

TUESDAY, 23 JULY 2024

ESTIMATES—COST OF LIVING ECONOMICS COMMITTEE—PREMIER AND CABINET

Estimate Committee Members

Mr LP Power—Chair
Mr RA Stevens
Mr MJ Crandon
Mr DC Janetzki
Mrs MF McMahon
Ms JC Pugh

Members in Attendance

Mr DF Crisafulli
Ms FS Simpson
Mr SSJ Andrew
Mr MC Berkman
Mrs DK Frecklington
Dr A MacMahon

In Attendance

Hon. SJ Miles, Premier
Mr K Wright, Chief of Staff

Department of the Premier and Cabinet

Mr M Kaiser, Director-General
Ms J Collins, Associate Director-General, The Cabinet Office
Mr D Cann, Director, Office of the Premier

Public Sector Commission

Mr D Mackie, Public Sector Commissioner

Queensland Audit Office

Ms K Johnson, Acting Auditor-General

Office of the Queensland Integrity Commissioner

Ms L Waugh, Queensland Integrity Commissioner

The committee met at 9.00 am.



CHAIR: Good morning. It being nine o'clock, I declare this estimates hearing for the Cost of Living and Economics Committee open. I would like to respectfully acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet today and pay our respects to elders past and present. We are extraordinarily fortunate that we collectively live in a country and a state with two of the oldest continuing cultures in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples whose lands, winds and waters we all share.

I am Linus Power. I am the member for Logan and also chair of the committee. With me here today is my deputy chair, Mr Ray Stevens, the member for Mermaid Beach. The other members of the committee are: Mr Michael Crandon, the member for Coomera; Ms Amanda Camm, the member for Whitsunday, who today is represented by Mr David Janetzki, the member for Toowoomba South; Mrs Melissa McMahon, the member for Macalister; and Ms Jess Pugh, the member for Mount Ommaney. The committee is joined by other members who have been granted leave to ask questions at the hearing today. I note that Mr Crisafulli, the member for Broadwater, is here, as well as Mr Andrew, the member for Mirani, and Ms Simpson, the member for Maroochydore.

I remind everyone present that any person may be excluded from the proceedings at the chair's discretion or by order of the committee. The committee has authorised its hearing to be broadcast live, televised and photographed. Copies of the committee's conditions for broadcasters of proceedings are available from the secretariat. Staff who are assisting our witnesses here today are permitted to use personal electronic devices in the chamber. I ask all those present to ensure that phones and other electronic devices are switched to silent mode or turned off when not in use. I also remind everyone that food and drink are not permitted in this chamber.

This year the House has determined the program for the committee's estimates hearing. Today the committee will examine the proposed expenditure contained in the Appropriation Bill 2024 for the portfolios of the Premier and cabinet and Queensland Treasury. I remind honourable members that matters relating to these portfolio areas can only be raised during the times specified for the area, as was agreed by the House. It is not really relevant to our hearing, but it is a specification of the House. I refer members to the program set by the House, available throughout the chamber and on the committee's webpage. The first session will examine the proposed expenditure of the Premier and cabinet until 1.15 pm. We will suspend proceedings for an intermission from 11.00 am to 11.15 am.

I remind everyone that these proceedings are subject to the standing orders and rules of the Legislative Assembly. In respect of government owned corporations and statutory authorities, standing order 180(2) provides that a member may ask any question that the committee determines will assist it in its examination of the relevant Appropriation Bill or otherwise assist the committee to determine whether public funds are being efficiently spent or appropriate public guarantees are being provided.

On behalf of the committee, I welcome the Premier, the director-general, officials and departmental officers, and members of the public. For the benefit of Hansard, I ask officials to identify themselves the first time they answer a question referred to them by the Premier or the director-general. I now declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio areas of the Premier and cabinet open for examination. The question before the committee is:

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

Premier, if you wish, you may make an opening statement of no more than 10 minutes.

Mr MILES: Thank you for the opportunity to make an opening statement. Good morning, committee members, guests and everyone watching online. Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee today. I would like to respectfully acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which this hearing is taking place. I would also like to pay my respects to their elders past and present.

When I became Premier just over seven months ago I told Queenslanders that I would work hard every day doing what matters to them now and for generations to come. As I travel across the state, Queenslanders tell me about the cost-of-living pressures they are facing. They tell me about their rents, mortgage repayments, bills and grocery prices all putting pressure on their family budgets and I have listened to them.

Our \$11.2 billion nation-leading package of cost-of-living relief and concessions forms the centrepiece of my first budget. The budget has been designed to take pressure off Queensland households, with more than \$3.7 billion in new and expanded cost-of-living measures. It delivers record cost-of-living concessions, up 31.1 per cent on last year. Our budget papers show real wages growth returning and continuing over the next four years.

This cost-of-living package includes \$1,000 in electricity bill support for all Queensland households this year. It is the biggest cost-of-living initiative by a state government ever and it is paid for with our progressive coal royalties. The \$1,000 payment will be made on energy bills this year, appearing as a lump sum credit on bills from 1 July. Queenslanders will be able to see this credit on their bills now.

Eligible concession holders will continue to receive an additional \$372 under the Queensland electricity rebate scheme including the \$300 rebate provided by the federal government. This means a rebate of \$1,300 will be provided to every Queensland household in 2024-25 and up to \$1,672 for eligible concession holders. Small businesses will also receive a rebate of \$650. Even before these rebates are applied, Queensland has the second lowest household power bills on the east coast.

On top of these bill savings, since 1 July more Queensland families have been supported to get their kids into sport and recreational activities. We have boosted our FairPlay voucher scheme up to \$60 million. More than 211,000 FairPlay vouchers have been snapped up by Queensland families since the program opened on 1 July. The value of each voucher for all Queensland kids aged five to 17 is now \$200, breaking down the barriers for more kids to get active. Soon SwimStart round 2 will open, giving families the opportunity to apply for a \$150 voucher towards learn-to-swim activities for children aged zero to four.

From 1 July the 12-month extension of the five per cent apprentice and trainee payroll tax rebate commenced. Eligible construction apprentices aged 25 years or older who are studying with TAFE Queensland and CQ University can access fee-free training through free construction apprenticeships for over 25s. We are also providing a rebate of up to \$1,000 to cover the cost of tools purchased for first year apprentices in critical sectors: construction, electrical and plumbing.

In less than two weeks time, on 5 August, 50-cent public transport fares will come into effect. Available on all services on the Translink network in South-East Queensland and all regional buses, no matter how far Queenslanders travel, they will be able to access almost free public transport. That is hundreds, if not thousands, in savings going straight into the pockets of commuters. On 5 August my government will also introduce half-price Airtrain tickets. Come 16 September car rego fees will reduce by 20 per cent on all light vehicles including motorbikes and trailers. The fee reduction will begin appearing on renewal notices from 5 August.

Other cost-of-living measures in this year's state budget include \$15 million in school and community food relief to provide healthy food for children during school days and help with family grocery bills. Applications for schools to access the funding opened on 10 June and so far 99 schools will receive between \$5,000 and \$36,000 in order to facilitate their breakfast, snack or lunch programs.

Free Kindy is being extended up to an additional 15 hours per week for four-year-olds in discrete communities with \$26.23 million under the Putting Queensland Kids First plan. This is on top of the Free Kindy program, which is already providing up to 15 free hours of kindy per week for 40 weeks per year to every Queensland child attending a government approved kindy program. The program provides on average \$4,800 per year in savings for Queensland families with a kindergartener.

My government has made Homes for Queenslanders a central priority. The \$3.1 billion investment is the single largest investment in Queensland's housing system ever. It is a comprehensive plan to build more homes faster, support renters, help first home owners, boost our social housing big build and work towards ending homelessness. We have increased the first home concession to homes up to \$800,000, up from \$550,000. This will help more aspiring first home owners to get into the market.

This budget also sets out a record investment of more than \$107 billion for capital infrastructure to deliver better health services, housing, school infrastructure and transport services. We are also investing in Queensland's frontline services, including a record health budget of \$28.9 billion, which is a 10.6 per cent increase in operational funding. Some \$1.28 billion is being injected into our community safety plan and \$1.3 billion in continued investment in school and early education facilities to ensure Queensland students receive a world-class education in world-class school infrastructure.

A personal focus area of mine, we are investing \$502 million to deliver Putting Queensland Kids First to give our kids the best start in life. The budget also includes a record \$26 billion towards the Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan over the next four years. This is a boost on \$19 billion in last year's budget and will support renewable energy and storage projects, the SuperGrid including CopperString and renewable energy zones, network batteries and transmission and training hubs in Central and North Queensland. The funding signals my commitment to Queensland's renewable energy future, ensuring our businesses stay competitive in a world demanding products made with green energy, and it will enable us to achieve our 75 per cent emissions reduction target by 2035 and net zero by 2050 which are both now enshrined in law.

The 2024-25 budget—my first as Premier—is one that locks in Queensland's prosperity and ensures our enviable Queensland lifestyle for decades to come, with record investments in health, infrastructure, housing, community safety and renewable energy. We are delivering on what matters most to Queenslanders and setting up this state for a prosperous future. I look forward to the committee's questions.

CHAIR: Thank you very much, Premier. Deputy Chair, normally I turn to you for some guidance. Are there any opposition questions?

Mr STEVENS: Thank you, Chair. I defer to the Leader of the Opposition for the first question.

CHAIR: I call the member for Broadwater, Mr Crisafulli.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Thank you, Mr Chairman. Just to assist with your flow, all of my questions will be to the Premier in this section. Premier, could you please advise the cost to taxpayers to fly two jets—one for yourself and one for the police minister—to Cairns, Townsville and Hervey Bay in April this year?

Mr MILES: I thank the member for Broadwater for his question. As he would be aware, there has been a longstanding practice for funds to be allocated to QGAir for it to provide air services to the Queensland government. That includes for the Premier and for ministers, for the Police Commissioner and for prisoner transfers, other emergency service as well as organ transplants. The member refers to an itinerary of mine from a little while ago where I travelled throughout regional Queensland talking to them about community safety. The costs for that itinerary were met from that budget allocation to QGAir. I am advised that, of the allocation to QGAir, less than three per cent of flight hours are used by the Premier or by ministers, so a very small proportion of that allocation. The course of events leading up to that week of travel were such that my itinerary had been booked sometime earlier.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Premier, just the cost, if that is okay, of that travel.

CHAIR: Order! The Premier is being responsive and it is my job to chair the hearings. Please do not interrupt, Mr Crisafulli. I call the Premier.

Mr MILES: Thank you, Chair, and I thank the member for Broadwater for clarifying his particular interest here. I think it is important, given that we are discussing the broader budget of the state, that I outline how funds are allocated. It has long been the practice to allocate funds for—

Mr CRISAFULLI: Just the cost.

Mr MILES:—premiers and for ministers, I think dating back to premier Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen. I was explaining that I am unable to outline costs for the travel itinerary of the Police Commissioner. His travel bookings are made by him and by his office. The itinerary that was booked for me was entirely within the guidelines for ministerial travel and, as I have outlined, come from the allocations that have long been made to QGAir to allow premiers to get around our big state. I think it is really important that premiers and ministers spend time in every part of Queensland. When commercial services are suitable I will always use them, but where it is necessary to get to all of the parts of Queensland that I am eager to spend time in and to hear from Queenslanders in QGAir is there for that purpose.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Can the Premier advise why it was necessary to take two jets?

Mr MILES: As I have explained to the member for Broadwater already, my itinerary was booked and confirmed sometime earlier. The Police Commissioner was appointed just prior to that travel and I asked that he accompany me on some elements of the trip. His office, I assume, then went about booking his travel arrangements. It was not the case that there was room on my itinerary for him to join me and so, as has long been the practice, the Police Commissioner was entirely entitled to go ahead and book the most appropriate travel arrangements for him and his travelling party.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Premier, the flight records obtained under RTI show the Premier departed Brisbane with four other passengers. Can the Premier explain who was on that plane?

Mr MILES: I understand that the opposition has flight manifests outlining those who were on that plane. That should be sufficient.

Mr CRISAFULLI: We do not, Premier, because it was redacted, so could I ask who those passengers were, please? Were they a camera operator, a film crew? Could you explain who was on that plane?

Mr MILES: I thank the member for Broadwater for his question and his interest. Both the Police Commissioner and I have security arrangements that require police to travel with us. The commissioner and I and the police minister also routinely have staff accompany us on our travels and, for that reason,

the plane that I had booked—the itinerary that I had booked—was close to full, and when I invited the Police Commissioner to join me on some of those stops it was necessary for him to make his own travel arrangements.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I am not sure if the Premier understood the question; it was about who else was on the plane with the Premier. Was there anyone there to film videos or take photos with the Premier on that plane?

CHAIR: I think the question has been put. I think the Premier did understand, but I will give the opportunity for the Premier to give any further answer if he chooses to.

Mr MILES: The passengers on my plane and, to my understanding, the Police Commissioner's itinerary varied throughout the week but were based on those who were necessary for the itinerary on that day.

Mr CRISAFULLI: So the Premier will not rule out that part of it was a film crew to shoot a commercial for the Premier?

Mr MILES: I can rule that out. That is categorically untrue.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Premier, was there anyone on either of the planes who was there to shoot videos or take photographs?

Mr MILES: As the member would be aware, it is not unusual for members of parliament—even the Leader of the Opposition himself—to prepare material that is used to convey to Queenslanders the activities of the itinerary.

Mr CRISAFULLI: That is a yes. I have a further question for the Premier regarding the return legs between Townsville and Cairns on the afternoon—

Mr MILES: So will the Leader of the Opposition—

CHAIR: Point of order, both of you. Member for Broadwater—

Mr CRISAFULLI: I have moved on for another question, Mr Chairman, if you would like me to continue.

CHAIR: Sorry; did you get the call? I just do not want to have backwards and forwards. Premier, you have concluded your answer.

Mr MILES: Mr Chair—

CHAIR: Sorry; is there a point of order, Premier?

Mr MILES: It just strikes me that, given the Leader of the Opposition's snide remarks, it might be an opportunity for him to rule out ever travelling with anyone with a camera.

Mr STEVENS: Point of order, Chair.

CHAIR: Yes. I sustain the point of order from the deputy chair.

Mr MILES: I see a lot of film of the Leader of the Opposition—

CHAIR: I understand the point that the Premier is making, but that is not a point of order and I take your point of order. Member for Broadwater, if we could just do this in an orderly fashion; we have already had four interjections from you. Yesterday the member for Glass House only had one interjection the entire time. You have already quadrupled that. I ask you to run these proceedings in a normal fashion. I call the member for Broadwater.

Mr CRISAFULLI: In answer to the Premier's comments, my staff fly commercially, not fly to shoot commercials. On the question regarding the return legs between Townsville and Cairns on the afternoon of the 22nd and the morning of the 23rd, the flight records show that the second aircraft carrying the Police Commissioner had two passengers on the way to Cairns but four passengers on the trip back to Townsville. Can the Premier advise if those two additional passengers were the members for Cairns and Barron River?

Mr MILES: I cannot answer for the Police Commissioner's travel itinerary.

Mr CRISAFULLI: To the Premier: did the members for Cairns and Barron River join the Premier in Townsville to make the announcement?

Mr MILES: I would have to check my records. I am happy to do that though. I can report back to the committee.

CHAIR: That might be something where we take the opportunity later if staff can check the itineraries of others.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Will the Premier take on notice to check if the members for Cairns and Barron River were on either of the flights?

CHAIR: Member for Broadwater, I have asked the Premier that that might be something that he revisits. That is what I just said.

Mr MILES: Could the member for Broadwater say what specific date and event he is referring to so that I can check my diary?

Mr CRISAFULLI: The flight between Cairns and Townsville. By my recollection—

CHAIR: Order, member for Broadwater. So that we have some clarification for that, I assume that staff can check and that is something for the end of the session.

Mr MILES: Does the member for Broadwater have the date?

Mr CRISAFULLI: It is the flight between Cairns and Townsville on 23 April.

CHAIR: Alright; the big business of the state. Member for Broadwater, do you have a question?

Mr CRISAFULLI: I do. That is a very important one because, if they had flown commercially, one plane would have sufficed. There was media coverage of the Premier and the police minister taking separate flights on the night of the 23rd and further coverage on the morning of the 24th. Were the Premier and minister originally slated to take separate jets on 24 April before the media story meant they were bundled into the same plane following that attention?

CHAIR: I am not sure what the question is.

Mr CRISAFULLI: The question is: did the travel manifesto change after the stories? Were the Premier and the minister originally slated to take separate planes but then took the same plane back to Brisbane?

Mr MILES: As I have been very clear, there was a booking made for my itinerary and a booking made for the commissioner's itinerary when he was appointed as the Police Commissioner.

Mr CRISAFULLI: To the Premier: quarterly reports on ministerial travel on QGAir have not been released since December 2023. Why have the flight records for the period of travel in question not been released?

Mr MILES: I am not aware of a delay in the release of those reports. I am happy to look into it.

CHAIR: Is that something that you will try to get back to today or just look into in general?

Mr MILES: It is more relevant to the police minister's estimates so I will either make sure that he can answer it or I will have an answer today.

CHAIR: Either way, we will follow up at the end. I am just noting that we will need some time at the end of the session to do that, Deputy Chair.

Ms SIMPSON: My question is to the director-general. Director-General, I refer to the results from the 2023 Working for Queensland survey that show that within DPC almost one in five respondents do not believe the process for backfilling roles is transparent. Can the director-general explain why?

Mr Kaiser: I assure the member for Maroochydore that the processes within the DPC are transparent and fair and undertaken in accordance with all requirements. I cannot account for a perception that may exist on the part of some members of the department.

Ms SIMPSON: I have another question to the director-general. I refer to the appointment of former Labor staffer Danielle Cohen to the position of associate director-general, implementation division. Who suggested Ms Cohen for the role and what was the period of the appointment?

Mr Kaiser: I chose Danielle based on my past experience of her and her ability to lead a team and get things done across government. In January I approached Stanwell CEO Michael O'Rourke and asked if he would be agreeable to a mobility agreement. He was. Mobility agreements are nothing unusual across the public sector and are used to fill temporary vacancies. My intention was to have Danielle help in establishing an implementation unit within the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and then to run a merit-based selection process to choose a permanent associate DG after the unit was established. Danielle was there for, I think, most of January.

Ms SIMPSON: I have another question to the director-general. Can I confirm that the director-general did not believe that anyone else working in DPC had the skills necessary to fill this temporary role?

Mr Kaiser: It was a role that we were creating. Everyone else in DPC has a day job and so I needed to find someone from outside the department to help me establish a new division and a new role within the department.

Ms SIMPSON: My question now is to the Public Sector Commissioner, Mr Mackie. Public servants tell us they are concerned that this government is ignoring the Coaldrake report and several appointments show politicisation of the Public Service is getting worse. Has the commissioner received any directives from the government to address political appointments and politicisation of the public sector?

CHAIR: Member for Maroochydore, you would be aware of the long-standing orders about giving preambles and assertions. I especially counsel you about doing that before officers rather than the Premier.

Mr Mackie: The answer to that question is no. The PSC's role and my role is really to advise around recruitment practice in terms of what is best practice in terms of engagement through processes, but the answer to that question is no. I have never been asked to be involved in appointing anyone of a political nature.

Ms SIMPSON: I have another question for the Public Sector Commissioner. The Coaldrake review is such a significant piece of work and relevant to the public sector and it states—

Confidence in recruitment and selection processes is important in fostering trust both outside of and within the public sector and counters the risk of politicisation. It also contributes to the perceptions of fairness within the workplace, which can have significant implications for employee morale and organisational commitment.

CHAIR: Member for Maroochydore, we have rules around significant preambles. Are you getting to a question?

Ms SIMPSON: It is within the word limit, Mr Chair. Can the commissioner advise if any investigation has been undertaken as to how many former Labor staffers have been parachuted into the Public Service in the last nine years?

Mr Mackie: No, I have not been asked to do that nor has there been any information coming my way to signify that that is the situation.

Ms SIMPSON: I have a question to the Public Sector Commissioner. David Shankey is a deputy director-general in the department of energy. He was a former Labor ministerial adviser. Robert Hogue, an assistant deputy director-general in Queensland Health, is also a former Labor staffer. Michelle Wellington is now an assistant director-general in DPC but previously worked in the Premier's office. Is prior experience in a Labor minister's or a premier's office beneficial when seeking a job within the Queensland Public Service?

Mr Mackie: My only response to that would be that I cannot answer in terms of whether or not those capabilities are oriented towards the jobs they go to. I have not been involved in those recruitment processes but certainly they should be and I am assuming they would have been subject to the appropriate recruitment selection process where a panel, under merit and suitability, would have been used to recruit them.

Ms SIMPSON: My question is to the Premier. Former premier Palaszczuk was recently asked about decisions made in her time in office, such as the Gabba and Wellcamp. When asked about now Premier Miles's and Deputy Premier Dick's involvement in decisions made over the last term, she said—

They served on the Cabinet Budget Review Committee with me. We made all those decisions collectively.

Does Premier Miles accept responsibility for the decisions made during the last nine years, such as the Gabba and Wellcamp?

CHAIR: I note that I have made comments about preambles and it continues to be flouted. I call the Premier.

Mr MILES: Of course I do. I am proud of the experience that I bring to this role, having served as a minister in three different portfolios and as the state's deputy premier. I bring that experience to the role now as leader.

CHAIR: Premier, with reference to the cost-of-living budget, can you update the committee on any measures to support Queenslanders catching public transport? As you are well aware, I represent the area of Logan and a lot rely on public transport in growing areas. How will these measures support someone living in my community with transport costs?

Mr MILES: I think the member for Logan has heard me talk about outer suburban public transport costs since we were teenagers. The chance to see if we can address that is really exciting. There are just 13 days to go now until the start of 50-cent fares. From 5 August, the cost of all Translink public transport services will be reduced to a flat fare of 50 cents. The flat fare, to operate over a six-month trial period to February 2025, will apply no matter how far people are travelling, be it by bus, train, ferry or light rail, and will apply no matter where people live in Queensland.

This is something I have wanted to do for a long time—to make public transport as close to free as practically possible and to make it more fair for people who live in the suburbs. I believe that we should not financially penalise commuters who live further away. They are exactly the people we want to see off the road and on public transport. Now that I am the Premier, I have had an opportunity to make it happen.

Our 50-cent fares help people to afford to travel to work and provide a flat fare, irrespective of whether they live in Ipswich or New Farm. A Queenslanders travelling into work from the Gold Coast or from Mango Hill in my electorate could save over \$2,000 over six months. That is so important because it means that Queenslanders who are working hard to make a start after buying their first property are on a level playing field with public transport costs.

We can help to alleviate congestion on our already busy roads. A single bus takes up to 50 cars off the road and a train 600 cars. That is not just good for the cost of living and for traffic congestion; it also lowers emissions and improves air quality. If this trial increases the use of public transport and takes cars off the road, we know it will have been a success. To help ensure it is a success, an extra \$75 million is being provided to the Brisbane City Council for its bus network, servicing one of the fastest growing cities in the country. I want to thank Lord Mayor Adrian Schrinner for working with us on 50-cent fares. He said—

We made a commitment to residents to keep Brisbane moving, and that's precisely what this deal delivers. I want to thank Premier Steven Miles for working closely with us to deliver a better deal for all Brisbane residents.

That deal will mean that, from October 2024, Brisbane Metro vehicles can be deployed on the busy 169 bus route between Eight Mile Plains and the University of Queensland at St Lucia, and an extra 160,000 bus services will be delivered across Brisbane each year. We also have two trams on stand-by on the Gold Coast ready to hit the rail, if needed, through the trial period.

Only my government is delivering a record \$37.4 billion road and transport budget to build more roads and more rail and put more buses on the road. That is more than double the last roads budget delivered under the LNP. We are leading the nation in delivering cost-of-living relief and we are delivering the largest investment in productivity-enhancing transport infrastructure since Federation that lowers the cost of living for Queensland families and means we can get out more to enjoy our fantastic state.

CHAIR: Thank you, Premier. I know that residents in Logan are looking forward to it.

Mrs McMAHON: In respect of cost-of-living relief in the budget handed down by your government, can you please outline to the committee what support the government is providing to Queenslanders, including in my community of Macalister, to lower the cost of electricity, and is the Premier aware of any risks to these rebates?

Mr MILES: I thank the member for Macalister for her question. We understand the impact that global and national inflation are having on household budgets—pressures that are being felt at the kitchen table. The household budgets of Queensland families are the economic yardstick that matters most to me. That is why we are doing what matters for Queensland by delivering the largest cost-of-living package in the nation, with \$1,000 off power bills. This is a really straightforward way for us to deliver help directly to families while reducing inflation. So far, \$656 million in power rebates has been paid, with 656,000 households receiving the \$1,000 rebate.

Even before these rebates are applied, Queensland has the second lowest household power bills on the east coast. After the rebates, Queensland households will have the lowest power bills in the nation. We have been able to deliver this because we have kept our power assets in public hands and made multinational mining billionaires pay their fair share. When we came to government, Queenslanders had the highest power prices in the nation—that is the data of the Australian Bureau of

Statistics' CPI index—and that was after the LNP closed three power units in preparation for asset sales. Queensland now has the lowest household power prices in the nation, supported by six gigawatts of new, large-scale solar and wind farms, none of which existed under the LNP.

With 27 per cent renewable energy and nation-leading investments in renewables going forward, after a meeting in the last fortnight, 15 energy retailers have signed on to a pledge to deliver every cent of those rebates in full to customers. Retailers have also offered to help identify Queenslanders who are eligible for another \$372 rebate, including pensioners, seniors and concession card holders, taking their total rebates to \$1,372. On top of that, every Queensland household will receive an additional \$300 power rebate from the Albanese Labor government. That means some Queenslanders will not have to pay another power bill this year. For small businesses, we have provided another \$650 rebate, co-funded by the Albanese government.

On Facebook, Sue told me that her bill was in credit and she could not be happier. So did Lyn, Sarah, Chris, Kaylee and Celine, just to name a few. Shannon's account is also now in credit. She said it was perfect timing because her next bill was due the following week, so that money can now go towards a car service. That is exactly why we are doing this.

Our cost-of-living measures on power bills are nation leading, responsible and aimed at lowering inflationary pressures on Queensland families. We have the budget capacity to do this because we remain committed to securing a fair return on the resources that belong to Queenslanders. All of these rebates are at risk under the LNP, who say they will only deliver structural relief and a maintenance guarantee. Last time, a maintenance guarantee meant closing three power station units and driving power prices to the highest in the nation.

The LNP's structural relief means cutting the power rebates that are helping Queensland families. Already, we have seen the LNP's commitment to slash investment in renewable energy by cutting the pumped hydro storage that is needed. The Leader of the Opposition was a big supporter of asset sales under the Newman government. He has even proudly confronted protesters and defended asset sales. All of our progress on renewable energy and delivering lower power prices is at risk from the LNP and their plan to sell off our future.

Ms PUGH: Premier, some Queenslanders, including in my community of Mount Ommaney, are unable to use our public transport network for a variety of reasons. Can the Premier outline to the committee how the first Miles government budget, which addressed cost-of-living pressures, supports Queenslanders with the cost of running their vehicle?

Mr MILES: I thank the member for Mount Ommaney for her question. My plan to relieve pressure on the household budget is tackling transport costs from all angles. That includes putting money back in the pockets of Queenslanders who rely on their car either to take the kids to school or for their work. For those people, and all Queenslanders, I am doing what matters by taking 20 per cent off rego costs. It is a \$435 million investment made possible by making multinational mining companies pay their share. It follows one of my first actions as Premier, which was to freeze car rego costs. The cut to car rego will apply for a 12-month period from 16 September 2024 and start appearing on vehicle registration notices from 5 August 2024.

The cut to rego applies to both the registration fee and the traffic improvement fee and will also build on existing concessions like half-price rego for pensioners. That means a Queenslanders with a four-cylinder vehicle will save almost \$85, taking their car rego down to \$338.75. Rego on a six-cylinder vehicle will be cut by over \$126 and for an eight-cylinder vehicle by more than \$172. For a four-cylinder car registered on a pensioner concession, the reduction will be nearly \$50 and that will reduce registration fees to \$194.50.

The majority of Queensland's 482,000 small businesses will also benefit from our rego reduction, with the 20 per cent discount also applying to vehicles utilised by small businesses. Queenslanders who have recently paid their registration can rest assured that under Labor the discount will be in place for 12 months and the discount will apply to their next renewal payment. All of this is at risk if we change course. We are doing what matters for Queensland by supporting families and vehicle owners with the cost of running their vehicles, putting money back into the pockets of Queenslanders at a time when it is needed most.

CHAIR: I turn to the member for Broadwater.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Premier, I want to refer back to the questions about the planes. You released a video following the trips across the state. It is obvious that a professional cameraman filmed that ad and there were others, I presume, who were taking photos or filming the other press conference. Videos were filmed in multiple locations where both of those planes went. How did the camera crews get to those locations with you?

Mr MILES: I thank the member for Broadwater for his question. I am not aware of the specific video he is referring to, but it is not uncommon for my staff to film videos and to take photos when I am travelling.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I take it from that that there were multiple people, and clearly that meant that one plane would have sufficed rather than two. Do you regret taking two planes and not revealing the cost to Queensland taxpayers today?

Mr MILES: As I have explained to the member for Broadwater, my itinerary was booked some time earlier. When it was clear that the Police Commissioner was to be appointed just prior to my travel, I asked him to accompany me and he made his own travel arrangements.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Premier, at a recent government conference the director-general spoke about the many 'wicked problems' facing Queenslanders such as the housing crisis, the health crisis, the youth crime crisis and the cost-of-living crisis. He said that a trip 'to a Third World country' would offer Queenslanders much needed perspective and should be made mandatory. Does the Premier agree with the director-general's suggestion that crime victims and homeless Queenslanders should be made to travel to a Third World country so they understand how lucky they are?

CHAIR: I do not know that the director-general made that comment in that context.

Mr CRISAFULLI: We can read from the article.

CHAIR: I do counsel the member for Broadwater for long questions.

Mr MILES: I thank the member for Broadwater for that question. I suspect he is verballing the director-general. Can he read the preceding and following paragraphs of what the director-general said?

Mr CRISAFULLI: Sure.

CHAIR: I think all listeners made that assumption. He is going to read from the newspaper article. I have asked to not have long preambles, Premier. Member for Broadwater?

Mr CRISAFULLI: It is a direct quote: 'Kaiser jokingly said a trip "to a Third World country" would offer Australians much needed perspective and should be made mandatory.' We have that report but I will move on because there are other things in there.

CHAIR: Your question then, you have revealed, member for Broadwater—

Mr CRISAFULLI: Yes, my question is to the Premier.

CHAIR: Member for Broadwater—

Mr CRISAFULLI: To the Premier, Mr Chairman.

CHAIR: Member for Broadwater, you have just revealed then that you did take the quote out of context.

Mr CRISAFULLI: No, Mr Chairman. I certainly did not and there are other quotes that I am about to go on to. To the Premier—

CHAIR: I just counsel—

Mr CRISAFULLI: Mr Chairman, may I ask the question to the Premier?

CHAIR: Member for Broadwater, I counsel you to not take things out of context and to have supporting evidence. That is in the standing orders.

Mr CRISAFULLI: To the Premier, it was reported that at this Queensland government conference it was stated that Australians 'might have to face a new normal'. Under this Labor government, is the youth crime crisis, the health crisis, the cost-of-living crisis and the housing crisis the new normal?

Mr MILES: No.

Mr CRISAFULLI: To the Premier, the director-general is reported to have said at this conference that the Queensland government could have done more to mitigate the housing crisis. As a former minister responsible for infrastructure and planning, does the Premier agree with this and accept blame for the record number of Queenslanders under housing stress?

Mr MILES: Clearly I accept that because when I became the Premier we allocated an additional \$1.3 billion and released a new Homes for Queenslanders plan. We would not have done that if I thought everything that could be done was being done. It was clear and, in fact, I made clear from the moment that I took over as Premier that we would have an additional focus on housing that we needed to do more and we have done precisely that—investing more, supporting renters, better supports to first home buyers and a \$350 million fund to fund infrastructure charges for developers where they have projects in the right location that provide the right kind of stock. Implicit in all of that is that when I became Premier I determined that we needed to do more and do better.

CHAIR: I turn to the member for Mirani from the crossbench.

Mr ANDREW: My question is to the Premier with reference to page 2 of the SDS and the list of key deliverables. Will the Premier advise what the updated cost and timeframe for delivery of the Pioneer-Burdekin Pumped Hydro will be?

Mr MILES: I thank the member for Mirani for his question. That is indeed a project that I know he has an interest in and we have discussed before. The pumped hydro storage at both Borumba and Pioneer-Burdekin are absolutely critical to allowing us to store the renewables—the wind and solar—that are needed to achieve 24/7 firmed renewable power for industry and for households.

As the member would be aware from the budget paper that he is reading from, there is \$1 billion allocated now for the assessment, feasibility and progress work—\$38.45 million of those works will be delivered this financial year prior to a final investment decision. When the project was announced as part of the Energy and Jobs Plan, the cost estimate was \$12 billion. This remains the latest cost estimate. I expect to have an updated cost available on finalisation of the detailed analytical report, which we have not yet received.

Mr ANDREW: Can you advise how much the government has spent on what we find is a highly misleading ad campaign depicting people swimming in pristine clean waters of a mountain lake which is supposed to represent the Queensland hydro dam? How much was spent on this advertising campaign? Was the Premier's department involved in sanctioning its use in some form? It is like state propaganda aimed at deceiving the Queensland public. How much did that cost? Why did we go into that?

Mr MILES: I thank the member for Mirani for his question. The director-general has just advised me that my department was not involved in the preparation of that communications material—that it was Queensland Hydro's work. Clearly a key component of their job is to convey to the community what a pumped hydro project looks like.

Mr ANDREW: Putting fences around dams does not allow people to swim in a pumped hydro area. I do not see how we could spend money on advertising that. How much did that cost? We do not know?

Mr MILES: As I outlined, that communication was from Queensland Hydro. There will be an opportunity in these estimates hearings to speak with the CEO of Queensland Hydro.

CHAIR: I call the member for Broadwater.

Mr CRISAFULLI: The Coaldrake report highlighted how the excessive use of contractors has diminished the capacity of the Public Service. At this Queensland government conference the director-general is reported to have said that issues around youth justice and housing do not lend themselves to the kind of thinking public servants used to. Does the Premier agree with this assessment?

Mr MILES: I am happy for the director-general to explain the context of his remarks. What I have done is put a very clear focus on community safety. We have that community safety plan that was informed by the evidence of what initiatives are working. Clearly we continue to see improvements since the implementation of that plan. It was developed with leading public servants including, of course, the Queensland Police Commissioner.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Mr Chairman, I have a further question to the Premier.

CHAIR: Did you want the director-general to make any additional comments?

Mr CRISAFULLI: Mr Chairman, I would like to ask a question to the Premier and I might have one for the director-general afterwards, if that is okay.

CHAIR: No, I understand. The Premier made reference in his answer—

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Mr MILES: I am able to call a witness forward to answer a question. That is within the standing orders.

CHAIR: Which he indicated, member for Broadwater. What is wrong with you?

Mr STEVENS: Point of order, Chair: that is not appropriate.

CHAIR: There is a longstanding order—

Mr CRISAFULLI: Mr Chairman, I understand that you love to wind down the clock. You do it every year.

CHAIR: Member for Broadwater!

Mr CRISAFULLI: We would like the opportunity to call the Premier.

CHAIR: Member for Broadwater, there is a longstanding order—

Mr CRISAFULLI: This is our one chance to attempt to have the Premier held accountable.

CHAIR: Order! Order! Order! You already interjected five times. I have let it all go.

Mr CRISAFULLI: No, you have not, Mr Chairman. With respect, you keep interrupting to deliberately wind down the clock, and that does not benefit anyone here today—

CHAIR: Order! Order! Order!

Mr CRISAFULLI:—other than the protection racket for a dud Premier.

CHAIR: Order!

Mr STEVENS: It is the same every time.

Mr CRISAFULLI: It is the same every time.

CHAIR: This is grossly inappropriate, grossly out of order and shows a severe lack of control. This is either a lack of control or showing that you have no interest in following the standing orders of the parliament—either way. I was clarifying with the Premier, who made reference in a question.

Mr MILES: I can assure the committee that the member for Broadwater has nothing I need protecting from. Under the standing orders I am able to invite a witness to answer a question. I have allowed the member for Broadwater I think five or six questions where he has effectively verbed or taken out of context the director-general. I do not think it is unreasonable, if the committee allows, to allow the director-general to speak for himself.

Mr Kaiser: I think context in respect of those comments is everything. I was reflecting on the fact that Westminster systems of government are inherently siloed, and public servants are very, very good at doing what their job is in respect of their particular departments and their aspect of service delivery. I was reflecting on the fact that increasingly in a complicated world, like in the youth justice system, we live in a system which cuts across individual departmental agencies, which is an excellent justification for the implementation division of the DPC.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I have a further question to the director-general. Does he regret saying comments around ‘a Third World country’?

Mr Kaiser: Again, context is everything. I think if you read the entire comments you will find that I was commenting on housing types and the fact that housing types in Australia are changing because the size of families is decreasing and that we are increasingly densifying our cities in order to not cause environmental damage. My comment was that if people were to travel overseas they could see this is the norm elsewhere in the world.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I have a further question to the director-general. The quote is—

Kaiser ... said a trip “to a third-world country” would offer Australians much-needed perspective, and should be made mandatory.

What perspective would a trip to a Third World country give an Australian who is struggling to keep a roof over their head because of a government that has not delivered the supply needed for nearly a decade?

Mr Kaiser: The first observation I have for the member for Broadwater is that my comments did not relate at all to youth crime, which was his suggestion in an earlier comment. I was talking about housing types and how housing types in Australia are changing. I may have used colourful language. Do I regret that? At this point in time, probably. I was trying to convey the point that Australian housing types are changing. It was all in the context of the densification of housing, the fact that family units are declining and that our housing system needs to change in response to that, and I made a colourful comment in respect of the fact that this was the case elsewhere in the world. It had nothing do with youth crime.

Mr CRISAFULLI: One out of four.

CHAIR: Sorry? You have had three times as much time.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I was not making a comment about the time, Mr Chairman.

CHAIR: You just shake your head and sigh.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I was talking to the director-general, Mr Chairman.

CHAIR: Okay, my apologies. Just do it in an orderly fashion. I thought you were making reference to—I have a question for the Premier.

Premier, I have three kids who love playing both netball and soccer. With respect to the year's cost-of-living action budget, can you outline to the committee how the new Miles Labor government is supporting kids like mine and across Logan to get active and play sport?

Mr MILES: That is a great question; thank you, Chair. I am a dad too, obviously, and I know how important sport is for kids to connect socially and develop healthy habits. Equally, I understand the costs that are involved. Equality of opportunity for Queenslanders is something I am passionate about, and costs should not be a barrier to our kids being able to be active and participate with their friends. Playing sport is not only great for our kids' physical and mental health; it teaches them important social skills and makes them feel more connected to their communities. I know this from watching my own kids grow up playing soccer and cricket and chatting with other parents on the sideline. That is why I boosted the successful FairPlay sport voucher value from \$150 to \$200 and expanded eligibility, to ensure even more Queensland kids can get involved.

We have made 300,000 \$200 vouchers available to all Queensland kids aged five to 17 to help families pay for sport registration and membership fees. Fifty thousand of these have been reserved for vulnerable households, including those who have concession or healthcare cards, because no parent should have to choose between putting food on the table and getting their kid involved in community sport. Claire wrote to me to say that her son is now competing in Little Athletics for the first time because of the FairPlay vouchers she received. As a single-income family, Little Athletics was something Claire could not afford before. That is what this program is all about. In just three weeks more than 186,000 FairPlay vouchers have been snapped up. Playing sport and having an active lifestyle is an important part of who we are as Queenslanders, and my government is committed to ensuring that all Queensland children can get active and play sport. Who knows? One of today's FairPlay kids might be standing on the podium at the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, doing us all proud.

It is my job as Premier of this state to create opportunities now and for the next generation, and that begins with having the best start in life. We know that kids are set up for success when they are active in their communities, have an active and healthy lifestyle and are engaged at school. That is why my government is doing what matters and helping Queensland families get active and involved in sport.

Mrs McMAHON: Premier, Queensland has an ageing population. I note that this year's cost-of-living action budget provides support for all Queenslanders, including seniors, with cost-of-living support. Can you advise the committee how the new Miles Labor government's budget is supporting seniors in Queensland, including in my community in Logan?

Mr MILES: I thank the member for Macalister for her question. The success of our state has been built by those who came before us. I know that my grandparents and parents worked hard every day to provide for my sister and me so we could have the opportunity to do well in life. The same can be said for all seniors and older people in our community. I will always value the contribution they have made to make Queensland a better place, which is why my government is proud to do what matters to support them.

As part of our \$11.2 billion cost-of-living budget we are providing major savings and concessions to seniors and vulnerable households. In Logan, households are now starting to receive an up-front \$1,000 rebate on their electricity bills, with eligible seniors set to receive a total reduction of \$1,672. Most Queenslanders will not pay a single cent on their first power bill of the financial year, and some seniors in the Logan area will not pay at all for their electricity this financial year. Seniors will also be eligible for 50-cent fares, which will commence 5 August 2024. The flat fare will apply no matter how far people are travelling, be it by bus, train, ferry or light rail. Our cost-of-living package also includes 20 per cent off car rego for 12 months. This builds on the 50 per cent discount senior Queenslanders can already receive on the registration component, meaning rego is essentially 70 per cent off for these drivers.

Eligible Logan seniors can also benefit from more measures. There is free dental care available under the Oral Health Scheme, with an average benefit of \$830. Seniors can also get a free pair of basic prescription glasses every two years. A water subsidy of up to \$120 is available under the South East Queensland Pensioner Water Subsidy Scheme, while your constituents in Logan may also take advantage of the rate subsidy of up to \$200 per year and over \$80 off their household reticulated natural gas bills. Eligible Logan Seniors Card holders can also access a range of discounts on goods and services and better prices on entry to museums and galleries and the Queensland Performing Arts Trust network.

As a former health minister, I know that one of the best things we can do is invest in critical health care closer to home. I am pleased that we have been able to deliver major upgrades to the Logan Hospital, adding more than 300 beds to the hospital through staged expansions. Just up the road at Eight Mile Plains, a satellite hospital has opened. This is a free, walk-in clinic and offers kidney dialysis, chemo, occupational therapy and allied health care for our patients.

Compare my first budget with that of the LNP. In 2014 they cut benefits to pensioners and seniors. They cut the electricity rebate, the reticulated natural gas rebate, the SEQ pensioner water subsidy and the pensioner rates subsidy. The opposition leader said at that time—

In recent days quite rightly there have been some good comments and some bad comments about the budget, and quite rightly people have been pointing out what they see as strengths and weaknesses.

For each of these benefits to seniors and pensioners, the LNP said, 'This concession will be adjusted as a consequence of the Australian government's decision.' They passed on a 15 per cent cut and tried to blame the federal government. They did not even stand up to the LNP in Canberra. Our government though is focused on cost-of-living relief for Queensland seniors. I am committed to working hard every day that I am Premier to deliver on the issues that are important to them.

Ms PUGH: Premier, my Mount Ommaney small business awards are tomorrow night. In respect of page 1 of the SDS can you please outline for the committee how the new Miles Labor government is backing small business, including any cost-of-living measures that are available to them?

Mr MILES: I thank the member for Mount Ommaney for her question. I am sure your small business awards will go great. Please congratulate all of the award recipients.

I understand that small business is the engine room of our economy, supporting the jobs of more than one million Queenslanders. An economy is not just data; it is all about the people—the mums and dads, business owners, shoppers, you and me, that drive our state forward. We know that small to medium enterprises are feeling the impacts from higher global and national inflation. When households spend less, that impacts on the local coffee shop and the corner store. We are doing what matters for Queensland small business by delivering lower taxes and record cost-of-living support. That starts with taxes being \$780 lower per person than the average of other states and territories. With the highest threshold for payroll tax on the east coast at \$1.3 million, that means fewer small businesses pay payroll tax, combined with the lowest payroll tax rate in mainland Australia.

Our cut to vehicle rego from 5 August will apply to all light vehicles, including those owned by small businesses across Queensland. Through our recently announced Small Business Strategy, my government is ensuring Queensland small businesses can continue to be innovative and adapt, grow and succeed. The strategy is backed by a \$250 million investment over three years. This includes funding for round 4 of our Business Boost Grants Program to help small businesses to enhance their efficiency and productivity. That program is helping businesses like Berry Excavations in the Whitsundays which received \$13,440 for software and Ice Blast air conditioning in Macalister which got \$20,000 for staff management. With cyber threats an increasing key cost of doing business—and this is something that many businesses experienced just recently—\$15 million is being invested to deliver a free cybersecurity solution for small to medium enterprises. We are also continuing the \$650 rebate on electricity bills for over 200,000 eligible small businesses.

Our support for small business does not stop there. We will also continue to support the Queensland Business Energy and Savings Transition program and the ecoBiz program. We are helping small businesses address workforce shortages through the Workforce Connect Fund grants and expansion of the free TAFE initiative. Available throughout Queensland, free financial counselling and wellness coaching services will continue to help small business owners tackle challenges and find solutions with free and one-on-one targeted support. The budget will help maximise procurement and supply chain opportunities for small construction and professional businesses that can benefit from Queensland's infrastructure Big Build. When it comes to better regulations, you cannot go past Buy Queensland, giving our small businesses the chance to supply government. We have supported over

\$7 billion in procurement for Queenslanders. I look forward to continuing to work with small businesses and chambers of commerce across the state to back them to thrive, including your business award recipients.

CHAIR: I will now turn to the member for Mirani and then we might have a question from the member for Maiwar. In transition, we might have a question from the opposition so there is time for the member for Maiwar to come forward to the table.

Mr ANDREW: I would also like to ask a question of the Audit Office after my question to the Premier, if that is possible. Premier, in relation to the billion dollars that you mentioned just recently on SDS page 2 to do with the Burdekin pumped hydro, how much have we spent on studies into the platypus habitation and also any of the frequency damage that could be done by wind factories for koala populations and sugar glider populations? Will these documents, if there are any available, be made public please?

Ms PUGH: Did you mean wind farm?

Mr ANDREW: Wind factory, same thing.

Mr MILES: Thank you for your question. I too am eager to ensure that the Pioneer-Burdekin Pumped Hydro project has as minimal impact on the flora and fauna of that precious environment as is possible. That is why we are doing the studies necessary to determine how we can build that project in the most financially, socially and environmentally sensitive way.

I understand that 86 per cent of the land within the likely inundation footprint is agricultural land so it has been previously cleared. The dam itself has been designed to ensure zero surface level impacts to the national park. Queensland Hydro are undertaking a comprehensive environmental baseline, including looking at options to improve habitat for platypus. The project also remains subject to state and federal environmental approvals which will take those matters into account. As outlined in our Energy and Jobs Plan, that work is set to continue into 2026—so for some time. It is common that those EIS and other studies are made public, so wherever possible that would be our anticipation.

The energy minister will be before estimates later in the hearings. As mentioned, the CEO of Pumped Hydro as well as the other GOCs will be available there to answer in more detail. The assurance I can give the member for Mirani is that this project is designed very much to protect the environment, including from the kind of existential threats that climate change indicates.

Mr ANDREW: I have a question to the Audit Office.

CHAIR: We note the presence of Ms Karen Johnson, the Acting Auditor-General, and welcome her to her first estimates. It is a unique experience.

Mr ANDREW: Ms Johnson, thank you for coming in. Have we ever conducted, like other jurisdictions, a performance audit on a Queensland budget here in Queensland?

Ms Johnson: We are currently conducting an audit of the state budget process.

Mr ANDREW: Have you done one in the past?

Ms Johnson: No.

Mr ANDREW: You have never done an audit on a Queensland budget here in Queensland since the parliament began?

Ms Johnson: No.

Mr ANDREW: Have we ever done an audit on a tier 1 provider, like a public-private partnership? Have we done any performance audits on those?

CHAIR: We are going into multiple questions but I will put the question anyway.

Ms Johnson: Are you asking if we have audited a public-private partnership?

Mr ANDREW: Yes, here in Queensland.

Ms Johnson: A number of our audits will examine the relationship between the government and the private partnership, but we have only recently got follow-the-dollar powers to enable us to do that and we have not done so to date.

Mr ANDREW: So you have not done so in the past.

Ms Johnson: No.

Mr BERKMAN: I do. First of all, I want to note that last night I published one of the Premier's questions on notice and responses on the social media platform X. I did not realise at the time that they had not been published by the committee, only circulated, so apologies for any inadvertent unauthorised publication.

CHAIR: I appreciate that, but I also note that that is a new initiative, that the parliament directed us to give all of that information and questions on notice to crossbench members and others, so this is novel and we appreciate your apology.

Mr BERKMAN: My question is to the Premier. Premier, you would be aware, I expect, that *The Lancet*, respected medical journal, has estimated that the death toll in Gaza since 7 October may be in excess of 186,000 people and that many of those deaths can be tied to weapons parts manufactured right here in Queensland. I am curious. In light of this, Premier, have you ever advocated for an urgent and lasting ceasefire in Gaza, including either publicly or internally, to your federal Labor colleagues?

Mrs McMAHON: Point of order, Chair: relevance to the appropriations.

CHAIR: Peripherally, there is a very broad context here, so I am calling the Premier. I will give you some latitude in the answer, Premier.

Mr MILES: Thank you, Chair. I thank the member for Maiwar for his question. It is a bit beyond the scope of the Queensland state budget, and certainly the situation in the Middle East is a bit above my pay grade. The member asks about personal conversations that I may or may not have had. I have always subscribed to what is broadly the Labor Party's policy nationally, which is in support of a peaceful two-state solution and in support of peace more generally.

Mr BERKMAN: Premier, since coming to power Queensland Labor, as I understand, has approved 38 new coalmines and opened up thousands of new gas wells. Given your commitment upon becoming Premier to take action on climate change, what changes have you advocated for as Premier in relation to the approval of new coalmines and gas projects? I want to preface this again by saying that this is not a question about renewables or about domestic emissions reduction targets; it is specifically about the approval of new coal and gas projects in Queensland.

CHAIR: I thank the member for Maiwar for his guidance on conditioning what I will or will not allow the answer to be. Eliminating any answer that makes reference to renewables will be difficult for the Premier, and it is within my purview to determine whether he is answering your question.

Mr MILES: Chair, I thank you for your ruling and the member for Maiwar in his attempt to limit the scope of the answer. It goes, really, to the heart of the difference between our approaches to addressing climate change and reducing emissions. We have long advocated for demand-side measures, and that is precisely what our renewable energy and jobs plan is. It will reduce emissions by reducing the amount of fossil fuels used in our energy network gradually over time in an orderly way, ensuring our households, industry and businesses can continue to have reliable power supply. I have not just advocated that since I became Premier; that has been a long and strongly held belief of mine. One of my first commitments and a clear and ongoing focus is achieving those emissions reduction targets by managing demand in the energy system as well as across other sectors, and the member would be aware that we have significant planning work underway on how to reduce non-energy emissions.

Mr BERKMAN: Specifically in respect of the approval of new coalmines and gas projects, what changes have you advocated for as Premier?

Mr MILES: As I have again indicated, the primary mechanisms through which we aim to achieve our renewable energy targets and our emissions reduction targets are on the demand side. We will continue to advocate for those kinds of measures. Meanwhile, we do have world-leading environmental impact assessments for those projects. Not only are they amongst the safest places to work—there are similar places to work in the world—but also they have strict financial assurance and rehabilitation measures, which I am very pleased to have worked on in my time as environment minister and to have seen them successfully adopted since then. We have made significant reforms there.

In the resources sector itself, there will be a resources sector plan to achieve emissions reductions there, and I expect that will go to things like fugitive emissions, particularly in the open-cut contexts. I met with the Queensland Resources Council just last week to discuss their efforts there, as well as electrification of on-mine-site plant and freight operations. They are the low-hanging fruit in reducing the greenhouse gas impacts of those operations.

CHAIR: I note that we have present in the gallery, from the electorate of Greenslopes, students from Seville Road State School, Marshall Road State School, Coorparoo State School, Greenslopes State School, Whites Hill State College and the fantastic Brisbane School of Distant Education. We welcome you all to these proceedings, and your local member.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Premier, the previous director-general was given a \$400,000 payout after her services were terminated to make way for the current director-general, who is a former Labor MP and a state secretary of the ALP. She was then rehired to undertake an independent review of homelessness. Who recommended Rachel Hunter to the Premier for this role?

Mr MILES: I understand stakeholders had suggested her to the housing minister and she suggested her to me.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Premier, we now know that the cost of this independent review of homelessness responses in Queensland is almost \$1 million to 30 June 2024. Why did the government not ask the Queensland Audit Office to undertake the review, given the QAO's experience in running these sorts of reviews, and instead spend the money on services for homeless Queenslanders?

Mr MILES: I thank the member for Broadwater for his question. If he had read the Homes for Queenslanders plan, he would have noted that we allocated \$2 million for that review. It is still ongoing. That funding has supported the dedicated project team of technical specialists, including analysts, strategy advisers and homelessness sector experts, to support the review process. The member would be aware that the independent reviewer is working pro bono, but any organisation that we would have tasked to do that review, whether it was the QAO, would likely have had to engage those technical specialists. They are unlikely to have had them just sitting around waiting.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Premier, it is reported that Ms Hunter will now work unpaid on the review, as you indicated, ignoring her \$400,000 payout. Can the Premier advise how many hours Ms Hunter has been working unpaid?

Mr MILES: No, I cannot.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Will the Premier take on notice how many hours Ms Hunter has worked on that review?

CHAIR: Premier, this might be something you can get back to us with some estimates on at the end of the session.

Mr MILES: I think it is more appropriate that he ask the housing minister, don't you think?

CHAIR: Naturally, but the question has been put. It might be something you could get back to us with. You might not be able to do it because, of course, when someone is not being paid they are unlikely to clock up individual hours, but if there is some kind of estimate—

Mr MILES: We will ask for an estimate; that is fine.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Has the Premier met Ms Hunter in this role?

Mr MILES: No.

Mr CRISAFULLI: A further question to the Premier—

Mr MILES: My diaries are published. You could have checked.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Ms Hunter was initially engaged in a paid role and, despite the fact that she was given a \$400,000 payout, has the Premier had any visibility at all on a review that has cost more than a million dollars already and is slated to cost \$2 million?

Mr MILES: I thank the member for Broadwater for his question. There are elements of the premise of his question that are misleading, but I will answer it substantively. I have a very excellent housing minister and she is managing this review process, and I talk regularly with her about it.

CHAIR: No doubt.

Mr CRISAFULLI: There are 45,500 Queenslanders who would disagree you have an excellent housing minister, because that is now the social housing waiting list.

CHAIR: Member for Broadwater, just put the question. You know that those assertions cannot be verified and it is impossible to put those questions. I ask the member for Broadwater for a question.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Member for Maroochydore.

CHAIR: So that was not a question at all; it was just a comment.

Ms SIMPSON: My question is to the Premier. I refer to the Premier's trip to Boston last year. The Premier has previously admitted that some of his actions were 'not a good look'. While many Queenslanders slept in tents, was staying in a \$2,000 per night hotel room a good look?

Mr MILES: I thank the member for Maroochydore for her question. I am not sure what reference she has there to what I have said previously, but as the minister for state development it was very important that I do my job to help develop Queensland's emerging industries. There is no greater show of confidence in Queensland than turning up on the doorstep of overseas partners and securing their

backing. As the Smart State, Queensland has a growing reputation as a place to invest in biotechnology. During my time in Boston I had meetings with senior representatives and decision-makers from biomedical businesses to explore further opportunities for investment in Queensland. This includes supporting the Sanofi Translational Science Hub and signing a statement of intent between the Queensland government and Sanofi to explore mRNA GMP grade clinical manufacturing in Queensland.

We also formed a partnership between the University of Queensland and Emory University, which was further strengthened by Queensland government investment into the Queensland Emory Drug Discovery Initiative. These two significant deals alone are worth over \$312 million to the Queensland economy. The Queensland government has been represented at BIO every time the conference has been held since 1999, except for the occasions when COVID caused it to be cancelled. That representation includes Ros Bates in 2012 and Tim Nicholls in 2010. I understand Mr Nicholls stayed at the Chicago Marriott hotel. In 2013 and 2014 Ian Walker represented the LNP government. At every other conference dating back to 1999, the Queensland government has been represented.

Ms SIMPSON: Premier, was the \$2,000 a night hotel room that you stayed in appropriate?

CHAIR: The question does seem to be repetitive.

Ms SIMPSON: We have not had an answer.

CHAIR: I call the Premier.

Mr MILES: I understand the accommodation booking was made on the recommendation of our in-market representatives and took into account the location of conference events as well as the other activities. They made those decisions. I would underline again that just two of the deals we negotiated while I was there were worth over \$312 million to the Queensland economy.

Ms SIMPSON: I have another question to the Premier. There are reports that the cost of the hire car on the Premier's trip was up to \$3,000 per day; is that figure correct and if it is correct, what was so special about this car?

Mr MILES: I not aware of that.

Mr CRANDON: My question is to the Premier. I refer to the Premier's comments that road trauma victims were to blame for choked hospitals. Queensland Health said, 'The RBWH has not experienced a substantial spike in car crashes or trauma cases.' When the health minister was asked about this link she said, 'I do not think that is the case at all.' Who gave the Premier the incorrect advice on why our hospitals were choked?

CHAIR: Usually we call for verification, but it will not be useful in this case. I call the Premier.

Mr MILES: For the benefit of the committee, the member for Coomera is taking remarks from two separate press conferences that were related to separate incidents and conflating the two. What I was simply doing was pointing out the special role that RBWH plays in our health system dealing with the worst trauma cases. Every time you see a helicopter flying in and landing on the RBWH, they are taking care of Queenslanders.

In relation to the broader question of the pressure on our health system, that is precisely why we massively increased the health budget. There was a 10.6 per cent increase to the health budget, bringing it to \$28.9 billion, to allow us to deliver the extra doctors, nurses, health professionals and support staff that are needed to address that ongoing increase in demand. Our health staff continue to do a fantastic job. We will continue to back them with the facilities and staff that they need. We will not ever call them 'duds'; we will not ever sack them.

Mr JANETZKI: My question is to the Premier. In question on notice 343 the Premier said that the cost for the hospital capacity expansion program projects were 'speculative only'. In the past 12 months we have had a \$1.4 billion blowout without any additional beds added. Is this what happens when good planning makes way for speculation?

Mr MILES: I thank the member for his question. This is what happens when building costs go up and you have a government that is determined to still deliver the projects. Members would be aware that across just about every building supplier, costs have escalated dramatically and that has increased the cost of those projects. When the cost of projects go up, the choice governments then have to make is whether to fund those additional costs, whether to cancel the projects or whether to revisit their scale. I can assure the committee that we are a government that will build the infrastructure that Queensland needs, including the health infrastructure. We will not cut it as the member appears to be suggesting we should.

Mr JANETZKI: Again, my question is to the Premier. The Cairns Hospital upgrade was supposed to start construction in 2020, it did not start until 2022 and now it will not open until 2025. How much has this delay cost and how many additional beds could this have delivered?

Mr MILES: I thank the member for his question. I will check if we have a specific update for Cairns. I will seek to have an answer regarding Cairns Hospital before the end of the session.

CHAIR: The member has asked if you are taking the question formally on notice.

Mr MILES: I should be able to report back. I will talk to Shannon.

CHAIR: One of your staff is taking a note of those things that you intend to return to.

Mr JANETZKI: I have another question to the Premier. The Redland Hospital ICU upgrade was a 2020 election commitment of this government and it was meant to be open in 2022. It now will not open until mid-2025. How many extra beds could have been delivered with the \$16 million or 25 per cent cost blowout for this project?

Mr MILES: Again I would say to the member for Toowoomba South that the cost of construction has increased across just about every class of input. As a result, governments have to choose between continuing to fund these projects, or cutting them as we know the LNP would. I note the interjections from the member appear to be suggesting that an LNP government would cut the pay and conditions of construction workers in Queensland. I understand that senior LNP members have given the CFMEU specific assurances that they will not do that.

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

CHAIR: Member for Broadwater, if we could have some order.

Ms PUGH: Premier, in respect to the renewable energies outlined on page 2 of the SDS and protecting the environment on page 1 of the SDS, can you please outline how the new Miles government is supporting renewable energy in Queensland and is the government concerned or aware of any external risks to the development of renewable energy in Queensland?

Mr MILES: That is a very important question because it goes to our plan for our state's future and our economy. One of my first acts as Premier was to announce a 75 per cent emissions reduction target by 2035, a target my government has now enshrined in legislation. This budget backs in that target with \$26 billion of investment in publicly owned renewable energy—the largest investment in renewable energy in the nation; investment in publicly owned renewables that means the returns from these assets stay with Queenslanders and do not go to offshore investors; an investment that builds on our record of taking Queensland from having no wind or solar farms to 10 gigawatts and 27 per cent renewable energy, with 55 large-scale solar and wind farms either built or committed.

This year's budget sets us on the pathway to 70 per cent renewable energy by 2030, with \$8.5 billion to build the Queensland SuperGrid and funding for the Lotus Creek, Tarong West, Wambo and Boulder Creek wind farms. There is funding for short- to medium-term storage and firming projects including the Stanwell renewable energy zone battery, the Swanbank battery, the Greenbank battery and the local network batteries across Queensland.

The most important part of our plan is long-duration storage for renewable energy. The advice of the CSIRO and energy experts is that the most economic way to do this at scale is with pumped hydro—to pump water to an upper reservoir during the day using solar and wind and then unlock that stored energy at night when the sun is not shining, storing solar and wind energy so it can provide 24/7 power for our businesses, homes and manufacturers. That is why the Pioneer-Burdekin and Borumba pumped hydro energy storages are so important for our state's future. We have budgeted \$14.2 billion for the two-gigawatt Borumba pumped hydro dam and \$1 billion towards Pioneer-Burdekin ahead of a final investment decision. Each megawatt of long-duration pumped hydro storage provides capacity for three megawatts of renewables in the energy system. To make that abundantly clear, if the Pioneer-Burdekin project is cut that means over half of our state's renewable energy pipeline has to go with it.

The Leader of the Opposition committed to axing the Pioneer-Burdekin hydro in the same week that he stopped for a selfie at an LNP fundraiser with the CEO and chair of the Coalition for Conservation nuclear lobby. The Leader of the Opposition is even calling into question the Borumba pumped hydro dam, a project that Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen had the courage to back way back then. The opposition leader has said he might look at smaller pumped hydros. That would mean building over 70 pumped hydro dams to achieve the same amount of storage. The advice of the CSIRO is that that would cost more than twice the cost of our plan to build 24-hour storage. Potential sites, according to the ANU pumped hydro energy storage atlas, include multiple sites at Tully and Mulgrave in the Wet Tropics

World Heritage area, Lake Proserpine and Eungella in North Queensland, sites near Maleny and Beechmont, and delivery of three separate dams at Borumba and Cressbrook near Toowoomba. That is the LNP plan: all those dams at great expense and environmental destruction as well as two nuclear reactors.

Mrs McMAHON: In respect of the government's objectives for the community to protect the environment on page 1 of the SDS, can the Premier outline how this budget is supporting clean energy hubs and the transition to a renewable future, as discussed?

Mr MILES: That is another important question about how our 75 per cent emissions reduction target by 2035 will be delivered through this budget. The sites where coal power stations are located will be critical to our state's renewable energy future as clean energy hubs. These sites are connected to transmission infrastructure and, importantly, have the spinning machines or synchronous condensers needed to provide frequency control across the power grid. That is why it makes sense to invest in short- and medium-duration energy storage and firming at clean energy hubs, including batteries and hydrogen-ready gas turbines.

There are strong renewable resources around many of the clean energy hubs, making these sites a good location for maintenance workers to base out of for future solar and wind farms. That means there will be ongoing opportunities for the skilled workers at existing power stations to stay in the regions where they are living. We are backing these opportunities with a jobs security guarantee, backed by training and financial assistance through the \$150 million Job Security Guarantee fund. This has only been possible because we stopped the LNP's asset sales plan.

The 2024 budget includes critical projects at our clean energy hubs to support renewable energy. These investments include the 400-megawatt hydrogen-ready gas peaking plant at the Kogan Creek clean energy hub, the 300-megawatt four-hour battery for the Stanwell clean energy hub and a 250-megawatt battery for the Swanbank clean energy hub. Construction is underway on the Tarong battery energy storage system for the Tarong clean energy hub to provide 600 megawatt hours of storage. This battery will be completed by the end of the year. The Tarong battery alone supported 80 jobs during construction and will provide six ongoing jobs. Work is underway on projects to develop a renewable hydrogen-ready gas peaker plant, grid-scale battery storage and local education services at the Callide clean energy hub.

All of this work is under threat from the LNP's nuclear plans. This is why I am committed to fighting these plans. I will not just say that it is not part of my plan; I am prepared to take the fight for Queenslanders. That is why I have written to the chairs of our government owned corporations to make clear that the Queensland government does not support any plans or work to develop nuclear power or associated transmission infrastructure.

The LNP want to turn the Callide and Tarong clean energy hub sites into nuclear power stations. That means that local communities will have to live under the shadow of a nuclear reactor, with higher rates of exposure to radiation and higher power prices, and local communities would have to wait 15 years for any ongoing operational jobs. That is the advice of the CSIRO. They said—

Long development times mean nuclear won't be able to make a significant contribution to achieving net zero emissions by 2050.

...

Nuclear is not economically competitive with renewables and the total development time in Australia for large or small-scale nuclear is at least 15 years.

That is confirmed by the advice from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet that is based on the CSIRO Lazard and the US Energy Information Administration reports. That is before factoring in the cost of storing nuclear waste, with no permanent storage facility yet constructed anywhere in the world. I will table for the benefit of the committee my direction to those government owned corporations.

CHAIR: The Premier has sought leave to table some documents. We will take those documents and deal with them during the break. Premier, as you know, the member for Macalister and I represent the fantastic Albert and Logan river valleys and water security is very important to both of us. With respect to the government's objective for the community to protect the environment and Queensland's great lifestyle on page 1 of the SDS, can the Premier outline how the budget supports water security and supply and are there any impacts on that, any external factors or any policy, which could hinder water security in Queensland?

Mr MILES: I am aware of the interests you both have in water availability in your neck of the woods. The 2024 budget provides generational investment in water infrastructure as part of our economic plan to deliver stronger regional economies and communities, building on our track record of investment in \$5.8 billion in water infrastructure projects, including building Rookwood Weir, the largest weir constructed in Australia since the Second World War.

This year we are forging ahead with the Fitzroy to Gladstone pipeline to provide greater water security for Central Queensland, unlocking new industries including hydrogen and critical minerals. We are delivering the Mount Morgan pipeline to provide water security for more than 3,000 people. We have increased our commitment to the Cairns Water Security program to \$195 million. We are delivering another \$32 million for the Great Artesian Basin water security project, building on previous investment that has returned 226,000 megalitres a year to the basin. We are also progressing a business case for a new Paradise Dam. Our South East Queensland Water Security Program includes projects to connect Wyaralong Dam, expand the Gold Coast desalination plant and deliver an additional desalination plant in the future. We have a comprehensive plan to deliver secure access to clean water for Queensland households, farmers and businesses. All of that is at risk under the LNP's nuclear plans.

Under our government we have upgraded our water assets, including the Boondooma Dam that currently supplies agricultural producers and the Tarong Power Station. Many of those agricultural producers would sit within what the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission describes as the ingestion exposure pathway zone for radioactive material or an 80-kilometre radius of the Tarong Power Station. The Tarong Power Station is 134 kilometres from the Brisbane CBD. The International Atomic Energy Agency states that nuclear power plants use large amounts of water—20 per cent to 83 per cent more than coal-fired plants.

CHAIR: How much—20—

Mr MILES: Twenty per cent to 83 per cent more than coal-fired plants. Water consumption for nuclear reactors is typically 13 to 24 billion litres per year or 35 to 65 million litres per day. Conversely, the water consumption of renewable sources and energy efficiency conservation measures is negligible or zero. During drought periods the Tarong Power Station is reliant on Wivenhoe Dam—so much so that in 2007 the Queensland government had to cut generation at Tarong Power Station to save for Brisbane's drinking water supply. It is far more complicated to shut down a one-gigawatt nuclear reactor that still needs water for cooling compared with a 350-megawatt coal unit. If the millennium drought was repeated, a nuclear reactor would draw around 15 per cent of the remaining water a year out of Wivenhoe Dam. Under the LNP's plans, Brisbane's drinking water supply will be placed at risk by nuclear power during a drought. The people of Brisbane would be forced to make the choice of having access to drinking water and a shower or whether to have power. The water that comes back out of nuclear reactors is recycled.

Mr CRANDON: What universe are you in?

Mr MILES: The water that comes back out of nuclear reactors is recycled and I do not think Brisbane residents want to be drinking water recycled from a nuclear power plant.

CHAIR: Member for Coomera, if we could show some decorum. I call the member for Broadwater.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Regarding the use of two jets in April, the Premier has not explained what the cost is or whether or not any other MPs were on the jets. Will the Premier give a list of professions and positions of the people on those jets?

CHAIR: I lost the question, but I call the Premier.

Mr MILES: I have already outlined for the benefit of the committee that my itinerary, which was booked some time before the Police Commissioner had been appointed, contained my protection detail as well as my staff.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Premier, did any of those staff involve professional camera operators, photographers or videographers and how many were there?

CHAIR: We are getting to a point of repetition. In the three years of chairing I have only stopped one question, and that was for repetition, but I do not intend to do that, so I will put the question to the Premier.

Mr MILES: Thank you, Chair. I can advise the committee that it is not unusual that my staff take photos and videos. They are all capable of doing so, whether they are policy or media.

Mr STEVENS: So that is a yes?

Mr CRISAFULLI: I think it is a taxpayer funded commercial, isn't it?

CHAIR: Member for Broadwater—

Mr CRISAFULLI: I think it is.

CHAIR: Member for Broadwater, I appreciate that you are attempting to get your grab, but that is not within the standing orders, so thank you.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Premier, how many more or fewer full-time-equivalent frontline police officers are there now compared to when Labor was re-elected in 2020?

Mr MILES: The 2024-25 budget provides an additional \$495 million over four years and \$183 million per annum ongoing for an additional 900 police personnel, including 500 sworn officers. In 2020 we committed to delivering 2,025 extra police personnel over five years. We are now on track to deliver over 3,000 additional police personnel by 2025. I am advised that, as at 30 June 2024, 650 police recruits are in training across both academies which is the highest number on record. Despite an intensively competitive labour market, there is an application pool of 2,300 recruits. In April a record breaking 137 new officers were sworn into the Queensland Police Service. That is the largest intake in 26 years. In May a record breaking 56 new officers graduated from the Townsville academy—the largest intake to graduate at the academy in 13 years.

Despite significant recruitment and labour market challenges, our Queensland Police Service has been very successful at recruiting additional police. Of course, that stands in stark contrast to when the member for Broadwater was in government when they cut more than 300 personnel, including 110 senior police. The QPS strategic review found that there was a reduction of 500 staff member FTEs in 2012 and 2013, and that is in addition to making them pay for their own body worn cameras and cutting back on safety features on the police helicopter.

Mr CRISAFULLI: The other record-breaking thing that has happened is the record breaking—

CHAIR: Is this a question, member for Broadwater?

Mr CRISAFULLI: Yes, it is, Mr Chairman. Again to the Premier I have specifically said frontline police officers, so not total personnel. I am asking the number of full-time-equivalent frontline police officers, because you have spoken about the pipeline, but there has also been a record number leave—

CHAIR: Thank you for the clarification.

Mr CRISAFULLI:—so a total difference in full-time-equivalent frontline police officers.

CHAIR: Thank you for the clarification.

Mr MILES: It is true that it took us some time to replace the police officers that were sacked by the LNP government, but we—

Mr CRISAFULLI: The question was from 2020, Premier.

CHAIR: Order, member for Broadwater. The Premier is less than one sentence into the answer and you are interrupting. It is disorderly.

Mr MILES: I am advised that, as at 30 June 2024, the police officer headcount was 12,341, which was 303 more than the budget full-time-equivalent baseline of 12,038 as at 30 June 2020. I know numbers are not really the member for Broadwater's thing, but 12,341 is 303 more than 12,038.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Transparency and honesty is my thing and what I am asking the Premier is the comparison between a commitment to add 1,450 additional full-time-equivalent frontline police officers in this term of government. When that commitment was made to as of today, how many of the 1,450 full-time-equivalent frontline police officers have been added? That is a net figure.

CHAIR: I think the question has been put and answered, but I will put it to the Premier again.

Mr MILES: The answer I provided was as at 30 June 2024. I can get a more recent update if that is what the member is after.

CHAIR: Is that what the member was after? That might be something that we return to if there is a more recent update.

Mr STEVENS: 303 is the number.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Thanks, Mr Chairman. I have a couple of other questions—

CHAIR: You did not answer my—

Mr CRISAFULLI: The question was regarding the 1,450 commitment, but I am happy to move on, Mr Chairman.

CHAIR: Okay. There is no need for that is my understanding. The member for Broadwater does not want that answer.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I do not believe I said that, Mr Chairman. I said I wanted an answer with regard to the 1,450 commitment.

CHAIR: The Premier asked, through me, a question about more recent updates. I put the question.

Mr JANETZKI: Point of order, Chair: just a few hours ago the Premier himself said that the chairs of the committees had been instructed not to run interference. At the moment that is all I am hearing from the chair. I ask that you let the proceedings progress as they ought to.

CHAIR: Respectfully, the Premier put a question as to whether there was more recent information than that put. I put that to the opposition leader. I find that disrespectful, member for Toowoomba South. I am not sure where we are up to. I think the Premier was answering a question. Premier.

Mr MILES: Was there a further question?

Mr CRISAFULLI: Yes, there is. Premier, last year's budget included \$10 million over three years held centrally to support a comprehensive independent evaluation of the government's youth justice response. Who is doing this independent evaluation?

Mr MILES: The member is right: a key element of our community safety plan includes ensuring we are evaluating what works and investing further in what works. I understand that that evaluation program is coordinated within DPC, but I presume it includes multiple streams of work.

I have some more details. The youth justice monitoring and evaluation project commenced in July 2023, driven by an overarching monitoring and evaluation framework and overseen by a steering committee chaired by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. One of the early focus areas is evaluation of the multiagency collaborative panels, which brings together relevant agencies and non-government service providers to work together to find ways to prevent the offending of individual serious repeat offenders based on their specific circumstances. I look forward to considering the final report of the multiagency collaborative panel evaluation, which I am expecting to receive in September.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Premier, how much involvement have you had in that process?

Mr MILES: I am regularly updated on the work of DPC by the director-general. I am heartened by the early evidence that those initiatives are working. I am advised that the average number of young people who are serious repeat offenders has fallen 14 per cent in the six months to May this year. For the six months January to June, the rate of offences by young people decreased by 6.76 per cent. The rate of offences against property decreased by 6.7 per cent and other offences decreased by 10 per cent.

I am advised that the number of reported offences by young people in some districts has made remarkable improvements in the period January to June compared to the last period: South-West is down 29 per cent, Wide Bay is down 34 per cent, Capricornia is down 24 per cent, Townsville is down 24 per cent, Logan is down 21 per cent, the Darling Downs is down 14 per cent, the Far North is down 12 per cent, the Sunshine Coast is down 10 per cent and Ipswich is down seven per cent. That is a credit to the hard work of our police as well as our youth justice system. I can only assume that the member for Broadwater would welcome those results.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I have a further question to the Premier. Premier, I want to go back to the independent evaluation of the government's youth justice response. How many specific meetings have you had regarding that and spoken to the people who are running that program?

Mr MILES: I have just very clearly outlined to the committee what I measure as success for that.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I believe there is none.

CHAIR: Member for Broadwater, he has not yet finished the first clause of the first sentence.

Mr MILES: The member for Broadwater's interjections are somewhat bemusing given the role that I played in putting this program together. As I have said, I expect the first report from its evaluations in September, but what we have seen in the first half of this year, with a new community safety plan and a new Police Commissioner, is a substantial reduction in youth offending. As I said, I assume the member for Broadwater is welcoming those results.

Mr CRISAFULLI: How does it differ from the Auditor-General's review into the government's response to youth justice?

Mr MILES: The member may be aware of the policy evaluation cycle or he may not be. This is very clearly the role of a central agency, to coordinate the implementation of our plans across agency to evaluate their outcomes, to inform future investment decisions.

Mr CRISAFULLI: The Premier at the time said that he would undertake an independent review of the Gabba because he was not happy with the advice he was getting. Who was giving him the advice he was getting originally?

Mr MILES: Can the member be clearer?

Mr CRISAFULLI: I recall the Premier said that he was undertaking an independent review of the Gabba because he was not happy with the advice he was getting. I am asking: from where was he getting the original advice? I suspect it is seated reasonably close to him at the moment.

Mr MILES: The original advice was the project validation report, which we released publicly. It outlined the range of challenges with the Gabba redevelopment. I was very clear that the reason I started the review was that Queenslanders were not supportive of that plan.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I have a question to the director-general. I refer to a comment from the Coaldrake review that says examples provided to the review included instances of senior public servants directing employees to sanitise advice and alter recommendations to align with the minister's position. Was the Gabba project validation report written to align with the position announced by the government?

Mr Kaiser: No, it was not sanitised. There were parameters set by the government at the time—namely, that the opening and closing ceremonies and the athletics were to be staged at the Gabba. What my previous department did, not relevant to DPC or this budget at all, was to run a project validation process to determine the best way to meet our contractual obligations with the IOC in respect of the Gabba. We examined four options, from memory—everything from a complete tear-down and rebuild of the Gabba through to various forms of refurbishment of the Gabba. That has been published. The very clear evidence is that the best-value-for-money option in respect of using the Gabba in the way that it was going to be used back then in an Olympics context was a tear-down and rebuild.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I have a further question to the director-general. At what point did the director-general become aware that the cost of the \$1 billion Gabba rebuild had grown to \$3.4 billion, and why was that never released publicly?

Mr Kaiser: You are testing my memory because it was a previous agency, not this financial year and nothing to do with this budget, but from memory—

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Mr Kaiser: Well, it was not. It was my previous role, not this role

Mr CRISAFULLI: You just forgot that \$2.4 billion blowout?

CHAIR: Order, member for Broadwater. Director-General, the question has been put.

Mr MILES: Point of order: the member for Broadwater is confusing the \$2.5 billion anticipated cost of the Gabba with the \$3.4 billion anticipated cost of his Victoria Park proposal.

Mr CRISAFULLI: No.

CHAIR: There is no point of order.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Please do not be so desperate that you lower the tone of your office.

CHAIR: Order!

Mr CRISAFULLI: Desperate.

CHAIR: Order! Member for Broadwater, that is out of order. Premier, that is not a point of order. We have a question that has been put to the director-general. I ask that it be dealt with without interjections. Director-General?

Mr Kaiser: Naturally enough, I did not swot up on previous portfolios for this estimates because I was under the misapprehension that this was about this year's budget and my role in DPC, but it is starting to come back to me.

Mr CRISAFULLI: We can go back to Shepherdson, if you like.

Mr Kaiser: There was original discussion of a \$1 billion cost for the Gabba that was not based on any analysis at all. It was not based on a PVR or a business case. When the business case was done and when a PVR was done, there were four options that were examined. All of this material was

published at the time. Clearly, the value-for-money option was \$2.7 billion, in fact, as a tear-down and rebuild of the Gabba. It was all published. It was there to see—transparent. All of the evidence was provided and published and made available at the time. The \$1 billion figure to which the member refers was never subjected to that kind of rigorous analysis.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Director-General, it was broadcast to the world stage, though. That \$1 billion figure was broadcast from the Queensland government when the bid was won.

CHAIR: Is that a—

Mr CRISAFULLI: A question to the director-general: is that a fair assessment?

CHAIR: When you say 'broadcast', you are saying it was part of the original bid. Director-General?

Mr Kaiser: It made the *Courier-Mail*. It was published in the *Courier-Mail*. That is where I saw it.

Mr CRISAFULLI: That was a figure that came through the government. The Premier was the infrastructure minister at the time. That \$1 billion figure was broadcast—

Mr MILES: Point of order: I was the health minister at the time.

CHAIR: I understand. That is technically true so was a mistake. Member for Broadwater?

Mr CRISAFULLI: Director-General, on the \$2.7 billion figure for the Gabba, there was never a figure higher than \$2.7 billion for the Gabba at any point after that?

Mr Kaiser: Not to my recollection. \$2.7 billion was the clear value-for-money option out of an analysis of four options.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I have a further question to the director-general.

Mr Kaiser: My apologies: I think, from memory, one of the alternative options, which was rejected, was greater than \$2.7 billion—but that option was rejected.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I have a further question to the director-general.

Mr JANETZKI: It is all over the place, as always.

CHAIR: Order, for Toowoomba South! The member for Broadwater is trying to put a question and you are interjecting on your own leader.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Director-General, did you make Premier Miles aware of this additional blowout? At what point did you make the Premier aware of the blowout in the Gabba?

CHAIR: I also wanted to note that we only have a brief minute to answer this, so if you could make your answer relatively quick, Director-General.

Mr Kaiser: I reject the premise of the question. There was no blowout. There was a figure put into the public arena which was not the subject of any evaluation or professional advice. I do not believe—and the deputy—

Mr CRISAFULLI: How did that get there? How did that get in the public arena? Did the paper just make it up? So the *Courier-Mail* just made it up?

CHAIR: Member for Broadwater, you have been doing so well. You have a minute left. Let's try to show some discipline.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Where did that come from?

Mr MILES: Just for the benefit of the committee, because some members of the committee might not be aware of the IOC's New Norm process, it does specifically limit investment in business cases at the bid stage. It is the IOC's objective to reduce the amount of money that bidding cities need to spend before winning the hosting rights. It does require that those initial venue plans have only very initial cost estimates. It is not until afterwards that the business case can be used to determine a more accurate cost.

Mr CRISAFULLI: The former premier said it on your advice.

CHAIR: Order! Member for Broadwater, this is ridiculous.

Mr CRISAFULLI: You weren't in that cabinet?

CHAIR: Member for Broadwater! I thank members for their participation so far. I hope that people can reflect during the brief break. We will take a brief break and come back at 11.15 am. I thank participants.

Proceedings suspended from 11.01 am to 11.15 am.



CHAIR: I welcome back the Premier and officials. The committee will now resume its examination of the proposed expenditure for the portfolios of premier and cabinet. I think we had a good morning and I hope that it continues.

Ms SIMPSON: Premier, do you personally use a Snapchat account?

Mr MILES: No. I am not young and hip enough, I suspect.

Ms SIMPSON: How often does the Premier speak to Gary Bullock?

Mr MILES: That depends—sometimes often, sometimes not for weeks or months.

Ms SIMPSON: Can the Premier advise if he has used any secure messaging services with autodelete functionality?

Mr MILES: Not for official business.

Ms SIMPSON: Premier, have you used any of these platforms with autodelete functionality for messages that relate to the work of Queensland?

Mr MILES: Not for official business, no.

CHAIR: We just note the repetition.

Ms SIMPSON: Can the Premier advise whether he has used these platforms to communicate with the unions?

Mr MILES: I would not use those platforms for official business other than for the purposes specifically outlined in the Ministerial Handbook.

Ms SIMPSON: My follow-up question is with regard to whether the Premier has used these platforms to communicate with Gary Bullock.

CHAIR: I think the question has been put, but I will ask the Premier to respond.

Mr MILES: Not for official business, no.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Premier, what you are saying, though, is that you have used these platforms to communicate with these individuals?

CHAIR: I will put the question to the Premier.

Mr MILES: No, but these hearings have a role related to official business and I will not be entertaining discussions otherwise. I can just add, though, for the interest of the member for Logan, that my understanding is the Queensland Ministerial Handbook was amended to allow ministers to use those platforms for official business at the insistence, I think, of Scott Morrison when he introduced National Cabinet. He wanted National Cabinet to use WhatsApp or Signal, or one of those apps, so that was the reason the handbook was changed at that time.

Ms SIMPSON: My question is for the Integrity Commissioner. I note that the SDS outlines that the Integrity Commissioner's role is to raise awareness about ethics and integrity. We have heard that the Premier does use social media platforms with autodeleting methods to communicate. How does that set the ethical and integrity standard for other ministers and public servants?

CHAIR: I think it may be a mischaracterisation but I will put the question to Ms Waugh to take that broadly when answering the question.

Ms Waugh: I think any communications need to be in accordance with whatever the set policy and requirements are. I am not across those to comment on them, but you should use official communication channels for official business.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Integrity Commissioner, if an elected official is using a channel with autodelete capability when speaking with someone with whom they have business interactions, would you suggest that that is not integrity best practice?

Ms Waugh: If it is official business—and I think I am straying into territory which I am not the particular expert in, but there is a requirement under the Public Records Act to maintain records. If you were engaging in official business using an app that auto deleted messages, I think you would not be complying with the Public Records Act.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Premier, can you see the blurred lines if you were using multiple platforms to communicate with somebody but the difference between if it is official and unofficial—do you understand why Queenslanders might be a little sceptical about that?

Mr MILES: There is a well-established process for where a minister creates a public record, regardless of what app that is in, and I always comply with that process.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Premier, why do you feel the need to use a platform that has an auto delete facility to communicate with a person who played a role in parachuting you into the role of Premier?

CHAIR: I think that is unsubstantiated. This is obviously just something for a grab. This is disorderly.

Mr CRISAFULLI: It is about integrity.

CHAIR: This is disorderly, but I am going to put the question and not entertain the obvious problems with the question. I apologise, Premier, but I am going to put the question.

Mr MILES: I thank the member for Broadwater for his question. I can confirm for the benefit of the committee that I always comply with the Ministerial Handbook, with the Public Records Act and with all other requirements placed upon me.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Premier, during the mangocube affair, one of the lessons the government said it learnt was that it would no longer do government in the dark. If multiple platforms, including those that are not subject to RTI, were being used to discuss with key powerbrokers, how does that prove the government has learnt anything at all?

CHAIR: Again, you are putting things in questions that are unsubstantiated and I do not believe to be correct. For the benefit of this process, I am going to put the question to the Premier.

Mr MILES: I thank the member for Broadwater for his question. As I outlined earlier, the exemption allowing for apps—the Ministerial Handbook describes WhatsApp and Signal—to be used for portfolio related business was added at the request of the Australian government so that it could be used for National Cabinet deliberations. I say again that I have never used and will not use it for official business, but if it were to be the case that a public record under the act was created in one of those apps then there is a process for ensuring that record is kept.

Mr CRISAFULLI: My question is to the Premier. What benefit would there be for Queenslanders for you not to communicate on a platform that is subject to RTI? If it is a personal matter, it would not be picked up. It would not be something that is of interest.

Mr MILES: That question would be best put to Scott Morrison, who insisted that WhatsApp be used for National Cabinet discussions.

Mr CRISAFULLI: My question is to the Premier. I am referring to the Premier's dealings with Gary Bullock, who installed him in the job. Why wouldn't those communications need to be subject to an RTI, if government needs to be done transparently?

CHAIR: This question again contains an imputation. I could give the member the opportunity to reword it without an imputation. I did counsel the member last time. I am not going to give the member the ability to do that because I feel that the member will, once again, abuse the standing orders. Instead, I am going to put the question to the Premier.

Mr MILES: I thank the member for Broadwater for his question. I can correct one premise of the question, which is his suggestion that those platforms are not subject to RTI. They are indeed subject to RTI. As I have indicated, as a matter of practice I do not use them for ministerial business or for official business. If a public record was to be created, though, for example, by somebody messaging me in that app in a way that the message should be held, then there is a process in my office for ensuring it is held, in accordance with the Public Records Act.

Mr CRISAFULLI: My question is to the Premier. How would Queenslanders know if it was subject to an auto delete facility?

Mr MILES: It requires the archiving before it deletes.

CHAIR: I think the Premier had made that clear, that upon the creation of it—anyway, it does not matter. I do see that question as being asked. Member for Broadwater, do you have any new questions?

Mr CRISAFULLI: My question is to the Premier. In recent media coverage regarding the behaviour of the CFMEU, the Minister for Industrial Relations, Grace Grace, said last week, 'I was as shocked as anybody else when I heard about the criminality part of that.' Was the Premier shocked?

Mr MILES: I thank the member for Broadwater and I congratulate him on his impersonation of the industrial relations minister. As I have indicated publicly, concerns about the behaviour of the CFMEU have been raised with me at different points in time. I have sought to direct those concerns to

the appropriate government agencies. In most cases the appropriate government agencies would have been the Australian government, although where the allegations are related to possible criminal matters I have directed those to the Queensland Police Service.

I spoke last week with the commissioner and asked him to ensure he was in contact with his equivalents in particularly Victoria to ensure there was a free flow of any intelligence that should be considered here in Queensland. I was concerned to hear those reports at estimates yesterday of CFMEU members' interactions with the catering staff here. Can I say: I have no time for that kind of behaviour. It is totally inappropriate.

Mr CRISAFULLI: My question is to the Premier. The New South Wales Premier has said that the CFMEU cannot and will not clean itself up. Does the Premier agree with this assessment?

Mr MILES: I thank the member for Broadwater. I personally contacted the workplace relations minister, Tony Burke, to ask that Queensland be included in the administration processes precisely because I wanted to see these concerns addressed.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Does the Premier believe that the CFMEU cannot and will not clean itself up? It is a very definitive statement from the New South Wales Premier.

CHAIR: The question has been put again, which I have concerns about, but I will put the question to the Premier.

Mr MILES: Clearly, in asking for the appointment of an administrator, I think they are unable to address those concerns without an administrator. I support an administrator.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Will the Premier stop his government from seeking the CFMEU's opinion about which company should be allowed to work on government projects?

Mr MILES: That is not a practice, but I can clearly rule it out because it is not.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Will the Premier request the state secretary of the Queensland Labor Party to return CFMEU donations as other state Labor premiers have done?

CHAIR: Generally these questions are not related and are ruled out of order, but I do think the Premier is possibly going to entertain this. Premier, I will put it to you. It is not really to do with our budget, but I will put it to the Premier.

Mr MILES: You are right, Chair: very few of the member for Broadwater's questions would be considered in order for estimates hearings, but I am happy to answer them. I am advised that the Queensland branch of the Australian Labor Party has not received donations from the construction division of the CFMEU since something like 2020.

Mr CRISAFULLI: The government has been warned about the behaviour of the CFMEU over many years. Will the Premier commit today that no members of his government will meet or engage with this organisation?

Mr MILES: I have given that commitment for the period of this administration. The objective of the administration would be that afterwards the concerns have been addressed. I am not going to say never ever, but certainly for the period of any investigation and administration process.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Why did the Premier lift the ban the former premier put in place? What changed in the behaviour of the CFMEU to make the Premier think they were a worthy organisation for him and his ministers to meet again?

Mr MILES: Since I became Premier I implemented a policy of attempting to meet with any groups that protest outside parliament. The member will have seen that I met with Voice for Victims after their rally. There were two CFMEU rallies that the member might recall. On both occasions I met with delegations from those rallies. In one case I met with the widow of a man who died upon leaving an overheated construction site. On another occasion I met with female delegates who were seeking an increase in the number of women's toilets, particularly on high-rise building sites, so they had access to a toilet on the floor they were working on.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Premier, we have had reports of union officials taking photos of the children of employees at their school. We have seen the CFMEU Cross River Rail blockades escalate to punch-ups. We have seen work equipment sabotaged, creating safety issues. The Department of Transport and Main Roads was stormed. I just want to confirm that the Premier still thinks it is okay to associate with these kinds of people.

Mr MILES: I have outlined the circumstances in which I attended meetings, and I have done so in great detail. I am a proud trade unionist. Queensland workers deserve free, fair and democratic trade unions. I do not condone it and there is no place for that kind of behaviour.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Premier, I will return to the issue of correspondence that is not picked up via RTI. During the mangocube email saga, included in the 2016 thread were emails from a private account from yourself and Jackie Trad titled 'cabinet-in-confidence'. Does the Premier believe the ability to have a platform that takes himself to warrant if it should be subject to RTI is a fit and proper way to do accountability in Queensland?

CHAIR: I am a bit confused by the question. Perhaps the Premier understood it better than me.

Mr MILES: No. The member referenced an email I sent eight years ago, but I am not sure exactly what he is trying to say.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Eight years ago the Premier was using a private email address that was not picked up via RTI and it came out in the mangocube saga. Now the Premier is saying he has a carriage service that he uses that would only be subject to an RTI if he was voluntarily submitting it. Does the Premier believe those are good governance principles?

Mr MILES: What I have been very clear about is that I do not use any of those platforms for official business, and therefore they do not generate public records. There is an hypothetical scenario where a public record could be generated; for example, by somebody sending me a message, in which case there is a process for ensuring it is appropriately archived.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Premier, why should that be your call? Why would you not use a platform that is all subject to RTI and then the independent officers make that assessment rather than your determination if you were to voluntarily put it forward?

CHAIR: I understand this question has been put multiple times. The changes in the Ministerial Handbook put forward by the Prime Minister have been referenced several times. There is a level of repetition here. As I have explained, I have only ruled out one question in three years so I am going to put the question to the Premier.

Mr MILES: If there was something clearly outside the scope of this year's budget, an email I sent eight years ago would probably qualify. What I have outlined is how I would act in the hypothetical scenario where somebody used one of those platforms in such a way to create a public record. It is not my practice to use those apps for official business in any circumstances other than those entertained by the Ministerial Handbook.

CHAIR: We might now turn to the member for Mount Ommaney.

Ms PUGH: Premier, I refer to the government's objectives for the community on page 1 of the SDS, and I ask if the Premier can provide an update on how this budget is supporting Queensland women and girls through the health strategy regardless of where they live.

Mr MILES: We know that women and girls experience different health outcomes than men and can face barriers to receiving the health care they need. That is something I know you have talked to me a lot about, especially when I was the health minister and since then as well. I will not be hooking myself up to that endo machine ever again, I assure you.

We are tackling these barriers head on because I want my daughter and all of the women and girls of Queensland to have access to the critical health care they need when they need it. That is why in March this year Minister Fentiman and I were pleased to release Queensland's new Women and Girls' Health Strategy 2032 to provide better, tailored health care for women and girls around the state. We developed this groundbreaking strategy after 12,000 women and girls shared their health stories with us. This put a much needed spotlight on access to mental health services, chronic health conditions such as endometriosis and pelvic pain, maternity care for mums and pubs, and sexual and reproductive health. Many of the Queenslanders who shared their stories highlighted that women and girls often feel dismissed or misdiagnosed by the health system, which is something the strategy will directly seek to address.

To support the strategy we are investing \$250 million in new funding, bringing our total investment to more than \$1 billion over the next five years. This will fund additional mental health supports and counselling, health and wellbeing programs for women and girls, enhanced access to abortion services, and publicly funded IVF services for people with complex health conditions. We understand the impacts of chronic reproductive health conditions and fertility treatments on women's ability to work. That is why we introduced 10 days paid reproductive health leave for all Queensland

public sector workers, which was nation-leading reform. It means public sector workers with a chronic condition like endometriosis will no longer have to exhaust their personal leave balances to address reproductive health issues. It can also be used for preventative screening and other treatments associated with reproductive health. For those undertaking IVF in order to pursue their dream of having a family it means sick leave, recreational leave or unpaid leave does not need to be exhausted to support that journey.

We also changed superannuation for public sector workers so that contributions are paid on all 52 weeks of parental leave, paid and unpaid, which is important to reduce the gender pay gap. Today I can announce that we are extending both reforms to all of our government owned corporations, Queensland Rail and Seqwater. We are also allocating \$46 million to establish four new nurse-led walk-in clinics across Queensland to provide free, easy care closer to home and more than \$18 million to boost care for pelvic pain conditions, including endometriosis. The first nurse-led clinic will open its doors in Brisbane city in September this year and the second will be in Gladstone. This strategy reaffirms our commitment to advancing the rights and interests of women and girls, increasing their economic participation and working to achieve gender equality in Queensland.

All of the work we have done to improve health outcomes for women and girls in this state is at risk if the LNP is elected in October. We know the LNP has endorsed candidates opposed to women's health care such as termination of pregnancy, endometriosis care, free IVF and support for women who have miscarriages and stillbirths. Nurse-led clinics are also at risk, along with pharmacists prescribing UTI medications and contraceptive medicine. Queensland women and girls cannot risk the LNP.

Mrs McMAHON: I refer to page 1 of the SDS and the government's objectives for the community on page 19 of the SDS. Can the Premier outline how the new Miles Labor government is supporting Queensland women generally?

Mr MILES: Queensland has more than 2.6 million women—that is 50.4 per cent of our population—and I think all 2.6 million of these women and girls should be supported to believe, dream and achieve, because when Queensland women thrive our economy thrives and our state thrives. Women and girls should live in a Queensland that recognises and promotes their equal participation. That is the sort of Queensland I want for my daughter.

I am doing what matters to create real and meaningful change. Our commitment to supporting women and progressing gender equality applies across the whole of government and every Queensland community. You have just heard about our landmark Women and Girls' Health Strategy, backed by \$1 billion over the next five years. This investment includes new funding for additional mental health supports and counselling, expanded endometriosis and pelvic pain care, more access to abortion health services and publicly funded IVF services for people with complex health conditions.

Beyond this, we are doing what matters to keep Queensland women safe. We have progressed significant reforms, including passing legislation to make coercive control a criminal offence and enshrine affirmative consent into our laws. We are also continuing to implement the recommendations of the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce. Our 2024-25 budget has committed an additional \$154.4 million over four years to tackle domestic, family and sexual violence, bringing our total investment in women's safety to \$1.9 billion. This new funding includes \$36 million to provide a 20 per cent funding increase for frontline services across the state—services which play a crucial role in supporting women and girls who have experienced violence to achieve safety and rebuild their lives.

I also recognise that women's economic empowerment is fundamental to realising women's rights and achieving gender equality. We are increasing women's participation in male dominated industries such as manufacturing, agriculture and innovation. In March this year we celebrated the first anniversary of the Women in Manufacturing Strategy, the first of its kind in the nation. In the first year of the strategy we have delivered close to 50 events connecting women and men in manufacturing with women entering the workforce or aspiring to be in the sector. We are continuing to deliver the \$16 million Women's Economic Security Package, committed in last year's budget, including programs to support women in male-dominated industries, women seeking to re-enter the workforce and women experiencing disadvantage.

Finally, our public sector is also leading the nation in terms of gender equality by introducing 10 days of reproductive health leave for public sector workers, by providing gender equitable access to paid parental leave and by paying superannuation contributions on all parental leave. Queenslanders can trust that my government will always strive to give women and girls across our state the helping hand, support, opportunities and respect that they deserve.

The alternative is an opposition who are weak on women's rights and women's representation. Their voting record speaks for itself. The LNP voted against safe and timely access to abortion and to keep abortion a criminal offence. They voted against our midwife-to-patient ratios, despite midwives and Queensland women having advocated for this change. The LNP voted against allowing trans and gender-diverse Queenslanders to update their legal documents to align with their gender identity. They even voted against Queensland sex workers having the ability to be safe at work.

When they were last in government they cut services for women and girls across the state. They cut parenting programs like Triple P. They cut women's health services like Family Planning Queensland for Queensland's reproductive health service and tried to abolish BreastScreen Queensland. They cut funding for Women's Health Information and Referral Service in Central Queensland. They cut support to migrant women's services, young women's services and older women's services and organisations supporting women who are in the justice system. They cut funding from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Development Recreational Women's Association for the Mount Isa region that provided crisis accommodation for women escaping domestic violence.

The LNP's cuts crossed all facets of women's and girls' lives. I am proud to lead a government that values the women and girls of our state and the service providers and non-government organisations who work alongside our government to support and enhance their lives.

CHAIR: We will now turn to the member for Mirani. I counsel those opposition members: I ask you to not talk during the member for Mirani's question and answer.

Mr ANDREW: I have a couple of questions. With reference to the department's commitment on page 1 of the SDS to protecting our Queensland lifestyle, will the Premier provide the names of the 15 Queensland towns currently subject to exclusive use native title claims over their council lands? People do not understand how this defines their association with these claims going forward. Could you please explain that to us?

CHAIR: Premier, did you get the detail of the question? You seem to have a quizzical look.

Mr MILES: I think I broadly understand where the member for Mirani is trying to get to. I understand that at different stages of those legal processes some information is public and some information is not. Let me try to identify what information is able to be made public about those.

I would just speak generally about what has been a bit of a misinformation campaign about native title and its impacts. The identification of native title holders has no impact on private properties and is simply the legal recognition of which group of traditional owners should be recognised for specific lands. I do know that there is a bit of a campaign going around to try to muddy the waters of that, but I think it is best that we are honest about what these things mean. I will see if I can get some more information for you otherwise.

Mr ANDREW: Would you take that on notice, then?

CHAIR: Premier, is this something you would take on notice, is it something you wanted to get back directly to the member or is it something you can get back to us during this session?

Mr MILES: We will try to get back during the session. Without knowing the specific 15 that he is referring to, it is probable that because of the court process I might not have access to them, but if I do I am certainly happy to table them.

Mr ANDREW: Thank you. Earlier I asked a question of the Audit Office which in no way reflects on their performance. I was actually asking that as a remit of the government. Would the government implement more transparency as far as engaging the Audit Office to look at Queensland budgets and make sure that all of our interactions with tier 1 and private-public partnerships are audited by the office? This would make sure we are not just measuring success on what we spend but actually have an opportunity to see what we do not spend. It is in the Queensland taxpayers' interest.

CHAIR: Premier, are you clear about the question?

Mr MILES: I think so, and I thank the member for Mirani for his question. I think the Acting Auditor-General did her best to answer that question. What the QAO determines to audit is determined independently, and we have recently made reforms to make that process even more independent by making the Auditor-General an officer of the parliament and the other amendments that we made. We recently announced the appointment of a new Auditor-General, the first female Auditor-General, Ms Rachel Vagg. She will start in August. Given the member's interest, I would be very happy to organise for him to have a meeting with her to talk about his interests in performance auditing of government departments.

CHAIR: It is also about a process of inviting suggestions of things to audit. Anyway, I am stepping outside my bounds. Thank you, member for Mirani. We now go to the member for Nanango.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I have a question to the Premier. In April the Premier was interviewed by the *Betoota Advocate* and he was asked about the cost of living. It is reported he said, 'There's not a lot the state government can do about it.' Can the Premier advise why he said this?

CHAIR: I have never had the *Betoota Advocate* at estimates before. I call the Premier.

Mr MILES: I thank the member for Nanango for her question and I am glad she listened to my *Betoota Advocate* podcast. As I was outlining there, the increases Queenslanders have seen to the cost of most of their goods and services are driven by national and global inflation. However, you will note that I have taken very significant action since then to address that cost of living, including \$1,000 of energy rebates, rising to \$1,372, and for vulnerable households to \$1,672, if you include the Australian government's additional \$300 rebate. We have cut the cost of public transport to 50 cents, no matter how far you travel. We have cut the cost of rego by 20 per cent. We have made all children eligible for the \$200 FairPlay vouchers. We have increased funding to school food programs. So contrary to that remark pointed to by the member for Nanango, we identified a wide range of ways that we could assist with the cost of living while those national and global inflation factors impact on Queensland households.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Do you regret the comment?

CHAIR: To Errol and Clancy and all those residents of Betoota, I am sure they are listening in.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I am sure the Premier now regrets that comment. My next question is also to the Premier. In regard to the Pioneer-Burdekin project, how much will this project cost?

Mr MILES: Unfortunately, the member for Nanango was not here earlier where I outlined—

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I was listening.

Mr MILES: You were listening?

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Yes.

Mr MILES: So you would have heard me say that the most recent cost to government remains \$12 billion, but we expect to have a more accurate cost figure prior to making a final investment decision.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Premier, in the Treasurer's budget speech, he said that the Pioneer-Burdekin project is 'fully detailed in the budget papers, fully funded'. How can it be fully funded in the budget if you do not know the final cost?

Mr MILES: The anticipated costs for the period of time of this budget are included in this budget. That is how budgeting works. I would also note that the level of planning already undertaken for Pioneer-Burdekin is much more advanced than the 70 additional pumped hydro sites that the LNP would need to replace it. I can update the committee on where those sites would need to be. They would need to build a pumped hydro at Redlynch which is without any planning or business case. There are 10 sites around—

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Back to the question.

Mr MILES: The Little Mulgrave—

Mr CRANDON: Look over here.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Shiny, shiny.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Just the cost, that is all.

Mr MILES: If you want to talk about the level of planning undertaken—

Mr CRANDON: You are making things up.

Mr MILES:—between two plans, we have two competing plans. One is two big pumped hydros—

Mr CRISAFULLI: We just want to know how much it is.

Mr MILES:—and the other is two big nuclear reactors and 70 pumped hydros.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: A bit desperate, Premier, a bit desperate.

Mr MILES: All of these communities deserve to know what the impact of the 70 pumped hydros would be.

Mr STEVENS: Point of order, Chair: under the standing orders, the answers to the question have to be directly in response to the question. We are not looking into alternatives here. The answer should be direct and short and given straight on the question that was asked.

CHAIR: We had a reasonable anticipation of those things. Premier, there was not any reference to the alternative plan in the question. Mr Stevens asks that you speak to the question.

Mr MILES: Thank you, Chair. I would again note that I have been very willing to answer questions from particularly the Leader of the Opposition well outside the scope of these hearings, and it is clear that he does not want to outline to Queenslanders any of the planning work undertaken on the 70 additional hydro sites.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Point of order, Mr Chair.

CHAIR: The Premier was effectively responding to the point of order. There have been things that have been put as questions that are certainly not questions that should be allowed in, but due to criticism of this process, as I said, I have only had one question I have ruled out of order and that was for repetition; it had been put three or four times before in three years. There is a point of order from the member for Nanango.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I am happy to move on if the Premier would like to answer questions about the Pioneer-Burdekin project that is—

CHAIR: Sorry, is there a point of order?

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: No, I will move on and ask a question to the Premier.

CHAIR: That is highly disorderly. The Premier had the call and you made a point of order and then you wanted to move onto another question. That is highly disorderly. Premier, had you concluded your answer? Is there anything further you wish to add? I do note that we have had some largesse about this process and I take that on board.

Mr MILES: I would simply put that the 70 communities who would be impacted by the alternative pumped hydro schemes deserve to know that they are on the LNP's list.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I will go back to my previous question where I note that the Treasurer clearly stated 'fully detailed in the budget papers, fully funded'. The Premier has now just debunked what the Treasurer said that it is not in the budget papers, and I refer the Premier to capital statement page 13, where there is only \$1 billion slated for the Pioneer-Burdekin project, and I again ask the Premier where is his prediction of \$12 billion slated in the budget?

CHAIR: You have partially addressed this, Premier, but greater clarity might be useful for our Betoota viewers.

Mr MILES: Thank you, Chair. I am advised that the member for Nanango is misleading the committee; that the budget speech does not say what she has just indicated. It says—

Mr CRANDON: Is that a WhatsApp message you just received?

CHAIR: Member for Coomera! Premier, I apologise, but if you could continue with your point about the question being misleading?

Mr MILES: Thank you, Chair. I am advised that the member's claims about what was said in the budget speech are not accurate. The budget speech says—

In 2024-25, significant clean energy investments include:

—and it lists a series of investments, and then it says—

\$38.5 million for early works at the Pioneer Burdekin Pumped Hydro Energy Storage scheme, with a \$1 billion equity commitment across the forward estimates. That investment in the Pioneer-Burdekin Pumped Hydro Storage scheme is fully detailed in the budget papers, fully funded—and fully supported.

Presumably, given that the LNP supported this budget a week before it was released, it was also supported by them.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: He confirmed what I just said.

CHAIR: A gross mischaracterisation. You actually put something that was proved to be false and confirmed, in the reading of the full passage, was correct. Misleading. Member for Nanango, do you have another question?

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Thank you, Mr Chair. Premier, industry insiders in relation to the Pioneer-Burdekin project, have told the opposition and numerous people within the industry that the proposed Pioneer-Burdekin project could be estimated to be more than north of \$20 billion. Where in the Premier's budget does the Premier anticipate this cost over the next 10 years?

CHAIR: We are examining the budget for the four-year forward estimates for those Betoota residents who follow budgetary process. Premier, where in the four-year budget?

Mr MILES: I just answered that from the budget speech. However, the member for Nanango would also be aware that industry insiders and industry experts universally agree that Pioneer-Burdekin Pumped Hydro is one of the best pumped hydro storage sites in the world and that, to replace it, you would need 70 smaller pumped hydro sites as well as the two nuclear reactors we know the LNP want to build.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Premier, why has there been a further delay to the recommissioning of the Callide C4 generator?

Mr MILES: I thank the member for Nanango for her question. I understand that CS Energy and the workers there continue to work hard to get the final generator back online. The further delay obviously is extremely disappointing. It fortunately has no impact on energy system adequacy due to lower electricity demand in these cooler months. This is, however, precisely why we have appointed two special advisers who are empowered to go inside CS Energy to determine how it can perform better. Those advisers, Mr Tom Fletcher and Mr Howard Morrison, we announced last week. There is work underway to make sure CS Energy can do a better job, but this further delay is disappointing, even though it is not impacting on the adequacy of power within the network. I understand that CS Energy advised of that delay of C4 on 22 July, pushing that return-to-service date back to 31 August. Three of Callide's four generating units are operational; B1, B2 and C3 are all generating electricity. The member would be aware of the complicated management environment there with the fifty-fifty joint venture.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Premier, did any former executive of CS Energy get a golden handshake on their way out the door?

Mr MILES: Not to my knowledge. Their departure was accompanied by normal arrangements.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: In relation to the Premier saying 'normal arrangements', was any executive required to sign a non-disclosure agreement upon leaving CS Energy?

Mr MILES: I am advised not, but the member will have the opportunity to ask questions of the shareholding minister as well as representatives of CS Energy at two o'clock.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: So any former executive of CS Energy is free to publicly discuss the explosion and what led to it?

CHAIR: The Premier has already answered this question to the best of his knowledge and has indicated that there would be a shareholding minister—

Mr Stevens interjected.

CHAIR: The deputy chair has reminded me that there is only one time in three years that I have not put a question, even if there is repetition. I will put it to the Premier.

Mr MILES: I am advised that there may be some legal constraints given the ongoing legal proceedings. I am not one of their legal advisers so they would need to determine that, but certainly once those proceedings are concluded I am advised there is nothing precluding them.

CHAIR: The mental health of Queenslanders is really important for the residents of Logan. We all know that support in Queensland for mental health is vitally important. Premier, can you outline how the commitment to the mental health levy will continue to assist every Queenslanders, especially Logan residents, and advise if there are any external risks to the levy and the associated and vital programs that help Queenslanders?

Mr MILES: Thank you, Chair. You are right: the mental health particularly of our young people is incredibly important. We know that having good mental wellbeing is just as important as having good physical health. I am incredibly proud of this government's nation-leading mental health levy, which means we are able to deliver our Better Care Together plan, providing more mental health services across Queensland.

The mental health levy has generated more revenue than originally predicted. As a result, in 2024-25 we will invest an additional \$99.2 million above the original Better Care Together plan allocation of \$1.645 billion over five years to expand and fund emergent mental health, alcohol and other drug projects and initiatives. There will be a \$457 million investment in mental health, alcohol and

drug services across Queensland this year alone. This funding will provide an additional 92 beds, strengthen our workforce and promote mental health and wellbeing. Key initiatives include a \$24 million dedicated adolescent mental health facility in Cairns offering a 10-bed residential program in a new purpose-built centre alongside nonresidential support options. The unit will be the first of its kind in Far North Queensland. We are providing more residential alcohol and other drugs withdrawal and rehabilitation services for adults in Ipswich and Bundaberg.

We are also expanding the Together in Mind program for mothers, along with new perinatal mental health beds. We have allocated \$61.6 million to respond to mental health crises and suicidality; \$31.3 million to promote mental health and wellbeing initiatives; and \$8.5 million to improve workforce capability, including the establishment of a new allied health graduate program. An investment of \$14.5 million will improve mental health, alcohol and other drugs services for First Nations peoples.

We implemented the mental health levy in the 2022-23 budget following the recommendation of a dedicated funding source for mental health, alcohol and other drug services by the bipartisan Mental Health Select Committee. The levy only impacts large businesses with national payrolls of more than \$10 million but delivers vital services for extremely vulnerable patients and their families.

The mental health and wellbeing of all Queenslanders is a priority for our government, and the mental health levy is key to providing a sustainable funding stream to enhance existing and future mental health services across Queensland. All of these mental health initiatives are at risk under an LNP government. The LNP and the Leader of the Opposition strongly oppose the mental health levy and would cut it given the chance. This would mean very deep cuts to mental health services. Queenslanders cannot risk cuts to our mental health services.

Mrs McMAHON: Premier, I refer to the government's objectives for the community outlined on page 1 of the SDS, in particular the objective for better services. Can you please outline how the Satellite Hospitals Program is supporting Queenslanders to get the health care they need and any recent innovative health announcements?

Mr MILES: I thank the member for Macalister for her question. We know that our health system is under increasing pressure, which means access to health care closer to home can sometimes be difficult. Delivering health care when and where Queenslanders need it is a priority for me and my government. That is why when I was health minister I invested \$363.9 million to deliver satellite hospitals at Caboolture, Kallangur, Redlands Ripley, Eight Mile Plains, Tugun and Bribie Island. All satellite hospitals are now open. Whether it is an ache, sprain, burn or simple infection, you can get the care that you need at a new satellite hospital built by Queenslanders. I could not be more pleased that more than 130,000 Queenslanders have visited one of our seven satellite hospitals already. More than 90,000 people have visited a satellite hospital minor injury and illness clinic, avoiding a trip to busy emergency departments, and a further 40,000 have received an outpatient appointment closer to home.

Our satellite hospitals are working. Since they have opened, non-urgent emergency department presentations have fallen by 12 per cent, taking pressure off busy emergency health workers. Each satellite hospital includes a minor injury and illness clinic that is open seven days a week from 8 am and accepts patients until 10 pm, while also providing other hospital services such as renal dialysis, chemo care, oral health care and specialist outpatient appointments. Allied health outpatient services include physiotherapy, occupational therapy, dietetics, podiatry and social work. In fact, they have provided 40,000 instances of these types of services since they opened. These facilities are equipped to assess and transfer any patients that present with higher needs to local emergency departments, working with the Queensland Ambulance Service, just like when an acutely unwell person presents to a general practitioner.

The Satellite Hospitals Program is a key element of this government's record \$28.9 billion health budget for 2024-25 and the Queensland Health and Hospitals Plan. These facilities complement our \$1.14 billion Putting Patients First 2024-25 plan, building on the \$764 million invested last financial year, which is focused on improving the flow of patients through our hospitals and creating additional bed capacity. All of this is at risk under the LNP. The LNP government sacked 4,400 frontline health workers, including 1,800 nurses and midwives, and cut \$1.6 billion from the Queensland health budget. A lot of the good work that we have done to build capacity and invest in our workforce for the future will be undone by the LNP. Our satellite hospitals are at risk. The LNP has criticised the satellite hospital model from the day we announced it. The Leader of the Opposition and the LNP pose an unacceptable risk to Queensland health services.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Following on from the Premier's earlier answer, I have a question to the acting Auditor-General. I refer to page 5 of your *Energy 2023* report, which states—

A termination payment made to senior management was not in accordance with the Queensland government owned corporations policy on Chief and Senior Executive Employment Arrangements issued by Queensland Treasury.

Can you confirm widespread industry rumours that this payment was, in fact, for Andrew Bills, the CEO of CS Energy?

Ms Johnson: We have not publicly named any of the executives who received ex gratia payments in that report, so I would not be able to answer that question.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: In relation to that, who would have authorised that payment?

Ms Johnson: I am not aware of the payment you are talking about. However, CS Energy is a government owned corporation and they would have a board. I believe the board would be responsible for making those sorts of payments and the authorisation thereof.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I have a further question, Ms Johnson. The Premier said that there was no termination payment. That is quite distinctly different to your energy report. How should the Premier have known that there was a termination payment? Would that have been from reading the Auditor-General's report?

CHAIR: I call the Auditor-General to tell us her knowledge of how the Premier should know things.

Ms Johnson: Our energy report was related to the energy sector and there are many government owned corporations within that sector. I think the energy minister would have been better placed to know the answer to that.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I have another question for the acting Auditor-General. The minister has advised that the former CEO, Andrew Bills, was sacked. The CS Energy website says he resigned. Either way, if his performance was unsatisfactory why was he given a payout beyond what his contract stated? I further ask: did he sign a non-disclosure agreement? If so, why would this have been necessary?

CHAIR: Obviously the shareholding minister is coming up. There have been questions put before. I call the acting Auditor-General to give an answer that is best suited to her position.

Ms Johnson: Thank you for that question. I am not aware of this payment. Any payments that we would have reported in the energy report were payments over and above contractual arrangements. I am not aware that there was one for CS Energy.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Just so I am really clear, the report states a termination was made.

Ms Johnson: To CS Energy?

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: To senior management. I am just clarifying. So the acting Auditor-General is saying to the committee that this was not—

CHAIR: I do not want you to verbal her. Do you have a question to put to the acting Auditor-General rather than projecting what her answer is?

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: What government entity was the termination payment directed to?

Ms Johnson: I am not able to disclose that. That is not publicly available information.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: In relation to that termination payment, was a non-disclosure agreement signed alongside that termination payment?

Ms Johnson: Are you referring to the termination payment to CS Energy or to another energy agency or just to whomever?

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: To whomever.

Ms Johnson: It is my understanding that what we reported was that there were eight executives to whom special payments were made. That included one large statutory body and two government owned corporations. Each payment was outside of contractual obligations and was agreed under non-disclosure agreements.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: How much were those payments?

Ms Johnson: They totalled \$792,000.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: How many people or persons received those termination payments equalling \$792,000?

Ms Johnson: Eight people.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Can you confirm the largest amount paid to one individual person?

Ms Johnson: No, I do not have those details on me.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Is that a detail that we would be able to receive through the committee—a breakdown?

Ms Johnson: If it was reported in our report we can provide that.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Thank you. Mr Chair, could I ask that that be reported back to the committee?

CHAIR: That is not the process and you are well aware of that.

Mr STEVENS: Take it on notice.

CHAIR: I do not take it on notice. You can ask the Premier to take it on notice. Is there another question?

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Would I be able to ask the Premier to take that on notice?

Mr MILES: I will need to take advice about what can and cannot be disclosed but I am happy to take it on notice. The answer may go to that.

CHAIR: Is this something you are taking on notice in a formal sense or something you will endeavour to get back to us on?

Mr MILES: I think I will need to in a formal sense because it sounds like the information is held at the Audit Office, but we will need to get advice about what can be disclosed.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Thank you. I understand that the energy minister will be here next week but, unfortunately, I will be unable to ask the Auditor-General questions during that session. I have a further question and it relates to the *Energy 2024* report. This is to the acting Auditor-General. I note that that report will be completed this financial year. It is also in the context of the findings of the draft Brady report, which showed the required money was not being spent on maintenance at CS Energy. In the preparation of any of your previous yearly reports, did the ministers or the government advise the QAO that they held concerns about a maintenance backlog at CS Energy?

CHAIR: To clarify, are you asking about previous Auditor-General reports?

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: No, I am asking about the *Energy 2024* report.

CHAIR: It might be clearer to the Auditor-General.

Ms Johnson: No, we were never advised of that.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Neither shareholding minister advised the QAO about any concerns in relation to maintenance at CS Energy?

Ms Johnson: Not that I am aware of.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Just so I am really clear, the Treasurer—

CHAIR: It does get a little bit repetitious. As I said—

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I apologise. I am just clarifying, Mr Chair.

CHAIR: Just try to add some newness to the question.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: To clarify, neither the two shareholding ministers nor the Premier of this state ever advised the QAO that they had any concerns around the maintenance backlog? Also, did any of the executives who were facing the termination payments notify in their exit interviews the QAO in relation to the maintenance backlogs or failings at CS Energy?

Ms Johnson: I would not believe we would have sat in on exit interviews with executives to be able to obtain that information. During the course of our audits we would be looking into the entities' asset management plans and we may have had discussions with appropriate people within the organisation to understand if there were any impairment issues on those assets.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Acting Auditor-General, I want to return to the *Reducing serious youth crime* report. It says that five of the seven significant procurements for youth justice 'were the result of direction and decisions from ministers rather than based on the department's advice'. Can the acting Auditor-General provide more details on what these directions were, the providers involved and why the QAO has highlighted this practice?

Ms Johnson: I would have to take the first part of your question on notice, and maybe you could repeat it?

Mr CRISAFULLI: Yes. It says that five of the seven significant procurements for youth justice services were the result of directions and decisions from ministers rather than based on the department's advice. Based on the fact that victim numbers continue to climb, that shows that what we are doing is not working, so what was the ministerial involvement in what programs and then we can analyse what value for money taxpayers got?

CHAIR: This answer does not accord with answers that have been given before, but I put the question to the Acting Auditor-General. As the opposition leader knows with questions on notice—and this might be for the benefit of the Acting Auditor-General—either she can provide information for the Premier to sum up with or the member themselves would seek for the question to be put on notice. You can of course informally get back to the committee as part of your statutory role. That is within the standing rules of this place.

Ms Johnson: I would like to come back to you on that question.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Thank you.

Ms Johnson: I do not believe the scope of our audit covered that. We did make mention of it, but the scope of our audit did not assess the effectiveness of specific programs. Specific programs are really policy decisions.

CHAIR: And best addressed to the people who make policy decisions.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I turn to the *State entities 2023* report. It shows that the total contractor and consultant expenses across government has increased from less than \$2 billion in 2018 to more than \$3 billion in 2022. Can you comment on this growth and how it relates to comments in the Coaldrake review? In particular, it calls out a \$717,000 contract with Deloitte regarding the Olympic and Paralympic Games. The report states—

The value received from \$717,000 of public money spent on this report is questionable ...

Can you comment on the growth and how it relates to the Coaldrake review?

CHAIR: That was a very long question. I am not sure what I took out of it, but, Acting Auditor-General, do you need any clarification or was that clear enough?

Ms Johnson: I can comment on the growth in contractors and consultants. The government engages contractors and consultants in accordance with what is going on at the time. In the last few years there has been a huge increase in the level of investment in infrastructure, including the Olympics, and specialist knowledge has been required, so there is a rationale for the growth. I think the question is more how the public sector manages those contracts and what value gets reincorporated within the public sector from that.

CHAIR: We will now turn back to the crossbench.

Mr ANDREW: Page 2 of the SDS refers to the department achieving beneficial outcomes for Queensland through engagement with the National Cabinet First Secretaries' Group and the First Deputies Group. Premier, what are the first secretaries and first deputies groups and what role do these entities play within Queensland government policy and decision-making processes?

Mr MILES: Given the director-general is more directly involved in those bodies, I might ask him to answer your question, if that is okay?

CHAIR: Just really quickly, member for Mirani, you have had a pretty good go. It could be that there is another crossbencher who turns up late, so we just might have to play that by ear if that is all right.

Mr ANDREW: Yes, that is fine.

Mr Kaiser: The First Secretaries' Group is a group of all of the secretaries or directors-general of state premiers and cabinet departments or their equivalent around each of the states and territories along with the Commonwealth secretary of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. We meet periodically. It is usually to discuss issues that are going to be on the National Cabinet agenda and/or matters which are the subject of sometimes quite complex negotiations around Commonwealth-state funding agreements. The First Deputies Group is the group of people who do most of the work, who are our respective deputies in each of the states and the Commonwealth, who meet I think more frequently than we do in order to nut out a lot of the detail of those agreements and the National Cabinet agenda.

Mr ANDREW: That was what I thought. In terms of the use of the tied grant payments, how do they impact policies, projects and new legislation rolled out here in our state?

Mr Kaiser: National Cabinet will often agree to policy reform which requires complementary legislation in each of the states, or it may be funding which is tied in a particular way. The Commonwealth makes funds available to states which are tied in particular ways, so they are some of the things that I think the member might be seeing and referring to in the statement.

CHAIR: Is that what you were after, because we do not have much time?

Mr ANDREW: Yes, and I have one other question, Chair, to the Acting Auditor-General. Can the Acting Auditor-General advise whether the Queensland Audit Office has ever conducted or been asked to conduct a performance audit on the government funding provided to our Aboriginal corporations and prescribed bodies corporate, including the payment of compensation under its commercial-in-confidence Indigenous land use agreements?

Ms Johnson: There were two parts to your question. The first one was whether we do any audits on Aboriginal corporations.

Mr ANDREW: Corporations, yes, and prescribed bodies corporate.

Ms Johnson: Aboriginal organisations are incorporated under federal law, so we do not have the jurisdiction for that. We have undertaken audits on how well the government is managing any grants that are provided to some of those organisations.

Mr ANDREW: Thank you.

Ms Johnson: And the second part of your question was—

Mr ANDREW: It was to do with the bodies corporate, including the payment of compensation under the new commercial-in-confidence Indigenous land use agreements.

Ms Johnson: No, we have not done any audit activity under that.

CHAIR: The first part answers the second part.

Mr STEVENS: Can the Premier advise if he is aware of the contents of the CCC report into the actions of Jackie Trad, and if the Premier knows why shouldn't Queenslanders?

Mr MILES: I am not.

Mr STEVENS: With regard to Labor's proposed laws governing the publishing of CCC reports, can the Premier advise if he will rule out rushing new laws through the parliament without a proper committee review of those laws?

Mr MILES: That matter has not been determined, but it would be my intention for those laws to be properly considered by a parliamentary committee.

Mr STEVENS: Premier, the head of the CCC has said that another review of the laws surrounding the release of CCC reports was not warranted. Can the Premier advise why he is going against that particular advice?

Mr MILES: We received advice from other agencies also. It was not a straightforward matter. We engaged a highly respected judicial officer. She provided us a detailed report. We will table those laws and, as I have indicated, my preference is for them to be properly considered by a parliamentary committee.

Mr STEVENS: Is the Premier aware of any other CCC reports that have not been released?

Mr MILES: I am not, other than obviously the public commentary related to the Carne matter and the High Court case.

Mr STEVENS: Thank you. Premier, at the recent Ipswich West by-election a union was handing out fake how-to-vote cards for the Legalise Cannabis Party to direct preferences to the Labor Party. Will the Premier take steps to ban the distribution of how-to-vote cards not authorised by the Electoral Commission of Queensland prior to the upcoming state election?

CHAIR: The question has some characterisations, but I will put the question to the Premier.

Mr MILES: With regard to any changes that members would want to make for the October election, the window in which we could have a proper parliamentary consideration of that I suspect has closed, but there is no reason why, in a future term of government, we could not consider that in reviewing elections.

Ms SIMPSON: The Premier has previously announced that he would release all sentiment polling undertaken by the government. Wave 6 polling was completed in the week commencing 4 December last year. Can the Premier advise why this and subsequent polling has not been released?

Mr MILES: As I indicated, all polling that has been completed has been released.

CHAIR: Premier, I refer to page 1 of the SDS and the government's objectives for the community to educate children for the future—as you know, I was a high school teacher; I was not a very good one but I gave it a go—and to keep Queenslanders safe. How does this budget support the Queensland government policy and your policy to put Queensland kids first?

Mr MILES: Making sure that Queensland kids get the best start in life is something that I am personally passionate about, not just as a dad but as someone who wants to see the next generation of Queenslanders thrive. Sadly, some Queensland kids are not growing up in the kind of loving and nurturing environment that I think every child deserves. I am determined to do what matters for Queensland and to make a difference in the lives of those kids. That is why my government has invested \$502 million in our landmark Putting Queensland Kids First strategy.

Putting Queensland Kids First takes a whole-of-government approach to supporting positive pathways for children and their families and boosts investment across housing, education, health and the community sector. This investment will generate lifelong and multigenerational benefits for children, families and our community. It is an investment in the future, for our future. My government is already delivering high-quality support for Queenslanders like \$645 million for free kindy for every four-year-old in Queensland. Putting Queensland Kids First builds on this investment by providing \$26.2 million over four years to extend free kindy for four-year-olds by up to an additional 15 hours for children in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

This budget also empowers families by connecting them to the supports and services they need to support their child's development. There is \$65.5 million for sustained health home visiting services, giving our kids the best start in life. We have allocated \$42.7 million to support a great start to school through family support coordinators working with classroom teachers, early years providers and parents, and \$29.9 million for early childhood coordinators to improve pathways and connections with early childhood education, health and development services.

Putting Queensland Kids First strengthens preventive and early supports for Queensland children and families at critical milestones and periods of development. We are allocating \$67.3 million to provide specialist behaviour supports for high-needs kids in Queensland state primary schools. The evidence tells us that adverse experiences during childhood such as poverty, marginalisation, family violence, parental mental illness or substance misuse and disrupted access to health care or education can have deep and lasting negative impacts over a child's whole life course. Putting Queensland Kids First ensures Queensland children have access to preventive health and development services from their earliest years. This includes an investment of \$71.4 million for development checks, \$56.6 million for enhanced child development services and \$10.7 million to provide students at 20 high-priority schools with free access to primary health care at school.

Through Putting Queensland Kids First our government is ensuring that young children and their parents and families have the supports they need to succeed. My government is working with Queensland families to build the Queensland of tomorrow—one where all children and families have every opportunity to reach their potential and live happy and fulfilling lives as Queenslanders.

Ms PUGH: Premier, we know that Queensland is a growing state and we need infrastructure to support our growing communities, particularly now and into the future. In respect of the government's objectives on page 1 of the SDS, including connecting Queensland and building Queensland, can the Premier outline how this budget supports infrastructure in Queensland and in my community?

Mr MILES: Australia is experiencing the strongest levels of overseas migration in history. That has resulted in Queensland's population being revised up above previous forecasts by 135,500 people. That is a city the size of Mackay moving to Queensland that was not predicted. All of this is happening at a time of rising global inflation. That leaves the government with two choices: to continue to build the infrastructure our growing state needs or to cut back.

Our government has made the decision to continue with the biggest build of infrastructure in our state's history supporting 72,000 jobs over the next year, delivering the largest investment in our state's history in social housing and the roads, rail and renewable energy needed to unlock more private housing and undertaking the largest build of new and upgraded hospitals across the nation.

We are building three new hospitals, at Bundaberg, Coomera and Toowoomba. The new Queensland Cancer Centre in Herston will have world-leading proton beam therapy used to treat childhood cancers. We are delivering major hospital upgrades in Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, Hervey Bay, Redcliffe, Logan, Ipswich and Robina. In Brisbane we are expanding the Prince Charles, PA and QEII hospitals with over 3,300 more hospital beds, as well as major upgrades in rural and remote areas including at Blackwater, Camooweal, Childers, Cow Bay, Doomadgee, Millmerran, Moranbah, Tara and Pomppuraaw. We are building new schools, including a new primary school in Park Ridge and a new secondary school in Collingwood Park, and more classrooms and halls across Queensland.

Our investments in transport infrastructure will unlock more housing, reduce congestion and lower inflation over the long term. We are building Cross River Rail, the largest transport infrastructure project in our state's history. We are again making trains in Queensland, in Maryborough, and rail replacement buses in Queensland. We have locked in the funding for the next generational investment to deliver the Direct Sunshine Coast Rail Line to Caloundra. For the Gold Coast we are delivering the Coomera Connector and we are delivering Logan and Gold Coast faster rail and Gold Coast Light Rail stage 3. Along the Bruce Highway we are delivering the Rockhampton Ring Road, upgrades to Cooroy to Curra and a bypass at Tiaro.

I know of particular interest to the member for Mount Ommaney is the new Centenary bridge, which is under construction right now. The upgrade will see a new three-lane Centenary bridge built in Jindalee as well as an upgrade to the existing bridge. This critical infrastructure project, like so many across the state, is about busting congestion, meaning that Queenslanders can get where they need to be safer and sooner.

We are delivering \$26 billion of investment in renewable energy to take us on the pathway to 75 per cent emissions reductions by 2035 and net zero by 2050. Our \$3.1 billion Homes for Queenslanders plan is the largest housing construction undertaken since the Second World War, including delivering rapidly constructed modular homes, which is something we have been able to do because we rebuilt QBuild after the LNP tried to privatise it.

We are doing what matters for Queensland's future by delivering a Big Build that secures 72,000 jobs now while setting up our state for the decades to come with the largest share of investment in regional Queensland ever, supporting 50,000 jobs outside Greater Brisbane. Now is the time to back jobs and to back households to back our future. Now is not the time to change course and to cut.

CHAIR: Member for Maroochydore.

Ms SIMPSON: Premier, based on your answer before about the Jackie Trad report, is it the case that Queenslanders under Labor will not see the report before the election? Why won't the Premier support the LNP bill that is before the House, has been to a parliamentary committee and is retrospective?

Mr MILES: The advice to us raises very significant concerns about the LNP bill. We have undertaken a very deliberative process where we have sought the advice of former Justice Holmes. We have received that report. We are in the process of drafting laws in accordance with that—

Ms SIMPSON: Desperately slow.

Mr MILES: A moment ago the member for Mermaid Beach was criticising me for possibly not having a full committee process so you do not get it both ways. We are currently drafting those laws in consultation with the CCC. They will be introduced as soon as possible. I have taken on board the commentary of the member for Mermaid Beach and others that there should be an appropriate committee process. If the position of the LNP has changed then I would welcome that advice.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Premier, the Cross River Rail project was meant to open this year. Former deputy premier Jackie Trad said in parliament in 2018 that the four new and two upgraded stations would be 'operational by 2024'. The government has since announced that this project will not open until early 2026. Is that information still correct?

Mr MILES: I thank the member for Broadwater for his question. What I know is that Queenslanders would be catching trains on Cross River Rail tunnels right now if the LNP had not cancelled it the first time. If they had not rejected funding from the federal government, it would have been partly funded by the Australian government. You walked away from that funding and you walked away from that project, which set it back a significant period of time.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I am going to ask the Premier the question again. The government said that the project was supposed to be operational by 2024 but we parked that. The government has since announced that it will not open until early 2026. Is that timeline still correct, or has the Premier been briefed that there may be a further delay?

CHAIR: Once again, the standing orders of the House refer to repetition. You said it yourself: 'I am going to ask the question again.' In the last three years, I have rejected only one question. It was for repetition. I will put the question to the Premier because I do not intend to give you that satisfaction.

Mr MILES: I again thank the member for Broadwater for his question. All of the latest advice provided to me confirms that the target for opening remains 2026. I again highlight to the committee and to Queenslanders that all of this work would have been completed with funding from the Australian government if the LNP had not cancelled it the first time.

Mr CRISAFULLI: The commitment was for early 2026. Does this remain the case?

Mr MILES: I do not have any advice suggesting that that date has been revised.

Mr CRANDON: All of my questions are to the director-general. I have a question regarding the proposal to use Griffith University for emergency accommodation. Can the director-general confirm that it was he who contacted Andrew Fraser from the university on the afternoon before the announcement to confirm the deal?

Mr Kaiser: Again, it is a question relating to a previous portfolio responsibility. I did have a conversation with the chancellor of Griffith University around that time. I would not describe it as confirming the deal. I would describe it as expressing the government's interest in investigating an option.

Mr CRANDON: It has been revealed in RTIs that Economic Development Queensland—
... went from being lukewarm—
a month ago—
to indicating the arrangement would be announced today ...
What has changed?

CHAIR: Are we talking about today, or are you talking about—

Mr CRANDON: I am quoting from an RTI from Economic Development Queensland.

Mr CRISAFULLI: It is a quote.

CHAIR: There is no need to interject on me. It was not very clear from the question whatsoever.

Mr CRANDON: I am saying exactly the same words I said a moment ago, Chair, and they are very clear. It has been revealed in RTIs that Economic Development Queensland—

... went from being lukewarm—
a month ago—

to indicating the arrangement would be announced today...

This all had to do with that moment in time when you contacted Andrew Fraser from the university in relation to the matter.

CHAIR: The director-general may have more information. Obviously the question could have said what 'today' is in reference to, because it is not in reference to today but that 'today' in the past. The director-general may have more knowledge about it.

Mr Kaiser: I do not have any clue what the member is referring to in terms of an RTI document or what is alleged to have been said. I point out again—and I seek your ruling, Chair—that this is in relation to a different portfolio.

CHAIR: I do understand, Director-General, but we do have a broad-ranging scope. I understand that you made preparations for the current job and that question did not have a lot of direction. Do you have any further questions, member for Coomera?

Mr CRANDON: I certainly do have some further questions in relation to the same matter. In hindsight, it would seem that EDQ's reluctance to jump into a deal was justified. Had due diligence been completed by the time the announcement was made? If you recall, the proposal did not go ahead at all, after spending \$2 million. I ask: was due diligence completed prior to the announcement being made?

Mr Kaiser: I think the \$2 million that the member refers to—if that is the correct amount, and I am not certain it is; money certainly was spent—was the due diligence.

Mr CRANDON: So you made the announcement that it was going to happen—

Mr Kaiser: How can you do due diligence without spending some money?

Mr CRANDON: So you made the announcement that it was going to happen.

Mr CRISAFULLI: \$2 million in a housing crisis.

Mr Kaiser: That is what due diligence is. You make an announcement about an intention and then you do due diligence.

Mr CRANDON: In the announcement, it was going to happen. This was going to be a solution for the people of Queensland—another alternative, another thing rolled out by the Premier.

Mr Kaiser: Following due diligence, that did not turn out to be the case.

CHAIR: It is not my place to rule, but this is obviously from previous budgets. I think you, as a member, have traversed these exact same questions previously.

Mr CRANDON: I have a further question for the director-general. We have something being brought to the attention of the director-general, it would appear.

CHAIR: Is that a question, member for Coomera?

Mr Kaiser: Is that inappropriate? Is there a problem with that?

Mr CRANDON: I see things being passed around and then the individual being asked the question answers.

Mr Kaiser: Is there a problem with that?

Mr CRANDON: No, by all means. You have some information in front of you.

Mr CRISAFULLI: We would just like an answer, that's all—just an answer.

Mr Kaiser: I am waiting for a question.

CHAIR: Order! Member for Broadwater, we do not need you to run interference for the member for Coomera.

Mr CRANDON: Is there anything there that you would like to provide?

Mr Kaiser: It is a news story.

Mr CRANDON: Okay.

Mr Kaiser: Do you have a question?

CHAIR: Order! I know this is highly irregular, but let me chair the meeting. Member for Coomera, can you put a question?

Mr CRANDON: I will put a further question, given those questions have not been answered. I understand that the site is still surrounded by temporary fencing, with government signage. What is the cost to date to the taxpayer?

Mr Kaiser: I do not know, but the appropriate portfolio area will face questions at estimates later in the week.

CHAIR: To be honest, I have given a huge amount of largesse to allow questions of previous roles of the director-general; however, it is not possible for him to answer questions when someone else had taken on that role in the intervening period. I counsel members that we do have the appropriate ministers to put these questions to. Member for Broadwater?

Mr CRISAFULLI: Can I call the Public Sector Commissioner, please? Public Sector Commissioner, who made the decision to stop publishing the Queensland government workforce statistics every six months?

Mr Mackie: Thanks for the question, member. The recommendation in the Coaldrake review was to have a look at what other jurisdictions were doing in terms of the frequency and content of their publications. We did make a recommendation to the government to publish it once a year, combined with some other extra reports such as the Working for Queensland survey and some of the CaPE data. We have combined that into the State of the Sector report, which now reports once a year as part of the budget process.

We looked at other jurisdictions' reporting in that context and I think it was the Commonwealth government, Victoria and New South Wales that did similar in terms of once-a-year reporting. One of the problems with the twice-a-year reporting—March and September—was that there were genuine anomalies at that time of the year with variances. You had teachers starting and finishing or health workers being put on or finishing. It really was not apples to apples; it was apples to oranges. This allows us a far better look, on a yearly basis, at what the figures are doing.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Mr Mackie, you could still compare the March to the March, which would still be apples to apples. I will just quote from the Coaldrake report—

CHAIR: We obviously know that. Do you want to put that in the form of a question to Mr Mackie?

Mr CRISAFULLI: I do have a question. Thank you very much. The Coaldrake report states—

The Review also acknowledges the PSC's 'State of the sector workforce report', but recommends the type of data published by the Victorian Public Service Commission as leading practice in depicting workforce trends.

Type not frequency. Why is the data now only published half as often, and how does that benefit Queensland taxpayers?

CHAIR: The question has been put and answered. Mr Mackie does not need to provide further information, but Mr Mackie may, on reflection, have something to add or give the same answer.

Mr Mackie: Thank you for the question, member. A lot of work goes into producing those reports. Again, producing the report twice a year was creating automatic variances just in terms of seasonal. Doing it on a yearly basis, which we looked at in similar jurisdictions across Australia, gives that point in time each year to look at. It also is quite a broadened report around not just workforce size but it talks about the demographics and the location of front line and corporate et cetera. It is a more consolidated report with more information in it but done once a year so you can actually compare comparable points.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Premier, do you think Queenslanders are better or worse off by having the workforce data shared once a year rather than twice a year in terms of transparency and does that benefit the hardworking public servants to see that data less frequently?

Mr MILES: I thank the member for Broadwater. I understood from the answers provided by the Public Service Commissioner that those decisions were made in accordance with the recommendations of the Coaldrake review.

Mr CRISAFULLI: My question is to the Public Sector Commissioner. It has been 755 days since Professor Coaldrake made the recommendation to implement a complaints clearing house. How much longer will Queenslanders have to wait for that?

Mr Mackie: Thank you very much for the question, member. As you know, the previous premier had appointed Michael Forde to do an independent expert dive into the clearing house. That report was furnished—and I will get you the date for that—to government with basically three options in terms of what that might look like going forward. There was a preferred option in there as well, and that was basing the clearing house functionality in an existing integrity body and also building then the technology, the IT platform, under it which was going to do the things that Coaldrake had recommended in his report in relation to being able to track all complaints, particularly from the complainants' perspective, giving themselves the ability to find out where their complaint was in the system and making sure it is going to the right agency.

There was around—I am trying to think of the figure off the top of my head—\$6 million, I think, for 2024-25 offered and about 15 FTEs to explore that option in greater detail to come up with details around cost but also what product from an IT perspective can do the functionality that it requires. It is a staged process. We have already done that first bit around the webpage form which allows complaints to go through one door and directed. Stage 2 now is really about building an IT system and locating it with functionality in an existing body.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Have all those options been presented to government as yet?

Mr Mackie: Those three options were in his report, yes.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I want to turn again to the Public Sector Commissioner.

CHAIR: This is broadly a policy question, so I might take some of the government's question time and ask the Premier if there is much he can add to that process.

Mr MILES: Thank you, Chair. I can provide a more fulsome answer to the Leader of the Opposition's question than Mr Mackie is in a position to do. The member refers to page 46 of the Coaldrake report stating that 'consideration be given to the establishment of a technologically-enabled clearing house'. The government accepted all of the recommendations and, as such, requested former District Court judge Mr Michael Forde, as an eminent person, to oversee the development of the reforms. Mr Forde has done that and provided their report to government. I table Mr Forde's summary documentation of recommendations and thank him and his team for his work.

I am advised that implementing a clearing house model is complex in terms of its design and development and will require significant collaboration and engagement across all government agencies and integrity bodies. The government wants to be able to review, learn and assess risk for this key

integrity reform at regular intervals. Consequently the government is taking a deliberate and staged approach to its development of a clearing house model, starting with a foundation stage. Mr Forde provided three options for the next stage of a clearing house, with his preferred option being option 1—‘extend the remit of an existing integrity body, supported by technology and resources’.

It is expected that the foundation stage will result in a detailed business case that defines the future state for a clearing house model. This will include details of the legislative changes required to support and implement the model, consultation outcomes across government including integrity bodies, detailed business and infrastructure requirements, and the outcomes of a technology proof of concept conducted in partnership with government agencies.

I am advised that outcomes of the technology proof of concept will be known in 2024-25. This proof of concept will inform the business case, which will be the basis for the implementation of the project and will be considered further by government. I can advise the committee that the budget has been provided initial project funding of \$6.2 million and 15 limited life FTEs over the coming financial year to progress the foundation stage. This is a clear indication that the government is taking this seriously. The funding outlined in the budget will also be used to establish a small temporary team to implement measures to improve complaint handling across government, but this is not the only enhancement occurring. I wish to advise the committee that the Queensland complaints clearing house foundation stage work will build on what has already been done to enhance the integrity and complaints landscape in Queensland.

I take this opportunity to thank Mr Forde and his team but also the public servants who have worked on the Integrity Reform Taskforce over the past two years and those who are now responsible for the ongoing delivery of these enhanced integrity measures.

CHAIR: I move that the committee accepts the previous document that you have tabled, having been reviewed by the secretariat. There being no objection, it is so carried. We now turn to the crossbench. Member for Maiwar, you had a question.

Mr BERKMAN: Yes, I do have a question to the Premier, although I note that it is also on the Coaldrake review, so it may pertain to the Public Service Commissioner as well. Professor Coaldrake in that review raised some concerns about the use of confidentiality clauses in agreements between the state government and private companies, particularly given the way courts in recent decisions have exempted the entire contents of those agreements from release under RTI. Premier, in responding to the Coaldrake report, what steps have you taken to improve transparency regarding expenditure of public money including by limiting the use of commercial-in-confidence clauses in agreements to which the state government is a party?

Mr MILES: What kind of agreements are you thinking of?

Mr BERKMAN: I can give you one example that was the subject of a relevant court case. The Toondah Harbour PDA development agreement I think was one where QCAT took a different approach to confidentiality clauses from the AAT’s previous position.

Mr MILES: I am not advised about that particular court case. There are circumstances in which commercial-in-confidence is required—for example, to retain tension in a tendering process. My guidance to public servants has always been to limit that wherever possible and to disclose information as soon as is possible once the necessity for that arrangement has passed, but I am not aware of any active work to otherwise limit it. I am happy to see if the Public Sector Commissioner can add to that.

Mr Mackie: That was not a recommendation per se in the Coaldrake report, so it really did not feature as one of the 14 recommendations that we addressed. I think there was a reference to it in there, but I would only say what the Premier was saying. There are places for commercial-in-confidence, and it is case by case on that basis.

Mr BERKMAN: Understanding broadly what you have said in response, are you able to give any examples of circumstances or in what conditions the government will still continue to sign agreements that require the ongoing confidentiality of the entire document in light of Professor Coaldrake’s concerns?

CHAIR: Who is that addressed to? Is that a policy question?

Mr BERKMAN: I will put it to the Premier.

Mr MILES: As the Public Service Commissioner noted, that was a reference in Coaldrake. It was not one of the recommendations that we have accepted or sought to implement. It is the case that we would endeavour to make content public if it can be and if there are no other impediments to do so. If there are recent legal outcomes that I am not briefed on, I am happy to ask for a briefing on them.

CHAIR: Member for Broadwater, do you have any further questions?

Mr CRISAFULLI: My question is to the Public Sector Commissioner. I want to touch on the results of the Working for Queensland survey. I have just had a look. In hospitals, 48 per cent of staff in the Cairns and Hinterland HHS do not feel that unethical behaviour in the workplace will be appropriately managed. In the Metro North HHS it is about 40 per cent and a lot of others are about a third. Should Queensland Health staff be concerned about the government not dealing with unethical behaviour inside our hospitals?

Mr Mackie: That is probably not really a question I can answer. That would probably be a question for the CEOs of the HHSs or the director-general of Queensland Health. I can refer to one of the actions that have come out of the Even Better strategy, which was part of Coaldrake's recommendation for public sector rejuvenation. At the moment we are in the midst of having a syllabus induction and onboarding for public servants to make sure that when they enter the public sector they understand what integrity and ethics mean in a practical sense before they start working.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Premier, what do you think these results show about the pressure Queensland Health staff are under?

Mr MILES: Can you repeat the question?

Mr CRISAFULLI: Premier, 48 per cent of the Cairns HHS and 40 per cent of the Metro North HHS are concerned that unethical behaviour in the workplace is not appropriately managed.

Mr MILES: They are, again, questions that would appropriately be put to those CEOs. What I know from my knowledge of both the Cairns HHS and the Metro North HHS, having worked very closely with them, is that they are overwhelmingly staffed by dedicated health professionals whose primary interest is in taking care of the Queenslanders they are charged with.

CHAIR: There were some questions the Premier was getting back to. Is there any indication of how long or when?

Mr MILES: I probably only need five minutes for that in a closing statement.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Premier, this is the 10th budget of this government, your 10th as a cabinet minister. Are things better or worse when it comes to youth crime, health, housing and the cost of living since the first of those budgets?

Mr MILES: I thank the member for Broadwater for his question. I have been Premier for seven months. This is my first budget. I have outlined in great detail the initiatives we have implemented these last seven months after travelling widely throughout Queensland and listening to Queenslanders. I have outlined the progress we have been making on community safety, on the health budget, on the Homes for Queenslanders plan, on our long-term plan for the future of our state's economy and indeed on our plans to continue to create jobs, and I am very proud of that.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Premier, let's assume your last decade as a cabinet minister and half a decade as deputy premier is not as relevant, but what about this: in the last seven months, have things got better or worse when it comes to housing pressure for Queenslanders?

Mr MILES: In the last seven months we have released and are implementing a detailed Homes for Queenslanders plan. It is much more than a series of slogans; it is fully funded, with very significant commitments. We have already increased funding for our critical response teams. We have increased—

Mr CRISAFULLI: Better or worse?

Mr MILES:—funding to homelessness services by 20 per cent. We are delivering on every element of that plan. It is a real plan. It is not just a series of slick, focus grouped slogans carefully crafted into radio grabs. It is an actual plan.

CHAIR: I am mindful of the time.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Could I have one more question?

CHAIR: There may be time for that. Premier, you gave an undertaking to get back to some of the other questions.

Mr MILES: I did, Chair. Regarding the member for Broadwater's question on a flight manifest and whether removing two persons from one leg of that trip would have meant that both parties could have travelled together, I can confirm for the committee that removing two persons from one leg of the flight would not have changed the requirement for two different itineraries.

With regard to Ms Hunter and her independent review of the homelessness response in Queensland, as noted, Ms Hunter is the independent reviewer and is undertaking that work on a pro bono basis. It is not required for people working on a pro bono basis to keep track of their hours, and therefore we are unable to answer that question.

I am advised that the Cairns Hospital expansion is on track to be completed by 2026, as outlined in the Queensland Health and Hospitals Plan. The major \$250 million upgrade will deliver 96 additional beds for the growing region. If the member was referring to the new Cairns mental health unit, I understand that construction was initially slated to begin in 2020, for completion in 2022. The unprecedented impact that COVID-19 had on our health system, our construction industry and our economy meant that the commencement of this build was initially delayed. The project was subsequently impacted by unseasonal rain and ex-Tropical Cyclone Jasper. I understand that the new Cairns mental health unit is now due to be completed later this year, backed by a new budget of \$82.2 million.

With regard to the Redlands ICU, stage 1 of the Redland Hospital expansion will deliver a new intensive care unit and 37 additional hospital beds for the community. This project budget was \$62 million, with an anticipated completion date of early 2025. The revised budget is \$77.9 million, with the anticipated completion date still early 2025. The cost overrun is due to unprecedented escalation in the construction market and to ensure an optimal design was delivered for the community. This is something being experienced nationally and around the world. The expansion of Redland Hospital is part of a multiphase plan to increase the hospital's capacity, building on significant investments made by the government as part of the Queensland Health and Hospitals Plan. A modular ward that opened at the hospital last year has strengthened the delivery of healthcare services to residents by delivering an additional 28 beds. A new mental health facility will also increase existing capacity by 20 beds, ensuring the community can receive mental health care earlier. In addition to these projects, the Redlands community can now also access healthcare services at the new Redlands Satellite Hospital.

With regard to the member for Mirani's question—

CHAIR: Speaking of the member for Mirani, I note there is some crossbench time available and I wanted to highlight that if there are any crossbenchers watching. I am sorry to interrupt you, Premier.

Mr MILES: In relation to the member for Mirani's question about 15 townships and native title, I am proud of my government's commitment to working alongside First Nations people in recognising their deep spiritual connection to their land and supporting their preservation of culture, customs and traditions. I understand that a number of applications are before the Department of Resources. These are not applications for the transfer of townships but, instead, discrete parcels of land that have relevance to the applicants. This includes land at Augathella, Boonaroo, Croydon, Duchess, Eurong, Happy Valley, Laura, Maryborough, Mount Isa, Rainbow Beach, River Heads, Roma, Thargomindah, Theodore and Toobeah. Applications are treated confidentially and with cultural sensitivity but, to be clear, an application does not guarantee that land will be made transferrable; nor does an application give the applicant the right to be granted the land under the act. There are processes under legislation that are followed by the Department of Resources, in consultation with interest holders and local councils, before any decisions are made. I am advised this has been the case since 1991.

With regard to questions from the member for Nanango to the acting Auditor-General regarding termination payments at CS Energy, I am advised that representatives of CS Energy will be available at the hearings from 2 pm. They will have further information and will be able to answer those questions.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I have a question to the director-general. How many times has the director-general met Rachel Hunter since she began the independent review into homelessness?

Mr Kaiser: I have not met with her. It is the responsibility of the line agency.

CHAIR: I call the member for Macalister.

Mrs McMAHON: Premier, ensuring Queenslanders have a roof over their head is important. With respect to pages 1 and 2 of the SDS, including building Queensland, can the Premier outline how the new Miles Labor government is supporting the delivery of more homes and building a better future for Queensland?

Mr MILES: Thank you, member for Macalister. Labor governments are about opportunity, and there is no opportunity without safe, secure and affordable housing. All Queenslanders deserve somewhere to call home, and making that a little easier is a priority for my government. That is why on 6 February 2024 I released our whole-of-system housing plan, Homes for Queenslanders. Backed by an unprecedented \$3.1 billion investment, Homes for Queenslanders sets out our ambitious plan for

delivering one million new homes by 2046, including 53,500 new social homes. It is a comprehensive plan that is structured in five pillars to work across the whole housing system, with measures to address market supply, home ownership, the rental sector, social and affordable housing, and responses to homelessness. Through Homes for Queenslanders, we are investing in planning, infrastructure and workforce measures, including a \$350 million fund to incentivise infill development and deliver more residential supply faster.

Earlier this year we amended the Planning Act to further improve the planning framework's response to housing challenges, including conditioning affordable housing on development approvals, helping to unlock more housing more rapidly for Queenslanders. There has been good progress on the state facilitated development process and the \$350 million Incentivising Infill Development Fund, which fast-tracks delivery of new housing in the right locations, including diverse and affordable housing. We have received over 150 proposals, with the potential for over 45,000 homes for the fast-track approval process. The state facilitated development team is now busy assessing those proposals.

We also recently passed legislation so Queenslanders will be first in line under the Commonwealth's Help to Buy scheme. For Queenslanders to access this support, the federal LNP and Greens political party need to get out of the way and stop blocking help for Queenslanders to buy their first home.

Homes for Queenslanders also boosts our social housing big build, with an additional \$1.25 billion to ramp-up to deliver more than 2,000 homes every year from 2028. The ramp-up is already well underway. We delivered 1,379 new social and affordable houses in the 12 months to 30 June this year, which is a 61 per cent increase on the previous financial year. Modern methods of construction are building homes faster so we are ordering 600 more modular homes in partnership with the private sector to be underway by year's end.

All of these positive initiatives in the Homes for Queenslanders plan and early progress are at risk if the LNP get elected. There was nothing new on housing in the Leader of the Opposition's budget reply speech. Many of his announced policies are already underway under my government. Shared equity is a good idea; it is a Labor idea. We have already passed legislation to enable it. There is just one problem and that is the Leader of the Opposition's LNP bosses standing in the way. He says one thing to Queenslanders but another thing to Peter Dutton. Queenslanders cannot trust the LNP to deliver the affordable housing Queenslanders need now. Chair, I have a very brief closing statement.

CHAIR: There is some crossbench time so we might award that to the opposition, even though the time has expired.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I have a further question to the director-general. Since revelations that Ms Hunter was re-employed after getting a \$400,000 payout, has anyone in your department worked with her on the independent review into homelessness?

Mr Kaiser: I cannot be certain of that. I imagine they may have had some involvement, but there is an independent review going on being managed by a line agency. Until the conclusion of that review, you would not expect DPC to necessarily be interfering in that.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I have one further question to the Premier. Should a young Queenslanders who gets access to a state government exemption on stamp duty be able to rent out a room of their house in the first 12 months?

Mr MILES: I think that they should. If the Leader of the Opposition can furnish me with any examples of punitive action being taken by agencies to enforce that, I will be happy to change the rules. It has never been applied.

CHAIR: Given that all time has expired and the opposition has had more time, we might conclude this session and go to our lunch break. Premier, do you have a closing statement?

Mr MILES: Yes. I thank you, Chair, the committee members and visiting MPs for your questions today. Preparing for estimates hearings is an extensive undertaking, and I would like to thank the staff of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, including Director-General Mike Kaiser, for all of their work. I would also like to thank my staff, particularly Darren Cann, for their hard work and support. They have all worked very hard to ensure that we were able to answer the committee's questions today. Thank you.

CHAIR: Premier, I note that there was a question taken on notice that could possibly be answered in a later ministerial area. Is that something you want to formally take on notice? It was about CS Energy. I do not know the full details.

Mr MILES: They can answer that. They will be here in the next session.

CHAIR: That is what I thought. With that, I thank everyone who has attended the hearings here today. As long as the opposition is comfortable with this, there are no questions taken on notice, just a question that can be proceeded with in the next session. I do note that it is on notice in an informal sense for the next minister to answer. I thank the Premier, the officials and the departmental officers for your attendance. The committee will now adjourn until 2 pm when we will examine the estimates for the portfolio areas of Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment.

Proceedings suspended from 1.15 pm to 2.00 pm.

ESTIMATES—COST OF LIVING ECONOMICS COMMITTEE—TREASURY; TRADE AND INVESTMENT

In Attendance

Hon. CR Dick, Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment

Mr B Kerdel, Chief of Staff

Queensland Treasury

Mr M Carey, Under Treasurer

Mr D Ellem, Head Strategic Policy, Strategic Policy

Queensland Treasury Corporation

Mr L Allen, Chief Executive

CS Energy Limited

Mr D Busine, Chief Executive Officer

Energy Queensland Limited

Mr P Scott, Chief Executive Officer

QIC Limited

Ms K Rampa, Chief Executive Officer

Trade and Investment Queensland

Mr J McGowan, Chief Executive Officer

Mr M Rigby, Chief Operating Officer



CHAIR: Good afternoon. For the benefit of those who have joined us, my name is Linus Power. I am the member for Logan and chair of the committee. I will take care of some housekeeping. As chair, I move that the *Queensland complaints clearinghouse governance project overview* be tabled from the previous session. All those in favour? Those against. That is carried.

Other members with me are Mr Ray Stevens, the member for Mermaid Beach and deputy chair; Mr Michael Crandon, the member for Coomera; Ms Amanda Camm, the member for Whitsunday, who today is represented by Mr David Janetzki, the member for Toowoomba South; Mrs Melissa McMahon, the member for Macalister; and Ms Jess Pugh, the member for Mount Ommaney. The committee is joined by other members who have been granted leave to attend and ask questions at the hearing today, including the member for Maroochydore.

I remind everyone present that any person may be excluded from the proceedings at the chair's discretion or by order of the committee. The committee has authorised this hearing to be broadcast live, televised and photographed. Copies of the committee's conditions for broadcasters of proceedings are available from the secretariat. Staff who are assisting our witnesses here today are permitted to use personal electronic devices in the chamber. I ask all present to ensure their phones and other electronic devices are switched to silent mode. I also remind everyone that food and drink is not permitted in the chamber.

The committee will now examine the proposed expenditure contained in the Appropriation Bill 2024 for the treasury portfolio area until 5 pm. Then we will adjourn for a short break until 5.15 pm before examining the portfolio of trade and investment until 6.15 pm. I remind honourable members that matters relating to these portfolio areas can only be raised during the times specified for the area, as was agreed by the House. I refer members to the program set by the House, available throughout the chamber and on the committee's webpage.

I also remind everyone that these proceedings are subject to the standing orders and rules of the Legislative Assembly. In respect of government owned corporations and statutory authorities, standing order 180(2) provides that a member may ask any question that the committee determines will assist it in its examination of the relevant Appropriation Bill or otherwise assist the committee to determine whether public funds are being efficiently spent or appropriate public guarantees are being provided.

On behalf of the committee, I welcome the Treasurer, Under Treasurer, officials and departmental officers and, of course, many members of the public. I now declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio area for the Treasury open for examination. The question is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

Treasurer, if you wish, you may make an opening statement of no more than five minutes.

Mr DICK: Thank you, Chair, for the opportunity to provide an opening address to the committee. As the Premier made clear earlier today, our government is bringing a fresh approach to doing what matters for Queenslanders. Our government is committed to being up-front and transparent with Queenslanders. When the Miles Labor government makes commitments, we tell Queenslanders how much those commitments will cost and how we will pay for them. We are being up-front and transparent with Queenslanders about the challenges our state faces, especially challenges that flow from our growing population.

Now more than ever, Queensland is the growth state of Australia. New data released by the ABS since I delivered the budget last month shows that in the most recent 12-month period Queensland has seen a population increase of 141,000 people. That growth is well above the forecasts from other earlier budgets. The fact that growth was unforeseen is not a reflection on the work of Queensland Treasury officials, many of whom join us here today. What has happened is an unforeseen change in population dynamics since COVID closed borders around the world. The forecasters from the federal Treasury were blindsided by these changes, and the secretary of the federal Treasury, Dr Steven Kennedy, admitted last month that federal Treasury got it wrong.

The effect of this unforeseen growth is stark. Across the three years to 2023-24, Queensland's population growth is estimated to have exceeded budget forecasts by a total of 135,500 persons. That is the arrival in Queensland of a new city—a city the size of Mackay, a city that no-one saw coming. However, our government will deliver to that virtual city the roads, schools, nurses and paramedics it needs, because that is what good Labor governments do.

For every city, every remote and regional community, every family across Queensland, our government is delivering the thing they need most, and that is relief from cost-of-living pressures. We are delivering that cost-of-living relief through \$1,300 power bill rebates in conjunction with the Albanese Labor government. Queensland families are already seeing that relief flow onto their family budgets. In less than a fortnight, Queenslanders will also start to see the cost-of-living benefits delivered by our 50-cent public transport fares and our 20 per cent saving on vehicle registration. This budget, through the appropriation bills, sets out how we will deliver the best outcomes for all Queenslanders. In total, our targeted cost-of-living measures are providing \$11.2 billion in concessions and cost-of-living relief to Queensland families.

As I noted earlier, our government is committed to being up-front and transparent with Queenslanders about the challenges our state faces, and the greatest challenge that comes with our growing population is housing supply. That is why we are delivering our \$3.1 billion Homes for Queenslanders plan. We have set out our comprehensive and detailed plans to deliver more social housing, to build more modular homes and to increase funding for homelessness services. We have increased the stamp duty concession threshold to \$700,000 and increased the cap on that concession to \$800,000. Importantly, we have done that in a way that will not sacrifice the revenue that pays the wages of nurses, schoolteachers and police officers. As with all the commitments our government makes, we are being up-front with Queenslanders about how we will deliver those measures and, most importantly, how we will pay for them.

While our budget is doing what matters for Queenslanders right now, it is also making investments that are critical to ensuring Queenslanders continue to enjoy a prosperous future. At the heart of those investments lies our Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan, our detailed path to unlocking secure, skilled jobs in new industries that manufacture the products our global customers want. To deliver the Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan and to deliver Queensland's bipartisan '75 by 35' emissions reduction target, we are continuing to invest in the Pioneer-Burdekin pumped hydro energy scheme, with an allocation of \$1 billion in the budget. Without Pioneer-Burdekin pumped hydro, those bipartisan emission targets would be in grave peril, risking both our energy transmission and Queensland's investment attractiveness.

As the Olympic Games get underway in Paris this week, we look forward to more Queensland gold-medal performances. Through Trade and Investment Queensland, we are already delivering gold-medal performances on the global stage, punching above our weight and delivering our personal bests. In 2023-24, Trade and Investment Queensland facilitated 480 export and investment deals

valued at more than \$2.5 billion, creating more than 2,000 jobs for Queensland. In everything we do we are making sure every dollar of investment counts, and we are making sure that everything we commit for Queensland is part of a fully detailed, fully accountable and fully costed plan, which means we are doing what matters for Queenslanders.

I look forward to taking questions from the committee and crossbenchers today. Chair, at the start I did want to reflect on a matter that was raised in the earlier hearing, during the committee's examination of the proposed appropriation for the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. Earlier today the Premier referred some matters to this session in respect of payments to GOCs, including CS Energy, and at the earliest opportunity I would like to ask the Under Treasurer to provide a short statement in relation to those matters so we can clear that up as soon as possible.

CHAIR: Certainly. Thank you, Treasurer. I am in your hands, Deputy Chair. Should we ask the Under Treasurer to answer some of the questions from the previous session?

Mr STEVENS: We are good with that, timing wise.

Mr Carey: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Deputy Premier. With respect to the questioning in the previous session about the Queensland Audit Office report into state entities and specifically the ex gratia payments to executives of government owned corporations, whilst I cannot talk about the specifics of which entities or individuals received payments, I can confirm for the committee that none of the payments cited in the report relate to CS Energy. I am further advised that payments by CS to former executives have been made pursuant to, and in accordance with, contractual arrangements and disclosed fully in their annual reports.

CHAIR: So those industry rumours in the questions were not correct; that is interesting.

Mr JANETZKI: My first question is to the Under Treasurer. Welcome. You are the fourth Under Treasurer to appear at estimates hearings this term. It is quite unusual that we have had four under treasurers in this term of government. Can you share your professional experience and background with the committee?

Mr Carey: I thank the member for the question. Prior to being appointed Under Treasurer I previously held roles including as the associate director-general of cabinet office in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and the CEO of Trade and Investment Queensland. I have also served as a deputy director-general within the department of state development, Queensland Treasury and the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. Prior to the Queensland government, I worked in the private sector.

Mr JANETZKI: How long did you serve as Cameron Dick's political chief of staff?

Mr Carey: I have worked in a range of roles, including in the federal and state government. I have worked in ministerial offices as well.

Mr JANETZKI: Which Labor ministerial offices have you worked in, in Queensland, in your professional career?

Mr Carey: None.

Mr JANETZKI: While you are in ministerial offices, apart from being the now Treasurer and Deputy Treasurer's chief of staff, what particular responsibilities did you undertake in those ministerial roles?

CHAIR: We are stretching appropriations. As I said, in three years I have ruled out only one question for repetition but I do counsel members. Under Treasurer, if you can try and find a link to the current budget that would be useful. I will give you a go.

Mr Carey: I thank the member for the question. As I have indicated to the committee, I have undertaken a diverse range of roles in my career, both across the public and private sector, including working in not-for-profits, legal and commercial roles and policy and policy advice roles. This has included working in ministerial offices. As a ministerial officer, I undertook all of the roles and responsibilities that that role entailed.

Mr JANETZKI: Treasurer, in April you announced that the state's total debt would reach \$188 billion by mid-2028. Did your office estimate that figure?

Mr DICK: No.

Mr JANETZKI: Under Treasurer, less than six weeks later, Treasury revised or confirmed that figure would be, in fact, \$172 billion in the budget. Can you explain what funding submissions were rejected in those six weeks?

Mr DICK: On a point of order: decisions about funding submissions are not made by Treasury, they are made by the government including the Cabinet Budget Review Committee. To be clear, Chair, the question should be appropriately directed so an appropriate answer can be given to the committee.

CHAIR: There is some legitimacy to that point of order, member for Toowoomba South. You are making a suggestion that there was a policy decision to rule in or out certain policies by definition; is that fair to say?

Mr JANETZKI: Let me rephrase the question to the Under Treasurer. Under Treasurer, on what basis was that debt figure revised from \$188 billion to \$172 billion in that six-week period?

Mr Carey: I thank the member for the question. Since the 2023-24 budget, the general government net operating balance has improved from a deficit of \$2.182 billion to a surplus of \$564 million, lowering the sector's borrowing requirements for 2023-24. General government sector borrowing at 30 June 2024 is forecast to be \$61.958 billion, \$3.5 billion lower than expected at the time of the 2023-24 budget. Similarly, general government sector debt is forecast to be \$12.223 billion, which is \$3.967 billion lower than the 2023-24 budget estimate of \$16.9 billion. Driven by an increase in the state's capital program, general government sector borrowings are projected to reach \$103.221 billion by 2026-27, \$8.406 billion higher than projected in the 2023-24 budget. However, the growth in budget is expected to slow as the capital program moderates from the peak expected in 2025-26 and the net operating balance improves. Compared to the 2023-24 budget, non-financial public sector borrowings at 30 June 2024 of \$108.569 billion is \$2.1 billion lower than the original budget estimate.

CHAIR: Member for Toowoomba South, I want to make it clear that the question was not ruled out of order but merely should be directed to the Treasurer. You can still put that question as originally phrased to the Treasurer if you like.

Mr JANETZKI: Chair, my question is to the Under Treasurer. What has happened to credit spread margins on QTC bonds since the announcement of that higher debt figure of \$188 billion?

Mr Carey: I thank the member for the question. I refer to question on notice No. 5 which contains detailed information in relation to the changes in the QTC bond, yield and spreads and also talks to various macro-economic and market-based reasons for those changes.

Mr JANETZKI: Chair, can I ask that Mr Leon Allen of QTC join the main table please? I will interchange for the next couple of questions between the Under Treasurer and the CEO of QTC. I would like to talk about credit ratings and I will start, Under Treasurer, with you first. Can you outline your engagement with ratings agencies since April, the announcement of the \$188 billion and the inclusion of that \$172 billion figure?

Mr Carey: I thank the member for the question. I am certainly happy to talk to our engagement with ratings agencies. It is also important to say to the committee that budget forecasts and advice from Treasury consider a range of possible scenarios and are impacted by a large number of factors. These factors and inputs evolve and change over time throughout the budget process as a result of both expenditure decisions, wider movements in the macro-economic environment and the local Queensland economy. As you would expect, Queensland Treasury provides regular insights on potential budget outcomes, including debt levels, throughout the process. Numbers and outcomes change right up until the final decisions are taken. The budget papers contain the final outcome for these deliberations.

With reference to the specific figure that the member is referring to, it is clear that it was a very plausible outcome depending on spending decisions and other macro-economic changes that were taken, and its plausibility is evidenced by the final outcome that was produced in the budget papers. With respect to credit ratings agencies, Queensland maintains regular contact with ratings agencies throughout the year. The most recent rating outcomes following detailed consideration by the agencies include: AA1 stable affirmed by Moody's on 17 May 2024, AA-plus stable affirmed by S&P Global as at 16 January 2024, AA-plus stable affirmed by Fitch on 9 August 2023. Post-budget commentary releases on 11 June by Moody's and S&P did not indicate inconsistency with the current ratings outlook. S&P and Moody's do, however, highlight fiscal challenges associated with an expanded capital program leading to larger fiscal deficits. This increased investment is critically important to Queensland's future in delivering essential and transformative infrastructure.

Recent revenue windfalls have been used to substantially lower borrowing requirements in the near term and provide additional capacity for the expanded infrastructure program over time. Strengths feature consistently across Queensland's credit ratings. These include our strong and diversified

economic base, robust liquidity, and effective and experienced financial management. The Queensland Future Fund Debt Retirement Fund continues to demonstrate a commitment to achieve debt management, which supports Queensland's ongoing positive credit ratings.

Mr JANETZKI: Mr Allen, what has been QTC's engagement with credit rating agencies over the last few months?

Mr Allen: I thank the member for the question. The relationship that we have with the credit agencies is primarily through the Treasury. Our engagement would be at junctures for any reviews that those rating agencies would undertake. As the Under Treasurer has outlined, they have provided formal rating analysis over the last year, noting September 2023 for S&P, Moody's in May 2024 and Fitch in December 2021, and they affirmed their rating again in August 2023. As noted also, the rating agencies publish post-budget updates, so QTC at those junctures would provide support into a briefing process that the Treasury would undertake.

Mr JANETZKI: Under Treasurer, how many conversations have you or Treasury officials had with credit rating agencies since April this year?

Mr Carey: As I have indicated, Queensland Treasury maintains ongoing and close engagements with credit rating agencies. I can seek some further information in relation to specific dates of contact. However, I can confirm for the committee that our engagement with credit rating agencies is ongoing and consistently managed by Queensland Treasury staff.

Mr JANETZKI: Under Treasurer, is there a formal or informal debt ceiling within Treasury?

Mr Carey: I thank the member for the question. With respect, that question goes to an opinion. Of course—

Mr JANETZKI: My question was: is there a formal or informal debt ceiling?

Mr Carey:—Queensland Treasury undertakes analysis on policy proposals that are put before the government. That includes the financial implications of those proposals. Where those proposals are put to cabinet, Queensland Treasury offers advice. It would be plausible for Queensland Treasury to include advice in relation to the impact of those proposals on the state's financial position, but those are rightly matters for advice to cabinet.

Mr JANETZKI: In those discussions with ratings agencies, what have they said to you or your officials in respect of additional borrowings and potential rating downgrades?

Mr Carey: I thank the member for his question. Again, respectfully, the individual methodologies that are operated by ratings agencies are questions best directed to them. Queensland Treasury obviously considers those when it frames its advice to government and works closely with ratings agencies to ensure they understand the full circumstances and opportunities associated with the Queensland economy, specifically with respect to the debt burden methodology. While debt is expected to rise, projections of debt remain consistent with the state's current ratings outcomes. Queensland's ratings are supported by strength in a range of factors including the economy, financial management, liquidity and institutional frameworks.

Following the release of the 2024-25 budget S&P Global Ratings has stated—

In our view, the state's debt levels will remain similar to domestic 'AA+' rated peers. Infrastructure spending will mean gross debt will continue to climb, after a temporary decline in 2023 as operating revenues spiked.

S&P's debt burden assessment is one of five factors considered in its individual credit profile. Their assessment is based on a ratio of borrowings to revenue for the non-financial public sector and the ratio of interest expenses to revenue.

Moody's commentary on the 2024-25 budget noted that non-financial public sector borrowing is projected to rise to \$172 billion over four years to fiscal year 2028, reflecting an increase in infrastructure spending. Moody's debt burden metric is based on all Queensland Treasury Corporation debt on issue relative to non-financial public sector revenue. The factor has a 15 per cent weighting in the overall baseline credit assessment, with an additional 10 per cent weighting allocated to the interest burden. Moody's has revised its methodology for assessing regional and local governments since Queensland's last credit opinion. Future releases for Queensland and other states will reflect this methodology. The implementation of the Debt Retirement Fund has improved Queensland's debt assessments for Moody's and S&P.

Mr JANETZKI: Under Treasurer, the general government debt-to-revenue ratio is 69.6 per cent this financial year and it is expected to increase to 116 per cent by July 2028. Are you concerned by that near doubling of this ratio?

Mr Carey: I thank the member for the question. Queensland's net debt continues to grow over the forward estimates, a trend that is consistent with interstate peers—

Mr JANETZKI: I was talking about general government debt, sorry.

Mr Carey: Again, I think a critical element of answering the member's question—and for the benefit of the committee—is understanding the comparison between Queensland's position and its interstate peers. In all years over the forward estimates, Queensland's general government borrowings and net debt are lower than those of New South Wales and Victoria, both on an absolute basis and as a share of revenue. Forecast net debt of \$59.8 billion in 2027-28 compares to \$139.5 billion for New South Wales and \$187.8 billion for Victoria. General government sector borrowing of \$111.4 billion in 2027-28 is lower than that of New South Wales, at \$199.2 billion, and Victoria, at \$226.9 billion.

Similarly, Queensland's non-financial public sector debt and borrowings and net debt compare favourably to New South Wales and Victoria on an absolute basis and as a share of revenue. By 2027-28, Queensland's NFPS borrowing is forecast to be 157 per cent of revenue. In the same year, NFPS borrowing as a share of revenue is forecast to be 183 per cent for New South Wales and 226 per cent for Victoria. Managing debt levels is crucial to ensuring debt servicing costs remain sustainable considering interest rate risk. On this basis, Queensland is comparatively better positioned than its peers in other states.

Mr JANETZKI: Mr Allen, are you concerned by the near doubling in this ratio?

Mr Allen: I thank the member for the question. I do not want to express an opinion on that. I think the Under Treasurer has provided a summary in relation to those expenses and the ratios.

Mr JANETZKI: Mr Allen, we have a doubling in that ratio. With regard to the debt-to-revenue ratio, what would it be if GOC debt was included?

Mr Allen: I thank the member for the question. We always highlight to investors that the aggregate Queensland borrowing program includes the funding of GOC or government trading enterprise debt as well as the general government sector as well as local government as well as some lending to universities and some minor entities as well. The aggregate picture is well understood I think by the market and has traditionally been the reason Queensland has had larger borrowing programs than other states up until recently. In relation to the question around the concern, it is the ratings agencies that ultimately are making the assessment here and I would refer to the fact that they have reaffirmed ratings on a regular basis. More recently in the budget there was no change to ratings or outlooks, albeit they were not formal assessments at that point.

Mr JANETZKI: Under Treasurer, so net debt in 2021-22 was \$11 billion and now it is forecast to reach nearly \$60 billion by 2027-28. Given net debt is used by credit ratings agencies to determine our rating, what is Treasury's position in relation to this growth in debt and what it may mean for our state's rating?

Mr Carey: I thank the member for the question. Again, whilst Queensland's borrowing costs are increasing as borrowings increase to fund the state's Big Build capital program, those costs remain manageable. Queensland's lower level of debt compared to other states means that it is less exposed to those future interest rate risks. Queensland's forecast borrowings of \$111.383 billion in 2027-28 are materially lower than New South Wales at \$199 billion and Victoria at \$226 billion in both absolute terms and as a percentage. The rate of increase in gross borrowings is expected to slow as the capital program moderates from its peak in 2025-26 and operating cash surpluses strengthen. Savings from the Smarter Spending, Better Jobs Plan also support strengthening surpluses. Much of the general government sector debt is held under long-term fixed interest rates and therefore the impact of interest rate variations on debt servicing costs is relatively modest, with the impact of changes in interest rates occurring progressively as refinancing occurs.

Mr JANETZKI: Under Treasurer, has Treasury modelled or been provided with any third-party modelling relating to the cost impact of BPIC on construction projects around Queensland?

Mr Carey: I thank the member for the question. A combination of strong demand with ongoing domestic and international supply chain disruptions has resulted in increases in construction costs and prices. Building construction costs in Queensland have risen by 31.2 per cent over the three-year period ending in the March quarter of 2024. Labour market constraints within the construction industry have eased over the past two years but remain elevated by historical standards. A tight labour market continues to put upward pressure on industry wages. Wages in the construction industry rose 4.2 per cent over the year to the March quarter of 2024—

Mr JANETZKI: I raise a point of order, Chair. Under Treasurer, I have a point of order around relevance. I asked a specific question if Treasury has undertaken modelling or received any third-party modelling. This is nowhere near the question.

CHAIR: To be honest I faded out a little bit, but just address the specifics of the question, Under Treasurer. I thought you were addressing some of it, but I will ask you to continue on that basis.

Mr Carey: Thank you, Chair, and thank you, member, for the question. Of course Treasury undertakes analysis on policy proposals that are put before the government. Consistent with the *Cabinet Handbook*, cabinet documents are diverse in their form and are broadly defined as any document that discloses or reveals any consideration or deliberation of the cabinet. Where cabinet has made—

Mr JANETZKI: Point of order, Chair: I do not need a definition of what a cabinet document is. I want to understand if Treasury has modelled or received third-party modelling in relation to the implications of BPIC on projects around Queensland.

CHAIR: Certainly. I understand the process and we are hearing the answer.

Mr JANETZKI: I do not need—

CHAIR: I think an officer of Treasury is attempting to answer the question. We will just proceed with the answer.

Mr JANETZKI: Okay.

Mr Carey: Thank you, Chair; thank you, member, for the question. Treasury undertakes analysis on policy proposals that are put before the government. We advise on all policy proposals that come to government, particularly those with financial implications. Where cabinet has made a policy decision with respect to a matter, I am limited as to what I can say with regard to any proposals put before executive government. In relation to the question of third-party modelling, I am happy to seek some further information. I am sure many and diverse interest groups and peak bodies have provided information in various forms to Treasury over time.

CHAIR: We have a bit of it before this committee as well. I might turn to the crossbench in a second, but we have now had 27 minutes and it has all been questions from the member for Toowoomba South about debt. Is debt a major concern and how do you intend to address it, Treasurer?

Mr DICK: It is as if we are at two different hearings, Chair. My opening address was all about the unprecedented population growth in Queensland and in two successive budgets now I have made it clear that to deal with growth in population you need to invest in infrastructure and provide the essential frontline services that Queenslanders deserve. When you have unanticipated and unforecast growth, that makes it even more important to invest and to do so in an accelerated fashion.

We saw the hysteria from the Newman government about debt. I saw the hysteria about the Newman government and the then opposition led by Campbell Newman outside of the parliament—their hysteria and obsession about debt leading up to the 2012 election and then their hysterical obsession about debt subsequent. What was the consequence of that public campaign against debt, their hysteria around debt? Some 14,000 Queenslanders paid for the LNP's hysteria with their jobs. That is what happened. Community organisations had funding removed from them. The Barrett Adolescent Centre was closed without replacement. Three young people died by suicide as a consequence and not one of the gentlemen in the LNP and not one of the female leaders of the LNP who were part of that government have ever apologised to those families. That was the consequence of an obsession with debt, and what have we seen in 27 minutes today, Chair? We have seen the same obsession, so all Queenslanders know what is coming. They know what is coming because we all saw the movie previously, and that is particularly the case now that the Leader of the Opposition, David Crisafulli, has made a range of unfunded promises to Queenslanders.

On the LNP's own estimates they have \$2.7 billion worth of commitments, but the Leader of the Opposition will not say how he will pay for them: a \$2 billion property developer fund; a \$61 million commitment for a Central Queensland property development; \$165 million for the duplication of the shared equity housing scheme that their federal colleagues, led by the federal Queensland leader, Peter Dutton, oppose; \$20 million for the women back to work fund; and \$400 million to reduce stamp duty for millionaires on multimillion dollar homes. They are costed but unfunded by the LNP. Of course, he has uncoded and unfunded promises.

The 'no ifs, no buts' Maroochydore rail line—I am so pleased that the member for Maroochydore is here. She got the promise from the Leader of the Opposition to build that rail line for 2032 that TMR figures demonstrate, after a \$14 million business case, would cost an additional \$6.6 billion. Where is

the accountability and transparency from the shadow minister for accountability and transparency on where the \$6.6 billion will come from and how that will be funded? It is one thing to make a commitment; it is another thing to say how it is to be paid for. There is the uncoded solar for landlords scheme, the uncoded introduction of the LNP's union-busting productivity commission and the uncoded business innovation pathway. On our estimate, that is \$8.7 billion.

Then, of course, we have the unfunded and uncommitted category: the new Bribie Island bridge that the LNP says is a bipartisan commitment; the new Barron River bridge, on which I think they said we stole their homework; and the Bowen Basin coal roads upgrades—all committed to by the LNP, but they cannot identify one dollar.

It is the same hysteria that will result in debt being obsessively pursued by the shadow Treasurer and member for Toowoomba South, which will result in, of course, his promise that debt will not be higher under the LNP. If you promise to spend more, reduce revenue and reduce debt then that leaves you with one option, and it is absolutely plain for all members of the committee, all witnesses willing to give evidence today and all Queenslanders that this is the same playbook that Campbell Newman adopted that resulted in 14,000 people being sacrificed—their employment being sacrificed—because of the LNP's obsession with public borrowings.

It does not matter how you cut it up, Chair. It does not matter how you look at public borrowings in Queensland. I want to make that clear. We have revised net debt down again, to \$12.2 billion for this financial year. Even at the end of the forward estimates, after all that we are doing to build the roads and the railway systems and the trains and the renewable energy system, net debt will be \$60 billion. No matter how you look at that metric—whether it is the total or as a ratio of population, revenue or output, or whether it is this financial year or the end of the forwards—Queensland outperforms the other major states, New South Wales and Victoria, which both have a credit rating the same or worse than Queensland. Queensland's net debt is just an eighth of New South Wales this financial year and it is a tenth of Victoria. Compared to New South Wales, Queensland is five times better off when you account for population and output and six times better relative to revenue. Compared to Victoria, our net debt is nine times better relative to population and 10 times better relative to revenue and output. That sort of performance will continue across the forwards. As New South Wales and Victoria contract their public investment in infrastructure and ours grows, we will still perform better than them.

I do not think Queenslanders will be conned by the LNP's approach to debt, which is to create public hysteria about it. Of course, it will be Queenslanders who suffer from an LNP government.

Ms PUGH: I would like to ask the Treasurer about one of my favourite topics, which is progressive coal royalties. With reference to page 120 of Budget Paper No. 2 and coal royalties, can the Deputy Premier update the committee on Queensland's progressive coal royalty tiers and the benefits to Queensland now that multinationals are paying their fair share?

Mr DICK: How much time do I have, please?

CHAIR: Technically 64 minutes, but I am hoping you will not take that. It is important to all of us, I understand.

Mr DICK: I thank the member for Mount Ommaney for her question. This has been a very important public policy decision that our government has made. We are the only party or government that will support progressive coal royalties taxation permanently—forever—in this state. That is why we have the Progressive Coal Royalties Protection (Keep Them in the Bank) Bill in the House. It is a very important measure to ensure that no government can change or reduce those royalties without a decision of the parliament and without a legislative measure being approved by the people's house.

Our state's royalty regime ensures Queenslanders get their fair share of the resources that belong to them. It is why our progressive coal royalty taxation program is so important. The progressive coal royalty program that I introduced in the 2022 budget has delivered an additional \$9.4 billion over the 2022-23 and 2023-24 financial years. That has allowed the government to invest more than \$16 billion in economic and social infrastructure and essential services, as outlined in the budget papers in 2023-24. These investments are across all regions of the state, including in coal-producing regions.

Supported by funding from coal royalties since the 2022-23 budget, publicly owned entities continue to deliver productivity enhancing infrastructure projects across the energy, water and port sectors. This includes CopperString 2032, the most transformative infrastructure that will be delivered in the north of our state since the Great Northern Railway was built from 1877. As announced in last year's budget, increased royalty revenue allowed our government to lock in the one per cent payroll tax discount for regional employers through to 30 June 2030. It means that businesses in regional Queensland pay one of the lowest payroll tax rates in the country.

Stronger-than-expected coal prices have allowed our government to provide nearly \$3.8 billion in new and expanded cost-of-living measures as part of the 2024-25 budget. Coal royalties have allowed our government to provide almost \$3 billion for additional electricity bill support to Queensland households and small businesses, which means Queenslanders will be paying the lowest retail electricity prices of all National Electricity Market jurisdictions and Western Australia in 2024-25. There is \$435 million for a 20 per cent reduction in vehicle registration costs for all light vehicles; \$150 million to lower transport fares to 50 cents per trip across Translink services from 5 August for six months; \$33½ million to increase the maximum value of the FairPlay vouchers; \$15 million for the School and Community Food Relief Program; and \$10.1 million over four years from 2024-25 for food emergency and financial relief measures for vulnerable cohorts.

We are doing what matters for Queenslanders and, of course, we have absolutely committed to these progressive coal royalties, but the Leader of the Opposition has not. He has not committed. He has told the Queensland Resources Council that when they release their taxation policy before the election the QRC will be able to take it to the bank. I ask the committee: how much will that be? \$2 billion? \$5 billion? \$9.4 billion? We are the only party or government that remains absolutely committed to those coal royalty tiers. I know that the member for Mount Ommaney is passionate and committed to that as well.

CHAIR: I now turn to the member for South Brisbane.

Dr MacMAHON: My question is for the Treasurer. This government has provided millions of dollars in public money to the Rheinmetall NIOA Munitions factory in Maryborough. A report by the Forensic Architecture research agency indicates that Rheinmetall shells are not just being sent to Ukraine but also being sent via Germany to the Israel Defense Forces. What due diligence has the government conducted into whether shells or other weapons made in Maryborough are being used against civilians by the Israel Defense Forces?

Mr DICK: I thank the member for South Brisbane for the question. I am not aware of that report and I am not aware of the matters that the member for South Brisbane refers to. I am proud that, outside of NATO, the nation that has made the greatest contribution to the war to defend Ukraine is the Commonwealth of Australia. I could not be more proud as a veteran of the Second World War—

CHAIR: 'Son of a veteran'.

Mr JANETZKI: You are not that old.

Mr DICK: That is true. My father had a big impression on me. I am the son of a veteran of the Second World War who fought in defence of the values that this nation believes in—freedom, democracy, justice. We are defending those very values in the Ukraine. We support our defence manufacturing industry in Queensland. I am not aware of the other matters referred to, but I do know that we are fighting hard to defend Ukraine from an aggressive, obscene dictator who is seeking to destroy democracy. I do not apologise for the work that our state is doing to defend the very values that everyone on your committee, Chair, and every elected member of this party professes to support. I make no apologies for defending those values.

CHAIR: Indeed, your dad made a big impression on me and his service in World War II.

Dr MacMAHON: Treasurer, can you confirm that no weapons or munitions from Maryborough are being sent to the Israel Defence Force?

CHAIR: The question has already been put and answered. I do not know if the Treasurer has much to add to that.

Mr DICK: No, I do not have anything to add to that.

Mr JANETZKI: Under Treasurer, Nine News revealed in March that advice was sought about the cost of potentially cancelling the Brisbane Olympic Games. Was Treasury asked to consider costings in relation to Queensland cancelling the 2032 Olympic Games?

Mr Carey: I thank the member for the question. Treasury undertakes economic and policy analysis across a wide range of domains for a range of purposes.

An honourable member: That is a yes, is it?

Mr JANETZKI: Under Treasurer, what was that advice then?

Mr Carey: Again, once policy proposals are put to government and government makes formal decisions, I am quite limited as to what I can say in relation to analysis that we provide to support cabinet outcomes.

Mr JANETZKI: So the Treasury did provide advice?

CHAIR: That has not been said by the Under Treasurer.

Mr JANETZKI: I think it has.

Mr Carey: No, it has not.

CHAIR: The Under Treasurer has made it clear that he is showing due discretion with advice provided, or not provided, before a cabinet process. Please do not verbal witnesses. Is there a further question?

Mr JANETZKI: Can I call Mr Busine, the CEO of CS Energy, please? My first question is to the Treasurer. Thank you for joining us, Mr Busine. Treasurer, you have said the explosion at Callide was not because of a lack of maintenance. Is that still your view?

Mr DICK: As the honourable gentleman would be aware, we have provided a comprehensive answer to the committee in relation to CS Energy and Callide. They are not my words. They are the words of the chair and the CEO when they made public comments on the release of the Brady Heywood report.

CHAIR: I just had a comment from the deputy chair. For elderly people like Ray and myself who are a little bit deaf, putting your hands there makes it more difficult.

Mr DICK: I am sorry. I was not seeking to obscure my answer.

CHAIR: We did not assume you were.

Mr DICK: I will not do that in the future.

CHAIR: Sorry, I interrupted the member for Toowoomba South.

Mr JANETZKI: Treasurer, it was a straightforward question. You have previously said the explosion at Callide was not because of a lack of maintenance. Is that still your view?

Mr DICK: I gave you a detailed reply in respect of the committee's question on this.

Mr JANETZKI: I have seen that.

CHAIR: You could read the whole lot, if you want.

Mr DICK: Let me be clear again for the committee: since 2015, shareholding ministers have approved all written requests regarding asset maintenance overhauls recommended by the CS Energy board, including those pertaining to Callide C Power Station, and we have increased this funding over our 2016 and 2020 shareholder mandate periods. I am advised that since 2015-16 total overhauls and maintenance capital spend at Callide C has been almost \$280 million in real terms. In 2024-25, budget capital expenditure is \$60.2 million. Over the last three years, from 2021-22 to 2023-24, our generators, government owned corporations, have collectively invested around \$1 billion. In 2024-25 alone, CS Energy, Stanwell and CleanCo are investing \$376 million for upgrades and maintenance at existing power stations.

The LNP drove CS Energy to make a \$74 million savings cut to ready it for sale. That is the only government that has demanded a cut in maintenance expenditure for a government owned generator, and that is the truth.

Mr JANETZKI: Treasurer, Mr Brady's report notes that, among other things, the shareholder mandate drove focus on cost savings while at the same time placed constraints on CS Energy's investment strategies, including into its existing assets. Treasurer, can you table the shareholder mandates from 2015 to date?

Mr DICK: I will refer the committee to where they have been released before the end of the hearing.

CHAIR: You can either hand up a link or table it. I do not know whether you read it out.

Mr DICK: I will come back to the committee with information on that.

CHAIR: Thank you, Treasurer.

Mr JANETZKI: Mr Busine, when did you first sight the draft Brady report?

Mr Busine: I thank the member for the question. There was a draft Brady report that was published in June this year. In the months leading up to that, we had received progressive drafts of the report which were going through a finalisation process. We then received the final report. The draft version was published on 25 June. The final report was published on 17 July.

Mr JANETZKI: You commented that there were earlier drafts—obviously progressive drafts leading up to the June draft. At what date would you have first seen the earliest draft?

Mr Busine: I thank the member for the question. I would have to take the question on notice to get a specific date. I have given you an indication that it was in the months leading up. It was potentially up to six months that we started to see drafts of Dr Brady's reports prior to his making his final conclusions.

Mr JANETZKI: We will take that on notice, or through the Treasurer.

CHAIR: Just to re-explain, as we did this morning, the process of the committee is that only the minister, or in this case the Deputy Premier and Treasurer, can take something on notice. You can make a request of the Treasurer.

Mr DICK: Let me examine that further and, if I can assist the committee today, I will. If I cannot, then I will look to take it on notice. Let me see if I can help the committee first today.

CHAIR: I understand.

Mr DICK: We will come back to you at the end of the hearing.

CHAIR: I understand you will make reference to it at a minimum at the end.

Mr JANETZKI: Treasurer, as a shareholding minister, when did you first sight the draft Brady report?

Mr DICK: Let me clarify that. The draft report, in its entirety—I think it was when it was published. I had not seen it before it was published—released, I suppose, is the more technical term.

Mr JANETZKI: Treasurer, will you confirm that exact date? Is that the date in June of this year when the draft was put on the website that Mr Busine was referring to?

Mr DICK: Whenever it was released publicly, yes. I think the date was 25 June.

Mr JANETZKI: Mr Busine, when did CS Energy first notify shareholding ministers, or their office, that they had received the report?

Mr Busine: The notification of the final report was on the day that it was received, which was 16 July, and the report was published on 17 July.

Mr JANETZKI: Mr Busine, so communications between CS and shareholding ministers were just limited to notification of the draft report being received in that June period? There were never any discussions between CS and shareholding ministers in respect of the draft report?

CHAIR: That is a pretty broad question.

Mr JANETZKI: I think it is pretty relevant, Chair. I do not need your commentary on that. It is a pretty relevant question considering what Queenslanders have been living through with increased power prices.

CHAIR: I was just trying to be helpful, to be honest, member for Toowoomba South.

Mr JANETZKI: I do not need your help.

Mr Busine: I thank the member for the question. In the period leading up to what was the publishing of the draft report, we would have ongoing conversations with departments about progress on the report. We received notification from the portfolio minister requesting the finalisation of the report via a letter, which our chair wrote back to the minister on, which we were unable to meet at that time. There were ongoing conversations primarily with departments in relation to the progress of completion of the report. However, given the process that Brady worked through, which was a formulation of hypotheses which were ultimately then formulated into a final report, we did not initially intend to share that information until it was final. Then the decision was made by the board to publish a draft in June which was published on our website.

Mr JANETZKI: Mr Busine, Dr Brady said—

Shareholder mandates have pushed to extract more from aging assets, and multiple cost cutting initiatives have been undertaken.

Did CS Energy raise any concern about the impact of the shareholder mandates on meeting its maintenance obligations?

Mr Busine: I thank the member for the question. In the finalisation of the 2020 mandate, there was correspondence and discussions between CS Energy and the departments regarding that. The requests that were made for capital and maintenance expenditure in relation to the coal portfolio were approved. The key limitations that were being expressed at that time for CS Energy were its diversification into renewable energy and a desire to ensure that the growth was within a confined program of entering into renewables through that period.

Mr JANETZKI: I will come back to renewables in a moment. Mr Busine, \$500 million in dividends was paid by CS Energy to the government over the five years prior to the Callide explosion. Can you provide the annual maintenance spend for those five years in the lead-up to the explosion in 2021?

Mr Busine: I thank the member for the question. I will have to take advice on that five-year period. Actually, I do have—

Mr JANETZKI: Can we ask the Treasurer to come back—

CHAIR: Mr Busine seemed to indicate that he did have that information to hand or it might be something you can provide the Treasurer with at the end.

Mr Busine: We can provide the Treasurer with those numbers.

CHAIR: If you have it there, though, it seems to be the line of questioning that the member for Toowoomba South might want to advance on.

Mr JANETZKI: No, it is okay. I can wait.

CHAIR: He is happy to have it at the end, if you can find that document and provide it to the Treasurer.

Mr JANETZKI: Mr Busine, do you accept the findings of Dr Brady that government directed cost cutting was a driving factor behind the explosion at Callide in 2021?

Mr Busine: I thank the member for the question. Dr Brady's report highlighted both technical and organisational issues that were key to the incident. The technical issues, as highlighted in his report—there were four factors. Some of those related to the original design and some of them related to the performance of the electrical equipment on the day. The organisational factors, as outlined in his report, highlighted an immaturity in process safety, particularly risk assessment capabilities, management of change and the ability to identify hazards in the business. Those were the key factors that Dr Brady identified in his report as the causes towards the incident.

Mr JANETZKI: Treasurer, last year at estimates I asked you how many times you raised concerns about rising power prices from Callide with former chair Jim Soorley. No answer was really given. How many times did you discuss increasing power prices in Queensland and maintenance issues with Mr Soorley?

Mr DICK: I will have to reflect on that before coming back to the committee, I think. It has been some time since I met with Mr Soorley. It would be some years now. I am going to have to consider and reflect on that. I cannot provide an immediate answer. I will try to come back today.

Mr JANETZKI: Treasurer, you are personal friends with Jim Soorley. I am sure you would have some recollection of discussions about power prices and maintenance.

Mr DICK: I am not personal friends with Mr Soorley. I do not recall the last time I engaged with Mr Soorley socially. It may have been at the start of this government perhaps 10 years ago. Maybe it was in the Bligh government that I had a cup of coffee with Mr Soorley. Obviously I am an acquaintance of Mr Soorley through the Australian Labor Party, but it is wrong to characterise, as the member for Toowoomba South so blithely did, that I am a close personal friend of his. Let me reflect on that because it is some years since I have met with Mr Soorley.

Power prices are not a function solely of the operation of one power generator in Queensland. It is a mischaracterisation of the drivers of power pricing in Queensland that I would have a conversation with Mr Soorley at some stage over some years ago that would have any impact or relevance to power prices in Queensland. I think that mischaracterises not only my relationship with Mr Soorley but also the influence I could exercise in relation to that through my relationship with Mr Soorley as the chair of CS Energy.

CHAIR: I was surprised to hear that myself. We do have to take care to ascertain the facts behind questions.

Mr JANETZKI: Treasurer, were any of the board members or executives who have left since the incident at Callide required to sign a non-disclosure agreement upon leaving the employ of CS Energy?

Mr DICK: That is a question that should be put to the entity.

Mr JANETZKI: Mr Busine, were any of the executives or board members who have left the employ of CS Energy since the explosion in 2021 required to sign a non-disclosure agreement or a confidentiality deed?

Mr Busine: Thank you for the question, member. There are no non-disclosure agreements that have been signed by board members or executives. Every executive has a confidentiality clause within their contract regarding confidentiality during employment and post employment.

Mr JANETZKI: How long are those confidentiality clauses for? The confidentiality will sunset eventually. Is it a period of time or is it indefinitely?

Mr Busine: Thank you for the question. It is an indefinite period.

CHAIR: These are contracts that perhaps were entered into with previous governments as well.

Mr JANETZKI: Treasurer, in the 2022 and 2023 annual reports CS Energy reported a net negative liability position, leading to a going concern note in the report. What steps did the Treasurer take to ensure CS Energy remained a going concern at the time?

Mr DICK: I was anticipating questions about the budget and this financial year, so I will have to consider that and reflect on it and come back to the committee.

Mr JANETZKI: I am happy for the Treasurer to reflect because I have another question in relation to what may be coming this year. The 2023 note stated that a cash flow forecast was prepared 18 months ago to demonstrate CS Energy could service its debt. How close has CS Energy remained to this forecast, and will the 2024 annual report again show a negative net current asset position, leading to another going concern note?

Mr DICK: I cannot recall the notes to annual reports of all of those entities and corporations for which I have some responsibility, unfortunately. I am sure the notes to annual reports run to some hundreds, maybe thousands, so I would have to take some advice on that. What is contained in the 2024 annual report will be a matter for the report writers for those organisations. If the organisation was privatised I would not be answering questions about it, nor would a future LNP government.

Mr JANETZKI: Treasurer, I want some clarity on this next question. CS Energy is building a Tesla mega battery at Greenbank in Brisbane's south. Last week you said that you had rejected CS Energy's attempt to break into the renewables sector in 2020 so they could focus on its core business. Can you explain this contradiction?

Mr DICK: The Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan.

Mr JANETZKI: Chair, I will ask the question seeking more clarity from the Treasurer. Treasurer, you made it quite clear that you had rejected CS Energy's attempts to break into the renewables sector. That comment, as I read it, was not just in relation to that specific point in time but over a longer term direction. At what point did the Treasurer, as a shareholding minister, direct CS Energy to invest in renewables and stop investing in its core business?

Mr DICK: That is a very convoluted and confusing question. I do not even know—

Mr JANETZKI: You have given very convoluted and confusing answers all day.

Mr DICK:—whether the member for Toowoomba South knew what the question was by the end of it.

Mr JANETZKI: We have a real lack of curiosity about CS Energy.

Mr DICK: We have a very detailed and comprehensive renewable energy plan for the state that was released by our government two years ago. We are now delivering on that plan, and that involves all of the government owned corporations assisting us in delivering that plan. Again, none of it would be happening if they were privatised under the LNP.

Mr JANETZKI: Under Treasurer, the government has committed to conduct a review into publicly owned generation businesses to ensure they are appropriately aligned. Who is preparing the terms of reference for this review? The government has said the review will be led by Treasury and QTC. If so, who are the responsible people within Treasury and QTC that will be coordinating the review?

Mr Carey: The government has committed to undertake a review into the publicly owned generation businesses following events at CS Energy's Callide C Power Station. As announced by the Premier on 25 June, the review will ensure Queensland's publicly owned energy businesses are aligned to deliver on the Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan, optimise the energy transition and ensure downward pressure on consumer prices while maintaining operating and business performance. An issues paper will be released for consultation by the end of September 2024, with the final report delivered to government ahead of the 2025 budget. The review will be led by Queensland Treasury and Queensland Treasury Corporation with support from the Department of Energy and Climate and specialist advisers as required. Relevant stakeholders, including the energy businesses, employees

and industry stakeholders, will be consulted throughout the review. The government has also appointed special advisers to the board of CS Energy to ensure it continues to operate and address matters arising from the incident. Terms of reference and further information in relation to the review are being developed and will be provided as part of the consultation paper.

CHAIR: We might turn to the member for Mirani.

Mr ANDREW: Treasurer, page 1 of the SDS mentions 'delivering fiscal sustainability'. Does the department use the information from the Audit Office to help Treasury make decisions on spending?

CHAIR: It was a fairly broad question but I will give you some latitude, Treasurer.

Mr DICK: I thank the member for Mirani for his question, and I thank him for at least referring to a document that compromises the budget papers for this year. When the Queensland Audit Office completes reports that impact Queensland Treasury, of course we seek to consider and adopt the recommendations as appropriate. When there are broader reports that may impact on the fiscal position of the state across other agencies they will be considered by Treasury as well. It really depends on the nature of the report of the QAO and Treasury and the officers of Treasury. The officers of Treasury will make an analysis of those reports and consider how that needs to impact on their work and the work of government more broadly across all departments and agencies.

Mr ANDREW: In the last session I asked about public-private partnerships and how Treasury makes deliberations on that, because there have been no audits done. Treasurer, can you advise what steps Treasury has taken over the past four years to review its processes for managing public-private partnership arrangements and ensure better value for money, public transparency and accountability around the management of these contracts?

CHAIR: Our committee has obviously had extensive discussions on these issues and the legislation.

Mr DICK: In relation to audit investigations, they are initiated by the Audit Office. It is a matter for the Audit Office and the Auditor-General to determine what aspect of government, what part of government or what policy of government they seek to audit. We do not seek to influence those. In relation to public-private partnerships, I will get some advice and come back to you today on what, if anything, Treasury may have done recently about public-private partnerships. I thank the chair for putting that question in context. I will take some advice this afternoon and come back to the committee.

Mr ANDREW: Treasurer, with regard to departmental delivery and blowouts, does the Treasury ask the Audit Office to audit that to find out what deliberations need to be done to stop cost blowouts and situational awareness around that so we can alter the way we deliver projects?

Mr DICK: I am not trying to be difficult, but that is a very broad question. In relation to the issue of blowouts, it was not specified whether that relates to the capital program, a specific capital program, public-private partnerships—

CHAIR: It might be an opportunity to talk about general things, for example, whether in the face of the increasing cost of steel and concrete there is a commitment to continue to do that or other alternative policies.

Mr DICK: I can give a broad answer to a broad question. I think it is relevant in the sense that there has been some significant public discussion around the cost of delivering infrastructure not just in Queensland but across Australia. If you look at one very important measure, that is a measure that is issued by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. It is not an analysis done by Treasury or the Queensland government; it is the ABS producer price index.

That demonstrates that building construction costs increased nationally by 27.6 per cent over the past three years to the March quarter 2024. In Queensland, building construction costs rose by 31.2 per cent over the same period. When we look across the rest of the country, costs increased in New South Wales by 29.1 per cent, in Victoria by 23.9 per cent over that three-year period, in South Australia by 26.6 per cent, in Western Australia by 31.9 per cent, in the Northern Territory by 21 per cent and in the ACT by 13.3 per cent. As I said, nationally it is 27.6 per cent.

Even for projects like Brisbane Metro—which is designed, planned, dreamed up and delivered by an LNP government, a local authority—the initial cost of that project was \$944 million. It has now blown out to twice as much, at \$1.7 billion. One person's blowout is another person's political attack; one cost increase is another person's blowout. I have not heard one thing from one member of the LNP in the Queensland parliament about Adrian Schrinner's Brisbane Metro. To give the Lord Mayor of Brisbane his due, he has taken the decision not to cancel or cut it. He has taken the decision to build

it. We have done the same thing. The only reason we have seen persistent criticism by the LNP of the state's Capital Works Program—when we have a large and growing population, when we have a very diversified state—is that they want to cut it. Just like they are obsessed by debt, they are obsessed by cutting capital. We know that. They did that.

Ms SIMPSON: Labor cut the Mooloolah River Interchange.

Mr DICK: You were very proud to do that, member for Maroochydhore, when you were in the Newman government.

Ms SIMPSON: Labor cut the Mooloolah River Interchange. That was cut under your watch.

Mr DICK: I am happy to take the interjection from the honourable member, because we know what the LNP's legacy was—

Ms SIMPSON: Federal Labor pulled it. State Labor pulled the funding.

Mr DICK: There are too many interjections, Chair. I do not know which ones to take. When the member for Maroochydhore was in government, the LNP never had a budget with a capital program more than \$50 billion. They cut the infrastructure spend in every year they were in government. They deliberately advertised the fact they were cutting infrastructure to save money.

Mr ANDREW: Point of order, Chair—

Mr DICK: They made a virtue of it. The only piece of infrastructure that the member for Maroochydhore built was 1 William Street—a monument to her and her leader's glory.

CHAIR: Member, do you have a point of order?

Mr ANDREW: Yes, that was not about my question. I think we have strayed a bit from my question. I do have a question, Treasurer.

CHAIR: Sorry, your point of order was that you wanted—

Mr ANDREW: Yes, to come back to the question.

CHAIR: Certainly. Treasurer?

Mr DICK: We do have a project assessment framework that provides agencies with the tools to consider projects, and that is available on the Treasury website, which I would refer the honourable member to.

Mr ANDREW: Again, with regard to Treasury's commitment to physical sustainability, will the Treasurer provide an update on the completion date and the final cost estimate for Energy Queensland's digital transformation project, which was originally due to be completed this year for a budgeted cost of \$239 million? Could you please provide an update on where we are?

Mr DICK: I have been assisted by the Under Treasurer. That is a project that is being carried out by Energy Queensland Ltd and it would be appropriate for the CEO to answer that question, if the committee wishes to do that.

CHAIR: I did not understand the nature of the question but we have an expert who can. Sorry for my ignorance. Can you restate the question?

Mr ANDREW: It is on the digital transformation strategy. With regard to Treasury's commitment to physical sustainability, would the CEO provide an update on the completion date and the final cost estimate for Energy Queensland's digital transformation project, which originally was due to be completed this year for a budgeted cost of \$239 million?

Mr Scott: I thank the member for the question. That was part of the overall DEBBs portfolio that started in 2016. Since that original budget was put together—and at the time I was around as the CFO—we have added a great deal of extra technical capability on board: CISO capability; new control rooms for Townsville, Rockhampton and Brisbane; new Esri GIS software; new payroll systems. There is a long list which I can provide to the committee—QAO provided a report on that last year—in the order of \$700 million. All of the programs in those budget estimates have been completed or are about to be completed. DEBBs portfolio was closed down under my leadership last year. We have rolled all of the digital programs now into the CIO's office business as usual. All projects have been delivered within the scope that was available at that time.

Dr MacMAHON: My question is for the Treasurer. With respect to other weapons manufacturers like Boeing and Ferra which are supplying the Israel Defense Forces since war on Gaza, what consideration has the government given to ending its support for these companies?

Mr DICK: It is a very broad question. The fundamental issue is that the Australian government licenses exports of defence equipment from this country, and that question should properly be put to the Australian government in relation to defence materiel that might leave this country.

Mr JANETZKI: The government recently announced a review of property taxes here in Queensland, as requested by the Property Council. Is this an acknowledgement that the Property Council data is accurate? I will direct that question to the Under Treasurer, please.

Mr Carey: I thank the member for the question. Queensland Treasury undertakes its own policy analysis and assessment arrangements, and the Queensland Treasury policy analysis and assessments are different to industry stakeholder assessments. I do not accept the premise of the question that industry stakeholders replace or provide advice or analysis that is provided by Queensland Treasury.

Mr JANETZKI: Has Treasury settled the terms of reference for the review yet?

Mr Carey: The review was announced in the context of an election commitment that is to be completed after the next election, consistent with standard practice. Agencies prepare incoming government briefs that provide information and advice to incoming governments and capture future election commitments.

Mr JANETZKI: Does the government intend to consult with industry to prepare those terms of reference before the election, or is it all after the next election?

Mr Carey: With respect, I am not the government.

CHAIR: Do you wish to direct that question elsewhere?

Mr JANETZKI: Treasurer, are you planning with this review to undertake consultation with industry to prepare terms of reference?

Mr DICK: I thank the member for his question. I do think it is important to put this line of questioning in context. It came out of a call to action from the Property Council that was issued to all parties in Queensland. That was their 23 June document entitled *Beyond reach*. In that document the Property Council released their call to action, which was calling on all parties to commit as follows—

A newly formed Government post the October State Election, commits to a thorough, evidence-based review on the impact of taxes and charges on the delivery and investment on the delivery of homes.

I was pleased to make a statement on 1 July agreeing with the Property Council's request on behalf of the Australian Labor Party to deliver a post-election review of Queensland's tax settings that affect the housing market, with a view to further increasing housing supply.

I think the Property Council is trying to take the politics out of the issue by asking for the review to occur post election. For that, they are to be commended. We should be taking an evidence-based approach, and I think the Property Council recognises that the politicisation of property taxation will not help anyone seeking to build or buy a new home in Queensland. I think it is a good idea. I am really surprised that the LNP will not make a similar commitment. From my perspective, we will engage with industry around that, should we be privileged enough to form government after the next election, but there are a few matters that will be off limit for a re-elected Labor government. No. 1: the family home must be exempt from land tax. That has always been our position. On that, I differ from the Leader of the Opposition who said that idea has merit, and the New South Wales Liberal-National coalition who tried to put land tax on the homes of first home buyers.

Mr JANETZKI: You just cannot make things up, Treasurer.

Mr DICK: That will never happen under Labor. The second thing is we are not dealing with interstate land tax. That issue is dead.

Mr JANETZKI: Embarrassment.

Mr DICK: No, they are his words, not my words. I will take the interjection. Thirdly, any changes have to be revenue neutral. The revenue of the state cannot be sacrificed as a part of the review. Other than that, I am open to what the Property Council and what other stakeholders want to suggest as part of a robust review, focused on driving up supply. Of course, it will not commence until after the next election should we be privileged to form government. We remain the only party of government that has made a commitment to that review.

CHAIR: I was torn in that this is not strictly to do with the budget, but, that being said, there was no other way to answer the question. It was put to you, so I allowed the answer to be put. I did not have that full awareness, but I think the member for Toowoomba South did.

Mr JANETZKI: Chair, this is all entirely relevant to the budget in that property taxes make up a considerable amount of revenue raised by the states. Anyway—

CHAIR: No, but I wanted to apologise for—

Mr JANETZKI: Chair, I am moving on. Under Treasurer, it was recently reported that Treasury believed that the Property Council's analysis 'includes a range of inconsistencies and inappropriate comparisons that mean it has substantial limitations and is misleading'. Under Treasurer, what are those inconsistencies and inappropriate comparisons?

Mr Carey: I thank the member for the question. We will seek some further information and I am happy to provide it to the committee.

Mr JANETZKI: Under Treasurer, that was actually attributed to a state Treasury spokesperson. Surely you must have some understanding of substantial limitations and allegedly its inappropriate comparisons.

Mr Carey: And I am happy to provide that information.

CHAIR: This will be something that you will provide through the Treasurer at the end and as a summing-up or—

Mr Carey: We will seek to provide some information in relation to that before the end of the hearing.

Mr JANETZKI: Are we taking that on notice, Chair?

CHAIR: The Under Treasurer has indicated that he has the ability to provide information before the end of the hearing. We will note that down. If it is not, then that might be something that we approach the Treasurer about taking on notice. At this stage we will not do that.

Mr JANETZKI: Under Treasurer, the Treasurer announced last year the government would put in place an automatic land tax exemption process for the principal place of residence for eligible owners based on verifying data. Can the Under Treasurer provide an update as to what work has been completed in relation to this matter so far and when will it be completed in full?

Mr Carey: Thank you very much, member, for the question. In March of 2023, the government announced changes to make it easier for landowners to receive land tax home exemption. Land tax is imposed through a financial year based on the unimproved value of land owned at midnight on the preceding 30 June. Queensland has a generous land tax framework with principal places of residence being exempt and a rate structure that ensures smaller landholders are subject to lower marginal rates of tax. Depending on the ownership and use of the land, a landowner may be eligible for a land tax exemption based on the land use, as a landowner's home is exempt from land tax. Historically, land owners are required to notify the Queensland Revenue Office if land was used as their home, and an exemption should apply.

The changes announced in March 2023 have made it easier for landowners to receive the land tax home exemption. Under the changes that were announced and now implemented, where the QRO has sufficient information to be satisfied that land a person owns is being used as their home, the home exemption will be applied without the landowner having to apply. Within 15 months of this announcement, QRO has automatically applied the home exemption to 66 per cent of individuals who have become eligible for land tax for the first time. Where the QRO does not have sufficient information, they will contact the landowner and provide them with an opportunity to apply for the exemption.

As the QRO continues to improve their data, more individuals will benefit from the automatic home exemption. As with all policy implementations, this is an iterative process and, with the QRO, we will continue to work to improve our process to ensure the maximum number of people can receive their exemption without application.

Mr JANETZKI: Under Treasurer, how many people received a land tax bill between 1 July last year and 30 June this year that could have applied for a principal place of residence exemption? Those numbers have been provided in the past; I was wondering if you can update me.

Mr Carey: The advice I have is that QRO has automatically applied the home exemption to 66 per cent of individuals who became eligible for land tax for the first time. I can seek some further information.

Mr JANETZKI: In 2021-22, there were 10,291 letters sent, and it was estimated in 2022-23 to be 23,000. I know we have the QRO commissioner here today as well. I am not sure whether that information is readily available. Chair, through you, what I would appreciate knowing from the Under Treasurer is how many people in Queensland have mistakenly paid land tax when they should not have.

Mr Carey: I thank the member for his question. With respect, no-one can mistakenly pay land tax because if land tax is not leviable against you, you are entitled to a full refund or not required to pay.

Mr STEVENS: Under Treasurer, I actually contacted directly the office when pensioners came in with a land tax bill on their house on the Gold Coast that they had lived in for many years. I was advised by the department that all new valuations of over \$600,000 on the land were issued with a land tax bill, and then they had to apply for exemption. This particular older lady was not aware whether she should pay the bill or not. We gave her clear advice that she was not because it is a house she has lived in for a long time. Under Treasurer, why do you issue a must-pay bill when there is uncertainty about particularly older people having to pay that bill?

Mr Carey: As I have indicated to the committee, the automatic exemption process currently captures up to 66 per cent of first-time eligible land tax holders. I am aware of the media attention in relation to the specific issue that you raise. Obviously, we cannot talk to individual taxpayers' circumstances, but, as you have indicated, we are aware individuals contact the QRO and if information can be provided in relation to their use of property as their principal place of residence, no land tax will be payable.

CHAIR: With reference to page 146 of Budget Paper 2 and the really important issue of long-duration pumped hydro, will the Deputy Premier advise the committee on the importance of pumped hydro energy storage to the Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan?

Mr DICK: Thank you, Chair. As you are aware, the Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan will transform our state's energy system. Over the next decade it will deliver clean, reliable and affordable power for Queenslanders. Of course, large-scale long-duration pumped hydro energy storage is central to that transformation and to meeting our emissions targets—emissions targets that are supported by the LNP: a reduction of emissions of 75 per cent by 2035.

As Queensland transitions to a system dominated by renewable energy, large-scale storage is needed to make sure there is always a supply of energy. Pumped hydro energy storage is the world's most used energy storage technology, accounting for about 97 per cent of installed global capacity. When the sun is not shining and the wind is not blowing or when there is high electricity demand, pumped hydro energy storage provides the energy that is needed. The scale and capacity of long-duration pumped hydro energy storage is significantly larger than the biggest current utility-scale batteries. Long-duration pumped hydro energy storage has a long asset life, over 50 years, to support our energy system for the long-term. Without it, this state will not be able to deliver a transition to clean energy that is reliable and affordable.

Our Energy and Jobs Plan identified two large-scale long-duration pumped hydro energy storage sites: the two-gigawatt Borumba project and the five-gigawatt Pioneer-Burdekin project. I can inform the committee that these sites were selected following extensive multiyear statewide analysis via the three-stage Queensland Hydro Study. It identified that the Borumba and Pioneer-Burdekin sites offer the ideal location and physical characteristics for the long-duration pumped hydro energy storage needed for Queensland's future energy system. That is why as part of the 2024-25 budget we have allocated nearly \$936 million to progress approvals, continue exploratory works and procure the main works for the Borumba project and \$38½ million in capital expenditure to progress early works for the Pioneer-Burdekin project.

Pursuing a firming strategy focused on multiple smaller scale pumped hydro projects, rather than two large-scale pumped hydro projects, will mean larger cumulative environmental and social impacts and higher costs, as economies of scale would not be realised. I am advised that if you were to deliver Queensland's future energy storage requirements through smaller, 250-megawatt eight-hour storage pumped hydro projects it would require the development of over 70 individual sites. That is the policy of the LNP, as articulated by the shadow Treasurer on *Brisbane Mornings* with Steve Austin. The LNP should be honest and up-front with Queenslanders and start telling them where those 70 sites will be, or they can give in and admit that Peter Dutton is walking all over them and will deliver nuclear energy for Queensland.

CHAIR: We had some discussion before about land tax and you mentioned the Leader of the Opposition's statement and views. Some were disgruntled about that. Can you substantiate the Leader of the Opposition's comments on land tax?

Mr DICK: Thank you for the question. I was surprised to hear the objections from the members of the LNP. The only leader of a recognised political party in this state who wants to impose land tax on the family home is the leader of the LNP. Chair, I know that because I listened to the interview of the Leader of the Opposition on ABC Radio *Queensland Northern Drive* on 17 June. The reason I was

listening to that interview is that I was driving from Gladstone to Rockhampton—I flew to Gladstone to drive to Rockhampton. I could not believe what I heard, so I immediately ordered a transcript to see the truth of what he said. The Leader of the Opposition is very slippery with the truth, so you have to look at the transcript to ensure he does not deny or misdirect after he makes public comments in Queensland. Adam Stephen asked the Leader of the Opposition—

We do know that some have called for stamp duty to be abolished altogether. REIQ have been campaigning for years to have it replaced with a tax based on land values. Why did you decide to not go with a tax on land values and continue stamp duty albeit, you know, removing the barrier for some?

The Leader of the Opposition said—

Yeah, it's a good question. We did want to focus at the end of the market, which is really giving hope for young people getting into it. I understand what you're talking about and there is merit in having that argument. There really is.

He is very earnest when he says these things. He is very earnest when he says there is merit in looking at the tax on households in Queensland. He continued—

I look at many of the state taxes and many of them are hugely inefficient and indeed counterproductive to what we're trying to achieve.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DICK: You know you have hit the target when they start interjecting. The truth of the matter is: that is where it is sourced, that is what he believes and that is what will happen.

Mrs McMAHON: Treasurer, will you update the committee on the CopperString transformation project?

Mr DICK: I am very happy to, member for Macalister. Thank you for the question. If the Leader of the Opposition was not proposing to impose land tax on the family home he would have ruled it out in the interview, but, of course, it is what he is seeking to do. Thank you for the question. I also thank you for a reference to the budget papers.

Mr JANETZKI: Desperate times.

Mr DICK: I take the interjection from the member for Toowoomba South, the shadow Treasurer. Why wouldn't he rule it out? It is just like when the shadow police minister said that the sole purpose of their crime strategy is to win seats in parliament. If that was not true, he should have been sacked as the shadow police minister, but he was not, because the Leader of the Opposition believes that and has put him out to say precisely what their crime policy is, which is to win seats in parliament.

To the question from the member for Macalister—I apologise for not responding directly to your question—I went to Hughenden, which is not geographically in the heart of Queensland but feels like the heart of Queensland when you go there.

Mr STEVENS: It is 90 miles from Richmond.

Mr DICK: It is near the great Queensland town of Richmond—the only thing that I will agree on with the member for Mermaid Beach today. There are probably other things we will agree on, but he is quite right about how important that part of Queensland is.

It was great to be there earlier this year to break ground on the first CopperString construction works with the traditional owners, the Yirendali people; the Premier; the Minister for Energy and Clean Economy Jobs; Powerlink; and other government representatives. We also acknowledge the presence there of Robbie Katter and Bob Katter Jr. It is quite unusual to get both Robbie Katter and Bob Katter in the same place at the same time. It has not happened since Christmas 2000, I understand, so I was very pleased that CopperString has brought everyone together. It is such an important program. Thank you for indulging me, Chair.

Not only will the CopperString project unlock the \$500 billion North West Minerals Province but also it will be one of the most significant regional economic development projects ever seen in North Queensland—a 1,000-kilometre high-voltage transmission line to connect north and north-western Queensland to the National Electricity Market to form an essential part of our new Queensland SuperGrid. That is the backbone of our transmission system, which CopperString will now plug into and an essential part of our plan.

The 2024-25 budget allocates \$712 million in capital spend to Powerlink to progress the project. This investment has been made possible through our taxation of coal companies. Since acquiring the project, Powerlink has powered on with progress and recently announced the purchase of significant equipment critical to the delivery of the project including shunt reactors, transformers and high-voltage

powerlines. A 100-strong project team has also been established, alongside joint venture partners UGL and CPB Contractors, with all detailed design on the transmission corridor well underway. I am advised that Powerlink has released 50 works packages to the market, directly supporting upskilling of the local workforce through training centres and local partnerships. This includes the workforce accommodation at Hughenden which will house up to 550 construction workers at its peak. These workers will construct a nearby substation and progress initial stages of the transmission line development heading west from Hughenden out to Mount Isa. This is one of the most significant regional economic development projects North Queensland has ever seen and it is being funded by our taxation regime on coal companies in Queensland.

Mrs McMAHON: On something a little bit more local and Logan, which is dear to my heart, will the Deputy Premier please update the committee on how the budget is doing what matters for Logan?

Mr DICK: I thank the honourable member for the question. As a passionate MP in Logan, I know she is always ensuring that our city receives its fair share as do you, Chair. In 2024-25 I am pleased to inform the committee the government will invest \$1½ billion in Logan to build critical social and economic infrastructure which will support around 4,200 jobs directly in the region. The 2024-25 budget is making key investments in Logan: upgrading the Pacific Motorway between Eight Mile Plains and Daisy Hill, \$105 million in 2024-25 out of \$750 million in total to increase capacity and reduce congestion, which I know will help any of your constituents travelling in the morning and the afternoon to get home faster and sooner to their families, member for Macalister.

The Logan Hospital expansion and maternity service upgrade will deliver up to 262 additional beds and bed alternatives with targeted refurbishments of key locations. I was pleased to attend the opening of stage 1 of the upgrade of the mighty Logan Hospital with the member for Logan a month or two ago. Stage 2 of the Logan Hospital expansion will provide an additional 112 overnight beds and a range of other clinical and support services. We have committed \$3.7 billion in 2024-25 for the Metro South Hospital and Health Service to deliver health care for Logan and other parts of Metro South. Over the years since 2015 that increased funding has delivered an extra 767 nurses, an extra 263 doctors and an extra 115 ambulance officers for Logan. The Springwood Ambulance Station is being redeveloped at a cost of \$8.1 million, which will deliver a 24/7 operational ambulance service facility. Across Logan we are investing \$110 million in 2024-25 to improve, upgrade and maintain local schools. That includes \$24 million of \$90 million to build a new primary school in Park Ridge in the chair's electorate.

CHAIR: It is a fantastic looking school. I have visited it several times.

Mr DICK: It will be world-class. The existing Park Ridge State School will receive half a million dollars to refurbish it. Beenleigh State High School, which I know is very important to the member for Macalister, will receive over a million dollars to refurbish the amenities block and for works on their performing arts centre. Shailer Park State High School will receive \$660,000 to refurbish the manual arts area and upgrade their tuckshop. Kuraby Special School will receive nearly \$8 million for its stage 1 school renewal project and refurbishment of block D. A number of residents in Logan send their children to Kuraby Special School. Marsden State School will receive over \$1 million to refurbish their tuckshop and F block, which is their main amenities building.

On top of that infrastructure investment, our ongoing programs continue to deliver for Logan. Up to 5,678 children are eligible for free kindy in Logan. That is for 15 hours per week, 40 weeks per year and that is free kindy. Across Logan 6,654 people are now employed as a direct result of their participation in the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program. Since January last year 6,906 fee-free TAFE courses have been commenced by locals in Logan wanting to train, retrain or upskill in priority industries. That is almost 7,000 people. Almost 7½ thousand first home owner grants worth more than \$123 million have been paid to homebuyers to help them build their first home in Logan. That is an indication of our government being committed to that community and doing what matters for the people of Logan.

Ms PUGH: Deputy Premier, with reference to Budget Paper 2 can the Deputy Premier please update the committee on how the budget is doing what matters for Western Brisbane, particularly around my community of Mount Ommaney?

Mr DICK: I thank the member for Mount Ommaney for her question. A lot of work is going on in the Mount Ommaney electorate at the moment. I want to bring the committee's attention to some of the investments that are being made in the member for Mount Ommaney's community. The budget provides \$2.1 million in 2024-25 out of a \$34.4 million total spend to develop the former Oxley secondary college site into a residential estate to deliver housing and facilitate development for

community purposes. I know the member for Mount Ommaney has been deeply engaged in the nature, form and shape of that development. That is a project that I was pleased to be involved in when I was the planning minister. I worked with the member for Mount Ommaney on that then and we are pleased that is now proceeding.

In education, there is \$857,000 in 2024-25 allocated across nine schools in the Mount Ommaney electorate for maintenance and \$500,000 in 2024-25 for hall refurbishment and upgrade at Corinda State School. For the Jindalee Districts Australian Football and Netball Club we will allocate \$217,000 in 2024-25 out of \$350,000 in total to upgrade changerooms and amenities to support Australian football at Jindalee, part of the Activate Queensland program. At Darra State School \$38,000 will be invested in 2024-25 out of \$317,000 in total to upgrade playground infrastructure. On top of that, in the education portfolio we have minor works for schools in the Mount Ommaney electorate totalling \$250,000 in 2024-25 allocated across nine schools in the Mount Ommaney electorate.

There is planning for other capital works in that community. We do not wish to impact the tender process, but the member will be pleased to know that the planning pertains to a number of schools in her community: Centenary State High School, planning for increased specialist spaces; Corinda State High School, planning to increase specialist spaces; Corinda State High School, contemporary specialist places; Jamboree Heights State School, additional classrooms; Middle Park State School, contemporary specialist spaces; Mount Ommaney Special School, planning for additional classrooms; Mount Ommaney Special School, additional classrooms—so a lot of work is underway. A lot of planning happens—and this happens across Queensland—by Education Queensland to ensure we can continue to build, refurbish and grow our schools for a growing population.

We also know that the electorate of Mount Ommaney will also benefit from the major investment in cost of living: \$1,000 rebate on all power bills for all householders, 20 per cent off car rego and 50-cent fares. That will make a big difference. That is cost-of-living relief, doing what matters now and then of course investing in the future, doing what matters for the future of the Mount Ommaney electorate.

CHAIR: I will now turn to the member for Mirani.

Mr ANDREW: Treasurer, we were talking about private-public partnerships. Could the Treasurer please point out where the leasing payments and other net cash outflows for the current PPPs are disclosed in the Queensland budget?

Mr DICK: On a specific matter like that, I am happy to take the advice of Treasury and come back to the committee and the member for Mirani by the end of the hearing today.

CHAIR: Just to clarify, public-private partnerships are often conducted department by department. Is there a particular—

Mr ANDREW: It is just a general question about where any of it is shown in the budget. That is all I was after.

CHAIR: Certainly. The Treasurer has made a—

Mr DICK: I will provide a clarifying statement or information as required before the end of the hearing.

Mr ANDREW: Thank you. I have another question of the Treasurer. In relation to intergovernmental agreements, what proportion of Commonwealth grant revenue is paid by way of tied grant payments and what impact does this have on determining which projects, programs and legislation are implemented on the ground here in Queensland? What percentage would that be?

CHAIR: Just to clarify, I think you said we are the postbox constitutionally for payments through to local governments. You are not referring to those? You are talking about specific—

Mr ANDREW: Page 5 of the SDS talks about Treasury's role in engaging with interjurisdictional policy matters through the National Cabinet. I am asking what Commonwealth grant revenue is paid by way of tied grant payments and what impact this has on determining which projects, programs and legislation are implemented on the ground here in Queensland through that process?

Mr DICK: I would refer the honourable member to Budget Paper 2, chapter 7, pages 151 to 164 which contains financial information in relation to intergovernmental financial relations—the member for Mirani will find that of interest—and the report on state finances. That includes public-private partnership lease payments. That is an annual report that I table in the parliament. That is another document that I would refer the honourable gentleman to.

Mr ANDREW: Thank you, Treasurer.

CHAIR: I turn now to the member for Toowoomba South.

Mr JANETZKI: My question is to the Under Treasurer.

Mr ANDREW: Sorry, but we did not get to the actual question about the intergovernmental agreements and the tied grants.

Mr DICK: Sorry; that is chapter 7 of Budget Paper 2.

Mr ANDREW: I am trying to ask how much impact it has in determining which projects, programs and legislation are implemented on the ground here in Queensland.

Mr DICK: I will come back to you with any further information that is not readily available in that chapter.

Mr ANDREW: Okay; thank you.

Mr JANETZKI: Under Treasurer, how much has the Queensland government spent engaging Deloitte to analyse the validity and merit of PsiQuantum's project plan and business model?

Mr Carey: I thank the member for the question. All information in relation to Queensland Treasury's engagement of consultants and consultant providers is provided on Open Data. In relation to Deloitte as a whole, total expenditure with Deloitte as a provider was \$8.424925 million for all of the department of Treasury. That information would include a portion of expenditure in relation to the PsiQuantum due diligence process.

Mr JANETZKI: In the QoN we got back today, obviously it looks like the federal Labor government used Mallesons, but it looks like the Queensland government, based on the QoN, used Deloitte. I am interested how much has been spent on Allens Linklaters.

Mr Carey: I can get some information for you on that. Again, individual contracts are uploaded and provided through Open Data, so there is a publicly available source for those contracts.

CHAIR: Is it information that would be on Open Data?

Mr JANETZKI: Chair, I would also like clarity from the Under Treasurer. Obviously QIC will have engaged Linklaters and Boston Consulting Group and other service providers assessing PsiQuantum. Obviously I will ask Ms Rampa perhaps, the QIC CEO, in time, but does the Under Treasurer have any visibility on those services engaged?

Mr Carey: I thank the member for the question. A detailed response is outlined in question on notice No. 1. In terms of dealing with the broader issue of our engagement on PsiQuantum, on 30 April the Australian and Queensland governments announced a joint investment of approximately \$940 million into PsiQuantum to build and operate the world's first utility-scale, fault-tolerant quantum computer and Asia-Pacific headquarters in Brisbane. The investment will secure billions of dollars of direct investment, create up to 400 highly skilled operational jobs and establish a new quantum computing industry in Queensland and Australia. We are very hopeful that this investment will ignite a fresh approach in the quantum computing industry.

Since March 2022 the Queensland government, including in partnership with QIC Ltd, has undertaken its own due diligence process before making a decision to invest in PsiQuantum. This has included an initial stage 1 high-level due diligence process by Deloitte, led by QIC Ltd, over July 2022 to October 2022, including financial analysis of the company, a market scan and an economic analysis; and a broader stage 2 due diligence undertaken by Deloitte, led by Queensland Treasury in conjunction with the Commonwealth Department of Industry, Science and Resources, over February 2023 to June 2023, including commercial, technical and economic analysis. This involved independent technical experts and analysis of investors, partners and potential customers and engagement of expert advisers on extensive commercial, financial and legal stage 3 due diligence to support the development of terms of support from August 2023 to April 2024. The due diligence process concluded that PsiQuantum is one of the most advanced developers of quantum computing globally and appears to be years ahead of its competitors.

Mr JANETZKI: I raise a point of order, Chair, on relevance. I just simply asked how much was being spent on Allens Linklaters and I do not need the full—

Mr Carey: And I am trying to come to your—

Mr JANETZKI: I have read the QoN.

CHAIR: Understood. The member for Toowoomba South has made the point that he does not like this information and would prefer—

Mr JANETZKI: It is all here.

CHAIR: I guess you risk, member for Toowoomba South, that when you ask the same question again—

Mr STEVENS: It is not a read test, Chair.

CHAIR: No, but we had this with the Deputy Premier where you asked the same question again and he began to read—

Mr JANETZKI: I will not be asking the same question again.

CHAIR: Under Treasurer, there is no point of order but we note the comment from the member for Toowoomba South.

Mr Carey: In an attempt to be as responsive as possible, the Queensland government and QIC Ltd have drawn on world-leading advisory firms including the Bank of America, Linklaters, Deloitte, Boston Consulting and Aracon to ensure the investment is commercially, technologically and legally sound. In relation specifically to costs, there were a number of parties involved in this transaction including QIC Ltd, the Australian government and the Queensland government. Costs associated with the due diligence are spread amongst each of those entities so it is difficult to singularly distinguish which expenditure was incurred by which group, but we will do our best to provide you with some further information.

Mr JANETZKI: Under Treasurer, that is certainly not the case with the federal Labor government because in Canberra the Australian National Audit Office is actually set to probe the contract for legal services between Mallesons and the Department of Industry, Science and Resources. Obviously legal fees are clearly articulated in Canberra with respect to the federal government's negotiation in respect of PsiQuantum. Why can the Queensland government not detail the legal fees that have been spent in respect of PsiQuantum if in fact the ANAO in Canberra is investigating the blowout in legal fees?

Mr Carey: I thank the member for the question. I am not the ANAO. I have undertaken to provide the committee with further information.

Mr JANETZKI: Okay. Under Treasurer, PsiQuantum has essentially reached out to the Queensland government as it has failed to attract private capital. The tender process has been conducted in complete secrecy, it sidelined expert advisers, it forced firms to sign NDAs and there are questions as to even the cost to operate qubits, even if the technology is successful. Against this backdrop, is handing over nearly \$500 million in taxpayer value to this private company defensible, or frankly is it simply speculative?

CHAIR: The question to the Under Treasurer is about a policy decision on spending?

Mr JANETZKI: To the Under Treasurer.

CHAIR: Okay. The Under Treasurer, of course, is limited in his capacity to answer as an officer, but I call the Under Treasurer.

Mr Carey: I thank the member for the question. PsiQuantum is one of the most advanced developers of quantum computing globally. It has the backing of a range of highly experienced investors including BlackRock; M12, which is Microsoft; Blackbird Ventures; and Temasek. It has continued to meet its technology milestones over time, and I have taken the committee through the extensive, well-supported due diligence that the Queensland government has undertaken. The Queensland government has a range of active and open investment attraction programs that result in the Queensland government engaging with companies from all over the world about investment opportunities to come to Queensland. PsiQuantum is one of those companies, and the ultimate outcome of the assessment process for this company is consistent with the treatment of other companies that are seeking to invest here.

Mr JANETZKI: Under Treasurer, Queensland investment into PsiQuantum did not involve a competitive process. Why was that?

Mr Carey: I thank the member for the question. I have provided information to the committee in relation to that. Queensland operates a range of investment attraction policy levers and policy programs. PsiQuantum, like many other companies, came to Queensland under the auspices of those open policy programs that are available to all comers. As a result of engagement with the company through that process, the arrangements that have been announced and agreed, supported by the Australian government and supported by some of the institutional investors that I have talked to, have been entered into.

Mr JANETZKI: Under Treasurer, PsiQuantum was the only company subjected to due diligence processes. Why was that?

Mr Carey: I thank the member for the question. That is not correct. Hundreds of companies are subject to ongoing due diligence processes through various investment attraction programs that are available to Queensland. A number of them are successful; a number of them are unsuccessful. It is the case that Queensland offers several substantial investment attraction opportunities for companies and we engage fully and openly with companies that bring proposals to us.

Mr JANETZKI: Under Treasurer, PsiQuantum hired Brookline Advisory, set up by Richard Marles's former chief of staff and another former Labor staffer as lobbyists in Queensland in June last year and then premier Palaszczuk announced the Quantum and Advanced Technologies Strategy and convened a round table to discuss policy developments. A PsiQuantum senior researcher was present at all three of the government hosted meetings so far. Were there any other private companies invited to attend the meeting?

Mr Carey: Again, I think the way I can be helpful to the committee and to the member and responsive to your question is to say that companies with investment proposals that they wish to take forward in Queensland have access to a range of financial and other incentives. We work with literally hundreds, probably thousands, of companies to facilitate their investment in non-financial means or to support their investment with financial support, whether that is in the form of grant, debt, government charges forgiveness. It is highly unremarkable that the Queensland government would go out of our way to continue to engage with companies that want to make major investments in significant industry sectors within the Queensland economy.

Mr JANETZKI: My question is to the Treasurer. Treasurer, you have said that PsiQuantum is our project Apollo. It has been said that, even if PsiQuantum does achieve the goal of building the world's first error corrected quantum computer, it may be too expensive to operate in a commercially viable way. Treasurer, have you directed Treasury to undertake any analysis about not whether it can work but how much it may cost to operate if it does work?

Mr DICK: Have I directed them? No, I have not directed them.

Mr JANETZKI: Under Treasurer, what Australian-based companies or organisations are developing the same technology as PsiQuantum?

Mr Carey: I thank the member for the question. The outcome of the extensive due diligence process that was undertaken in relation to this transaction is that PsiQuantum is one of the most advanced developers of quantum computing globally. It has the backing of a range of experienced investors. It has continued to meet its technology development milestones and the partnership that we have struck with PsiQuantum is providing benefits to the state. On 16 July, the company announced a strategic partnership with five leading Queensland universities to address growing demand for skills in the quantum computing economy and to explore research projects in adjacent fields.

As I have indicated to the committee, the Queensland government remains committed to engaging with any companies that want to invest into the Queensland economy. We run a series of significant investment attraction and facilitation processes and opportunities for companies that wish to invest here.

CHAIR: Certainly, we did have this system of division of trade and investment. Member for Toowoomba South?

Mr JANETZKI: Under Treasurer, it has been reported in the *Financial Review*, an Australian start-up Diraq, which uses locally manufactured silicon chips, has recently closed a \$33 million funding round that it says put it on track to get ahead of PsiQuantum to a commercially viable quantum computer. Has Treasury ever engaged with Diraq or any Australian-based companies in this field?

Mr Carey: I thank the member for the question. Queensland Treasury engages with companies across a diverse range of fields that are seeking to invest into Queensland. That would include quantum computing fields.

Mr JANETZKI: Under Treasurer, Diraq, again as an example, recently said its quantum computer contains qubits with an accuracy of 99.9 per cent, which is 10 times better than the minimum accuracy of 99 per cent needed to build a useful error corrected quantum computer. Why would Treasury not seek to engage with Australian-based companies in the same field of human endeavour rather than spending \$500 million of taxpayer value on an international partner that may, in fact, be less commercially viable in the long run to an Australian competitor?

Mr DICK: On a point of order, can I ask for authenticity? It is the second time that the honourable gentleman has said that someone has said it is not commercially viable. Can I ask for authenticity of who said that and in what context?

CHAIR: It seems to be a *Financial Review* article.

Mr JANETZKI: I will provide the article. I am happy to move on, Chair.

Mr DICK: On the point of order on authenticity, is that by the author of the article or is the author of the article quoting an expert saying it is not commercially viable?

CHAIR: That is a reasonable question.

Mr JANETZKI: I will provide a copy of the article.

Mr DICK: What does the article say? I have not seen it. Is it the author of the article saying that in his view it is not commercially viable or is he quoting someone who is an expert in the area who is saying it is not commercially viable?

CHAIR: That is a reasonable point.

Mr JANETZKI: The article is making reports of what people in the field are saying. I will provide a copy of it.

Mr DICK: For context, instead of a general statement saying that it is not commercially viable, it is the author of the article forming a view, a journalist forming a view, that it is not commercially viable; is that the point?

CHAIR: I do not think it went that far.

Mr JANETZKI: It was merely a question.

Mr DICK: It is not clear.

CHAIR: I think the member for Toowoomba South has been relatively transparent in that he is saying 'an article has said'. He was not making an assertion beyond the fact that a journalist wrote an article and also the claims of the alternate company on their self-belief in what their technology does. With respect, although there is very limited backing to that, he had not made any assertions beyond that so I will accept the question.

Mr DICK: Thanks, Chair.

Mr JANETZKI: Under Treasurer?

CHAIR: The question was about the Australian company and its claims of being a better investment.

Mr Carey: Thank you, Chair, and thank you for the question. I have detailed for the committee the extensive three-stage due diligence process that has been undertaken in relation to this investment. The other participants in this investment decision include the QIC, a professional investment company, the Australian government, a government other than the Queensland government, and it is backed by a range of very significant institutional investors. At the conclusion of that due diligence process, advice and options were provided to the Queensland government and, ultimately, the Queensland government has decided to take this investment decision. I think that is as helpful as I can be to the committee.

I would further add, as I have made clear, that the Queensland government runs a series of programs targeted at increasing direct investment into the state and to the state economy. These are open programs. They are not closed. They are not limited in their accessibility. Any company that is seeking to make a significant investment into Queensland is welcome to engage in those processes and talk to the Queensland government about the opportunities that they are bringing.

Mr JANETZKI: Mr Allen, in view of the volumes of debt that are currently being issued by state and federal governments, what is QTC's view on bond raising in the foreseeable future?

Mr Allen: The Australian semi-government bond market, which is effectively the bond market for state governments, has grown materially over recent times. As outlined in the question on notice that was tabled on this, it is a half a trillion dollar market now. That has principally been significant growth from COVID, particularly in other jurisdictions. We would note that for Queensland, as outlined, I believe, by both that question on notice and comments today, the size and shape of the Queensland borrowing program relative to those states is changing and has changed.

We will see growth in the overall borrowing program, but there is strong demand against this increased supply. The outlook would be still for Queensland rates to be competitive. We will see the state, I think, more active in investor markets and investor engagement. Obviously we are looking very much to stimulate competition and bidding for when we issue.

Mr JANETZKI: What percentage of next year's bond issuance is likely to be hedged and what mechanism would be used? How would you hedge it?

Mr Allen: I thank the member for the question. The majority of Queensland government bonds are issued as fixed-interest bonds, so our need to hedge is very minimal. If we are managing liquidity—when we are issuing bonds, effectively holding those before they are on-lent to either the general government sector or GOCs—we will manage that by buying other assets and, in effect, having a physical hedge. We might buy other government bonds, Australian government bonds or bank bonds and use those as an offset as opposed to using derivatives, per se. From time to time there will be a minor amount of use of derivatives used to manage interest rate risk.

Mr JANETZKI: In respect of some of the big projects that the Treasurer has talked about, have QTC undertaken their cost estimate of Pioneer-Burdekin pumped hydro? QTC has an internal view of the potential cost there?

Mr Allen: I thank the member for the question. QTC would provide lending services to all GOCs. Depending on their needs, those facilities will adjust to whatever the outlook is for that particular entity. We are focused more on the credit as a whole as opposed to any of the individual projects. Of course, though, when analysing any organisation, you take into account the totality of their capital program, the working capital requirements and the need for guarantees, and we will incorporate that into an overall recommendation to Treasury, who ultimately are making the decision about what is or is not lent on to a corporation.

Mr JANETZKI: Mr Allen, what were your employee engagement results over the last couple of years—say, 2022-23 and 2023-24?

Mr Allen: I thank the member for the question. In relation to a staff survey results, QTC remains a very high performing organisation with a high level of engagement across the organisations. I do not have numbers reaching back, but I can note that, for the top line results for this year, the corporation scored very highly in terms of overall engagement. I think we have seen a change in overall engagement of 92 to 89 per cent in terms of people participating in surveys, which is a very healthy sign—well above expectations.

We have seen strong results for the corporation in relation to teamwork, ownership, management alignment to organisational purpose and work-life balance. We have a strategic priority around risk and we have seen very strong results in relation to risk culture. These are all great opportunities to take soundings on organisational performance and strategy, and we are looking to strengthen the business. It is a very good business. We continue to perform very strongly right across the board. Over the year we have certainly had some change in the business. That is always reflected in engagement results, so we have seen a drop in our results over the last year, but we maintain very high performance overall.

Mr JANETZKI: What is the annual staff turnover rate since you were appointed?

Mr Allen: I thank the member for that. I know that there has recently been a question on notice on staff turnover and we provided input into that question on notice. Excluding staff that have transitioned from QTC into other organisations, including government owned corporations and other entities, the staff turnover rate at 30 June 2024 was 13.9 per cent. If you incorporate movements to those other government entities, that goes to a rate of 21.6 per cent, which compares to 23.1 per cent in 2021-22 and 20.2 per cent in 2022-23.

Mr JANETZKI: Mr Allen, in 2022, for the third consecutive year, QTC was recognised as one of Australia's best places to work. When it won that award, HRD—Human Resources Director—recognised QTC's exceptional leadership, employee benefits, professional development programs and culture, yet a few months after you were appointed the entire executive team had departed. What was it about the performance of the then existing leadership team that required them to be removed, and what qualifications and experience do the staff members who replaced them possess?

Mr Allen: I thank the member for the question. I know that we touched on this last year as well. To remind members, as I did before, QTC is a high-performing organisation and remains so. As an indication, we completed the \$14½ billion borrowing program for last financial year. We actually pre-funded another \$5.2 billion for an aggregate \$19.7 billion. We manage a \$9½ billion cash fund, with a \$500 million return. In terms of the overall performance, the organisation continues to perform very strongly.

As I highlighted last year, acknowledging the points you have made around elements of QTC's HR programs, the material change has been that I have reduced the executive leadership team from five to four. I think that has streamlined operations. Principally, we no longer have a deputy role. I did

not think that was required, per se, for an organisation of circa 200 people. I thought that was a relevant and necessary streamlining of operations. That has obviously generated some redundancies in the structure.

In hiring into the organisation, we have sought to strengthen where the opportunity arises, particularly, as I noted, priorities around risk management. We have been able to access very strong capability around financial industry risk management. For our funding and markets business, we have also sought to strengthen understanding of investor markets. We have a leader from the business with strong understanding of the fixed-income funds management industry. Our chief operating officer has extensive experience in the superannuation industry and financial services, and our managing director is strong in the advisory business, ensuring we have good understanding of project management in alignment with government priorities.

Mr JANETZKI: Given bond spreads will continue to widen given the supply on the market with that increased issuance demand, your investors in QTC bonds right now may, in fact, lose some income given that increased demand and widening bond spreads. What feedback are you getting from existing QTC and bond holders right now? What are they saying?

Mr Allen: I thank the member for the question. It is a very diversified investor base that we have. If I look to the last ABS data that we have from the end of last quarter, 57 per cent of QTC bonds are held by major banks and Australian deposit-taking institutions which is a very big concentration. We have about 18 per cent offshore. The remaining would be with domestic real-money investors and some hedge funds. They are seeing, as I say, an increase in the overall liquidity of the semi-government bond market. There is quite an increased interest in government bonds. There is the restoration of a term premium, so there is a more priced in fixed income market now with rates having increased. That is quite attractive for investors. We are obviously looking to ensure we get the best possible price outcomes for the state in managing into that.

CHAIR: I might put a question to the Premier.

Mrs McMAHON: The Deputy Premier.

CHAIR: Sorry, the Deputy Premier.

Mrs McMAHON: It has been a long day.

Mr DICK: It has been a long day and how long have we got to go?

CHAIR: The committee commented that we should have taken a break during these four hours and they are proved to be right.

Mr DICK: We still have an hour and three-quarters to go.

CHAIR: With reference to Budget Paper 2, will the Deputy Premier advise the committee on how the home buyer transfer duty concessions have been funded?

Mr DICK: Thank you, Chair. I appreciate your question and your interest in supporting first home owners in particular, particularly in a community like the state electorate of Logan, where you have large growth areas and very large residential housing developments.

As you are aware, Chair, and as the committee would be aware, the budget provides additional support to a wider range of first home buyers by expanding the eligibility thresholds for the first home concession and first home vacant land concession. An eligible home buyer buying their first home valued at \$700,000, I am pleased to inform the committee, will not pay any transfer duty. This represents a saving of \$17,350, and a total concession of \$24,525 after you factor in the home concession of \$7,175 that is provided to every owner-occupier in Queensland.

As noted on pages 97 and 98 of Budget Paper 2, the expansion of the first home owner concession and the first home vacant land concession will be fully funded through increases to the additional foreign acquirer duty rate and the surcharge rate of land tax imposed on foreign companies and trustees of foreign trusts and absentees. The additional foreign acquirer duty which is levied on foreign buyers of residential property in Queensland has been increased from seven per cent to eight per cent. The increased rate is applicable from 1 July 2024 and is estimated to deliver additional revenue of approximately \$90 million over the four years ending 2027-28, as noted on page 182 of Budget Paper 4.

The surcharge rate of land tax imposed in addition to general land tax rates for foreign companies, trustees of foreign trusts and absentees has been increased from two per cent to three per cent. The increased rate applies from 30 June 2024 and is estimated to deliver additional revenue of approximately \$330 million over the four years ending 2027-28, as noted on page 181 of Budget Paper 4.

Queensland's new transfer duty and land tax foreign surcharge rates will remain highly competitive, I am pleased to inform you, Chair, and the committee. After the Queensland budget was released, the New South Wales government announced it would increase its transfer duty foreign surcharge from eight per cent to nine per cent in 2025—one percentage point higher than Queensland's new rate. Meanwhile Queensland's additional foreign acquirer duty will be in line with Victoria at eight per cent. The New South Wales government also announced it would increase its land tax foreign surcharge from four per cent to five per cent from 2025—two percentage points higher than Queensland's new rate. Meanwhile Queensland's new rate of three per cent will also be less than Victoria's rate of four per cent. For the additional foreign acquirer duty and the land tax foreign surcharge, ex gratia relief will continue to be available in Queensland to eligible foreign entities where their commercial activities deliver significant benefits to Queensland.

That ex gratia relief will continue to be made available by offsetting, can I say in conclusion, the fiscal impact of the substantial additional support to first home buyers in the 2024-25 budget through increased foreign surcharges. This will ensure that funding does not need to be reallocated away from delivering the essential services and critical infrastructure that benefit Queenslanders across the state. This is a detailed plan that helps young Queenslanders in particular to find a home that they can call their own through a fully costed, revenue neutral plan that will not sacrifice the revenue that pays the wages of Queensland's teachers, nurses and police officers.

Mrs McMAHON: With reference to Budget Paper 2, page 26, will the Deputy Premier advise the committee on how the Big Build will improve infrastructure and opportunities in regional Queensland?

Mr DICK: Thanks, member for Macalister. I appreciate your question today. As you would be aware, Queensland regional economies are at the forefront of our state's economic transformation and diversification. In 2024-25, almost 70 per cent of our \$27.1 billion capital program will be invested outside the greater Brisbane area. That is nearly \$18.6 billion, which will support around 50,000 jobs. This is a record. Many more additional employment opportunities will be supported by supply chain activity generated through these infrastructure investments.

The \$1.1 billion Works for Queensland program will continue to support local governments outside South-East Queensland by funding job-creating maintenance and minor infrastructure projects relating to assets owned and controlled by local governments. In 2024-25, \$124.5 million will be delivered towards Works for Queensland projects.

Queensland's regions have experienced a significant number of natural disasters in recent years, including devastating floods and cyclones, so we are not only supporting communities with their recovery but also reinvesting to reduce the impact of future events. The 2024-25 budget is allocating \$100 million over three years from the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements efficiencies program, jointly funded by the Queensland and Australian governments, to support a suite of high-priority disaster resilience and mitigation infrastructure and non-infrastructure programs and projects.

Capital investment of around \$26 billion over the four years to 2027-28 is included in this year's budget for the Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan, which is a landmark. Those projects—the majority of which are in regional Queensland—will ensure that clean, reliable and affordable power can be accessed by future generations of Queenslanders while simultaneously driving the economy's overall level of resilience and competitiveness over the longer term.

The government's publicly owned energy businesses are leading Queensland's energy transformation. They are progressing an investment pipeline of solar and wind renewables, batteries, gas, pumped hydro energy storage and the transmission SuperGrid including CopperString 2032, which I commented on previously. Our state owned ports and water businesses are delivering infrastructure projects that are enabling the economic transformation of many of our regional communities and increasing water security and resilience. This includes replacing the Bowen wharf, the port of Townsville channel capacity upgrade and the expansion of the Cairns Marine Precinct through to improving the Burdekin Falls Dam, delivering the Toowoomba to Warwick water pipeline project and construction of the Fitzroy to Gladstone water pipeline.

When you reflect on the nature and extent of those capital works programs, you see the extensiveness of our transformation of regional Queensland and our ongoing support of those vitally important infrastructure facilities as well as delivering those new water pipelines that our state deserves. We have more investments, including our Building Rural and Remote Health Program. We are delivering health facilities to every corner of Queensland. We are building new regional school facilities and school infrastructure, including domestic and family violence courthouse improvements. We want to maximise the benefits to all Queenslanders of our capital program. We want all Queenslanders to benefit. That is why we are investing across Queensland.

Ms PUGH: Deputy Premier, my question is with reference to page 28 of Budget Paper No. 2 and the Critical Minerals and Battery Technology Fund. Can you advise how the Queensland government's Critical Minerals and Battery Technology Fund will support Queensland's future resources?

Mr DICK: Thank you for your question. This is a really important fund that is fusing together the technological innovation of our state with the incredible critical minerals base that we have as a state. Much of that technology is developed in our cities, but by harnessing the wealth that lies beneath the soil of Queensland in those new economy minerals—which are very old minerals that are being used for new purposes—we can do what we have always sought to do in this state: use our natural endowment to add value, create jobs, deliver technology and build a brighter future for Queensland. It is a very bold vision we have for our state when it comes to critical minerals and the value we can add to critical minerals, just as we have a bold vision for technology, including information technology, and developing the world's first large-scale quantum computer in Queensland.

That fund supports investment in the whole critical minerals supply chain, as I have said, with a focus on enhancing the extraction and processing of critical minerals and accelerating the development of battery technology and the production of precursor or advanced materials in Queensland. That fund was announced in June 2023, and I am pleased that it is delivering for Queensland. As at 11 July 2024 the fund has received over 80 inquiries and announced funding of over \$55 million for six projects, including the Alpha HPA Ltd project. That is a \$30 million commitment in capital support to purchase furnaces for the production of sapphire glass in Gladstone. The extraordinary durability of sapphire glass makes it ideal for use in micro LEDs and smartphone screens, making it a hot commodity for many producers around the world. The units they install will enable Alpha HPA to produce more than four tonnes of sapphire glass from high-purity alumina each year.

Our \$20 million investment in EQ Resources will support plant and equipment, drilling activities and mine trials for the Mount Carbine tungsten mine in North Queensland. Tungsten is a key component in solar cells, wind turbines and batteries. This investment will create 100 new jobs and extend the life of Australia's largest tungsten mine in Far North Queensland.

I am also pleased to advise the committee that AnteoTech, Graphene Manufacturing Group—GMG—Redflow and Revolver Resources are also being supported through this program. AnteoTech will receive support for the commercialisation of its high silicon content anode for a pouch cell battery. We are supporting Graphene Manufacturing Group with \$2 million to develop an automated battery pilot plant to support the commercialisation of its graphene aluminium ion batteries. We have allocated \$1.2 million for Redflow to develop a large-scale battery prototype and undertake a feasibility study for the establishment of a zinc bromide flow battery manufacturing facility in Queensland, and there is \$1.3 million to support Revolver Resources with technical studies to accelerate plans for reopening the Dianne copper mine in Far North Queensland.

In recognition of the success of the fund and the strong pipeline of inquiries, in 2023-24 the Queensland government allocated a further \$70 million, bringing total funding to \$170 million. It is open until it is considered fully allocated. We welcome inquiries from anyone who wishes to invest in Queensland, in particular Queensland companies. We of course welcome a commitment from companies that wish to invest in our state. I was so pleased, member for Mount Ommaney, that I saw you smiling when I mentioned Redflow, which is based in your electorate. Whether companies are based in our cities, our great regional towns, in the south-east or in the bush, we will deliver for them.

CHAIR: Deputy Premier, can you advise the committee how the budget's \$11.2 billion in concessions that you mentioned earlier compares with previous budgets?

Mr DICK: This is a significant increase. We have put at the heart of our budget this year doing what matters for Queenslanders now and doing what matters for Queensland's future. This is a record investment in cost-of-living relief and concessions for Queenslanders: \$11.21 billion in 2024-25 is an increase of 31.1 per cent over the budget I delivered last year, with estimated actual concessions of \$8.555 billion in 2023-24. It is a 31 per cent increase on last year. That is the largest annual increase in cost-of-living relief and concession spending in Queensland's history. Our spending on concessions is expected to more than double between 2015-16 and the conclusion of this financial year. That represents an annual increase on average that exceeds inflation by almost seven per cent—6.9 per cent per annum over that period. This is what Labor governments do: look after Queenslanders who need a hand up and help them through difficult times. We have been consistent in that since our election in 2015.

The substantial increase in concessions by the current government has ensured that the real value of concessions available to Queenslanders has grown materially over time. As part of the record concessions outlined in the budget, the government is providing \$3.7 billion in new and expanded

measures to support cost-of-living challenges faced by Queensland families and households. We know about those electricity bill rebates; lower public transport fares; motor vehicle registration cost reductions; additional support for first home owners; the increase in value and access to FairPlay vouchers; school and community food relief programs; and food, emergency and financial relief measures for vulnerable Queenslanders. We will continue to provide those to Queenslanders. That is being delivered—particularly our electricity bill rebates—through our new taxation regime on Queensland coal companies. We will continue to focus on doing what matters for Queensland, particularly delivering relief to ease cost-of-living pressures bearing down on Queensland families and households in particular.

Mrs McMAHON: Deputy Premier, with reference to page 44 of Budget Paper No. 2, will you update the committee on the economic performance of Queensland's mining industry?

Mr DICK: Thank you for the question. I think it is a useful question to juxtapose with the answer I just provided in relation to what we are doing to support cost-of-living relief and how that is being funded. I am pleased to inform the committee that our mining and resources industry in Queensland remains strong and vibrant. It is very strong indeed. The industry has benefited significantly from high global commodity prices over the last few years. The most recent data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics indicates that the Queensland mining industry is highly profitable. In 2022-23 the industry's gross operating surplus and mixed income rose by 11.2 per cent to a record level of almost \$80 billion. That represents a gross rate of return on capital of 27.3 per cent, the highest level since 2008-09 and well above the long-term industry average of 18.8 per cent.

It also compares very favourably with, and in fact is almost double, the economy-wide average gross rate of return of 14.6 per cent in 2022-23. The ABS does not produce data on profit margins—that is, profit as a percentage of revenue—at a state level. However, at the national level, coalmining with a profit margin of 48 per cent in 2022-23 ranked as one of Australia's most profitable industries. This compares with an average national profit margin across all industries of 14½ per cent.

Mining industry employment, capital expenditure and exploration have all been trending upwards. In the year to the March quarter 2024, the value of mining industry capital expenditure in Queensland was \$9.8 billion, an increase of 12.4 per cent on the corresponding period a year earlier. Mining industry spending on exploration is also strong. Over the year to the March quarter 2024, the mining industry in Queensland spent over \$900 million in exploration expenditure, an increase of 19.1 per cent on the corresponding period a year earlier. That is the highest level of exploration spending since the December quarter 2014, almost a decade ago.

More than \$250 million was spent on coal exploration over the year to the March quarter 2024, up 41.7 per cent on a year ago. The most recent data from the Queensland mining inspectorate indicates that almost 59,000 people were working in Queensland mines across all commodities in the March quarter 2024, an increase of 4.1 per cent over the previous year. For coal specifically, there were 44,812 workers in Queensland coalmines—seven per cent higher over the year and 18 per cent higher than in June 2022 when progressive coal royalties were introduced to Queensland.

ABS data as at the release of the Queensland budget showed that over the period from July 2021 to March 2024 the value of Queensland coal exports totalled \$188 billion. In comparison over the previous corresponding period July 2018 to March 2021, Queensland coal exports totalled \$100 billion, so there has been an \$88 billion increase and it is only fair that Queenslanders get their fair share of that additional value. We welcome the increase and the strength in the coal industry. It puts to bed once and for all the nay-sayers who say that progressive coal royalties have somehow damaged or impaired Queensland's coal industry. That is absolutely, categorically false and anyone seeking to perpetrate that is perpetrating a very dishonest position for Queenslanders.

We have generated additional revenue for Queenslanders. We are giving that back to Queenslanders, particularly in regional Queensland. I am also pleased to report to the committee that, since the new coal royalty tiers were implemented from 1 July 2022, a range of coal producers including Whitehaven Coal, Peabody Energy, Stanmore, Coronado, Thungela Resources, Bowen Coking Coal, Sumitomo and Pembroke Resources have all made public statements or taken actions indicating clear plans to continue to invest in the Queensland coal industry. That includes BHP, who were highly critical of those new progressive coal royalties and of course Mike Henry then ultimately turned around and said the coalmines that BHP operate in Queensland were high-value assets and they would continue to invest \$1 billion each and every year into their operations in Queensland. Now of course they seek to take control of the Anglo American mines in Queensland. All of those statements made by BHP and other companies have proven to be incorrect. They remain dedicated to Queensland, and I welcome

that. I welcome BHP's commitment to Queensland. They have been a committed partner for our state for many years. I was just disappointed in those earlier comments which have not shown to be correct over the years since they were made.

We remain 13th in overall mining investment attractiveness globally and the most attractive metallurgical coal investment destination in the world according to not me or Queensland Treasury but the independent Fraser Institute's survey of mining companies. Demand for Queensland's premium mining products will continue to remain strong for decades to come. For as long as I have the privilege of serving as Deputy Premier and Treasurer, I will support that incredibly important industry for Queensland.

Dr MacMAHON: My question is for the Treasurer. In relation to plans for the Gympie Road bypass tunnel, has Treasury, QIC or North Brisbane Infrastructure held discussions with Transurban about privatising or commercialising the tunnel once it has been constructed?

Mr DICK: We are still in the examination phase of that project. We have made a very significant investment in this budget to ensure that that project can proceed. We know it is a congestion-busting project on the north side so we will examine all of the fiscal aspects of that investment going forward. It is a big investment, with \$318 million on preconstruction works for that new bypass tunnel. As the honourable member would know, a recently completed detail investment proposal found a tunnel from Kedron to Carseldine could reduce congestion and improve travel time, bypassing 19 sets of traffic lights and saving up to 32 minutes per day during return peak hour trips, but it is an expensive project, an important project.

Treasury and QIC are exploring how we can bring future tolling rights back to government. That is a very important part of this progress. Of course, Queensland Motorways was sold by the LNP. It was privatised by the LNP so we missed that opportunity. They remain committed to privatisation. We will look at bringing those tolling rights back into government so we can fund projects like this. Of course it is early days. We will continue to investigate opportunities to optimise the commercial value of tolling rights on the South-East Queensland toll roads following the conclusion of existing concession arrangements. How we can maximise the benefit for Queensland taxpayers through the government is what Labor governments do.

Mr ANDREW: We have not heard much about hydrogen. Treasurer, could you tell us what we spent on hydrogen and where the future of hydrogen is going in Queensland?

Mr DICK: I welcome the question from the member for Mirani. Our trading partners in particular in Japan and South Korea have a very clear vision about developing hydrogen societies. We have of course made very significant strategic investments as a government to support the development of clean renewable hydrogen in Queensland. We will continue to remain committed to that as part of our hydrogen industry development plan for Queensland. We are very pleased that in Gladstone the world's largest hydrolyser manufacturing plant was recently opened. We are very keen for that to continue. Fortescue has made the commitment that that plant and its development into further stages will continue in Queensland.

It remains part of the renewable energy but also the industrial diversification story for Queensland, so that is why we remain committed to the development of a hydrogen industry in Queensland. Around \$44 million out of the Queensland Renewable Energy and Hydrogen Jobs Fund has been invested, including \$29 million for CS Energy's Kogan renewable hydrogen project and \$15 million for Stanwell's Central Queensland hydrogen project, as two investments totalling \$44 million.

Ms SIMPSON: I have a question to the CEO of QIC, Kylie Rampa. In 2022-23, QIC paid its executives \$95.7 million in bonuses. How much were they paid in 2023-24?

Ms Rampa: May I just confirm that your question was the remuneration that was paid in FY2024?

Ms SIMPSON: It was the bonuses that were paid in 2023-24.


Ms Rampa: That is currently unresolved. We are still going through our end-of-year process. In fact we are going through audit at the moment and we have a series of board meetings pending which will determine what the remuneration will be for FY24.

Ms SIMPSON: I have another question to Ms Rampa. It has been reported that QIC has closed a \$225 million loan to a subsidiary of Porter Aviation Holdings Inc., a North American airline business that operates 50 aircraft across 30 destinations. A QIC spokesman said that this was a trophy infrastructure asset. On what basis did QIC reach this conclusion?

Ms Rampa: I thank the member for the question. That transaction was part of our private debt platform. They review a range of infrastructure funding projects around the world. We have a very strict investment criteria and an investment mandate around the type of assets that are funded and that particular project would have been in line with the investment. This is an objective of the capital partners.

CHAIR: The time now being five o'clock, that ends the time allocated for expenditure of the Treasury portfolio area. The committee will now take a short break. The hearing will resume at 5.15 pm with the examination of estimates of the portfolio area of trade and investment. I thank those hardworking public servants and government officers who have come for just this hearing. Whether you were able to give some information to us or not, I thank you for your attendance here today. With that, we will take a break.

Proceedings suspended from 5.01 pm to 5.15 pm.

 **CHAIR:** Welcome back, Deputy Premier and Treasurer and officials—a narrower group but a harder, tougher group, those who can tough it out; the real ones, we like to think of them. I declare open for examination the proposed expenditure for the portfolio of trade and investment. The question before the committee remains—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

Ms SIMPSON: My question is to the CEO of QIC, Kylie Rampa. While she is coming forward, I would like to acknowledge that there are a lot of staff and officials here today. It has been a long day and I appreciate you being here throughout the wait for these moments in the estimates. Thank you, Ms Rampa. QIC has kicked off selling out its 33 per cent stake in Powerco, one of New Zealand's biggest electricity and gas distribution networks. What is the progress and why was that decision made?

Ms Rampa: I thank the member for the question. That asset is owned in one of our funds, and the asset has met its investment objective and the investors have requested liquidity. It is appropriate for us to test the market, which is what we have done, to put that to provide liquidity back to the investors.

Ms SIMPSON: Ms Rampa, what are QIC making as the managers of the ART stake?

Ms Rampa: Thank you for the question. ART are one of the investors in that particular fund and we charge appropriate market-based management fees to manage the fund on their behalf. Those fees are confidential, but they are market-based and they are heavily negotiated with all of the investors that invest in the funds.

Ms SIMPSON: Ms Rampa, how much debt does QIC have in its business and trusts structures?

Ms Rampa: From a QIC corporate perspective, we have minimal levels of debt. Our debt is really working capital. We do have debt structures within our investment vehicles and they are all different, subject to the investment objective and the gearing tolerance of each one of those funds. Some could be as low as 10 per cent and others might be closer to 30 per cent, but it is all run through very rigid Treasury management processes and, generally speaking, would be an agreement with the investors in those particular products and funds about what their debt tolerance is.

Ms SIMPSON: Does the land titles trust hold any debt?

Ms Rampa: Thank you for the question. Yes, most assets would have some level of gearing against them that is prudent investment management to maximise the returns of those investments.

Ms SIMPSON: Ms Rampa, who owns the units of the land titles office trust? Are any owners of the units in the trust non-government owned?

Ms Rampa: The Queensland Future Fund is one of the owners of Queensland titles. Also the endowment fund would have a position, plus some other government clients are invested in Queensland titles.

Ms SIMPSON: So largely government related entities?

Ms Rampa: That is correct.

Ms SIMPSON: Ms Rampa, what is the total amount of losses year to date in QIC's US property portfolio?

Ms Rampa: Was that for year to date?

Ms SIMPSON: Yes.

Ms Rampa: I may need to come back to you on that question. Rather than speculating, I will come back because it is just a small subset of our investments overall. I do not want to misguide you.

CHAIR: Ms Rampa, that might be something where you could give the Treasurer that information or else, if someone dutifully texts it through to in the meantime, you might be able to engage with the member for Maroochydore.

Ms Rampa: Yes, I should be able to get them.

Ms SIMPSON: What is the dollar value of the writedown of Thames Water investment?

Ms Rampa: Thank you, member, for the question. Thames Water has been quite a troubled investment and asset. The owners of that asset, like QIC, were a minority owner. We own approximately five per cent, so we have a minority position. Major global investors are the other owners in that asset. The asset has come under difficulty with the regulator, Ofwat. When the investment was made, it assumed a very stable regulatory regime which we currently find that asset not in that position. We have written that asset down to zero, which is very unfortunate. We have looked very hard and at the lessons learned from that, from a regulatory perspective. However, having said that, we run a diversified investment portfolio and, even taking that loss into account, we will be delivering record returns this year for the funds that own Thames Water.

Mr JANETZKI: Is the value of the writedown on that particular asset ascertainable as yet or not, Ms Rampa?

Ms Rampa: No, that is really for the investors. We do not disclose, sorry, under confidentiality with the investors.

Mr JANETZKI: My question is to Ms Rampa in relation to Virgin. QIC has a two per cent stake and Bane is the predominant shareholder, but what is the progress of the transaction between Virgin and QIC and when is it likely to be completed?

Ms Rampa: I thank the member for the question. It would be inappropriate for me to speculate, given the ownership structure of Virgin. What I can say is that Virgin remain in compliance with its objectives under the investment package including in relation to local employment.

Mr JANETZKI: While we are talking about Virgin, I might go to the CEO of TIQ, Mr McGowan. Yesterday Virgin announced the direct link between Cairns and Haneda will end at the start of next year. It may, in fact, be a question for the Under Treasurer but I was wondering how much Virgin was granted under the Attracting Aviation Investment Fund?

CHAIR: The question is to the Under Treasurer first?

Mr JANETZKI: If Mr McGowan can answer it, I will direct it there. No? Okay. Under Treasurer, please.

Mr Carey: Thank you, member for Toowoomba South, for your question. The management of the aviation attraction fund is held by the department of tourism. I would ask that you direct those questions to that agency.

Mr JANETZKI: Surely Treasury would have appropriated a certain amount to the department. I would have thought Treasury would have visibility of that.

Mr Carey: The amounts that are appropriated to departments cover all of their operating expenses, their capital expenses and their grant programs. That is a grant program that is administered by another agency. On that basis, I would ask that you take those questions to that agency and they will be able to provide you with answers that are consistent with the guidelines and rules of that program.

Mr JANETZKI: As a general comment, obviously you are relatively new in the role but it is a disappointing departure from the flight route. What are you hearing on the ground when it comes to aviation generally and the space of trade investment and getting tourists here?

Mr McGowan: We are a trading state and it is key that we secure routes and the aviation attraction fund has secured a whole new range of routes that support our exporters in getting their product overseas. In terms of export numbers we could always do more to fill those planes so any investment decision made by the airlines is really about not only what is up the top of the plane—so how many business travellers, general visitors, tourists and students—but also what is in the belly of the plane. We work closely with Brisbane Airport and the airports across the state to make sure that those supply chains are optimised when we are providing advice to our clients about getting their goods to market. A good example is seeking to export more of our avocados. Some 65 to 75 per cent of the avocados from our country come from Queensland, and we have been working closely as a part of our Queensland India strategy to get our avocados into India. That, ideally, would require a direct flight to

India. We have been lobbying hard and working with the aviation attraction fund team, as well as our team in India, to secure a direct flight. From our perspective, we welcome the increase of the in excess of 20 flights that have been brought on under the aviation attraction fund which helps us and helps our clients.

Mr JANETZKI: Ms Rampa, in relation to the work QIC has done on the toll tunnel from Kedron to Carseldine—it is obviously a wholly owned subsidiary—is there an update on the work that has been undertaken on the project itself?

Ms Rampa: I thank the member for the question. We have established a special purpose vehicle which has an independent chair and a membership of experts to assess the project and to continue with the project works. We refer to that as the NBI, which is the North Brisbane Infrastructure SPV. That SPV is continuing to look at geotechnical work, the design work and the appropriate routing for the road network. They will also be looking at strategic land purchases, if required, and establishing the project for future success.

Mr JANETZKI: Ms Rampa, it may be difficult to tell but what percentage of the Queensland investment book is dedicated to Queensland-based assets; is that easy to share?

Ms Rampa: I thank the member for the question. We currently have \$11 billion invested in Queensland-based infrastructure assets. That includes Port of Brisbane, Brisbane Airport, Titles Queensland and Sea Swift. Combined these assets provide around 25,000 jobs in Queensland. In real estate we have \$4.75 billion across 17 assets—11 retail shopping centres, five commercial buildings and one industrial building. Those particular assets are home to over 1,250 retailers and 8,000 jobs in Queensland, plus we obviously are working very closely in relation to business development and have enterprise acceleration funds here for local businesses within Queensland.

Mr JANETZKI: Ms Rampa, is QIC involved in the Fortescue project up near Gladstone?

Ms Rampa: No.

Mr JANETZKI: Under Treasurer, it was before your time—I think it is a couple of under treasurers ago—but in the 2021 budget there was \$2.6 million allocated to the Queensland Hydrogen Taskforce. What has been the outcome of that \$2.6 million expenditure towards that taskforce and what steps in hydrogen have we seen from it?

Mr Carey: I thank the member for Toowoomba South for the question. The Hydrogen Taskforce was an initiative of the now Department of Energy and Climate and was auspiced and administered by that agency, so questions in relation to the taskforce and its outcomes could best be directed to that agency.

Mr JANETZKI: I have a question to Mr McGowan again in respect of hydrogen. Has TIQ been involved at all in discussions with Fortescue or any other private sector players in respect of investment in hydrogen in Queensland?

Mr McGowan: I thank the member for the question. The role that TIQ plays is facilitation, largely with offshore investors. We have the *Queensland hydrogen prospectus* but we also have the Energy and Jobs Plan that we use as key tools to promote the state. There has been interest, as the Deputy Premier said earlier, from a range of countries that are seeking to secure their energy supply and they see Queensland as a great place to invest. In terms of our investment outcomes for this year, Trade and Investment Queensland has had a record year with \$2.57 billion of benefit to the economy, \$1.6 billion of which is in investment. Over 35 per cent of that is related to renewables and some of that is associated with hydrogen.

We have recently had hydrogen delegations from Japan, Korea, Singapore and Germany and facilitated those with opportunities to see our assets across the state. We are also hosting here in Brisbane the APAC hydrogen summit on 12 and 13 September. Our international network has been working really hard and we have secured over 100 delegates who will come from around the world to discuss hydrogen from an APAC perspective right here in Brisbane.

CHAIR: The Under Treasurer has something to add?

Mr Carey: I can add to the—

Mr JANETZKI: Do we want to save it for when the Treasurer wraps it up? I am in your hands.

CHAIR: It would be easier for my time management, if that is all right.

Mr JANETZKI: Easy.

CHAIR: Under Treasurer?

Mr Carey: In response to the committee's questioning on hydrogen, the global economy seeks to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions, and hydrogen is emerging as a new energy source for international trade. Queensland is well placed to take advantage of the hydrogen opportunity with significant renewable power potential, world-class ports and industrial heritage. I am advised there are over 60 projects currently progressing within Queensland and we are fast becoming a world leader in renewable hydrogen. Through multiple departments facilitation is being provided to support projects in a range of places including the Gladstone low-carbon ammonia development and the Gladstone renewable menthol project, which could provide 100 per cent domestic offtake for the Central Queensland renewable hydrogen project in Gladstone.

CHAIR: I want to perhaps build on that, given the partners involved. My question is for the Deputy Premier. With reference to page 31 of the SDS, will the Deputy Premier advise the committee on the strength of Queensland's relationship with Japan? This is important to me because I have lived in Japan and speak Japanese and I have that connection as well.

Mr DICK: Arigatou, Chair. I thank you for your question. As you know, Japan is a very significant and important trading partner today, and for many decades it has been an important strategic partner for our country but also, relevantly for this committee, a very important economic partner for Queensland. We have had a representative office in Japan since 1979—the second oldest outside of London. The Consulate-General of Japan in Brisbane opened in 1966—the oldest continuing operating foreign consular post in Queensland. That consular post will be celebrating its 60th anniversary in a couple of years time. I think those two offices are reflective of Queensland's and Japan's commitment to one another through trade and cultural exchanges as partners and, just as importantly, as friends.

Japan is Queensland's second largest goods export market, valued at \$17.4 billion in the 12 months to May 2024. Of course, major export items include liquefied natural gas, coal and beef. Japanese investment has been essential in developing many of the export industries that have driven Australia's growth including in large-scale projects to meet Japanese demand for resources such as coal and iron ore. Japanese investment has also enabled the rapid expansion of Australia's LNG production.

Japanese companies and their joint ventures in Queensland and Australia have been among the largest exporters of Australian resources, energy, grains, beef and other products and services to Japan. Japan also continues to be one of Queensland's top investors and reinvests a greater proportion of their earnings back into Australia than companies from most other major economies, and that is something I wish to recognise as well.

In 2023-24 Japan was the second largest market source of investment outcomes facilitated by Trade and Investment Queensland, valued at a third of a billion dollars—\$336 million. Japanese investment now extends to renewable energy, as you heard earlier from the CEO and the Under Treasurer; financial services; infrastructure; information and communications technology; property; food; and agribusiness. Opportunities exist for Queensland to cooperate with Japan as each of our economies transitions, of course, to low-carbon futures. These include supply and collaboration relating to carbon-neutral LNG and technologies such as hydrogen, low-emission steel and iron ore, batteries, carbon capture and storage, and carbon recycling. Opportunities also exist in supplying the Japanese manufacturing sector with critical minerals like lithium, graphite, vanadium, nickel and cobalt.

Our Trade and Investment Queensland team in Japan, led by Senior Trade and Investment Commissioner Mr Tak Adachi, are highly respected by stakeholders and investors in both Japan and Queensland and remain focused on delivering outcomes for Queensland. I want to recognise Mr Adachi and his team in Japan who do great work for us and have done so, in Mr Adachi's case, for almost two decades. We will continue to work through our Japan team and ensure we make the most of these opportunities for the success of our economies mutually and the continued strengthening of our relationship for years to come.

Ms PUGH: With reference to page 31 of the SDS, can the Deputy Premier advise the committee why engagement with European countries is vital to developing Queensland's future industries?

Mr DICK: I thank the member for Mount Ommaney for her question. I am pleased also to speak positively about our relationship with European countries—with the European Union more broadly—and a very important and historic relationship for Queensland as well, both through individual countries on a bilateral basis and also collectively through the European Union. Europe is primarily an investment partner for Queensland, particularly in renewable energy, hydrogen and biomedical industries, and we have discussed a little bit today at this hearing about renewable energy and hydrogen in particular. In 2023 the EU as a bloc was Queensland's fifth largest goods trade partner, valued at \$18.4 billion, and

the state's fifth largest goods export market, valued at \$7.3 billion. Europe was the leading market source of investment attraction outcome value facilitated by TIQ in 2023-24, at \$431 million—just a shade under half a billion dollars.

In 2019 the European Commission outlined its European Green Deal policy, which commits Europe to being the first climate-neutral continent by 2050. This policy will fuel European demand for critical minerals and hydrogen, and Queensland stands in prime position to support that demand. We must look to our trading partners and see what they are doing. We must match their ambition. If we do not, Queensland companies and Queensland exporters will suffer as a consequence, particularly as trading blocs and individual nations move to decarbonisation and climate-neutral activities.

Moreover, in response to the global energy market disruption caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which I commented on earlier, the European Commission released the REPowerEU plan to accelerate Europe's clean energy transition and increase Europe's energy independence from unreliable supplies and fossil fuels. In Queensland there are more than 50 large-scale renewable projects either operating or in development including world-class pumped hydro projects; wind, solar and green hydrogen projects; new transmission lines; and a range of storage and firming technologies. Queensland has ample space and resources and Europe has the capacity, expertise and capital to co-build large-scale and critical enabling infrastructure.

European companies bring expertise in hydrogen and are investing in Queensland. In 2022 Queensland signed a memorandum of understanding with the Port of Rotterdam in the Netherlands to collaborate on opportunities to develop a hydrogen export supply chain. This will support Queensland to capitalise on opportunities to export green hydrogen to Europe's largest port. In May 2024 Queensland and the EU signed a memorandum of understanding to improve collaboration on critical minerals projects. Queensland's extensive reserve of vanadium currently measures 15 per cent of the world's estimated reserves. We have the critical minerals essential for the development of the green economy and renewable energy including graphite, cobalt and undeveloped resources of lithium.

Queensland is fast becoming a global research and innovation hub thanks to the Queensland government's investment in state-of-the-art facilities, talent attraction and partnerships. I am proud of the partnership the Queensland government has established with world-leading vaccine innovator Sanofi to inject \$280 million into the Translational Science Hub to undertake next generation mRNA vaccine research in Queensland. Ross Buchanan, I am pleased to inform the committee, will commence his role as Agent-General and Senior Trade and Investment Commissioner for Europe later this month, ensuring our investments in and with the region continue to deliver benefits for our state.

CHAIR: Inject investment. We got the pun.

Ms PUGH: I see what you did there, DP.

Mrs McMAHON: With reference to page 31 of the Service Delivery Statements, will the Deputy Premier update the committee on the growth of Queensland's trade relationship with our Pacific partners?

Mr DICK: I thank the member for Macalister for her question. Representing an electorate in Logan, she knows how important and significant the Pacific diaspora is to her community. I see the chair nodding as well for the electorate of Logan. In fact, there would not be an electorate in Queensland that did not have a migrant community from Pacific nations, and they are very welcome.

CHAIR: Great people.

Mr DICK: I take the interjection: they are wonderful people and they have contributed so much to this state and it is one of the reasons I wanted to develop a dedicated trade strategy for the Pacific. We are proud to be Australia's Pacific state. That is how I see Queensland and that is how many Queenslanders see our state. We are our country's gateway to the Pacific, so strengthening and maintaining relationships both from a diplomatic and trade perspective is a priority for our government. I am pleased to advise the committee that since I announced the Queensland government's Pacific Trade Strategy in 2022 there has been considerable acceleration in the business, industry and government engagements between Queensland and Pacific nations.

Trade and Investment Queensland's Pacific team has supported nearly \$19.7 million—almost \$20 million—in outcomes and our focus on the region is already reaping the benefits from the key activities and initiatives that have been undertaken in the last 12 months, including an investment deal with Papua New Guinea valued at \$7 million which was recently signed. Queensland has welcomed visits by the Prime Minister of the Solomon Islands, the Deputy Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, the Deputy Prime Minister of Fiji, the Minister of Finance for Samoa and my friend the Prime Minister of Tuvalu.

In February this year CEO Justin McGowan and Ms Leata Alaimoana, Senior Trade and Investment Commissioner for the Pacific, led a trade mission to Fiji and Samoa to grow our relationship with these two nations. Following this mission, growing trade opportunities were identified in food, agriculture, renewable energy and infrastructure. It also brought together alumni in Samoa and Fiji who have studied in Queensland to network and help champion and deepen Queensland-Pacific relationships. These groups will be formalised under a broader global community initiative by TIQ's Study Queensland team.

In May 2024 Queensland's Senior Trade and Investment Commissioner for the Pacific, Ms Alaimoana, and a strong contingent of Queensland companies attended an Asian Development Bank infrastructure business opportunities forum in Fiji where a \$2 billion infrastructure project pipeline was presented and discussed. There are some excellent opportunities for Queensland infrastructure companies that the commissioner will help progress, and we have a number of companies in Queensland that have very long and deep roots in the Pacific. Many of them are trading companies. Many of them supply the goods that are needed for the development of the Pacific. Many of them are involved in engineering and building and construction and I just want to recognise those companies. Some of them have been involved in deep relationships with the Pacific for decades and they have really contributed to not only trade relationships but also strengthening the personal relationships—the people-to-people links—between Queensland and the Pacific.

We have strengthened our in-market presence by appointing business development managers in Auckland and Port Moresby led by Queensland's Senior Trade and Investment Commissioner for the Pacific. I note that we are the only state to have appointed a trade and investment commissioner for the region and our Pacific team is successfully forging vital relationships in unearthing opportunities for strengthening two-way engagement with the Pacific through trade, investment and very importantly for Queensland one of our important export industries—international education.

CHAIR: I call the member for Toowoomba South.

Mr JANETZKI: Thank you, Chair. I have a question for Mr McGowan again. The Treasurer was talking about our key trading partner in Japan. I am interested to know if you have had any feedback or your team has had any feedback in relation to a deteriorating investment view on Queensland given what happened with the coal royalties in 2022 and the lack of consultation in particular.

Mr McGowan: I thank the member for the question. Japan is a really strong trading partner. It is our second largest trading partner. It is a significant source of investment. We have had record inflows of investment this year from Japan. We have had to increase the size of our investment attraction team to focus on the Japanese market and the North Asian markets in particular. I have not had any negative sentiment represented to me personally, but I can undertake to validate that with our trade commissioner in Japan.

Mr JANETZKI: Thank you, Mr McGowan. Treasurer, at the *Courier-Mail's* Future Resources event this month the Premier revealed that Treasury did not consult with the coal industry due to the need to control the timing. At estimates in 2022 the Treasurer said—

The truth is: industry was consulted.

Treasurer, who is right—the Premier or you?

CHAIR: We went through this with our hearing, but I will let the Treasurer answer. I do find it disappointing though, but over to the Treasurer.

Mr DICK: The Premier and I are both correct. The truth of the matter is I spoke to Ian Macfarlane prior to the announcement of progressive coal royalties. Ian Macfarlane was under absolutely no illusion about what might happen with royalties. Why is that? Because the Queensland Resources Council and Mr Macfarlane absolutely campaigned against our government through the entire 2020 state election demanding a continuation of the royalty freeze that had benefited coal companies for 10 years. They were vigorous and vociferous in their attacks on our government, but we resisted those during the campaign, we did not concede and we did not agree to a continuation of the royalty freeze.

The premise of this question, as with so many others that have been asked in relation to coal royalties, is that if only we had spent months talking and meeting with the coal lobby they would have been happy to pay a 40 per cent premium royalty. That is a complete fantasy and I want to put that to bed now. The royalties have been in place for two years and they are still complaining about them—crying their eyes out as they bank yet more record profits. The moaning from a few of those companies just proves that it would not have mattered how long or how much we talked to them; they would have never agreed with our position ever. I know that now, we all knew it then and it has not changed.

To make it absolutely clear, I met with Ian Macfarlane where I made it very clear about increasing royalties to him before we did it. In fairness to him, at those meetings he made it very clear that they would never accept any change whatsoever to royalties in Queensland. It did not matter what we offered them; they would never accept it. What was the consequence of those meetings before the royalties were introduced, the new taxation regime was introduced? The QRC began a campaign against the government before I could even introduce the budget in 2022.

All of this talk about consultation is just a smokescreen for the fact that they do not want to pay, and it is also completely different. At least I spoke to them. I was not like the LNP government in which the member for Mermaid Beach and the member for Maroochydore served under the Newman government where the increase in coal royalties was dropped on the coal industry on the day of the budget by the member for Clayfield. So all of this sobbing and moaning by the LNP about a lack of consultation is just a smokescreen. I was bitterly attacked by Ian Macfarlane. I was bitterly attacked by the QRC during that election campaign, but I am pleased that that attack failed, the QRC's campaign failed, we won the election and no-one was under any illusion that as a result royalties would go up.

Can we not indulge in fake surprise by the LNP when our coal industry is prospering? I talked about that at length. The industry has never been stronger and I welcome it. I have been one of the most ardent supporters of the coal industry in this parliament and in previous parliaments that I have served in. I have always supported the coal industry. I authorised two coalmines when I was the minister for state development: Olive Downs and Winchester South. I have facilitated investment in coal and I welcome it. I have released two future coal reports, carried out by Queensland Treasury, that show that the coal industry has a strong and vibrant future in Queensland.

It does not matter, this argument about consultation from the LNP—this false argument that they have perpetrated for two years, nonstop. The coal industry has never been stronger, with more jobs, more investment and a record share price after we introduced progressive coal royalties for so many companies. We welcome that. We think it is good. It is good for regional Queensland. What has been the benefit for Queensland? \$1,000 coming off every power bill in this state because of our new taxation regime for coal royalties.

But all of it—every single dollar—is at risk from the member for Broadwater and the LNP. At the LNP convention just a few weeks ago, the Leader of the Opposition again flagged that he wanted to reduce coal royalties for coal companies. He has repeatedly refused to guarantee that they will be kept permanently, so no more coal royalties under the LNP and no more cost-of-living relief except the fatuous structural cost-of-living relief. We know what that was last time: shutting down three coal-fired power generators to jack up the price of power and jack up the price of those businesses so that they could be sold. That is the reality.

Royalties are a binary question: either the people of Queensland get the money or the coal companies get the money. The Labor government makes no apologies for standing on the side of the people so they benefit from the resource that belongs to them and they get a benefit, a small benefit, when prices are high so that money can go back to the people of this state. We will support that new taxation regime for coal royalties for as long as we are in government.

Mr JANETZKI: Under Treasurer, the Treasurer is on record, quoted on 7NEWS Mackay on 15 March 2023, as saying, 'Every cent of these new royalties is being reinvested into regional Queensland right now.' Can Treasury provide a breakdown of every cent of the royalties from last year and this financial year just completed and where they are being invested in regional Queensland?

Mr Carey: I thank the member for Toowoomba South for the question. Coal royalties are expected to total \$10.54 billion in 2023-24. That is 31 per cent lower than in 2022-23. This decline is in line with previous expectations that coal prices would moderate from previous highs. We expect those royalty gains to decline further over the forward estimates, as is outlined in the state budget. The additional fiscal capacity from the new progressive royalty tiers has enabled over \$16 billion to be invested across all regions in Queensland, as outlined in the 2023-24 budget and budget update. The 2024-25 budget builds on this by providing significant new and expanded cost-of-living support. As outlined in the budget, this includes \$2.965 billion in electricity rebates to Queensland households and small businesses; \$435 million for a 20 per cent reduction in motor vehicle registration costs for light vehicles for 12 months—

Mr JANETZKI: Point of order, Chair: it is a question of relevance. In fact, the Under Treasurer's response is giving everything and is actually answering the question inadvertently. The Treasurer's promise was to invest—he said it—every cent of these new royalties in regional Queensland right now.

CHAIR: Order! Respectfully, member for Toowoomba South, you asked for every cent of expenditure in regional Queensland. The Under Treasurer started a list. I imagine it will be a very long one. Under Treasurer?

Mr Carey: Thank you, Chair. The government will invest \$27.1 billion in capital in 2024-25, directly supporting 72,000 jobs. A record \$18.6 billion, or 68.5 per cent of this capital program, will be invested outside of the Greater Brisbane region, supporting around 50,000 jobs.

Mr JANETZKI: My question is to Mr McGowan. In November 2022, the Queensland Pacific Trade Strategy was launched. It was said, 'Our Pacific strategy will be the additional \$150 million we are investing to support Queensland exporters and attract investment'. Can you outline where that \$150 million is being spent in the Pacific?

Mr McGowan: I thank the member for the question. The \$150 million is the total sum of the 10-year trade and investment strategy for Queensland. The government announced just over \$4 million allocated to the Pacific region as a part of that strategy, which is a four-year strategy. That may have been an incorrect statement, but certainly the \$150 million is for the entire 10-year strategy.

Mr JANETZKI: Treasurer, why has the government never corrected that error if that is in fact the case, as it was detailed in the media release?

Mr DICK: Because it is probably a typographical or grammatical error by someone who wrote the media release. I apologise for not picking that up. If you had called me anytime before now, I would have been able to clarify that issue for you and explain that there is a \$150 million trade strategy for Queensland. I thought that was blatantly obvious to everyone, but that is the truth. We are spending \$150 million over 10 years for a trade strategy. I actually will do a search to see if I mentioned anything in the parliament about that, too. That might be another source of truth.

CHAIR: We have a number of questions that were held for the Premier to get back to answering. I call the member for Mirani.

Mr ANDREW: I have swapped seats again.

CHAIR: He is going to come up in this one soon!

Mr DICK: No chance of that.

Mr ANDREW: I do have a photo of Bob Jr and Robbie here.

Mr DICK: Together?

Mr ANDREW: Yes, on 1 May, for your benefit. With reference to page 30 of the SDS regarding TIQ's key objectives of boosting exports, can TIQ provide an overview of the current state of Queensland's beef industry and provide details of the support that TIQ has provided the industry over the past year in order to help them overcome supply chain issues and other barriers to boosting exports? What specific strategies does TIQ have for 2024-25 to promote Queensland's beef products internationally?

Mr DICK: I thank the member for Mirani. I might make some introductory comments. Obviously, the beef industry remains a critically important industry for our state. It generates great wealth not just from an export perspective but also through the domestic economy here in Queensland. It is very significant.

Mr ANDREW: It is huge to my electorate.

Mr DICK: Quite right; I take that interjection. It is a very significant industry in the electorate of Mirani. We have seen strong growth in beef exports over a number of years. Notwithstanding the vagaries of Queensland's climate, including natural disasters, we have seen that industry continue to strengthen over the years. I will see if there are any additional matters that the CEO might like to add, with the indulgence of the committee. Would that be okay?

CHAIR: Yes. Mr McGowan?

Mr McGowan: Thank you, Deputy Premier. This year, 2023-24, placed considerable focus on beef exports, as the Deputy Premier said, with the delivery of the Taste of Queensland beef buyers mission last August where we partnered with Meat & Livestock Australia. It is a program where we have attracted inbound chefs to get an understanding of who we are, our people and our culture and meet our producers and then take that to the world. That beef export program has collectively generated \$66.5 million in export outcomes and \$80 million in future deals.

Obviously, this year the big event for Trade and Investment Queensland was Beef Week. We brought in buyers from around the world. We brought in 26 buyers and gave them an understanding and opportunity to meet with the producers, get out to the feedlots and go to Central Queensland University in Rockhampton to understand the genetics and the science behind our beef industry.

Mr ANDREW: Mr McGowan, I have one more question about the beef corridor road network. We are the beef capital of Australia and our roads are dangerously dilapidated and substandard safety-wise, as far as many who transport beef across these roads are concerned. What are we doing here in Queensland with the budget to update these roads and make sure they are fit for purpose?

CHAIR: If we were to do this, it would be better addressing it to the Treasurer in that it is a broader question about roads investment.

Mr ANDREW: It is crucial.

CHAIR: Mr McGowan is shaking his head. It might actually be better addressed during the transport and main roads estimates. I am not certain.

Mr ANDREW: I would like to hear if there was anything you could add. I would really like to hear it.

Mr DICK: We have a record investment in the portfolio of transport and main roads this year, member for Mirani. It is a record investment—one we have never seen previously. We have one of the most distributed road networks in the world in one of the most decentralised states in the world, and we take our commitment to investing in roads, particularly in regional Queensland, very seriously.

Within our capital program, the biggest single investment comes through our Department of Transport and Main Roads. In our overall capital program, we are investing about 70 per cent of that in regional Queensland. Of the 72,000 jobs that will be generated out of our \$27 billion investment this year, about 70 per cent of that will be invested in regional Queensland.

In March, we announced \$500 million for our beef roads initiative, and that will include: paving and sealing sections of the Clermont-Alpha Road in Mackay-Whitsunday and Central West districts, near your electorate; pave, seal and widen the floodway along Alpha-Tambo Road in the Central West district; pave and seal in sections of the Fitzroy Developmental Road between Bauhinia and Duaringa in the Fitzroy; and pave and seal sections along May Downs Road in the Mackay-Whitsunday district, again in your part of the world. That is an important investment that we have made. Those works are in addition to the \$107 million early works package announced in November 2023 to kickstart the \$1 billion Inland Freight Route, known as the Second Bruce Highway. We remain committed to that.

In relation to coal roads, which is not directly related to your question about beef roads, we have made an election commitment as a party to invest \$157 million in the Peak Downs Highway. The Labor Party has made that commitment to upgrade those roads in the Burdekin electorate, should we be re-elected. We are very strongly focused on the roads that deliver the resources outcome, whether they be mining, beef or agriculture. We are very focused on delivering for those communities and upgrading those roads where we can.

Mr ANDREW: Treasurer, the carnage on the Bruce Highway is out of control.

Mr DICK: It all has to be paid for, member for Mirani, and we have made a commitment to upgrade, accelerate and add more money to our investment in the Bruce Highway. We remain committed to that, but we are not going to perpetrate a hoax on the people of Queensland and say that, all of a sudden, the road will be dual lane from north of Brisbane to Cairns. That happened in the last election under the LNP and it was a complete hoax on the people of Queensland.

We will be fair dinkum and straight. Where we can invest, we will invest, and we will make that commitment very clear. Not only will we make a commitment; we will make sure that it is funded. It will not be a false promise. We will make sure that we are very clear with the dollars we commit. For example, the upgrade to the coal community roads will be additional borrowings that we will make as a Labor government if we are re-elected to make that investment. We will be fair dinkum with people, not put it off to the never-never like the LNP because they need to cut.

CHAIR: Mr Deputy Premier, with reference to page 31 of the SDS, will you advise the committee on programs available to TIQ clients to support their entry into the export market?

Mr DICK: Thanks very much for the question, Chair. I am pleased to report that satisfaction with export services, which is what you are talking about—how we support our exporters through Trade and Investment Queensland—was above target at 94.7 per cent. Clients reported that TIQ's most beneficial export services included introductions to buyers and partners, support at trade shows and tailored

in-market assistance. As well as export client satisfaction being 9.7 percentage points above the 85 per cent target in 2023-24, TIQ's cost per export lead was lower than expected, with an estimated actual of \$7,656 compared to the target of \$10,646 due to the facilitation of a record number of outcomes.

They remain probably the three most important things: introduction to buyers and partners, support at trade shows and tailored in-market assistance. That is apart from a number of the other programs, including our Go Global, New Market, New to Export and New Market eCommerce programs. There is a range of programs for exporters, including tailored programs for specific companies as they need support to export from Queensland.

CHAIR: The crossbench was jumping in a bit and has blown out our time a bit. We might go to the opposition.

Mr JANETZKI: Returning to the Queensland Pacific Trade Strategy, I think, Mr McGowan, you will be best placed to answer these questions. How many applications have been made for access to that \$4 million Pacific Trade Strategy fund, as you articulated?

Mr McGowan: I thank the member for the question. It is \$4.37 million. It is not a grant fund. That is to fund our expansion and our activities in the Pacific. Since the strategy was commenced, we have spent just over \$1.2 million, and that has been to bring on our Pacific Trade Commissioner, Mrs Leata Alaimoana; to have a presence in Auckland through a business development manager in Auckland co-located with Austrade; and, to have a business development manager in Port Moresby co-located with Austrade. Additionally, there have been a number of trade missions as a part of that which have generated the over \$19.7 million worth of export outcomes. We are really proud of the \$7 million investment outcome.

Our target for this strategy is really to focus on those people-to-people links initially, and this is where Leata, who has Samoan heritage, has really established Queensland's presence in the Pacific. We are also drawing out those Queensland businesses that have been exporting—for example, Pacific Trade Invest has been exporting to the Pacific for over 50 years. We have companies like Hall Contracting, who are helping to develop ports and a range of things. They are doing great work already. It is about building confidence for others. My expectation is that will continue to grow.

Mr JANETZKI: It is not actually a fund—sorry, Chair.

CHAIR: Member for Toowoomba South, we may be able to get back to you, but the Treasurer indicated that he would come back to us on a number of answers to questions left outstanding. I want to make sure that we have time for that. What do you want to do, member for Toowoomba South?

Mr JANETZKI: Let's hear from the Treasurer. I am interested in the answers.

CHAIR: Deputy Premier, the member for Toowoomba South is interested in the answers.

Mr DICK: Thanks, Chair. My practice, as members of the committee know, is to try to assist you as quickly and as early as possible in the process when you raise matters and I want to address some of those now.

The Under Treasurer undertook to provide more information on Treasury's meetings with ratings agencies. Queensland Treasury consistently engages with credit ratings agencies. Queensland Treasury has engaged with credit ratings agencies formally five times since April 2024. That compares quite favourably with the member for Toowoomba South, who attended eight coal meetings from April to May. He has been very busy talking to coal companies but he has not met once with ratings agencies.

The Under Treasurer undertook to provide further information on third party modelling regarding Best Practice Industry Conditions. Queensland Treasury has not engaged any third party, I am advised, to undertake modelling on BPICs. Queensland Treasury received two stakeholder submissions as part of the 2024-25 budget process that made reference to BPICs, and we have seen cost increases in the capital program—I made reference to that—particularly the ABS Producer Price Index data.

I undertook to point the committee to the shareholder mandates regarding CS Energy. I table the 2016 and 2020 shareholder mandates for the benefit of the committee. For the benefit of the committee, I table the previous Newman government's 2012 mandate, then called a letter of expectations, referenced in the final Brady Heywood report. That 2012 letter of expectations is relevant because it is the only reference to operational cost cutting at CS Energy in the final Brady Heywood report.

I also table the equivalent documents pertaining to Stanwell. It is worth pointing out that Stanwell received largely the same shareholder mandate and did not experience the problems that CS Energy experienced. Shareholder letters of expectation and mandates clarify stakeholders' expectations, which

are then reflected in legislative planning and reporting requirements such as statements of corporate intent that are tabled in the parliament. I think that demonstrates clearly that the shareholder mandate is not the source of the problem at Callide.

The member for Toowoomba South asked the CEO of CS Energy when he first sighted the draft Brady report. I am advised by CS Energy that the organisation received the first draft of the technical section of the Brady report on 15 December 2023 and the first draft of the organisational section of the Brady report on 1 March 2024. I am advised that, upon receiving successive organisational drafts, CS Energy did not indicate to government the gravity of concerns about organisational factors contributing to the incident that were expressed by Dr Brady. Members of the committee will, of course, recall there was a decision of Justice Derrington saying they were not the subject of legal professional privilege and could then be released.

The CEO of CS Energy undertook to provide information on maintenance. I would like to point the member for Toowoomba South again to my response to question on notice No. 6. To summarise, GOC boards are accountable for their investment decisions. Since 2015, shareholding ministers have approved all written requests regarding asset maintenance overhauls recommended by the CS Energy Board. I think I mentioned that earlier. That includes those relating to Callide C Power Station. This funding has increased across the period of the 2016 and 2020 shareholder mandates. As outlined in the answer to question on notice No. 7, since 2015-16 the Queensland government has approved new equity allocations of \$1.78 billion for CS Energy. Over the same period, CS Energy has returned \$502 million in dividends, or less than 30 per cent of equity contributions. This compares to zero equity investment by the previous LNP government.

I undertook to come back to the committee regarding meetings with Mr Soorley, the then chair of CS Energy. The number of times I have met directly with CS Energy is a matter of public record and contained in ministerial diary extracts. I met with Mr Soorley and Mr Bills on 4 and 29 June 2021. I met with Mr Soorley again on 12 August 2021. Again, these are all available in published ministerial diary extracts. I recall discussing with them the importance of ensuring that Callide C4 return to service as soon as possible.

As I said, meetings with a single electricity generator are of minimal relevance to the retail energy prices paid by Queenslanders. Retail energy prices are set as the result of thousands, if not millions, of market interactions on the national energy market, with oversight provided by the Australian Energy Regulator. I have certainly met with the Premier and other members of the cabinet regarding energy prices. The result of those interactions was to decide to provide energy rebates, which are making Queenslanders' energy bills the lowest in the nation.

The member for Toowoomba South asked about a going concern assessment in the CS Energy annual report. I can advise that going concern assessments are standard practice as per the Corporations Act and are a standard audit requirement. CS Energy is a government owned corporation and has access to debt and equity as required. Debt borrowings from Queensland Treasury Corporation are underpinned by guarantees from Queensland Treasury. In the coming audit period, I am further advised CS Energy will undertake a going concern assessment and there are no indications to suggest any inability to meet future debts as they fall due.

Queensland Treasury engages with all GOCs and Queensland Treasury Corporation on the financial positions of entities on a regular and ongoing basis. This includes, as part of the annual state borrowing program assessment process, credit reviews and performance reviews of individual businesses. As outlined in answer to question on notice No. 7, since 2015-16 the Queensland government has approved new equity allocations of \$1.78 billion for CS Energy, and I have mentioned that.

The Under Treasurer undertook to provide further information regarding Treasury analysis of the Property Council report. I table that analysis that was provided to my office by Treasury on 31 May, the week after the Property Council report was released, for the benefit of the committee. I did not edit or change Queensland Treasury's analysis; nor did anyone in my office, I am advised.

I undertook to come back to the member for Mirani on federal agreements and tied funding. I am advised that Queensland expects to receive \$19.923 billion in 2024-25 for payments for specific purposes, commonly referred to as tied payments. This is approximately 23 per cent of Queensland's revenue. Specific purpose payments fund a broad range of services in health, education and housing, as well as critical transport projects. Tied payments are negotiated with the Commonwealth through funding agreements and reflect the objectives of both levels of government.

I am advised, with reference to page 151 of Budget Paper 2, that the approximate shares of Australian government payments of \$39.811 billion in 2024-25 are: 50 per cent, or \$19.923 billion, are payments for specific purposes—tied grants; 47 per cent, or \$18.525 billion, are payments for general purposes—untied—that is, GST; and three per cent, or \$1.364 billion, are other Australian government grants, including payments direct to Queensland government departments for Australian government own-purpose expenditure.

The Under Treasurer undertook to provide more information on the costs associated with the due diligence of the investment in PsiQuantum. I am advised that, as part of its due diligence processes for the PsiQuantum investment, the Queensland government and QIC have drawn on expertise from world-leading advisory firms. These include Allens Linklaters, DLA Piper, Boston Consulting Group, Deloitte Financial Services and Deloitte Tax, Bank of America and Aurecon. Queensland Treasury's contract disclosure register for the 2022-23 and 2023-24 financial years identifies a cost of \$495,000 for its engagement of Deloitte Financial Services to undertake stage 2 due diligence. As at 27 June 2024, QIC's costs for Allens Linklaters was \$1.433 million. This amount is in line with standard market and commercial practice, I am advised, for the size of the transaction.

The CEO of QIC undertook to come back to the committee on QIC losses year to date of QIC's US property portfolio. QIC advise that the final end-of-year financial results for the US real estate portfolio are not yet available. I am advised that QIC is still waiting for final year results in relation to these assets.

With regard to QIC and Thames Water, I refer the committee to the answer to question on notice No. 9 from last year's estimates which outlines that Queensland government portfolios have received a positive since inception return, with returns exceeding the initial investment amount.

That is the update for the committee. Would you like me to make a concluding statement?

CHAIR: There was a question about public-private partnerships. I am not sure what the question was.

Mr DICK: The answer was to do with the Report on State Finances. I provided an answer to the member for Mirani.

CHAIR: Are there any further issues? There being no issues outstanding, I invite you to make some concluding remarks.

Mr DICK: I will try to be as brief as possible, Chair. I want to thank you, Chair, and all committee members for your attendance and for your participation in this process, because it is a very important part of our parliamentary and democratic process in Queensland. I appreciate the engagement of all members. I am always pleased to appear before the committee. It is part of my duty and responsibility as a minister of the state, and I am pleased to do so as the Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment.

In particular, I want to acknowledge Queensland Treasury staff, the staff of our government owned corporations and our commercial statutory entities and authorities for their work. They do incredible work for Queensland. They also do incredible work preparing for these hearings. I want to thank them for their hard work to support this process, to support the democratic accountability process of our state and to support the prosperity of Queensland in everything that they do.

CHAIR: I note that this concludes the estimates hearing of the Cost of Living and Economics Committee for 2024. I would like to thank my fellow committee members, guests and visiting members who have participated here today. I would like to apologise to the member for Mount Ommaney and the member for Macalister. My management has meant that we have only used 64 minutes of the 69.5 minutes that the House specified. That went partly to extra questions for the opposition and obviously the opportunistic member for Mirani and his enthusiasm, but the great answers on Queensland roads that the Treasurer just could not be stopped from giving meant that we exceeded time on those as well. I want to thank you for your time.

I thank Hansard and the parliamentary broadcast staff who will be having a very tough week this week—Lindsay always does a great job and looks after me—together with all of the other parliamentary staff who have assisted us here today, especially the secretariat—Tim and Melissa.

Mr STEVENS: And the deputy chair.

CHAIR: And the deputy chair, without whom I would be lost, with his frank and fearless guidance of my behaviour and activities. With that, I declare this hearing closed.

The committee adjourned at 6.18 pm.