temporary solution has still not commenced despite being scheduled to take place last September. Frustrations are at boiling point and for good reason. The projects that users of Molongle Creek have been promised have not materialised—delays with permits and even issues with border crossings due to COVID restrictions having been cited as excuses.

The message from Molongle Creek users is simple. They are sick of false promises and excuses that, at best, restrict their time for a family holiday and, at worst, could claim a life. Tonight I stand on behalf of the users of Molongle Creek and convey their message to the Queensland government and the Whitsunday Regional Council: no more excuses will be accepted. Get on and do the work you have committed to do before your inaction results in loss of life. The time for delays is over.

Haughton Water Pipeline, Stage 2



Mr STEWART (Townsville—ALP) (7.15 pm): There is no doubt that the Palaszczuk government is invested in regional Queensland, particularly in Townsville. As we emerge from the COVID-19 health pandemic and transition into an economic recovery phase, it is the Palaszczuk government again investing in local jobs and infrastructure in Townsville.

The Premier also announced the Back to Work program, which has been very successful in our city, with many employers taking on extra workers to help them in their workplace. When Clive Palmer's Queensland Nickel closed its doors, 800 people lost their jobs in one day. It was the Back to Work program that employed 2,700 workers in more than 1,000 businesses across the city.

The Palaszczuk government knows that investing in local infrastructure creates local jobs and keeps the local economy moving—infrastructure like the Townsville stadium and stage 1 of the Haughton water pipeline worth \$215 million and creating over 1,000 local jobs. When it comes to stage 2 of the water pipeline project promised by the LNP federal government, they have done the dodgy on the people of Townsville. On 3 June the *Townsville Bulletin* quoted the member for Herbert as saying—

... the relevant departments just need to sign on the dotted line.

Mr Thompson said he had spoken to the Deputy Prime Minister and Infrastructure Minister, Michael McCormack, and said a final draft for the agreement had been agreed to.

"He and Minister (Anthony) Lynham have reached their agreement through their long, drawn out debate, and it is positive, the money is ready to roll," Mr Thompson said.

However, there has been no agreement from Minister Lynham, nor the Treasurer, nor the Premier, as the \$195 million towards stage 2 would reduce Queensland's share of the GST distributed by the Commonwealth to the tune of around \$156 million.

If this were to happen to other projects around the country then maybe this would be palatable. However, we find that that is not the case. In fact, 18 projects around the country have been exempt from GST allocations including projects in Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania, Northern Territory and the ACT. The only reference in five years that mentions Queensland is the fruit fly response for Tasmania! This deal has more hairs on it than Chewbacca.

I want to know why the federal government is treating the people of North Queensland as hillbillies? Why does Michael McCormack think he can pull the wool over the eyes of the people of Townsville? The Palaszczuk government has done the heavy lifting when it comes to investing in critical infrastructure. It is time the federal government honours its election commitment and stumps up its fair share without ripping off the people of Townsville.

Inquiry into the Queensland Government's Health Response to COVID-19



Ms BOLTON (Noosa—Ind) (7.17 pm): Residents often query me whether anyone actually reads submissions as part of consultation on an issue or a bill. Being part of a committee, seeing the process and the work of our secretariat, I can say yes. Every submission is read and reported on. However, are submitters heard?

To the recent inquiry into the government's response to COVID-19 there was a call-out for submissions on both the health and economic aspects, with the health responses now public domain. Given the impacts on every electorate across Queensland, I am curious as to why I was the only MP to make a submission on behalf of my community. Yes, we have sent in the hundreds of concerns, queries and recommendations on behalf of our constituents. However, to collate and summarise these as part of improving what we, and governments, can do now and into the future I would have thought invaluable. My closing summary from that submission is as follows—and I hope would be representative of what many MPs would have said—

COVID-19 has given opportunity to not only look at how we can improve our responses, it has provided the momentum to review how we think. It has brought about the opportunity to 'reimagine' new ways to come together, agree on recovery and post-COVID policy approaches, significant reforms in governance and regulations to remove the barriers that have prevented our society addressing the issues that remain unresolved. These historical issues have been amplified by COVID. Affordable housing, rising inequality and poverty, the need for diversification of a home-grown economy, ensuring we have Australian manufacturing and services to sustain and provide when global borders shut down. Health services that are not impacted by shortages, spaces that are flexible, a society that quickly can respond. This includes an education for our communities and our children, on how to adapt, respond and cope. This is through trust, and the building of resilience. There is no aspect of our current framework that does not need revisiting, however to revisit, that framework needs to be reformed.

Decision making that is constrained through outdated thought processes, bureaucracy and 'tick' boxes has never been so important, relevant, and urgent to address. Through this emergency, we saw that the elements of our 200-year-old framework that underpins all that we do, was rejected in order to safeguard Queenslanders.

This pandemic has created an opportunity. To 'reimagine' during the recovery phase how our world will look. By capturing the intent and culture of [all levels of] governments during this emergency, and translate these into long term behaviours and actions that will define real and lasting solutions.

I ask my fellow MPs: do you agree—and will we listen to submitters and act accordingly?

Mansfield Electorate, Schools



Ms McMILLAN (Mansfield—ALP) (7.20 pm): Tonight I celebrate the great investment that the Palaszczuk Labor government has delivered for the schools in my electorate of Mansfield. Earlier this year the Palaszczuk government announced that all state schools will receive funding to air condition their classrooms, libraries and staff rooms over the next two years. In the Mansfield electorate air conditioning has already been delivered at Rochedale State School and Mackenzie State Special School. Mount Gravatt East State School and Mansfield State School have reached contract award stage, while Rochedale State High School, Mansfield State High School, Upper Mount Gravatt State School and Wishart State School are in the design/tender phase.


Since being elected in November 2017 I have secured well over \$100 million for our local schools. Mansfield State School has received over \$12 million to build eight new classrooms, and \$1.4 million has been allocated to extend the sports hall. The department's pre-consultation for the delivery of the new learning centre and car park extension closed 28 April. A contract has also been awarded to the successful business for the delivery of air conditioning for all classrooms at that school. Mansfield State High School has received more than \$70 million invested in new learning areas. The Palaszczuk Labor government is providing the school with refurbishments to multiple learning spaces, an extension to the administration area, a new kitchen and canteen and a completely refurbished performing arts hall.

Rochedale State High School has received more than \$5 million; Rochedale State School, \$797,416 to build new classrooms; Upper Mount Gravatt State School, \$1.97 million invested in new facilities and \$8.8 million to rebuild the building after the fire; Wishart State School, more than \$6 million and a new 40-kilometre school zone; Mount Gravatt East State School, refurbished teaching blocks; Mackenzie State Special School, \$4 million for new classrooms; Mackenzie State School, \$736,000; Brisbane Adventist College, more than \$1 million for the renewal of their secondary school building; Redeemer Lutheran College, more than \$340,000; St Catherine's Catholic Primary School, nearly \$4.5 million of recurrent funding, similar to St Bernard's Catholic Primary School.

I have a proud and long history as a school principal and teacher of more than 22 years. Education is my expertise and my electorate is an education powerhouse—a hub of educational excellence! It has been an honour to support thousands of young people on their educational journey

during my career, inspiring each and every one of them to aspire to achieve their goals and fulfil their life dreams. While the Palaszczuk Labor government has made tough decisions to protect the health of all Queenslanders during these challenging times, we continue to future-proof our children and their education.

Moggill Electorate

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (7.23 pm): On Saturday, 31 October 2020, residents of the western suburbs of Brisbane, including those in the electorate of Moggill, can elect a Liberal National Party state government which can, and will, deliver vital local infrastructure to bust traffic congestion and enhance public transport services. The Palaszczuk state Labor government has consistently ignored the western suburbs of Brisbane. It is only the Liberal National Party that has the vision, the plans and the commitment to bust traffic congestion in the electorate of Moggill. It is not just my priority but also that of Liberal National Party candidates across the western suburbs of Brisbane, including: Lauren Day, the LNP's candidate for Maiwar; Roger Hooper, the LNP's candidate for Mount Ommaney; and Trent Wiseman, the LNP's candidate for Cooper.


All local LNP representatives and candidates are committed to providing better and safer roads for the western suburbs, improved local infrastructure as well as cost-of-living relief. That is why LNP leader Deb Frecklington has announced our plan to provide free off-peak travel for seniors on the Citytrain network as well as free travel via a voucher system to students commencing full-time university. Last week it was also a pleasure to join the LNP's candidate for Gaven, Kirsten Jackson, and discuss the Liberal National Party's plans to build the second M1 and bust traffic congestion for constituents in the electorate of Gaven and across the broader Gold Coast region—and I know the member for Theodore and the member for Coomera understand the importance of the second M1.

In the electorate of Moggill the Palaszczuk state Labor government must cease its go-slow approach and finally get on with upgrading the Kenmore roundabout. Labor must release the Moggill corridor planning study with solutions to ensure cyclist safety and eliminate fatalities. Labor must also address its significant failure to provide vital public transport services to residents, particularly in Mount Crosby, Karana Downs and surrounding suburbs. Residents in these areas often use taxi services due to limited public transport.

I note that the Queensland taxi industry continues to be badly let down by the Palaszczuk state Labor government and their continued inability to address significant concerns, especially with respect to compliance, questionable and unchecked practices by rideshare drivers, and ultimately the significant imbalance in regulation and oversight between the taxi and rideshare industries.

When it comes to education, so much more needs to be done for students in the electorate of Moggill. For years our local Kenmore State High School has been in desperate need of a new school hall, with the current facility totally inadequate for the needs of students, staff and parents. Labor has ignored and failed Kenmore State High School. While the Palaszczuk state Labor government announced a new primary school for Brisbane's inner west yesterday, it is imperative that any location is properly assessed on student need and population growth along with proper and adequate community consultation. Such a process is also crucial for a new high school to service local families in Karana Downs, Mount Crosby and surrounding areas, which I have consistently advocated for, along with the LNP's firm commitment to defend, support and expand the rollout of Queensland's independent public schools. The next state election cannot come soon enough for residents of the western suburbs of Brisbane. Only the Liberal National Party can get Queensland working again.

Ferny Grove Electorate

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries) (7.27 pm): From speaker after speaker on the government benches tonight and previous nights you, Mr Deputy Speaker, and those opposite have heard of the government's delivery on the road to recovery as we move out of COVID-19 and invest in our electorates to ensure we come out of the COVID-19 pandemic. I want to add to that list in terms of what is happening in Ferny Grove with respect to the Ferny Grove Transit Oriented Development—an excellent opportunity to make sure we unite and recover from COVID-19.

This project at the existing Ferny Grove railway station, which is funded by state and federal governments and was finally approved by the Brisbane City Council, will become a reality. The DA is before the Brisbane City Council awaiting approval. Once approved, the development, like all of this Labor government's projects, will kickstart the Queensland economy, delivering 736 construction jobs

and 738 FTE local retail jobs—a combination of 1,474 jobs overall. This is a fantastic investment for the Ferny Grove community but also for the economy. Added to that are 465 commuter car parks, a retail supermarket, cinemas, a health centre, child care, a gym, a food and beverage business and much more.

I can tell you there is much interest out there in Ferny Grove, Mr Deputy Speaker. Just the other Sunday early in the morning I was out doing the Blackwood Street markets with the concept plans and drawings. While I was going through the markets person after person stopped and wanted to visualise and understand what was happening at Ferny Grove as a result of this fantastic investment. I know this is important because leading into the 2015 election I doorknocked over 9,000 homes in the electorate myself. The vision of what people in Ferny Grove wanted is becoming a reality, and this Palaszczuk Labor government is delivering.

I want to put on record my thanks to the then transport minister, Minister Hinchliffe, and the Minister for Transport and Main Roads, Minister Bailey. This project will come to fruition. It will benefit our economy and see us on the road to recovery as we plan to unite and recover. I am sure there are many vital jobs on the Lord Mayor's desk. I am sure he will want to quickly tick off on that, so it is really time to tick off on the TOD.

Another outcome in the electorate is Works for Queensland. Only last week I had the opportunity to walk around George Willmore Park and the Ferny Hills swimming pool with the councillor for division 10, Matt Constance, to see funding going to the Moreton Bay Regional Council—all up, nearly \$8 million. This is another example of what Labor governments do in times of need to make sure we see ourselves out of—

(Time expired)

The House adjourned at 7.30 pm.

ATTENDANCE

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