

PCEAR's report referenced the views in the Fitzgerald report that an important feature of a democracy is that decision making is seen to be impartial and objective and that 'if there is any suggestion that a decision may have been improperly influenced by financial considerations then confidence in the political system will be undermined'. PCEAR recommended a disclosure regime which significantly adopted the relevant provisions of the then revised Commonwealth model, which at that time involved a disclosure threshold of \$200 for candidates, and \$1,500 for political parties.

PCEAR's recommendations were adopted, forming the basis of the 1994 bill. The explanatory notes for the bill stated—

The need for this legislation arises primarily from the imperative to eliminate the potential for corrupt practices associated with political donations, especially in those situations where practices connected with the giving of such donations has led to perceptions that government administration may have been inappropriately influenced by them.

In 2006, a Liberal-National Party federal government amended its Commonwealth electoral gift disclosure scheme to significantly raise the threshold amounts for disclosure—which is, of course, the current Queensland threshold. The threshold amounts continue to be the subject of debate at the Commonwealth level. In 2011, the Commonwealth parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters recommended that 'the disclosure threshold be lowered to \$1,000, and CPI indexation be removed'.

Commonwealth bills to reduce the threshold amount to \$1,000 have been introduced on three occasions but not passed into law. The former Queensland government has justified the increase in the disclosure threshold as needing to align with the Commonwealth but other jurisdictions have not felt the need to follow. Four other states and territories which have disclosure laws have thresholds ranging from \$200 to \$2,300. South Australia, under legislation that will become operative later this year, has provided for a \$5,000 threshold with a move to real-time reporting.

In 2013, Tasmania also introduced a bill, which has since lapsed, requiring real-time disclosure of donations over \$1,500. New South Wales, which already has strict political donation laws including a disclosure threshold of \$1,000, commissioned a review last year by a panel of experts in response to public concerns about political donations, and prompted by findings of the New South Wales Independent Commission Against Corruption, ICAC, investigation into allegations of corrupt conduct involving political donations.

The expert panel comprised Dr Kerry Schott as chair, former Labor Deputy Premier the Hon. John Watkins and former Liberal shadow Attorney-General Mr Andrew Tink AM. The expert panel undertook a comprehensive review of political donation laws resulting in its publication of five working papers, the holding of four roundtable discussions with experts, an interim report and a two-volume final report.

The expert panel's final report in December 2014 states that 'timely and meaningful disclosure is the cornerstone of any effective campaign funding regime'. The expert panel concluded that the current New South Wales \$1,000 threshold was reasonable, although acknowledged there had been some support for a reduction in this threshold. ICAC has also made recommendations in relation to the frequency and timeliness of disclosures in order to enable the public to have access to an accurate picture of funding behind parties and candidates before they cast their vote on polling day. The NSW expert panel final report states—

Presently, different election funding laws apply in each jurisdiction and NSW parties are part of federal structures. This creates opportunities for avoidance and undermines the effectiveness of the NSW election funding regime. We recommend that the Premier support coordinated national reform of election funding laws, and that this be pursued via the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) process.

The NSW government has indicated in-principle support for most of the recommendations of the expert panel, which the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters is expected to consider further after the state election. The momentum is clearly for greater and more prompt disclosure and accountability from their politicians—not less. Yet, against this backdrop, last year Queensland amended its laws to require less transparency—less frequent reporting and a significant increase to its disclosure threshold.

This government believes that Queensland cannot afford to forget the lessons of its past. Report after report reminds us that disclosure is the key to transparency, and transparency is the key to accountability. It is a tool for addressing risks and perceptions of corruption. This government is committed to transparency and accountability, and believes that this is what the people of Queensland want, what the people of Queensland expect and what the people of Queensland deserve.

The bill also removes discriminatory and unnecessary voter proof-of-identity requirements, introduced by the former government in 2014, from both the Electoral Act 1992 and the Local Government Electoral Act 2011. A discussion paper released by the former government in January 2013—which canvassed voter proof of identity—stated there was no specific evidence of electoral fraud.

When instances of multiple voting arise, they are matters for review by the Electoral Commission. The recording of multiple votes may be due to a range of factors: polling official administrative error, poor literacy or language skills, or confusion with persons forgetting they have already voted. The Electoral Commission can refer instances of multiple voting to the police for investigation in appropriate cases.

As was pointed out by the Electoral Commission during the committee hearings on the former government's bill, at the 2012 state election there was one solitary case. Queensland is the only jurisdiction to have adopted the proof-of-identity requirements. No other state or territory or the Commonwealth has introduced these backward policies.

The requirement for voter proof-of-identity documents has the potential to discriminate against voters from marginalised groups in society without ready access to proof-of-identity documents; inconvenience voters without proof-of-identity documents at the ballot box on election day; and reduce voter participation in the electoral process.

Voters required to make declaration votes because they cannot produce the required proof-of-identity documents are left uncertain as to whether their votes have been counted. The Electoral Commission of Queensland website shows that over 15,000 voters without proof-of-identity documents were inconvenienced on election day being required to make declaration votes that were ultimately treated as part of the ballot. The extent to which voters did not participate because they could not produce voter proof of identity is still unknown. The government prefers to endorse the use of improved technology such as the electronically certified lists trialled in the greater Brisbane districts at the last state election for reducing opportunities for multiple voting.

In addition to increasing transparency and fairness in the electoral system, the bill also amends the Crime and Corruption Act 2001, the CC Act, and Judges (Pensions and Long Leave) Act 1957, the judges pensions act. This implements a key aspect of the government's election commitment to restore accountability and integrity in Queensland by legislating to give the chair of the Crime and Corruption Commission, the CCC chair, access to a judicial pension with appropriate variations.

The CCC plays a critically important role in maintaining accountability and integrity in Queensland's public sector through its function of ensuring that complaints, information or matters involving allegations of corrupt conduct within the public sector are properly investigated and dealt with. Under the CC Act, the CCC chair has significant responsibility for ensuring the CCC properly performs this function. For this reason, it is vital that the CCC and its chair are, and are seen to be, independent of the executive government so the public can have confidence that the CCC's corruption investigations are thorough and impartial.

Providing the CCC chair with access to a judicial pension will help to attract people with the highest calibre of experience and qualifications to the chair's role. The government has already moved quickly and advertised to permanently fill the office of the CCC chair. The amendments to the CC Act are designed to ensure that the promised pension entitlements will apply to the next permanent appointee to the chair's office as the bill expressly provides that the pension entitlement provisions will apply to any person appointed after the bill's introduction.

The bill inserts new provisions into the CC Act to, in effect, bring the CCC chair within the pension scheme for Supreme and District Court judges under the judges pensions act. The new provisions change particular aspects of the judges pension scheme as it is to be applied to a CCC chair because of the differences between the offices of the CCC chair and a Supreme or District Court judge. The CCC chair's pension entitlements will require the CCC chair to serve in that office for not less than five years including any period the person has acted as chair before his or her appointment to become entitled to receive a pension.

This change from the judges pension entitlements reflects the fact that, unlike judges who can serve for any length of time until they reach the mandatory retirement age of 70, a CCC commissioner including the chair cannot hold office as a commissioner for more than 10 years in total. However, to avoid significant differences in the pension rights of the chair and a judge, the bill defers the chair's pension entitlement until he or she reaches, or would have reached, age 65. The pension will be calculated on the amount of the 'prescribed salary', which the bill provides is the annual salary of a

Supreme Court judge—other than the Chief Justice and President of the Court of Appeal—plus the annual rate of the jurisprudential allowance and expense of office allowance paid to a Supreme Court judge—other than the Chief Justice and President of the Court of Appeal.

Long leave allowance is not included in calculating the chair's pension because the chair will, as part of his or her entitlements when appointed by the Governor in Council, have access to long service leave. While the bill ensures that a person does not receive two pensions under the judges pensions act, the bill allows the period of service as chair, or judge, to be used to calculate pension entitlements, for either as the CCC chair or as a judge. Similar to the judges pensions scheme, the CCC chair will not be entitled to a pension if he or she is removed from office because of misbehaviour or misconduct. The bill also amends the Superannuation (State Public Sector) Notice 2010 to address consequential matters arising from the new pension entitlements.

The amendments in this bill will ensure that the current recruitment process for a new CCC chair will attract high-quality candidates. The appointment of an independent and non-politicised CCC chair is the first step in the government's CCC commitments to restore integrity and accountability in Queensland. This bill represents important steps in restoring accountability to Queensland's political and public service arenas. I commend this bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. YM D'ATH (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (11.24 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee

Mr SPEAKER: Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee.

Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date

Hon. YM D'ATH (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (11.25 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That under the provisions of standing order 136 the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee report to the House on the Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill by 1 May 2015.

Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (11.25 am): Many times when we were on the other side of the House we listened to the ranting, wailing and curdling cries from the then Manager of Opposition Business about matters being rushed through before parliamentary committees had an opportunity to debate these matters fully and before full consultation had taken place with different groups. In this brand-new, different parliament which the Premier has promised in terms of accountability and openness, straightaway we have the Attorney-General rushing this legislation through before the next sitting of parliament, just a fraction over four weeks away.

The bottom line is that this is consistent with a government that has no intention of changing any of the ways it needs to push its legislation through for political purposes. That is what this legislation is about. Let us be very clear: it is all about pushing its political agenda. I look forward to reading the legislation. Obviously I have not seen the legislation at this point in time, but I am sure that union donations, as per usual, will not be included in this legislation. The government is pushing its political agenda straightaway.

We object to this legislation being rushed through before parliamentary committees have even had their reporting dates set by the CLA. The CLA has not met at this point in time to set reporting dates for these matters. As the Treasurer and other members would be aware, those dates are set and referred through the CLA. Yet the minister, desperate for this political legislation to be put in place for their own political agenda, is making sure this is put before the House by the next sitting. The parliamentary committee will have to rush it through without adequate consideration. I doubt if the unions will be consulted on this matter. I doubt if other bodies such as the legal fraternity will be consulted on this issue. By the way, Mr Speaker, there is the little problem that Easter cannot be shifted for the benefit of the Labor Party so we have lost that period of time in between. This is

classic, 'We really want to have a different parliament but we are not really genuine about that at all. We are going to push our political agenda straight through.' Premier, it is a great embarrassment to you that this behaviour is taking place under your watch with your brand-new Attorney-General. It is absolutely flying in the face of the proper parliamentary positions on the matter.

Hon. YM D'ATH (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (11.28 am), in reply: I rise to oppose the comments of the Leader of Opposition Business. We heard criticism from the opposition prior to this sitting week that there are not enough sitting days, we are not doing enough business and there is not enough question time. But today in the first week of this parliament we are introducing a number of pieces of legislation.

From what we have just heard from the opposition, they expect us to come back but not consider any bills or any second reading speeches for months. They do not want us to have any debate on any bills beyond the first reading for some months into the future. Instead, when we come back in the next sitting week and then the sitting week shortly after that, we will actually deal with the legislation before us.

I take the point of the four-week time frame. I also take the point that the opposition has not seen the detail of the bill, but let me assist the opposition on that. You have seen the detail of the bill because it is actually what existed in the legislation before you amended it. That will make it a little bit easier for you as you go through it clause by clause because you will know what it means. You can think, 'That's right. This is that threshold we lifted so we did not have to disclose anything.'

Mr SPEAKER: Members, perhaps we could all go through the chair.

Mrs D'ATH: My apologies, Mr Speaker. It is important that this House considers legislation. It is important that the parliamentary committees consider the bills that come through this House, but this is a piece of legislation that has had numerous submissions already from key stakeholders interested in political donations. It already went before parliamentary committees last time the former government actually lifted these thresholds. We have already heard from all the parties on why they opposed those thresholds being lifted and why they argued the \$1,000 threshold should remain as is. So I believe the time frame that is set is fair.

There is also another very important element in this—that is, the elements do not just go to political election disclosure, which we took to the election. It is a very clear election commitment that we are delivering on here.

Mrs Frecklington: So that means no consultation.

Mrs D'ATH: I take that interjection. The parliamentary committee will have the opportunity to consider this bill and will—

Mrs Frecklington: When?

Mrs D'ATH: It might just be that you have to work over the school holidays. We are committed to delivering our election commitment, but another important element of this bill is in relation to the chair of the CCC. Currently, we have an acting chair of the CCC and that acting position expires on 30 June 2015. It is a requirement and an obligation on this government to then fill that position. We believe it would be highly inappropriate to have to fill that with another acting position. We promised the people of Queensland that we would provide an independent, permanent chair for the CCC, and that is what we should do. We have set about making that happen as quickly as possible by already advertising for this position, the chief executive officer and the two ordinary commissioners. But for the government to appoint a new permanent CCC chair under the new salary arrangements—

Mr STEVENS: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. We are talking about the electoral bill, not the bill that the Attorney-General is now talking about. This is irrelevant to this matter.

Mr SPEAKER: I call the Attorney-General.

Mrs D'ATH: Mr Speaker, the Leader of Opposition Business in the House should listen a bit closer. I am talking about the amendments in relation to the CC Act for the pension entitlements for the new chair of the CCC. What I am saying is that, to appoint the new chair under the new salary arrangements, that legislation needs to be passed through this House. You cannot offer a salary when there is no legislative ability to offer a pension equivalent to a Supreme Court judge's pension when that is provided for, and that is the purpose of these amendments. They need to be considered and they need to be introduced so that we can fix up the mess that the other side created. The LNP constantly reappointed the acting chair; in fact, they came into this House and they changed the rules so that they could keep reappointing the acting chair. That time frame lapsed and they just wanted to keep him there that little bit longer and that little bit longer again. I can assure the House that we are not going to rush through an amendment to try to extend that acting appointment for Dr Ken Levy.

We will do what we promised—that is, we will put in place the legislative requirements to allow us to provide for an appropriate salary so as to attract a high-calibre applicant to become the permanent chair of the CCC. That is why it is important that this legislation be considered by a parliamentary committee and be brought back to this House for debate—so that a permanent chair can be appointed before the acting appointment lapses—and that is why we ask this House to support the proposal that the parliamentary committee report back by 1 May.

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

AYES, 46:

ALP, 44—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Byrne, Crawford, D'Ath, de B renni, Dick, Donaldson, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Gordon, Grace, Harper, Hinchliffe, Howard, Jones, Kelly, King, Lauga, Linard, Lynham, Madden, Miles, Miller, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pease, Pegg, Pitt, Power, Pyne, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Stewart, Trad, Whiting, Williams.

KAP, 2—Katter, Knuth.


NOES, 42:

LNP, 42—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Costigan, Cramp, Crandon, Cripps, Davis, Dickson, Elmes, Emerson, Frecklington, Hart, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Mander, McArdle, McEachan, McVeigh, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, Perrett, Powell, Rickuss, Robinson, Rowan, Seeney, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Walker, Watts, Weir.

Resolved in the affirmative.


SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

School Group Tour

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Before I call the Premier, I inform the House that we have students from the Beaudesert State School in the gallery.

PARLIAMENT OF QUEENSLAND AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (11.40 am): I present a bill for an act to amend the Financial Accountability Act 2009, the Parliamentary Service Act 1988, the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 and the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal Act 2013 for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Finance and Administration Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Parliament of Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2015 [\[217\]](#).

Tabled paper: Parliament of Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2015, explanatory notes [\[218\]](#).

The bill has three major purposes: the first is to restore autonomy to the position of Speaker within the parliament by returning responsibility for the management of the Parliamentary Service to the Speaker; the second is to enable a crossbench member to be included on the membership of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly and to provide the Speaker with a deliberative vote on all questions at CLA meetings and a casting vote in the case of a tied vote; and the third is to retrospectively revoke determination 7/2015 of the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal and to outline a new process for the tribunal to follow in making determinations about salary entitlements for members of the Legislative Assembly.

Mr Speaker, this government believes in integrity and accountability, and at the heart of these matters in the parliament is the position of Speaker. The Speaker is the representative of the House and its powers, rights and immunities. The independence of the office of Speaker is a central tenet of the Westminster system. Mr Speaker, during the election campaign this government committed to restoring autonomy to the position of Speaker in the parliament, and today through this bill we are delivering on that.

Under the bill, responsibility for the management of the Parliamentary Service will transfer from the CLA back to the position of Speaker. The parliament's transfer of the Speaker's responsibility for the Parliamentary Service in 2011 resulted from a review of the Parliamentary Service Act conducted by the CLA at that time. Those members who have served on the CLA and have managed the Parliamentary Service in recent years have undertaken their role with diligence. The government is simply of the view that the Parliamentary Service should be administered independently and autonomously by the Speaker of the day. We committed to this during the election, and today the bill delivers on this.

The Clerk of the parliament will remain as the employing authority for the Parliamentary Service officers and employees, as is currently the case. The parliament transferred these functions from the Speaker to the Clerk in 2011, and it is more appropriate that they remain with the Clerk. Just as in government departments, where directors-general rather than ministers are the employing authority for departmental employees, the Clerk as the chief executive officer of the Parliamentary Service should perform that function here at the parliament. Mr Speaker, the bill also allows the Speaker to refer any matter to the CLA. Under this provision, any such referral will be at the total discretion of the Speaker. There is no change in the bill to the Speaker remaining as chairperson of the CLA, but to further enhance the autonomy of the position of Speaker the bill gives the Speaker a deliberative vote on all questions at CLA meetings together with a casting vote if a vote on a question is tied.

There were previously quite a significant number of matters where the Speaker did not have a vote at CLA meetings. This is the first time since the CLA was established that the Speaker will be able to exercise full voting rights at a CLA meeting. The bill also provides that the Speaker, rather than the Leader of the House, will be responsible for calling CLA meetings and setting the agenda. These are responsibilities which would ordinarily attach to the chairperson of a committee.

Mr Speaker, in my letter to you dated 5 February 2015, I committed to amending the Parliament of Queensland Act to ensure that the membership of the CLA includes a member from the crossbenches. This bill provides that if the Legislative Assembly contains one or more crossbench members, then the membership of the CLA is to include one crossbench member. That member, like all members of the CLA, will also be able to nominate another crossbench member to perform their role on the CLA in their absence. As the size of the CLA will increase from seven to eight members, the quorum for a CLA meeting will also increase from four to five members in line with the quorum for the parliament's portfolio committees when they comprise eight members.

I now turn to the third purpose of the bill, which relates to the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal and the salaries of members of the Legislative Assembly. I advocated for the establishment of a tribunal when the issue of members' salaries became quite a topic of public debate in 2013. The principle of linking MPs' salary increases to that of public sector employees was enshrined in a policy that I announced during the election campaign, and today I intend to honour this pledge and commitment to Queenslanders. While the tribunal's determinations are legally binding and are not subject to disallowance or amendment by the parliament, the parliament can overturn a tribunal determination by a retrospective act of parliament. This was outlined to the parliament by the former Premier when the tribunal's legislation was introduced in 2013 and reflects that the parliament is the supreme lawmaking body of this state.

The tribunal's recent determination of a 2.58 per cent salary increase for members from 6 April 2015 does not accord with the next salary increase that public sector employees in core departments of the government are scheduled to receive. As I have said, I have made a commitment to Queenslanders that future salary increases for members will be linked to public sector employees, and I intend to keep this pledge. To this end, the bill provides for the retrospective revocation of determination 7/2015 made by the tribunal on 5 March 2015. Once the bill becomes law, the determination will be taken to never have had effect.

The government is acting to meet its election commitment about members' salaries. We believe that when it comes to members' salaries, they should not be able to be increased by a rate higher than that applying to public sector employees. The bill provides that when a decision is made to increase the salaries of public sector employees, the tribunal must, within 90 days, make a determination outlining the extent of any increase that may apply to the base salary and additional salaries of members. In making such a determination, the bill provides that the tribunal cannot increase the base salary or additional salaries of members by more than the percentage amount of the salary increase that public sector employees have been granted. The bill also provides that any increase to the base salary or additional salaries of members determined by the tribunal must have the same commencement date as the increase granted to public sector employees.

Following a public service salary decision, the tribunal will first have to decide if a salary increase for members is to apply, and if it agrees to an increase the tribunal will then have to determine the percentage rate to apply while noting the percentage rate that it cannot exceed. This is a similar situation to that in New South Wales, where their Parliamentary Remuneration Tribunal is legally prevented from granting percentage salary increases to members of the New South Wales parliament which exceed the New South Wales government's wages cap for public sector employees.

In closing, Mr Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to introduce a bill that restores autonomy to the position of Speaker and also allows a crossbench member to have both a voice and a vote on matters considered by the CLA. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (11.48 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the Finance and Administration Committee

Mr SPEAKER: Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Finance and Administration Committee.

Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date

Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (11.49 am), by leave, without notice: I move—


That under the provisions of standing order 136 the Finance and Administration Committee report to the House on the Parliament of Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Bill by 8 May 2015.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade) (11.49 am): I present a bill for an act to amend the Heavy Vehicle National Law Act 2012, the Local Government Electoral Act 2011 and the Queensland Reconstruction Authority Act 2011 for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Local Government and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 [\[219\]](#).

Tabled paper: Local Government and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015, explanatory notes [\[220\]](#).

The Labor government made a commitment to the people of Queensland to keep the Queensland Reconstruction Authority in existence after 30 June 2015 so that disaster recovery infrastructure built over the past five years is protected. The government also promised that local government elections will be run to the same high standards of independence and efficiency as state and federal elections. To deliver these commitments I am pleased to introduce into the House today the Local Government and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015.

The bill repeals the sunset clause of 30 June 2015 from the Queensland Reconstruction Authority Act 2011 to ensure the Queensland Reconstruction Authority can continue the critical work of helping communities effectively and efficiently recover from the impacts of natural disasters that have devastated Queensland over recent times including severe Tropical Cyclone Marcia.

The Queensland Reconstruction Authority administers the rebuilding program for Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements activated disaster events and works closely with local governments to ensure the effective recovery of Queensland communities. The work of the authority is integral as Queensland deals with natural disasters and moves from response to recovery.

Many Queenslanders are going through traumatic times as a result of natural disasters. The extension of the Queensland Reconstruction Authority is recognition of the fact that, unfortunately, natural disasters are a fact of life in Queensland and we need to be constantly ready to prepare, respond and recover.

Fortunately, there were no fatalities as a result of Tropical Cyclone Marcia; however, the destructive winds, heavy rainfall and flood events continue to have a catastrophic effect on many Queensland communities. The scale and scope of damage saw the activation of the NDRRA in 14 local government areas, not only Rockhampton, Livingstone, North Burnett and Banana but also North Mackay and south to the Sunshine Coast.

The Palaszczuk government acknowledges that many Queenslanders are continuing to face the uphill battle of getting their lives back to normal. I want to assure them that the government's help and assistance is ongoing and that they will not be forgotten, as shown in the release of the recovery plan, released on Monday of this week.

I now turn to the amendments to the Local Government Electoral Act 2011. The bill ensures that a local government chief executive officer cannot be the returning officer for a local government election unless the chief executive officer is the only person reasonably available in a community to perform the role. Sensibly, the bill provides for an exception to be made if in some smaller communities the local government chief executive officer is the only person reasonably available in the community to perform the role with the necessary experience in conducting local government elections. In these instances the chief executive officer is appointed the returning officer by the Electoral Commission and is therefore under the direction and authority of the Electoral Commission, ensuring the impartiality and integrity of the local government election is protected.

Queenslanders are entitled to have state and local governments that are accountable and open according to the principles of the Westminster system. As chief executive officers of local governments work closely with elected mayors and councillors in carrying out their duties, the chief executive officer performing the role of returning officer presents the potential for a conflict of interest, especially where incumbents recontest an election.

Labor believes that local government is the level of government closest to the community. Every day local government affects the lives of Queenslanders and local government is a genuine partner in the Australian government system. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge local government chief executive officers and councillors and the important work they do in supporting local communities, and I thank them for their continuing hard work.

Finally, the bill includes a minor amendment to the Heavy Vehicle National Law Act 2012 to ensure that the unproclaimed provisions of the act that relate to heavy vehicle registration do not automatically commence ahead of the implementation of a national heavy vehicle registration system. On 20 March 2015 my colleagues and I on the Transport and Infrastructure Council voted to delay the commencement of a national heavy vehicle registration system until 1 July 2018. The council also sought the Queensland government's support as host jurisdiction for this important national reform to make the necessary amendments to the Heavy Vehicle National Law Act 2012 to enable this to happen. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. JA TRAD (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade) (11.54 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee

Mr SPEAKER: Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee.

Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date

Hon. JA TRAD (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade) (11.55 am), by leave, without notice: I move—


That under the provisions of standing order 136 the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee report to the House on the Local Government and Other Legislation Amendment Bill by 22 May 2015.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

PAYROLL TAX REBATE, REVENUE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (11.55 am): I present a bill for an act to amend the Criminal Law (Criminal Organisations Disruption) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2013, the Duties Act 2001, the Environmental Protection Act 1994, the Financial Accountability Act 2009, the First Home Owner Grant Act 2000, the Payroll Tax Act 1971, the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002, the Taxation Administration Act 2001 and the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Finance and Administration Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Payroll Tax Rebate, Revenue and other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 [\[221\]](#).

Tabled paper: Payroll Tax Rebate, Revenue and other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015, explanatory notes [\[222\]](#).

This bill seeks to implement the government's 2015 election commitments to provide a payroll tax rebate for apprentice and trainee wages and to restore high standards in Queensland's plumbing industry. The bill will also amend Queensland's revenue legislation and other acts administered through the Treasury department to ensure their currency and proper operation.

This government recognises that apprenticeships and traineeships provide a great employment pathway, particularly for young Queenslanders. This in turn contributes to the development of a highly skilled workforce to permit delivery of projects to ensure Queensland's economic growth into the future.

As an incentive to employers to hire apprentices and trainees, the government's election commitments included the introduction of a 25 per cent payroll tax rebate on the wages of apprentices and trainees, funded over three years, in addition to the existing exemption for apprentice and trainee wages. This commitment is delivered through extending the application of provisions introduced by a former Labor government, providing an apprentice and trainee wages rebate for the 2009-10, 2010-11 and 2011-12 financial years. As amended, the provisions will now also apply for the 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18 financial years. This will capitalise on existing systems and administrative frameworks in place for the earlier rebate, minimising implementation costs and utilising a model familiar to Queensland employers.

This bill also makes amendments to the Duties Act 2001 and the Taxation Administration Act 2001 to support the introduction of electronic conveyancing in Queensland. Electronic conveyancing will provide a process for settling qualifying land transactions between parties and their financiers through a shared electronic workspace as an alternative to the traditional face-to-face settlement process. This Council of Australian Governments initiative will involve the electronic creation of transfer forms, their digital signing, and progression through financial settlement, transfer duty endorsement and lodgement with the Registrar of Titles via an electronic work space.

In addition to these measures, the bill enacts a number of taxpayer beneficial amendments. These include concessional treatment for agreements for the transfer of exploration authorities under certain resource sector farm-in agreements which will assist in the exploration and development of exploration authorities in Queensland and recognises the risks to return on investment for exploration activity. The farm-in agreements that are eligible for the concession will be defined; however, the criteria are defined so that relief will be available for the farm-in arrangements most commonly used in the sector.

Other amendments to the Taxation Administration Act 2001 will ensure fairer treatment for taxpayers whose objection to a tax assessment is upheld by the commissioner. A refund resulting from any reassessment that is issued as a result of such a decision will attract interest payable by the commissioner to the taxpayer. These amendments recognise that, where a taxpayer's objection is successful, it is fair that they should be paid interest on the refund amount. Other amendments to state revenue laws under the bill are beneficial to taxpayers or grant applicants or clarify the operation of or correct an anomaly in the legislation. A final amendment is necessary to protect revenue.

Amendments to the Financial Accountability Act 2009 will reflect modern auditing and financial management practices and streamline certain procedural matters such as increasing the powers delegated by the Treasurer to appropriate officers in Queensland Treasury and Queensland Treasury Corporation and addressing issues relating to machinery-of-government changes. Appropriate controls and governance arrangements will continue to exist with the proposed changes. The bill will delay for a further 12 months certain not commenced amendments in the Criminal Law (Criminal

Organisations Disruption) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2013 which would have unduly added a regulatory burden to the assessment of certain licensed occupations covered by the Electrical Safety Act 2002, the Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act 1991 and the Work Health and Safety Act 2011. If commenced, these provisions will cause significant delays in processing licence applications and renewals. There are concerns that any benefits arising from their implementation will be outweighed by the costs to workers in potentially restricting Queenslanders' ability to commence or continue to earn a living in their licensed occupation. This delay will allow for the government's review of these laws to occur, including whether these provisions are required.

The bill also amends the Environmental Protection Act 1994 to allow the cancellation of a transitional environmental program or a temporary emissions licence where the operator and the administering authority have agreed on other measures to achieve compliance with the Environmental Protection Act 1994 or the program or licence is no longer required. These are sensible amendments which, amongst other things, will provide certainty for the continued operation of the copper smelter at Mount Isa past 2016. Closure of the smelter would have caused significant job losses in both Mount Isa and Townsville.

I now turn to the amendments to the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002 and the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008. This government made a commitment at the recent election to restore high standards in Queensland's plumbing industry. The amendments to the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002 and the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 will realise this election commitment by requiring the installation of water meters to be performed by a licensed plumber. The Plumbing and Drainage and Another Act Amendment Bill 2015 also contains a transitional provision that will allow a person who is currently authorised by a water service provider to install a relevant water meter to continue to perform this work for a period of two years. After the transitional period expires, only a licensed plumber will be able to perform this work. This transitional period is important as it will allow the water sector time to adjust to the new legislative arrangements. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. CW PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (12.02 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the Finance and Administration Committee

Mr SPEAKER: Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Finance and Administration Committee.

Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date

Hon. CW PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (12.03 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—


That under the provisions of standing order 136 the Finance and Administration Committee report to the House on the Payroll Tax Rebate, Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill by 22 May 2015.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

EXHIBITED ANIMALS BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. WS BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Sport and Racing) (12.03 pm): I present a bill for an act to provide for exhibiting and dealing with particular animals and to amend this act, the Biosecurity Act 2014, the Nature Conservation Act 1992 and the regulations mentioned in schedule 3 for particular purposes. I table the bill and explanatory notes. I nominate the Agriculture and Environment Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Exhibited Animals Bill 2015 [223].

Tabled paper: Exhibited Animals Bill 2015, explanatory notes [224].

Today I am pleased to introduce the Exhibited Animals Bill 2015. The bill will reform the regulation of a small but significant contributor to Queensland's economy—the exhibited animals industry. The industry contributes about \$100 million to the Queensland economy. It employs 1,000 Queenslanders, adds to the experience of overseas and interstate tourists and provides educational and cultural experiences for Queenslanders of all ages. It includes large zoos, aquaria, theme parks and wildlife parks; mobile wildlife demonstrators who exhibit at community and private events; circuses; and magicians. The reforms contained in the bill were first proposed under the Bligh Labor government in 2008. It is largely based on the Exhibited Animals Bill 2014 that lapsed when parliament was dissolved for the 2015 election.

The legislation that currently regulates the animal exhibition industry is unnecessarily complex and makes it tough for businesses working to create jobs and grow the economy. There are provisions spread across four acts: the Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002, the Fisheries Act 1994, the Nature Conservation Act 1992 and the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001. The six overlapping and inconsistent licensing frameworks under the current legislation are just the beginning of the complexity. The way in which animal welfare, pest establishment, disease spread and safety risks are managed under the current legislation is inconsistent. This is problematic because keeping wildlife for any purpose involves risks: some animals may be dangerous; escaped exotic animals may establish as pests with consequences for the economy, environment and social amenity; animals may carry disease; and keepers may lack sufficient facilities and expertise to adequately care for animals with complex needs, resulting in animal welfare issues and high mortality rates.

The existing legislation does not adequately or appropriately manage the risks associated with animal exhibition. There are also gaps in the coverage of some animal welfare and safety risks. This bill will meet community expectations for risk management by requiring exhibitors to actively manage the animal welfare, biosecurity and safety risks associated with exhibited animals and any adverse impacts of an event they might cause. Critically, it will address those risks that fall through the gaps in the current legislative framework. The bill imposes a general exhibition and dealing obligation on all those involved in exhibition and dealing with exhibited animals to prevent or minimise risks to animal welfare, biosecurity and safety. This will ensure that such risks will be better managed in future.

The current licencing frameworks mean that some exhibitors need several licences, each with their own processes and fees. In addition, exhibitors can only keep some animals for some types of exhibition. Some animals cannot be exhibited at all, even if the associated risks can be managed. One of the first actions of the Palaszczuk government was to provide some immediate relief to businesses being hampered by this last problem. Currently, Queensland zoos and film and television productions can only access exotic species that are listed in regulation. They cannot access other species, even if the associated risks could be managed. Some species are not listed because they pose a very high pest establishment risk, but there are other species that are not listed simply for historical reasons. The result is that Queensland zoos have been unable to participate in captive breeding programs for some endangered exotic species simply because they are not listed. There are some other species, such as meerkats, that many Queenslanders would love to see and which are being kept in other states while our industry is being left behind. It recently impacted on a particularly significant film production that created hundreds of jobs on the Gold Coast. The Palaszczuk government has added six new species to the list of species in regulation which will allow Queensland zoos and film and television productions to apply to keep these species.

This interim measure will give Queensland businesses more opportunities and signals this government's commitment to work closely with businesses to create jobs and grow the economy. As a result, meerkats, Patagonian mara, capybara, veiled chameleons or Cape porcupines might just be coming to a zoo near you. Adding the additional species has provided some small relief for the animal exhibition industry, but it does not address the underlying problems with the current legislation. That is exactly what this bill will do.

The Exhibited Animals Bill 2015 will create a new regulatory and licencing framework specifically for the animal exhibition industry. The bill will streamline and simplify the licensing of exhibitors. A single licence will replace the six fragmented schemes under current legislation.

The bill will create new opportunities for Queensland businesses by ensuring that future licensing decisions are based on risks, not lists. It will allow exhibitors to keep almost any animal for any type of exhibition, provided they can manage the risks. That means opportunities for business to exhibit a greater range of species in Queensland, provided the risks can be minimised, and gives them the flexibility they need to grow the economy.

Licensing decisions will respond to a management plan explaining the activities the exhibitor proposes to undertake and how they will minimise animal welfare, biosecurity and safety risks. The only restriction will be that the species with the highest pest potential will need to be based in a fixed exhibit because that is the most reliable way to control the risks associated with those animals. The flexibility of this risk based approach will be complemented by regular inspection and monitoring.

I want to acknowledge that risk management in the industry, particularly in relation to the welfare of exhibited animals, has improved considerably over recent years. However, further improvement is needed, particularly behind the scenes, to avert future incidents and meet growing community expectations. Inspections will generally be charged to exhibitors with the frequency of inspections dependent on the exhibitor's previous compliance record on managing animal welfare, biosecurity and safety risks. This will create a financial incentive for best practice.

To encourage industry to take more responsibility for driving future improvements in risk management, a report by an accredited assessor could generally be relied on for deciding renewal applications. However, I want to assure honourable members that safeguards within the bill will maintain the integrity of the private assessment scheme. For example, accredited assessors will be required to disclose any conflicts of interest.

Another feature of the bill is the introduction of uniform minimum exhibition requirements. These will ensure that animals kept under an exhibition licence are actually exhibited rather than being kept for private enjoyment. This is important because the species to which these requirements apply cannot be kept in Queensland for private recreation.

This bill is a blueprint for the future of the animal exhibition industry in Queensland that creates opportunities for businesses to grow while improving the management of animal welfare, biosecurity and safety risks. The Palaszczuk government will continue to work with exhibitors to ensure that the industry has a bright future in Queensland. We will work together to foster economic development by restoring confidence and creating jobs. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. WS BYRNE (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Sport and Racing) (12.13 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the Agriculture and Environment Committee

Mr SPEAKER: Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Agriculture and Environment Committee.

Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date


Hon. WS BYRNE (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Sport and Racing) (12.13 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That under the provisions of standing order 136 the Agriculture and Environment Committee report to the House on the Exhibited Animals Bill by 8 May 2015.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algera—ALP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works and Minister for Science and Innovation) (12.15 pm): It is an honour that I, the first Aboriginal woman elected to this place, be given the opportunity to move—

That the following address be presented to the Governor in reply to the speech delivered by His Excellency in opening this, the 55th Parliament of Queensland—

May it please Your Excellency—We the members of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland wish to assure Your Excellency of our continued respect for the Crown and loyalty to the system of government in this state and to tender our thanks for the speech with which you opened the first session.

The various measures to which Your Excellency referred and all other matters that may be brought before us will receive our careful consideration and we shall strive to deal with them so that our endeavours may contribute to the advancement and the prosperity of the people of this state.

Let me begin by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land on which we gather and, in doing so, let me acknowledge the more than 3,000 generations of the Turrbal peoples and the Yugerra peoples, who have performed ceremonies, conducted trade and maintained cultural practices on this land. May I also acknowledge all of our elders, those who have passed and those who are still with us, guiding us into the future. Let me also pay special respect to my family: my mother, Lyn; my aunts Evelyn Parkin and Merle Cashman; and members of the Logan elders, Aunty Peggy Tidyman and Aunty Betty McGrady, who on my swearing in to this parliament performed a moving blessing, a ritual of support. It is this way of beginning that fills me with incredible pride and provides me the grounding from which to speak my words in this place.

I am a proud Nunukul/Nughi woman of the Quandamooka nation, which takes in the islands and waters of Moreton Bay. As my grandmother was a Kanjuu woman, I also have ancestral ties into Queensland's far north. I pay tribute to all of my ancestors, including those of my mother's people from European nations. I come to this place as a member of this parliament, recognising the profound role that I play as a representative of the people of Algester. Being chosen by your local community to represent them is an incredible act of trust and I thank the people of my electorate for putting their trust in me. I remind myself every day of that trust and I hold it in the highest regard and with the desire to honour that trust in all I do.

I also recognise the significance of this moment in our state's history. I acknowledge that, as the first Aboriginal woman elected to the Queensland parliament and the first Indigenous minister in this House, I have an additional responsibility: one that holds the expectations and hopes of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and of those who value and seek out diversity in our civic society. But, of course, I am not alone in this responsibility. I acknowledge also the new member for Cook, who follows in footsteps created more than 40 years ago by Queensland's first Indigenous state parliamentarian, the earlier member for Cook, Mr Eric Deeral. Uncle Eric lit the beacon for people like me and other aspiring politicians, like Cheryl Thompson, a Iningai woman, who also ran at the last state election in the seat of Gregory. Although not elected this time, I hope to see Cheryl sit in this place in the future.

The beacon lit by Uncle Eric has been joined by beacons lit by women in my own community—women like Aunty Kath Walker, or Oodgeroo Noonuccal as she was later known, an internationally renowned poet who, the year after my birth, became the first Aboriginal woman to ever run as a Labor candidate in a state election. Or Aunty Rose Borey, who talks about the important role the union movement played in issues of equality on North Stradbroke Island during the late 1960s, which saw Quandamooka women taking action against unfair conditions. Or Aunty Margaret Iselin, who has carved out a path of self-determination with other elders on North Stradbroke Island. Seeing those beacons on the horizon has guided me to this place and, in doing so, has now lit the path for many more to follow—something I personally hope to support into the future.

I had the privilege until elected to this place to work on behalf of people in many walks of life in my role as a teacher, a public servant in both local and state government, a national manager of the Australian Red Cross and, in the most recent of months, as an official of the Queensland Council of Unions. I wish to acknowledge the many talented and hardworking public servants I have had the opportunity to work with as we supported the most vulnerable in our communities.

People like Kelly McKellar Nathan and Suzanne Thompson who I worked with in Brisbane City Council as we developed whole-of-sector business development programs and innovative social policy solutions, or Sharon Kinchella who I worked with in the Department of Communities as we built cultural competence solutions and community engagement frameworks. I would also like to acknowledge the incredible work that our state's teachers do to prepare and nurture the adults of the future. As a former high school teacher of more than a decade in our state schools and for a number of years in the United Kingdom, I worked side by side with truly talented educators. People like Jane Flynn who I taught with in an East London school, where going the extra mile to help students and their families was essential, or many of my friends from university, such as Helen Radvan, Amanda Johnson, Lowanna Dunn and many others who are still teaching with the same passion as when we all began in the early 1990s.

The schools in my electorate: Algester State School, Boronia Heights State School, Grand Avenue State School, Pallara State School, Forest Lake State High School, St John's College and St Stephens are all working incredibly hard and in very innovative ways to meet the needs of students in our community and I look forward to contributing to their hard work.

May I also recognise the incredible humanitarian work that the Australian Red Cross does in supporting Queensland's most vulnerable. I had the privilege to contribute to this work during my nearly seven years working with the Red Cross as one of their Queensland and later Australian managers. The ability to understand the needs of others, to share power inside our solutions and build trust are fundamental principles I sharpened when working with people like Greg Goebel, Matthew Cox and Leann Wilson and they remain principles I carry into my role as a local member. I have had the opportunity to work with many different people with many different views on the world. We did not always agree, of course, and there were moments of debate, but it was in our diversity of views that the seed of creativity blossomed to unite us in seeking to make our communities, our state and our country a better place.

But it is one aspect of the work I was engaged with at the Queensland Council of Unions that I wish to bring to the attention of the House and in doing so I acknowledge the support of Ron Monaghan, Ros McLennan, John Battams and other members of the Queensland Council of Unions executive. In my role I had carriage of the stolen wages campaign. Honourable members may be aware that this campaign has been underway since last century when many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders were compulsorily sent out to work in a variety of domestic and labouring roles. They worked long hours for months on end and often many hundreds of kilometres from their family and their lands. They had no say in the matter. Because of the colour of their skin and the policies of the day, many were never paid in full for their work. Through the stolen wages campaign I got to meet and represent many elders who as young men and women had their whole economic base taken from them, something that they and generations after them are still recovering from today.

On election day I was handed a small ziploc plastic bag. Inside that bag was \$8.25. It was a gift from one of those Aboriginal elders I had been working with in the stolen wages campaign, a woman who as a young person had her wages stolen from her and as a pensioner had very little to call her own. She had scraped together all that she could spare because she wanted to contribute to my campaign. Think about what \$8.25 means for those of us fortunate enough to be in this House today. Maybe a cold drink or the loose change floating around in your car or at the bottom of your handbag. For that elder, it was what she had managed to scrape together after covering the costs of her essentials: her food, her housing, her medical needs. That is how important this election was to her.

I have thought a great deal about that \$8.25 since the highs of election day. It represents a great deal of hope to that elder, hope that things could be different, that the generations after her could be saved from the terrible discrimination she experienced and the pain of being treated as less. That \$8.25 has galvanised my belief that every generation faces its own challenges and that we face those challenges with the hope that we can make things better for the generations that follow us. And it has left me thinking a great deal about the generations in my own family who have faced their fair share of challenges. I think in part of my parents, my mum, Lyn, a non-Indigenous Australian woman who grew up in Inala, and my dad, Douglas, a dark-skinned Aboriginal man who was born and raised on North Stradbroke Island—Quandamooka country. They married when they were both still teenagers in 1967, the year of the referendum, and remained married until dad's passing last year. I am sure honourable members can imagine what kinds of challenges they faced in the 1960s as a couple from two very different cultures. They faced discrimination in all its forms from all parts of our society and they battled inside poor government policies that worked against them and their dreams. They worked hard all their lives and they taught me and my three younger brothers Wesley, Rodney and Andrew, how important a good education and a decent job is when you are raising a family, something I am proud to be now teaching my two wonderful sons, Callum and Ethan.

Mum and Dad moved the family from North Stradbroke Island to the suburb of Woodridge in Logan City in the early 1970s. I went to Woodridge State School and Woodridge State High School, where I was fortunate enough to be taught by incredibly talented and dedicated teachers, something I have been very grateful for all of my life. We did it tough. Dad drove bulldozers for a living and Mum picked up unskilled work until later in life when she took up further study and completed a psychology degree. I wonder lately what \$8.25 would have meant to my mum as she and Dad worked hard to keep our family's collective head above the poverty line. My mum and dad's generation faced the challenges of creating a more equitable society where, no matter your wealth or your background, every person should have access to good health care and quality education and experience the dignity of work—things that I have been grateful to receive in my life and things I defend at all costs today.

But mostly I think about the struggles of the generation before Mum and Dad, and in particular I reflect on the stories of my two grandfathers, one a proud and powerfully strong Quandamooka man, the other a fiercely independent non-Indigenous man with English heritage. They both served and saw combat in World War II and as soldiers were treated by and large as equals. They both received the same pay and they both operated under the same conditions, more or less. Even looking at some of their photos from the war I see that there are so many similarities: soldiers, black and white, shoulder to shoulder, brothers in arms. When they returned to Australia and to Queensland, however, their stories took very different paths.

My non-Indigenous grandfather returned to an Australia and a Queensland that provided him with assistance to restart his life as a civilian. He was free to travel the country, work where he desired and was paid accordingly. He married, had four children, of which my mum is the eldest, and he has lived out his 88 years as, quite frankly, a genuinely grumpy old man, albeit quite ill at the moment. My Aboriginal grandfather, however, returned to a very different Australia and a very different Queensland. After putting his life on the line for our country he was never provided the same assistance as non-Indigenous soldiers. He technically had no control over where he could work or where he could travel. That was all controlled by the government. For many of his generation, their wages were not theirs to control and for the most part were never paid to them in full. He was never regarded a citizen of Australia even though his family had lived on the same lands for more than 3,000 generations and he never in his life held the right to vote. Yet today, his granddaughter is on her feet in the Parliament of Queensland speaking not only as a member but also as a minister commissioned by the Governor of this state. He married and raised his 15 children until a massive heart attack took his life at the age of 41, subsequently throwing his family into extreme poverty. For my grandmother, my father and his siblings at that time, \$8.25 would have literally made the difference between starvation and survival.

My two grandfathers and their vastly different stories remind us of their generation's struggle with the notion of equality, where people were treated differently because of their skin colour or their cultural background. We have come a long way since then, but there are still challenges for our generation to face if we are to ensure that we never return to the times of my grandfathers where inequality was the norm, or the earlier years of my parents' generation where discrimination went unchecked and where your wealth determined the kind of access you could have to front-line services like education and health.

I am committed to facing our generation's challenges with the hope of making Queensland a better place for all of us, black and white, rich and poor, Australian born or recently immigrated. For me, that gift of \$8.25 illuminates that guiding principle. It might not sound like much. In fact, for many people it might represent nothing more than a coffee and cake with friends. But I know that for my grandmother \$8.25 would have seemed like a fortune, and for my mother that would have made all the difference to our family in the lean times.


I know that even today for many families and individuals in my own electorate \$8.25 is the difference between putting a meal on the table tonight or not, ensuring that a child can attend the school excursion or simply having enough petrol in the car to get to work. For the Aboriginal elder who donated to my campaign, \$8.25 was a significant amount. It was all she had and she wanted to put it towards my campaign in the hope that one day, such as today, I might be taking a seat here in this place and facing the challenges of our generation with the hope of a better future. That is an incredibly humbling act of trust and I feel that sense of responsibility every day.

Though my presence here today represents many firsts in this House, this will not be the last time I stand to represent those in our community without a voice. In large part, I stand here today because of the many people who supported me during the campaign and, of course, there are too many to mention every one of them. However, I pay special acknowledgement to my campaign leadership team of Claudia Whitton and Doreen Awabdy, who are both in the gallery, Michael Foster and Milton Dick, and the many wonderful young women such as Clare Manton and Jess Tibbitts who formed what is now known as the Algester Girl Gang, along with the dedicated members of the ALP and the union movement. It was their collective dedication, patience, love and support, along with that of my family and friends, that carried me across the line on election day and I will always be grateful to each of them.

I also stand here because of the many people who have said to me, 'I trust you and I want you to make a difference': be it the father from Hillcrest who wants more opportunities for his family than he himself has been given, the mother from Algester who wants to work for a living wage, the small business owner at Forest Lake employing recently arrived migrants, the elder on a pension or the

child who looks at the world and sees the potential to achieve if they are given a fighting chance. I stand here for those people and I stand here facing the challenges of our generation on their behalf, hoping to make things better for the generations that follow us.

Mr Speaker and honourable members, it is my great honour to be a member of this parliament. I thank the people of Algester for the opportunity to represent them and I promise to work hard to deliver on that responsibility.

 **Mr STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (12.31 pm): Today I rise to second the motion moved on the address-in-reply and I do so proudly and with the greatest honour. I present my address in reply to the speech of His Excellency at the opening of the 55th Parliament of Queensland. I pledge my loyalty to this parliament, the people of Queensland and, more particularly, to the electors of Townsville. I am humbled by the confidence that the people of Townsville have placed in me to represent them in this House. Firstly, I pass on my sincere congratulations to the member for Nicklin on becoming the first Independent member for 100 years to take on the role of the Speaker of the House. Mr Speaker, I look forward to working with you over the coming years.

I am a proud North Queensland man who was born in the electorate of the member for Burdekin at Home Hill. Although I grew up in Brisbane, I started my teaching career in the electorate of the member for Gregory at Springsure. Three years later I transferred to Mackay and nine years after that, in 1999, I transferred to Townsville with my wife, two children and a son on the way. Back then my wife said to me, 'Scott, we'll do two years in Townsville and then move back to Mackay,' and like a good husband I said, 'Yes, dear.' Sixteen years later we still call Townsville home.

Not only do I call Townsville home, but so too do the North Queensland Cowboys, the Townsville Crocodiles and the Townsville Fire, the current national champions of the WNBL and the only Queensland women's professional basketball team. Later in the year, the V8 Supercars will call Townsville home for the Townsville 400 race.

Two months ago I was a high school principal at a large, high-performing school that was among an elite group of schools known as independent public schools. I had risen to the pinnacle of my career and achieved my dream job in what could be called a plum school. However, I put my job on the line and pursued a political career. Some say that my time as a high school principal has aptly prepared me for a life in politics. I assure members here today that I will not be issuing detentions for unruly behaviour or for not completing homework on time. I will leave that role to you, Mr Speaker. I hope that I will not be on the receiving end of any lunchtime detentions, even though that may delight several of my past students.

I was a student in state schools for my primary and secondary education and am part of a very special alumni with two ministers, the Hon. Kate Jones and the Hon. Coralee O'Rourke, as we call Kelvin Grove State College—Kelvin Grove State High as it was back then—our high school. I quickly point out that during my glory days at high school the Hon. Coralee O'Rourke was in the early years of primary school, while the Hon. Kate Jones was in mere nappies. My high school education taught me the most important and valuable lessons in life, those of tolerance, resilience, compassion, understanding, honesty and integrity.

My parents, Dawn and David Stewart, who next month will celebrate 57 years of marriage, were and still are very supportive of their three children. Through their continued love, parenting and self-sacrifice, they taught me how to be a good person and, later, a good parent. They were never my friends. They never wanted to be my friends as they had a more important role in my life, that is, to be my parents. That is the most important role bestowed on anyone.

On 26 December 1912 in Mount Isa, Phyllis Davidson was born into a pioneering family and almost 96 years later, on 31 August 2008, she passed away. She lived a life that saw the war to end all wars and, not 30 years later, she saw another one. She listened to the wireless and later in life watched TV, which became colour in 1977. She saw a man walk on the moon and the Berlin Wall rise and eventually fall. She saw two aeroplanes fly into buildings, which would lead to a change in the world such as this generation has never seen before. She saw a Beatle get shot, a president get murdered and a Prime Minister go for a swim and never return. She wept the day a princess was married and she wept again the day that that princess was killed in a motor vehicle accident. She watched Australia win the America's Cup and the Davis Cup, and host two Olympic Games, and she cheered until she could not talk anymore. She marvelled at five grandchildren being born and as three great grandchildren entered the world. In 1942, during the Second World War, in Townsville Phyllis Davidson worked for the American Red Cross where her role was to assist American service men and women located in Australia. Her role was very similar to what we would now refer to as a liaison officer.

I take the House back further in time to 1864 when John Melton Black from Woodstock Station, who was in partnership with pastoralist and businessman Robert Towns, dispatched a small party to search for a coastal site that would be suitable for a port to be established. Woodstock Station was located to the south-west of where Townsville is now located. Prior to 1864, all livestock was shipped through the most northern port located at Port Denison, now known as Bowen. A suitable site was found at the mouth of Ross Creek and it was determined that a settlement could be established to support the port. Within three years, Townsville had become the major port and service centre for the Cape River, Gilbert, Ravenswood, Etheridge and Charters Towers goldfields. It encouraged the pastoral industry to expand further west and the sugar industry, now worth billions of dollars annually, to be developed in coastal towns to both the north and south of Townsville.

During the last state election, the former LNP government hatched a plan that would see the sale of assets across the state and the Port of Townsville was one of the assets on the table to be auctioned off to the highest bidder. What the then Premier and Treasurer failed to see was that the Port of Townsville was what established our city. It is the very heart of the city that pumps life into our industries such as mining and agriculture. It pumps life into our beef and livestock export industries and it pumps life into our very city. To the people of Townsville, the port is more than just an asset where ships come to load and unload commodities. It is part of our DNA. It is part of the very social fabric that makes up our community. It is where Phyllis Davidson and thousands of other Townsville residents went to welcome home the ships that brought back our troops from various conflicts during the Second World War. The government's lack of understanding of the pivotal role the port has had in shaping our city and its people was met with contempt by those very people.

On 22 November 1933 Phyllis Davidson gave birth to a son named David John. In the 1950s and 1960s David was employed by the Townsville Regional Electrical Board, or TREB as everyone in the area knew it back then. In those days each region across Queensland was responsible for supplying and maintaining electricity in the area. In the event of the electricity supply being disrupted, maintenance crews were sent out to perform the necessary repairs to return the power supply to those affected. David was one of those crew members who restored lost power.

In the years to come TREB became NORQEB. Then another restructure of the state's electricity suppliers saw the abolition of the multiple boards, with Energex replacing SEQEB and Ergon set up for the rest of the state to provide services to over 700,000 consumers. This represented a major departure from the previous decentralised nature of the industry, with Ergon's headquarters transferring to Brisbane.

In 2004 the Townsville City Council, along with the then state member for Townsville, Mike Reynolds, rallied for the head office of Ergon Energy, the regional Queensland electricity supplier, to be based in Townsville. After a 10-year battle with the south-east corner of the state, Ergon's headquarters is now located on the corner of Flinders and Stanley streets, Townsville, and employs over 400 people to help provide electricity to regional Queensland. However, the former government again failed to see the significance of the government owned Ergon Energy and its connection with regional people and specifically the people of Townsville when they put this asset on the table for sale.

The city is also home to the largest hospitals in Northern Australia. They provide genuine care to more than 600,000 residents across North Queensland—as far north as Cape York Peninsula and the Torres Strait Islands, and west to Mount Isa and the Gulf of Carpentaria, and south to Sarina. It is also the major teaching hospital for James Cook University's schools of medicine, nursing and allied health and for the Barrier Reef Institute of TAFE.

Townsville has, over the past 150 years, produced some memorable leaders who have shaped our city and state as we know it. In January this year George Vivian Roberts, a former Townsville city councillor, passed away aged 99, and just one week short of his 100th birthday. Mr Roberts had played an important role in locating James Cook University and Lavarack Army Barracks at the foot of Mount Stuart.

Both of these institutions have become essential to educating and protecting not only North Queensland but also Northern Australia. James Cook University is arguably one of the nation's leading universities, and in certain faculties a world leader. Lavarack Barracks is now the largest Army barracks in Australia and is occupied by 1, 2 and 3 Royal Australian Regiment or some 6,500 service men and women.

It would be remiss of me not to highlight the work of Eddie Koiki Mabo as a leader. Koiki Mabo was a Torres Strait Islander man born on Mer Island—we call it Murri Island. He started work in 1967 at James Cook University as a gardener when he was 31 years old. Eddie Mabo's story of proving land ownership for Indigenous people in the High Court of Australia is quite famous across our

country. In 1992 Eddie Mabo passed away aged 55, and five months prior to the announcement by the High Court of Australia overturning the doctrine of terra nullius opening the way for our nation's first people to claim ownership of the land.

In 2008 JCU renamed their library the Eddie Koiki Mabo Library in honour of the research he conducted during his lunch breaks in the library that led to his actions. It is just as important for me to highlight to all members here today that one of Eddie Koiki Mabo's grandsons Cade Mabo-Edwards is one of the Premier's Anzac prize winners for the centenary of the Anzacs landing at Gallipoli and will be at the dawn service in Anzac Cove on 25 April this year. It is quite a remarkable achievement by a bright young man from Pimlico State High School, where I was principal.

I would like to acknowledge the work of Professor Gracelyn Smallwood, or Auntie Gracelyn as most in Townsville know her. She grew up in a tin house with a dirt floor, one of 18 siblings of whom she is the third eldest. Her father was one of the stolen generation; stolen from his family from the North Queensland town of Ayr and banished to the notorious Palm Island dormitories.

She was awarded the Queensland Aboriginal of the Year in 1986 and an Order of Australia in 1992 for service to public health, particularly HIV-AIDS education. In 1993 she was the first Indigenous Australian to receive a Masters of Science in Public Health at the JCU for her work on HIV education in North Queensland's Indigenous communities. In 2007 she had one of her greatest achievements; the Deadly Award for Outstanding Lifetime Achievement in Indigenous Health. In 2011 Auntie Gracelyn completed her PhD thesis 'Human rights and first Australians wellbeing'.

I have heard her speak with passion on many occasions in many different forums. But perhaps the saddest address I have heard from Auntie Gracelyn was the one she gave at the recent opening of the Mental Illness Fellowship of North Queensland where she cited the following statistics regarding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide rates. The rates of suicide are substantially higher in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, accounting for 4.2 per cent of all Indigenous deaths compared to 1.6 per cent for non-Indigenous Australians in 2010. In males the suicide rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders is highest in the 25- to 29-year-old age group and is more than four times the rate in the corresponding age group for non-Indigenous males. In females the suicide rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders is highest in the 20- to 24-year-old age group and is more than five times higher than their corresponding non-Indigenous counterparts.

Auntie is calling on governments, both national and state, to work in partnership with the Indigenous mental health leaders, experts and stakeholders to close the gap with regard to the mental health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders. That is something that I am sure that every one of us sitting in this chamber today can recognise is needed if we are truly going to close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous health concerns.

I have spent a deal of time talking about the history of Townsville and its people. The city will celebrate its 150th birthday next year. As a city we have seen the boom times and we have seen the bust times. We have endured the ravages of cyclones that have flattened our buildings, the dismay of floods as they have swept our life's work away and the anguish of fires as they have destroyed our structures leaving behind only the broken shells of what once was.

But Townsville was forged by tough men and women who did not lay blame or want compensation. They wiped away their tears, rolled up their sleeves and with mate standing beside mate started to rebuild the city of Townsville. Right now the city of Townsville is on its knees. While we have not weathered a cyclone or endured a flood or sheltered from a fire, we have been at the mercy of a former government that saw the only way to forge ahead was to slash jobs and close vital government services and programs. Couple this with the fall in mineral prices globally resulting in the downturn in the mining industry, the fallout from those decisions has been almost economically catastrophic with unemployment rates at 8.9 per cent and youth unemployment at 17.4 per cent. Insolvencies are amongst the highest in the country and commercial rental vacancies are at 23 per cent, which is an all-time high.

Trade at a global level will see increased consumer demands for local commodities including coal, sugar and beef to countries such as Japan, China and particularly Indonesia. However, we have an aggressive competitor who is quickly positioning themselves as the conduit for trade through Northern Australia. Darwin is forging ahead in developing itself as the lead city for trade and transport with Southern Asia. We need to act quickly and decisively if we are to rebuild the Townsville economy through attracting industry and creating opportunities for investors to grow business by our ability to deliver on projects that are not hamstrung by bureaucratic red tape, that facilitate expediency in delivering outcomes and are supported by modern infrastructure and sustainable but affordable

resources. This vision for Townsville should not and will not rely solely on state government spending, but result through partnerships with local and foreign private investors supported by various levels of government.


The opportunities for Townsville as a serious player on the national and international stage are endless, but it will take bravery to make tough decisions that are shaped by a very clear vision for the city. This has already started with the announcement by the Premier that \$100 million has been committed over the next four years to build a new stadium.

Mr Speaker, earlier in my speech I spoke of a woman by the name of Phyllis Davidson, who saw the growth of the Port of Townsville, who saw the new Townsville Hospital built, who saw the ring-road built and who saw the Townsville Strand get redeveloped. All these projects that helped build a city were the vision of the Labor Party—projects that reflected faith in the Townsville economy through the many thousands of jobs that have been created. Phyllis Davidson was my grandmother and her son David John Stewart, who worked at TREB, is my father. Now it is my turn to help create a Townsville that will be vibrant—a city that will be the north Australian hub of business, industry, agriculture, education, health and defence; a city that thrives in business on a national and international level; and a city that is supported by its community.

I would like to acknowledge the work of my young campaign manager, Ben Gertz, who hopefully is present here today in the gallery. Ben is an Aboriginal man from Mount Isa and, despite his young age of 24, he ran an outstanding campaign like a person twice his age. I also acknowledge Patricia Schluter, the Townsville team's organiser, who is a single mum and who dedicated 24 hours a day to the campaign ensuring that the three Labor candidates in Townsville were elected. I would like to congratulate my fellow regional Townsville members—the member for Mundingburra, the Hon. Coralee O'Rourke, and the member for Thuringowa, Aaron Harper. During the election campaign, the three of us ran a united campaign. Without their support and encouragement I doubt whether I could have made it through.

Finally, I thank my family who loved me, supported me and endured me during those rough campaign days. To my eldest daughter, Tyler Jane: you have turned into a fine young woman whom I admire for your determination and courage. To my middle daughter, Jordan Mackenzie: I cherish your compassion and sense of humour. And to my young man, Lachlan James: I never cease to be amazed by your knowledge and zest for learning. But most of all to my wife, Jackie, who is my rock and who stood beside me when I needed her the most: my love for you can never be measured.

Mr Speaker, you do not need to be Einstein to work out that family is the most important thing in my world. I draw strength from them and my values are shaped by them. I thank the people of Townsville for the faith that they have given me in this role. I will not disappoint them.

 **Mr SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (12.51 pm): In starting my contribution today in the formal address-in-reply debate, I would like to congratulate all members who have been returned to this place and in particular those members who have been elected to this parliament for the very first time. I certainly wish them all the very best with regard to their representation of the people who have elected them to this place.

I would also like to acknowledge and express my thanks to and respect for His Excellency the Governor of Queensland, who does his job and fulfils his role with enormous grace and contribution and energy on behalf of the people of Queensland. I would also like to express my loyalty and affection for Her Majesty the Queen and the wonderful role that she has fulfilled over such a long period of time as our monarch and for the way that she has carried herself with extraordinary dignity, gaining admiration from right around the world.

To my constituents in Southern Downs: thank you very much for again putting your trust and faith in me as your local member of parliament, a position which I have held now for almost a quarter of a century in one way or another. In terms of my commitment to the people of Southern Downs—and prior to that to the people of Warwick and Carnarvon, which were my two predecessor seats—I thank them for their support and also for recognising that I have been able to achieve significant things on their behalf. If you are unable to achieve things on behalf of your constituents then you certainly do not deserve their support into the future.

It is a great honour to be elected to represent people in this parliament. Indeed, I think I heard the honourable member for Dalrymple reflecting on this point yesterday. Some 89 members of parliament are chosen out of a large population only once every three years. I am not so sure what the odds are on that, but they are not very good odds. I am not sure that Sportsbet would give very good odds. After this last election I am not so sure they will be issuing any odds on state elections anymore. I think they copped a bit of a flogging along the way with regard to that.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Yes, but that was not necessarily the case. Some 89 people out of a population of 4.6 million have the opportunity to come into this parliament to represent their fellow Queenslanders.

Mr Speaker, I also indicate that I will be moving an amendment to the address-in-reply motion, something which is a little unusual in this place and something which I have seen happen once in this place in 1990 after the election of the Goss government. Indeed, it is to correct what I think is a fundamental omission from His Excellency's speech of areas which were importantly outlined by this government during the course of the election campaign and which relate to debt and debt reduction. I move the following amendment—

That the motion be amended by inserting the following words:

'This House however requests the government demonstrate financial accountability by:

- tabling a quarterly report updating the level of gross state debt and the total of debt repayments;
- ensuring gross debt will reduce each financial year;
- publishing prior to the next sitting day a formal definition, including a minimum value, of what constitutes a state asset as it relates to Labor's 'no asset sales' pledge.'

Tabled paper: Motion to amend address-in-reply [225].

I will speak a little bit more about that later because it is an extremely important amendment that holds this government to account.

Mr Hinchliffe interjected.

Mr SPRINGBORG: In which way? Mr Speaker, in response to the concern from the honourable Leader of the House, there is nothing in that amendment which is outside convention or precedent in this parliament. There have been attempted amendments to the address-in-reply debate previously in this parliament. As I indicated, some 25-odd years ago there was an amendment moved in the post-Fitzgerald era which was aligned to the election of the new Goss government when they came into power. There were issues that were committed to by the previous government around areas of accountability—whether it be around administrative appeals in Queensland, the issue of the establishment of freedom of information legislation or a number of other accountability bodies—which were then put forward as an amendment to the address-in-reply motion for the consideration of this parliament.


I say to the honourable Leader of the House that it is up to him and other members to consider the merits and the veracity of the amendment and to debate that during the course of this address-in-reply debate. It is up to members in this place to put forward particular amendments which they believe may actually improve what has been proposed to the parliament for its consideration. It does not negate the intention of the platform speech, which was outlined by His Excellency when he opened parliament only two days ago. Indeed, if you look at the conventions which are actually established by precedent, if an amendment is moved it should seek to be to that particular question—not to in any way negate it but to actually build on it, and that is what this does. It actually reinforces a positive around the area of accountability, and I will go into some of that in a little while.

I also place on record my extraordinary gratitude and affection for my family, who have supported me now for some 10 terms in the time that I have been in this place. This is my 10th term. My wife—we were married only a month before I was elected to this place—has done an absolutely outstanding job in raising our four children in my absence, and that certainly is not easy. It is certainly not easy when I work on many occasions some 3½ hours drive, or 300 kilometres, from home and getting home is not something you can do on a daily basis.

I think that, regardless of where members come from, we should reflect upon the enormous support of their husbands, their wives, their partners and their families in general because being a member of parliament does take up a lot of your time. You are public property and something has to give. I do not think there has ever been a person who has been elected to this place who has been able to find that perfect balance, notwithstanding the fact that in their hearts their families come first but in their actions they often do not come first—they come further down the list as they attend to their other duties, whether it be in parliament, in their electorate or more broadly on committees or even ministerial or other high office duties. So I thank my fantastic wife, Linda, and our four children as well. I also thank my parents, who probably thought they had a son who was going to be far more involved in actually putting my shoulder to the wheel on the farm and I was not. I put my shoulder to the wheel in another way.

It is important to go back to what was said in this place yesterday and what has been crafted by this government since their election and even in the lead-up to that. At best what they said to the people of Queensland was nebulous because they basically came into government without a comprehensive plan. They promised certain things to the people of Queensland and there were certain things that they promised that they would not do for the people of Queensland, but there was not a lot of what they actually said—

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.30 pm.

 **Mr SPRINGBORG:** As I was saying before the lunch break, what we have on the other side is an inexperienced government which is basically making it up as it goes. If people are questioning that, just look at the fact that they departed from what the convention usually is for an opposition hoping to form government in this state. The convention is to seek briefings in the caretaker period. There were no briefings generally sought in the caretaker period prior to the election, with one exception in the area of education which was not taken up. Briefings were not sought in the portfolios of Health, State Development, Transport, Premier or Treasury. That is the simple reality. Those briefings were not sought until at least two weeks after the state election had been held.

I remember in previous times in opposition, and when others in the Labor Party have previously been in opposition, routinely seeking caretaker briefings to inform the putative government on what the issues were to assist them in formulating and finalising their particular election manifesto. That is not unusual. Indeed, I remember seeking such a briefing when previously in opposition from Leo Keliher, who was the then director-general of the department of Premier at the time of the Beattie government and at a stage when we had 11 members in parliament. It does not matter how far away you believe you are from forming government; there is an obligation to make sure that you properly inform yourself. In this case I do not think they really expected to win but they did. The reality is that the government is there; we are in opposition. We have to learn our lessons but they have to learn the lesson that you need to be more prepared when you are coming into government.

The other day we saw some glaring omissions in the Governor's speech which outlined the manifesto of this government. Not once was agriculture mentioned. It is an extremely important portfolio area in this state which produces some \$10 billion to \$11 billion worth of production in this state. It is of enormous value to the economy of Queensland. Not once was Transport or Main Roads mentioned. In order to get our major commodities it is very important to have the necessary transportation for a whole range of interactions in the state, whether it be social or otherwise. There was no mention of that and mines were hardly mentioned. I do not believe they were mentioned at all. They are the areas which underpin the economy of this state and there is a magnifying effect which goes on from there. There were some glaring omissions. It was really putting together press releases and a few policies which the government announced during the election. There was not a far-flung manifesto of what they were expecting to do when they got into government.

In my electorate people would like to know whether things that have been committed to after proper assessment are going to go ahead under this government. The Emu Swamp Dam, which is just south of Southport and which will be a new water supply for the people of the Granite Belt, has been sought after for at least two decades. It was approved by the Newman government. It will provide about 4,000 megalitres of water for irrigation purposes and town purposes into the future. The people of the Southern Downs want to know whether that particular approval which has gone through the assessment process over a long period of time is going to stand under this government. It is vitally important for the future of that area.

Similarly, will Royalties for the Regions funding which was made under round 4 of the allocations for the Southern Downs Regional Council for the replacement of five bridges in places such as Mullins Road, Sandy Creek Road, Tummaville Road, Bellinghams Road and Lyndhurst Lane be made available and committed to? There is also the water supply reticulation upgrade north of Stanthorpe, towards Applethorpe. These particular funding proposals were put in properly by the Southern Downs Regional Council, and I do believe there is a reasonable expectation that they should go ahead because they have been properly assessed. I have seen nothing to date that indicates this government will not support that, but I think it would be very good if such a commitment were able to be made to assure the people of the Southern Downs electorate.

Similarly, the work which was done by Scott Emerson and the Department of Transport and Main Roads in planning for an upgrade—a whole new safety program—of the Eight Mile intersection on the New England Highway just north of Warwick is also very important. A commitment was made to plan for that and allocate funding when the Commonwealth came to the party on the normal 20 per

cent, 80 per cent state-Commonwealth arrangement because it is a National Highway. There is no expectation from the community that it comes this year or next. There is an expectation that the planning will proceed. Very importantly, there needs to be some form of allocation made in the forward estimates to ensure that that particular unsafe intersection is addressed sometime in the future.

I was most interested to hear the honourable Minister for Health earlier today again rewrite history. I would like to draw some matters to his attention. He basically laid credit for the complete abolition of dental long waits in Queensland to the work of the former Labor government in the federal jurisdiction. It is very interesting that all Australian states had a similar problem but other states were not able to similarly fix it. The honourable Minister for Health indicated that it could only be fixed because it was Commonwealth money. That is absolute and complete revisionism and does not tell the truth with regard to the facts. The money allocated by the Commonwealth government was one-seventh of the program. It was around 15 per cent of the overall program. The lion's share—85 per cent of the money—came from the state government. We had people who were waiting up to 10 years in Queensland when the recommendation was up to two years for a routine dental appointment. That was not able to be done by Labor previously.


What made the greatest difference which they have now committed to not pursuing in future as part of their policy arrangement as a commitment to the honourable member for Nicklin is outsourcing. Outsourcing made the difference. Up to 100,000 dental vouchers were provided to patients in order to have their teeth done. Those people were extraordinarily grateful for that. Another thing which was very important was our investment in additional infrastructure—dental chairs in places like Wide Bay, metro south and right throughout Queensland—to increase our public dental capacity. If it were not for outsourcing and breaking down ideological barriers, over 60,000 Queenslanders would still be living in pain. They were basically swept under the carpet by this government which just could not care less.

This morning in parliament we did not get a straight answer from the member for Woodridge when he was asked whether he agreed with the assertion by the Premier in the letter of undertaking to the honourable member for Nicklin that Labor will continue with its policy of never outsourcing. They said they never outsourced previously. They said they do not believe in it and they have not done it.

We will actually tell you, Mr Speaker, why the honourable member for Woodridge dodged this particular question because it is extremely instructive. In the last full year of the Labor government, they outsourced \$986 million worth of health services—I repeat, \$986 million worth of health services—and that was in their own budget papers. The year before that they outsourced \$979 million worth of services. I do not want the House to think it was something that had always been static because, not to be outdone, in 2009-10 it escalated from \$800 million to \$979 million. It had gone up \$179 million from 2009-10 to 2010-11. We cannot believe anything the honourable member for Woodridge says. If anyone wants to understand why, they should go back and look at his reputation when he was Attorney-General in Queensland and he actually tried to explain away and fiddle the figures with regard to SPER debts in this state. He tried to recreate the debts so that it did not look as bad as it was. He was subject to an adverse finding in this parliament by the Ethics Committee at the time, and I think it was report No. 121 or thereabouts.

Again, could we actually have a little bit of truth when it comes to the issue of outsourcing? Outsourcing is something which has been supported by all sides of politics in this state over a long time, and it makes sense—whether it be with Mater or a whole range of other community organisations out there that can provide certain services, like the Royal Flying Doctor Service, St Vincent's, CareFlight, you name it. Indeed, who are the ones who put together the contract for the Sunshine Coast University Private Hospital? It was those members opposite. That was a \$2.2 billion project which was outsourced with regard to the construction and also the hard facilities maintenance, and the state made a contribution of some \$800 million.

Let us not have any rewriting of history. It makes sense to have partnerships to deliver good health services into the future. That just goes to show again that if the health minister says anything we need to check the record of this place and, very importantly, check the record of the Service Delivery Statements from the time that Labor were previously in government in Queensland.

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (2.41 pm): I rise to second the amendment to the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. It is my great pleasure to do so when we look at what we have contained in the address-in-reply amendments to

the Governor's address, and I will address those amendments throughout my discourse this afternoon. Mr Speaker, I again thank you for your ascension to the role of Speaker. I want to congratulate you for that, as I did yesterday in the motion of confidence we debated.

Following the election and the commencement of the 55th Parliament, I want to thank the people of Surfers Paradise for their faith in me. It is the fifth time I have been elected and I pledge to honour that faith with a relentless commitment to serve my constituents. On the Gold Coast, we had a significant result compared to the overall result. Out of the 12 seats in the region, we won 11 of them, including Sid Cramp in the seat of Gaven and all the other seats that we maintained as well. I acknowledge the government won the seat of Waterford and I want to pay tribute to Michael Latter, who was our former member there. It certainly was a great result on the Gold Coast. I want to thank all of the people on my campaign team. I thank my wife, Stacey, who enjoyed the garden party we had the other day here at Parliament House. I thank all of my campaign team, including my campaign director, Craig Wallace, the people who worked on pre polling, the volunteers we had and my SEC executive.

I came into this place in 2004 having contested unsuccessfully in 2001 when I achieved a personal vote of just over 21 per cent and when there was no prospect of ever winning the seat of Surfers Paradise. It has been very nice to see the result we have been able to achieve on the Gold Coast as an LNP team and to have personally ended up with the safest seat two-party preferred, and I really want to acknowledge that. My honourable colleague, the Leader of the Opposition, has the greatest number of first preference votes on our side, and the same goes for the Premier in her seat on the Labor side. For the first time ever—and I think this is significant—this occurred in a metropolitan seat, along with my colleague, the member for Mermaid Beach, who I think is at No. 6 on the pendulum on the conservative side. When a metropolitan seat has such a representation in terms of the margin, that is something that should be acknowledged, and I want to thank the people of Surfers Paradise and the people of the Gold Coast.

On behalf of the people of Surfers Paradise though, I am very disappointed with the government's lack of plans for my electorate and for the Gold Coast. I also wish to express my concern about the prospect of what plans this government may have for the Gold Coast. When it came to local plans for Surfers Paradise, in Ashmore State School there is a new prep covered area that is being delivered, and that is something I promised before the election. All members on the Gold Coast came together to support Project Booyah, which is a local initiative to help people who are disengaged from employment. I will speak about some of those matters later. That program is now at risk because there is no promise that the current government will actually honour that.

I turn to the law and order provisions, and I know that you, Mr Speaker, have expressed concerns in your role as the member for Nicklin about those law and order provisions. I can assure all members of the House—and all members of the Gold Coast will acknowledge this—that there has been a significant change in the sense of wellbeing for the people living in the suburbs on the Gold Coast who had this sense that other people had taken over our town.

We have the sixth biggest city in Australia, and insidious forces will prosper when people do nothing because most of us do not presume that those sorts of people are out and about and that those are the sorts of things that have taken over our town. It was not just bikie gangs, as the member for Bundamba has asserted; there were nefarious people who were basically responsible for and often associated with outlaw motorcycle gangs, tattoo parlours and massage parlours. It actually implicated a lot of other jurisdictions and other parts of jurisdictions. We have had health concerns, taxation concerns and Federal Police and justice concerns, and those things have changed since September 2013 when that incident happened in Broadbeach that necessitated the legislation that our government brought in.

It is really important for the sake of the safety of families on the Gold Coast that we do not see a winding back of those provisions. I know that the Attorney-General has announced as part of the election campaign that there will be a royal commission into these sorts of events, but those provisions are really important for the safety of people on the Gold Coast—and the perception of safety of people—including things like the tourism economy. For those of us who love to live, work and play there, we do not want to have a return to what happened over so many years where those of us who lived there knew something was happening but no-one seemed to be doing anything about it. That means that it is not just down to our Police Service to be responsible for that. As I have already mentioned, and as we did in government, it is a matter of coordinating a number of different organisations and sometimes jurisdictions to make sure we do not have a winding back of those law and order provisions.

We are also concerned about the significant road and infrastructure plans that we announced during the election campaign, some of which are associated with automatic or Main Roads and Transport planning that will go ahead in my electorate. One example is the widening of Bundall Road, which is an important link between the electorates of Southport and Mermaid Beach to the north and south of my electorate. We are really concerned because those things need to go ahead for a city that is still growing, as everyone knows.

The Commonwealth Games are going to be a significant impost on services, and transport is the most significant issue that the Gold Coast City Council has acknowledged needs to be sorted out so that people can enjoy the experience we know they are going to enjoy. The people of the Gold Coast are confident that we can deliver a great games, and that is now down to the member for Ashgrove, the new Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games. I pledge to work closely with the government to make sure that we have a positive atmosphere about the preparations for the Commonwealth Games and to make sure we do deliver. When I was previously the opposition leader, I certainly supported the then Premier Anna Bligh to make sure this would be a wonderful thing for our state and especially for the city of the Gold Coast. It is really Queensland's games and it is important that we deliver those issues, including those transport and infrastructure issues that I have already mentioned.

Ms Jones: I'm happy to work with you.

Mr LANGBROEK: Thank you, I take that interjection. As I have mentioned, I want to support the amendments proposed by the member for Southern Downs, the Leader of the Opposition. I am disappointed that the government used His Excellency the Governor on such a significant occasion as the opening of the parliament to politicise what should be the clear direction of the Labor government. It could and should have been done with much more grace. So much for the noble and lofty sentiments expressed in this House by the Premier and Deputy Premier just two days ago at your election and again yesterday about how they intend to conduct business.

Having seen question time this morning, to my mind we have gone back to the publicly magnanimous but privately snide era of the former member for South Brisbane, Anna Bligh. On Wednesday, our new Premier said on the radio that Queenslanders are tired of combative politicians and they want people to work together. I say that we should not look at what they say; we should look at what they do. The tone of the government was set by the nasty vitriol directed at the former government contained in the Governor's address.

Mr Speaker, I would ask you to cast your mind back to Her Excellency the former Governor Penelope Wensley's address to the 54th Parliament in April 2012. For those who want to question this I would ask them to go back and look at that address, which was a considered oration on the very clear direction of the LNP government. We set out exactly what we were going to do. It was not a political statement of our beliefs, and I felt dismayed at the lack of courtesy shown to His Excellency in asking him to present such a speech in contravention of the conventions of parliament. Notwithstanding its contents, it was amazing because of the things that were not mentioned. We have already heard that there was no mention of agriculture, no mention of trade, no mention of mining—or if there was, it was a cursory one—no mention of transport—

Mrs Frecklington: And no mention of roads.

Mr LANGBROEK:—and no mention of roads. I take the interjection from the member for Nanango. It reminds me of the lack of grace exhibited by the Deputy Premier on 31 January, election night, while appearing on Channel 9 where the member for South Brisbane was so insufferably smug, gloating and maintaining the diatribe of the campaign. The votes were in and there was no need to continue the campaign rhetoric. There were several assertions contained in the Governor's speech which require clarification, and the first is the ALP government's determination to reinstate the Skilling Queenslanders for Work programs.

I am the first to acknowledge that we never said they did not work. We never said that the analysis by Deloitte was not valid. What we did say was that we could not afford to duplicate the federal government's responsibilities at a state level. When I became the minister the cupboard was bare. There was a contribution of \$100 million a year by the state government, and the federal government was responsible for those employment programs. I do not deny that when I was on the other side we knew that they were programs which were valuable. Today the government quoted from a letter that I wrote to my colleague, the Leader of the Opposition, acknowledging the people we met in Goondiwindi who are delivering programs such as Get Set for Work and Skilling

Queenslanders for Work. The important thing for us to also consider is that Skilling Queenslanders for Work, and for disengaged children Get Set for Work, are programs that had to be developed because of the former government's lack of performance in the roles of education and training. There was a need for programs such as the ones that we brought in. We were giving money directly to schools to stop children from being disengaged. That is why the former government's solution was to bring in Get Set for Work and Skilling Queenslanders for work, neither of which guaranteed people jobs. I am the first to acknowledge that they are good programs, and this government now has a mandate to introduce those programs. We have heard a number of claims, one of which is that they are going to create 32,000 jobs. Those are the sorts of things that we will now be monitoring. They are the facts about Skilling Queenslanders for Work.

I have had discussions and written to federal members of parliament and ministers who were responsible for employment programs to say that it was their responsibility. As I recall, the only other state which was delivering programs like Skilling Queenslanders for Work or Get Set for Work was South Australia back in 2012 or 2013, and it was to the amount of about \$6 million. We had inherited a situation where the cupboard was bare, and when we were trying to right the Queensland economy we could not in all good conscience spend \$100 million on programs for which the federal government was responsible.

We have always said that Treasury told us Queensland's fiscal position and outlook was unsustainable and that restoration must be an urgent priority for the 54th term of parliament. Today, in response to my query whether they would commit to the three fiscal surpluses forecast by Treasury, the government said that it was only Peter Costello and the Commission of Audit who recommended that the fiscal balance should be the one that we looked at and not just the operating balance. I know that it can be complicated for people to understand the difference. Basically, the simple answer is that it was not just Peter Costello who recommended that in the Commission of Audit; it was also Doug McTaggart and Sandra Harding. I think it is a terrible thing for the Treasurer and the government to be questioning the Commission of Audit because they are also then impugning the character of people like Sandra Harding, Doug McTaggart and all of the other people who worked on it—especially because the incoming Treasury brief confirmed their advice.

Ms Trad: Just table the brief!

Mr LANGBROEK: I take that interjection from the Deputy Premier. They can table their brief. Why don't they table their brief? I know it is in there, they know it is in there, and the important thing is that they can table their brief now. We did the responsible thing. We reined in spending in a fiscally and socially responsible way whilst maintaining front-line services, and there is no better example of that than what we do with the TAFE system. If you listen to those opposite, TAFE is the only way that people can receive training. TAFE is an outstanding example of a training system which has been around for 130 years, but the important issue is that we inherited a system that was withering on the vine. When I became the minister we had very low utilisation rates. TAFE had over 20 facilities that were either unfit for purpose, blocks of land or they were already for sale, which also calls into question what are the assets, what are the 'significant' assets and what are the 'major' assets that the government will no longer contend are the things that they said they were during the election campaign.


When we were in government we set up a Skills and Training Task Force to recommend a way forward for vocational training because students were voting with their feet. Across the nation, students and their parents were saying that whilst the public provider is valuable, it is not the only place where they wanted to receive training. We brought industry in—because it is industry which provides the jobs—and they said that because of the lack of flexibility that TAFE could provide in terms of the hours it was open and the courses that it was providing, students were going to other places for training. When you are the training minister, students are your customers. This meant that there would be a diminution of people going to TAFE, so TAFE was withering on the vine. At the South Bank TAFE, our flagship campus, the utilisation rate from six o'clock at night was five per cent. Everyone knows that originally TAFE was night school. Who would have thought that you would have a utilisation rate of five per cent for something which should be used to help people get another qualification or to upskill or reskill. We inherited utilisation rates across the state which were, on average, 40 per cent. We do value TAFE, which is why we took it out of the department. We decided that we should not be spending more money on administration than on teaching, and that was happening with the hundreds of millions of dollars in training that was in my department—


Mr Hinchliffe interjected.

Mr LANGBROEK: I take the interjection from the member for Sandgate, who had responsibility for employment in the Bligh government. We wanted to stop spending more money on administration than training, and that is why we have now have a TAFE system that is set to be part of the contestable funding pool. I would like to mention the wonderful people from the Ashmore TAFE who I have met in my electorate of Southport. We have opened a brand new TAFE facility with corporate logos and a real sense of wanting to show what TAFE can deliver in a contestable market. That is as a result of signing up to a national partnership with federal Labor ministers. There may be dinosaurs on the other side who say that TAFE should only ever be what it has been for 130 years, but I dealt with a number of federal ministers because of the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd governments who had us sign up to a circumstance where there was going to be contestable funding. As occurred in Victoria, funding should not just be opened up to people who rort the system. I note that that happened under a Labor government, which opened up market contestability too quickly and without any checks and balances. We must ensure that, if we have students who want to receive the training that they need to get the real jobs that industry says they will provide if you give us the right training and the right students, we also need to ensure that students can get those qualifications across the state and not just at TAFE. There are more students at TAFE than at every university in Queensland combined. There are over 180,000 students in TAFE. As a result of our reforms we have seen utilisation rates go up.

It is important to acknowledge that in my time as minister I always wanted to make sure we had more of a horizontal equalisation, between starting with a diploma or certificate and going all the way through to a PhD, and educational qualifications that meant that the educational pathway was something you could jump on and jump off depending on your life circumstances—starting a family, coming back to work or changing your job for example. In this generation, my children, who are 24, 22 and 17 are not going to do the same job forever. At times they will want to get different qualifications. We wanted to make sure we committed \$615 million a year for a VET investment plan to fund training in high-priority areas. It is wonderful to provide training that does not lead to a job. It is not so wonderful if you are the person getting that qualification. Of that \$615 million, \$134 million was for TAFE.

Under our stewardship TAFE has come to life. Go to TAFEs around the state and you will see occupancy now up to 60 per cent, heading to 90 per cent. In the time available to me it is really important that I acknowledge that we did many things in the time we were in government in the area of education and training. I am very proud of what I was able to do in what I believe is one of the most positive portfolios in the government. There are many other things I would like to address. All I can say about this government is that it has come to government without a plan. It is now making it up as it goes along. We want to make sure that we work for the purpose of the good governance of this state. Whether it is to do with assets or other things, we want to make sure that we hold the government to account for the things it has promised. We will hold it to three surpluses, no debt and no increase in taxes—making sure it can provide all those things under the magic pudding formula that the Deputy Premier is such a specialist in.

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, the Leader of the Opposition has moved an amendment to the address-in-reply motion. The question now before the House is that the amendment be agreed to. The amendment may be debated and once the House has determined that question, the debate will return to the motion as read or the motion as amended.

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (3.02 pm): I rise to speak in support of the motion as moved. I acknowledge the traditional owners of the land and pay my respects to elders past, present and future. I congratulate all members of the House sitting here today. We are here not only as representatives of our communities but also as custodians of the enduring democratic tradition. We must uphold it, respect it and protect it.

I stand here as a new Labor member of parliament and a member of the next generation of the Labor movement. I am humbled by my new role as Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Multicultural Affairs. It is both an honour and a tremendous responsibility. I look forward to the challenges ahead and am gripped by a sense of great potential.

I would like to give particular thanks to our Premier, Annastacia Palaszczuk, for placing her trust in me. I would also like to extend my gratitude to our Deputy Premier, Jackie Trad, for her friendship, mentorship and support over many years, as well as to Minister Kate Jones for her friendship and invaluable advice. I am proud to be in a cabinet with such strong and intelligent women.

I am also extremely proud to be the member for Waterford. The people of Waterford and Logan are the reason I am here, and I am honoured to be representing our community, which is strong, diverse and resilient. It is a community of generous and kind-hearted people, and I speak for my constituents when I say that we are optimistic about our future.

In Waterford we have one of the biggest and most active Labor Party branches in the state. I take this opportunity to thank all of the hardworking branch members for their support. Thank you to Evan Moorhead, our previous Labor member for Waterford and now the ALP state secretary in Queensland. Evan, you have left big shoes to fill. I also acknowledge my predecessor in the seat of Waterford, Mr Michael Latter, and wish him the very best in his future endeavours.

I would like to thank my local campaign team: Sean Leader, Dolly and Anton Chang, Kate Luke, Cynthia Kennedy, Romony Rogers, Aaron Bakota, Chris and Luke Moore, Chantelle Tibbotts, Melissa Venville and the Nielson family. To my campaign director, Jules Campbell: you have been most importantly a great friend. I cannot thank you enough.

Thank you also to Murray Watt, Susan McGrady, Milton Dick, Matt Collins, Sarah Abbott, Travis Dawson and Dee Madigan for all your advice and support before and during the campaign and I hope for many years to come. Thanks must also go to former state secretary Anthony Chisholm, who ran our very successful state election campaign.

Most importantly, I thank all of my campaign volunteers. They gave their time, energy and support over those seemingly endless days of doorknocking, and I could not have done it without them. We can be proud of the Waterford campaign. We talked about the issues that matter—about jobs, health, education, transport and the environment. And I am proud because we talked about our values—fairness, integrity and opportunity. It is those values the people of Waterford saw in them, and it is those values the people of Waterford saw in the Labor Party. It is those values I am now so honoured to bring to this place, the Queensland parliament, on behalf of the people of Waterford. Waterford is a place I am proud to call home. I am humbled by the faith my community has placed in me, and I promise that I will not let them down.

Politics sparked my interest at a very young age. Growing up, my grandfather Bernard was a fixture in our living room. Whenever parliament was sitting he would tune in to the ABC's broadcast of question time. With me sitting by his side, fixated by the television screen for that one hour, he taught me the importance of civic participation. Though he lacked the voice and opportunity to speak in this forum, he held parliament in that living room. That was his contribution to democracy. There was never a debate he was not across, an issue he did not seem to know everything about or a cause he was disinterested in. It is individuals like my grandad who protect and strengthen our democracy. When I think back to the crank of the volume knob and the flicker of green across the screen, I remember that my grandad is the reason I am in politics today.

My grandad emigrated from Northern Ireland, where political disputes were not always resolved peacefully, and his values were informed by that bloody conflict. He understood better than most that democracy is a time tested system that allows people with different beliefs and from different backgrounds to come together for a common good. My grandad also brought with him from Northern Ireland the value of solidarity. He was a working man, a nurse and an active union delegate in Melbourne, and the proudest moments of his career were working alongside the then secretary of the ACTU, Bob Hawke, in the late 1960s. My grandad always stood up for those who were treated unfairly, and he knew that the best way to ensure a fair Australia, the aspiration that motivates both me and the Labor Party, was to stand up for what is right and that doing so with your mates is always better than alone.

The Labor Party for me is not just a loose collection of interest groups; it is a family of true believers. It is a movement of people and ideas. The Labor Party for me is not just a political organisation; it is a belief in an optimistic and progressive future. The Labor Party is not just a government; it is ideas, principles and long-lasting reforms. It means a better-working, more inclusive and more prosperous Australia and Queensland for all of us.

My personal journey and my family's experience inspired me to run for parliament. I have been privileged in my career to fight for working people—people like my dad. Dad has worked as a carpenter for over 50 years, like his grandad before him. He taught me the value of not only hard work but also fairness at work. When I was quite young I remember coming home one day with my sister to find my mum quite frantic on the phone because Dad had injured himself at work and was taken to hospital. It was an incredibly stressful time for our family, but the one thing my parents did not have to worry about was how they were going to pay the bills. They were okay because Dad had access to first-class public health care and a strong workers compensation scheme, both legacies of Labor governments.

Workers compensation makes the difference for many working families in Queensland, and I am proud to be part of the Palaszczuk government that will reinstate Queensland's previous successful workers compensation scheme. We will restore the rights of injured workers to sue negligent employers when they are injured at work. One of my first cases working as a young employment lawyer has always stood out for me. It was an unfair dismissal case for a woman named Lyn Hastie. Lyn was a middle-aged forklift driver. She rolled her ankle at the end of a shift and her employer refused to let her return to work. She was stood down indefinitely without pay and she was forced to resign. Unfair workplace laws made it a really tough fight but, after almost 12 months and many legal hurdles, Lyn was finally successful and won compensation. It was the plight of people like Lyn that drove me to fight for those who have been treated unjustly and I would not have had the opportunity to take on cases like Lyn's if it was not for the work given to me by our union movement.

Today I want to give particular thanks to AMWU Secretary Rohan Webb, to National President Andrew Dettmer and also all of the officials that I have had the pleasure of working with who do an incredible job day in, day out representing the rights of working people. Thank you also to Gary Bullock and United Voice, Michael Ravbar and the CFMEU, Wendy Streets and the FSU, the Plumbers Union, the ETU, the Not 4 Sale campaign and the Nurses' Union. I also want to thank my former colleagues at Hall Payne Lawyers, particularly John Payne, Charles Massy, Luke Forsyth and Laura Fraser-Hardy. I also want to give particular thanks to the Hon. Justice Roslyn Atkinson. Before being admitted as a lawyer, I had the privilege of being her associate at the Supreme Court of Queensland. She was a fierce advocate for the equal treatment of all persons before the law and a champion of social justice. I could not have asked for a better mentor. Thank you to her for her guidance, advice and friendship.

Prior to my election as the member for Waterford I had the privilege to work on the ground in my community of Waterford. Through my work with the Beenleigh Neighbourhood Centre, the Logan Women's Health and Wellbeing Centre and the Centre Against Sexual Violence, I saw firsthand how strong services really make a difference in our community, and today I want to pay tribute to the dedicated staff at these vital community organisations. I want our young people to have the choice to live and work in Logan and the ability to take ownership over local issues, and jobs for our young people in Logan will do just that. Jobs give people dignity, a stake in society and the opportunity to contribute in their community. Jobs are vital for the future of Waterford's youth, and that is why jobs are the No. 1 focus for our government. I want jobs for young people like Rachel, a young woman who came up to me at the Loganlea train station one morning while I was campaigning and told me it meant so much to her that the now Premier and myself were talking about addressing youth unemployment because so many of her friends and her sister could not find work.

Nearly 40 years ago Logan City Council was established for what was a semirural district with a population of 60,000 people. Since then, Logan has grown into a city of nearly 300,000 people across 63 suburbs—we are a growing community and economy—but our expanding city needs jobs to prosper. I want to see the next generation of Logan's young people fulfilling their dreams and aspirations. This means smaller class sizes and more teachers in our local schools and better investment in skills and training. I want our Meadowbrook TAFE to achieve its potential and, most importantly, I want those jobs for our school leavers and graduates to go into once they have finished learning. But a community is so much more than just an economy and I think Waterford's greatest strength is its multiculturalism. It is a community of diverse and rich cultures. Waterford is a true multicultural success story. It is a place where traditional owners and Australia's most recent immigrants make their mark. Our Mayor Pam Parker often says that Logan is the heart of South-East Queensland, and I for one believe this to be absolutely true. It is the generous spirit of so many people in Logan and their generosity in welcoming new residents that makes it a wonderful place.


Today it is also most important for me to mention the women in my family. These women have paved the way for me. They have inspired me and shaped my values. My great-grandmother Josephine worked as a seamstress for almost her entire life. She was tenacious, hard working and an advocate for equality and in her later life she became active in her local Gold Coast branch of the Labor Party. Our family often tells the story of how Josephine marched defiantly down the streets of the Gold Coast with her daughter and granddaughters protesting then Premier Joh Bjelke-Petersen's preposterous ban on street marches. My grandmother, Elaine, grew up in the Depression and started out her working life as a clerk. She then married and went on to become a mother of five and, when she later separated from my grandad, she worked three jobs to support her children through school. She did anything and everything to give her kids an opportunity in life. She worked in a bread factory, as a cleaner in a Gold Coast caravan park and a prawn peeler at a seafood processing plant at Tweed Heads.

My mum Chris was lucky enough to finish school and eventually went to university as a mature age student. Mum did an exceptional job raising my sister Erin and I, but she always wanted to study education. Once university became available and affordable for my mum, she was able to realise her lifelong ambition. She became a teacher. Mum instilled in me a passion for social justice and the belief that any child, irrespective of how much their parents earn or where they live, deserves a quality education. I also cannot forget my Aunt Kerry, who was one of the first women to become a partner at a large Gold Coast law firm. She was my inspiration to study law. These strong women paved the way for me and these incredible women are the reason I stand before you today.

The promise of true gender equality is within our grasp, but much remains to be done. The gender pay gap in Australia is the highest it has been for more than 10 years. Currently in Australia, there are more men named Peter in CEO and chair positions in our country's top 200 listed companies than there are women. I am determined to increase women's leadership roles, not just in the government sector but in industry and across all levels in our community, and still one in three women will experience violence or sexual violence in their lifetime. Too many women and children are hurt and killed each year as a result of domestic and family violence, and we know these deaths are preventable and we can stop the behaviour and attitudes that feed the domestic violence cycle. We are all responsible for ending domestic violence. This begins not only here in parliament but also in our living rooms, our pubs, our clubs, our parks, our streets and our schools. The epidemic can no longer be ignored. We must all play a role in challenging the attitudes and culture that surround domestic violence. Along with the Premier and my colleagues, I will work hard to ensure that victims of domestic violence will always have someone to turn to. Every Queensland woman who lives in fear as a result of domestic violence deserves our help. I do not simply want to reduce the statistics of women suffering from domestic violence here in Queensland; I want them to be where they belong—the past—because I believe that when women are empowered our society benefits, economies grow faster, families are healthier, children are better educated and our communities become intrinsically fairer.

I proudly call myself a feminist. I also proudly call myself a Labor woman, as the ALP has and continues to be a light on the hill for women. We are a proud party of firsts. We were the first party to have a woman Premier of Queensland, the first to have a woman Prime Minister, the first to appoint a woman High Court judge, the first to appoint a woman Governor-General and of course, as you are aware, Madam Deputy Speaker Grace, we are the first to have a majority of women around the state cabinet and our first Indigenous woman here in this parliament, my good friend the Hon. Leeanne Enoch. We are led not just by a woman Premier but a woman Deputy Premier too, and that is a first for Queensland and the country. It is true that the Labor Party has led the way, but we need to be firm in our resolve. As Deputy Premier Jackie Trad said recently, a majority of women in the cabinet is an achievement to celebrate. But let us make it something we do not have to celebrate. Let us not make it the exception; let it be the norm.

That light on the hill must continue to shine for Queensland women. I have been inspired, encouraged and mentored by those women leaders who have come before me and now it is my turn to extend a hand to the next generation of women and girls. I realise just how lucky I am to have a supportive and loving family. To my aunts and uncles, cousins and family friends, thank you. To Barbara, Richard, and Alex, thank you for your ongoing love and support. To my sister and best friend, Erin, my mum and my dad, who have always believed in me, I cannot thank you enough. I thank my husband, David, for his love, support, strength and advice. Thank you for encouraging me the whole way. We made it! I thank my grandad, Bernard. I cannot help thinking of him every time I set foot in this place. It is for him and our community that we must work together to create a Queensland that those who came before and those who will come after are proud of. Finally, I thank all the women in my family and those women who have come before me in this place. If it were not for their courage I would not be standing here today.

 **Mr RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (3.20 pm): Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to speak in support of the motion moved by the member for Algeester. Madam Deputy Speaker, may I start by congratulating you on your appointment to the office of Deputy Speaker. I am sure that you will excel in that role. As you know, I am a previous member of this House. Notwithstanding that, the honour and privilege to serve in this place is not lost on me a second time around. It will never be lost on me. However, on this occasion I am even more acutely aware of the unique opportunity that has been provided to me to serve my community—the community I grew up in, the community I went to school in, the community I live in and the community I hope one day to raise a family in. It is good to be back. It is great to be back.

I acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet today and the traditional owners of the land on which the Morayfield state electorate is based. I pay my respects to their elders, past and present. Although there is still much more work to do, I hope that this parliament and the state government can continue to work in partnership with our Indigenous brothers and sisters to close the gap around our state. History is never lost on me and I am pleased to be part of this historic parliament with the member for Algeester and the member for Cook.

Words cannot completely express the thanks that I have for the people of the Morayfield state electorate, who have once again put their faith in me to serve them as their representative. Service to community means so much to me. It guides my every decision. It motivates my every action. It inspires me on a daily basis. Although the challenges that we face as a community may at times be difficult, I say to the people of the Morayfield state electorate that I will always be there for them. I will always be there to help them. I will always be on their side. To the people of the Morayfield state electorate, I thank them for this opportunity to serve. May I acknowledge the service of my predecessor, Darren Grimwade, who served as the member for Morayfield from March 2012 to January 2015. Although we have different political ideologies, we share a common commitment to our community. I thank him for his service to our community and to this parliament.

It is with gratitude that I also acknowledge the individual support and encouragement that enabled me to be in this place today. To everyone who assisted in my election campaign, I thank them for their selfless assistance and unwavering support. Although many hundreds of people volunteered to assist on my campaign with doorknocking and phone calling, letterboxing, street stalling, early morning train station visits, catering for campaign events and handing out how-to-vote cards, I would like to particularly acknowledge the efforts of Bill Marklew and the CPSU; Gary Bullock and United Voice; the best campaign director in the state, Michael Caisley; Craig Dunn and Jackson Dunn; Drew Cutler and Lisa Cutler; Geddy Kearney, Kas Hilton, Deb Jury and Saroja; Trevor Lewis and Anja; Dr Nicole Kaiyan; doorknocker and letterboxer extraordinaire, Peter Kennedy; Gus Padilha and Eddie Fraser; Dan Clancy, Courtney Graham, who came up from Melbourne to assist with the campaign; Jane McMillan, Elke Moroz and their hardworking team; star social media guru, Krys Brady; Vicki Batty, Therese O'Brien, Yvonne Packbier and her boys; Theresa Butler, Flora Douglass, Mavis Lambert and their enthusiastic team of letterboxers and street stallers; and Senators Chris Ketter and Claire Moore. My thanks also go to my good friends Chris Whiting, the member for Murrumba—and it is good to finally have Chris in this place, especially in this place with me—and his wife, Sian Whiting; and Ken Hayward, the former member for Kallangur, and his wife, Janet Hayward, for always offering good advice but, most importantly, for always providing good friendship.

I could not be in this place if it were not for the support of my family. My parents, Pete and Robbie, and my brother, Gerry, the most generous and selfless people I know, have been here with me the whole time. My community spirit comes from them and I am so fortunate to have them in my life. As Grandma Ryan was known to say, up the workers! My partner, Holly, who I met here at parliament during my first term, is the most amazing person I know. Although both Holly and the member for Bundamba were very disappointed that I did not propose to Holly in this place during my last term in parliament, I am very lucky that Holly accepted my proposal at a later date and I am very excited about this journey with her. Quite simply, I am much better with Holly in my life.


There was much said about former members of this place seeking election to this parliament at the 2015 state election. Negative comments about those former members—that they were recycled—are offensive and hypocritical. To actively and negatively dissuade individuals from pursuing opportunities to serve their communities and their state is a disgraceful act in a parliamentary democracy. Irrespective of one's politics, no-one should ever be dissuaded from seeking election to this place. Whether someone be a former member of this place, a former Lord Mayor of Brisbane, a former local government councillor, an electorate officer or whatever, as participants in our democracy we should all be encouraging greater participation, not less. To personally attack an individual's desire to participate in our democracy highlights the attacker's own unwillingness to build a strong, robust parliamentary democracy.


No doubt there are many reasons people seek election to this place. When I was contemplating my candidacy for election to this place at the last election, I always had to remind myself of the power of government to effect real change in people's lives. When I was previously the state member for Morayfield from 2009 to 2012, I tried to encourage volunteerism in schools by volunteering in local school tuckshops. One day when I was on tuckshop duty a mum from one of the local schools came up to thank me for attending her son's graduation ceremony. I used to get around to a lot of graduations, so I asked her, 'Which school did your son attend?' She told me that her son went to the

Morayfield youth justice flexi school. The Morayfield youth justice flexi school is for young people who are struggling with mainstream schooling and require some additional support to address their complex needs. It is a special place that is making a big difference in young people's lives. Quite simply, the flexi school breaks the cycle of disadvantage and marginalisation. It keeps kids out of jail. This program was established and funded by Labor. I asked this mum what her son was up to now that he had graduated. The mum told me that her son was now an apprentice mechanic. Many of us would know that apprentices are not the highest paid individuals around, so I was particularly inspired to fight for my community when this mother also told me that her son was now earning more money than her family had ever seen and that she was just so proud of him. Making a difference in the lives of people such as that proud mum and her son motivates us to work as hard as we can for our community. I wanted to again work hard for the people of the Morayfield state electorate.

I will always believe that the Australian Labor Party is the only political party that has the capacity and willingness to deliver fair and good government and to make a real difference in the lives of the most vulnerable, most disadvantaged and most marginalised people of our community. I am proud to be a member of the Australian Labor Party. This year is the 100th anniversary of the election of the TJ Ryan Labor government, a reforming government, a government that laid the foundations for a period of progressive social and economic reform for Queensland. Interestingly, the 1915 Queensland state election has numerous similarities with the 2015 Queensland state election, including the defeat of an unpopular conservative Premier in both instances. I am sure that there will be more opportunities to talk about this particular anniversary at later times.

The 2015 Queensland state election was about jobs, front-line services, integrity in government and stopping the LNP's privatisation plans for Queensland's most profitable public assets. I am proud to be part of a team, part of a government, that is committed to creating jobs and job opportunities, restoring and enhancing front-line services, rebuilding integrity in government and keeping Queensland's most profitable assets in public hands. I am grateful for the opportunity to serve Queensland, this House and the people of the Morayfield state electorate once again. I look forward to working hard to make a difference.

 **Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Grace): Order! Before I call the honourable member for Moggill, I remind honourable members that this is the member's first speech and should be listened to with the courtesies reserved for such occasions. I call the member for Moggill.

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (3.31 pm): Madam Deputy Speaker, can I begin by congratulating you on your appointment and a Iso acknowledge Annastacia Palaszczuk as the Premier of Queensland and the success that she and her government achieved on 31 January.

In our democracy there is no greater privilege than to be elected by a community as its political representative. I wish to thank the people of Moggill for entrusting me to be their representative in the 55th Queensland Parliament. I would like to thank my wife, Jane, and my four children, Nicholas, Charley, Angus and Lucie, for the commitment and sacrifices they have made prior to, as well as during, the election campaign. My wife, Jane, as a journalist, business owner and mother, is an inspiration to me and many others—not only for the family and business work roles she undertakes but also given that she manages the daily challenges of type 1 insulin dependent diabetes, a condition she has had for over 30 years.

Jane's parents, Parker and Wendy Nelson, are much cherished grandparents and stalwarts of the Chapel Hill community. Their love, friendship and guidance are treasured by both Jane and me. I acknowledge my former wife, Elisabetta, and her extended family overseas who enrich Nicholas's life. I also need to make mention of the wonderful efforts of my campaign director, Leigh Warren, and the many members of the Moggill campaign committee, as well as booth captains, local branch members and colleagues who assisted with the successful campaign in Moggill. I would also like to acknowledge the encouragement, thoughtful words of wisdom and strong support given to me by the federal member for Ryan, Jane Prentice MP, and her husband, Ian. I would also not be standing here today without the loyal friendship, encouragement and political insights of Councillor Julian Simmonds and his wife, Madeline. I am also fortunate to have an excellent collegiate and professional working relationship with Councillor Margaret de Wit.

As we all know, achievement in life often requires a stable and happy upbringing as a child. I acknowledge the late Martha 'Hennie' Henricksen, my godmother Kim Nicoll and godfather Peter Carpenter, the Edmonds, the Burtons, Gilchests, Bodmans, Martins, Kings, the Pohios, my Aunt Sue and her three boys, Jonathan, Robert and Duncan, my Aunt Christine, Sean Rothwell, Caroline Nelson, Dominic and Anna Katter, Sean Crosbie and the many other family members and friends who have provided guidance and who have been of great support to me and my family over many years.

I was raised by my mother in a single income household. I always knew my parents loved me unconditionally, despite their divorce and the fractured family relationships that often result as a consequence. My father, John Andrew Rowan, is a retired small business owner and qualified gas fitter. He lives in regional Queensland where my sister, Edwina, brother-in-law, Nick, and my brother, Thomas, are also residing with their respective families, including my nieces and nephews. My mother, Virginia Carr Rowan, is a retired schoolteacher and educator. She holds dual degrees from the University of Queensland: a Bachelor of Arts with Second Degree Honours in Government as well as a Bachelor of Educational Studies. Unfortunately, my mother now suffers with severe end-stage Parkinson's disease. I offer my gratitude, respect and admiration to the staff at Reid Court in Sinnamoon Village whose compassion, empathy and care is a testament to the quality of residential aged-care staff right across Queensland. My mother taught me the societal value of evidence based public policy. She educated me via a strong, well-rounded liberal arts education in political ideology and philosophy and the processes of democratic government. Regular discussions around the dinner table would reference British philosophers John Locke and John Stuart Mill, as well as the views and policies of former US presidents Woodrow Wilson, Ronald Reagan and Dwight D Eisenhower. Family friends of my mother, including former Menzies government minister the late Sir Reginald Swartz, have all provided inspiration for serving in public office.

My father, my grandfather, the late Andrew Rowan, and I all attended the Anglican Church Grammar School. My grandfather was the first elected president of the Churchie Old Boys' Association in 1949. My former teachers, including historian James Mason, housemaster Bill Cowlshaw and Anglican chaplain Father Theodore Woods, all instilled in me the importance and value of service and duty. Our family connection continues with the school to this day with my eldest son, Nicholas, currently at Churchie in year 10 and my youngest son, Angus, due to commence his secondary schooling there in the next few years. Jane's father, Parker, is also an old boy.

I am very fortunate to have my father's cousin, Steve Rowan, who has researched my family's lineage all the way back to 1477. My great-grandfather was James Stephen Rowan. He owned the property Talleyrand at Longreach where my grandfather was born. My great-great-uncle, Andrew Percival Rowan, served in the Boer War with the 5th Victorian Mounted Rifles. He then enlisted in the 10th Regiment 3rd Light Horse Brigade and was killed in action on 7 August 1915 having just been promoted to captain. He is buried at Anzac Cove. My great-great-grandfather, also an Andrew Rowan, arrived in Australia from County Down, Ireland and settled in Melbourne in 1861. He was a merchant, company director, pastoralist and winemaker with Hubert de Castella at the St Hubert Vineyard in Victoria. He also invested in several pastoral properties in Queensland, including Darrwater and Darr River Downs in the Mitchell district, Weribone and Talavera in the Maranoa district and Malvern Downs and Echo Hills in the Leichhardt district.

I offer the aforementioned information not to espouse the virtues of my family or connections but to emphasise the importance with which I view rural and regional Queensland as well the value I place on family, educational opportunity, public service, duty and loyalty. I have been afforded incredible personal and professional experiences until now, many of which have led me to reflect on both the great Australian writer Albert 'Bert' Facey's autobiographical work *A Fortunate Life* and the American poet Robert Frost's *The Road Not Taken* poem, which reads—

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—

I took the one less traveled by,

And that has made all the difference.

I hope these comments will provide some insight into the perspectives I will bring to this parliament.

I believe in politics with principle. I believe in fostering a society where the rights and freedoms of individuals come with mandatory responsibilities. I believe in an educational system that recognises that both personal fulfilment and social responsibility are compatible and that the pursuit of excellence is not in conflict with equal opportunity for all. I believe that young people who value learning, who are taught how to learn, desire to become productive and in doing so advance our economy. As a humane society, we need to do more to address the growing disparity between the wealthy and the poor.

If you combine social, educational and economic disadvantage with geographical isolation you create the ideal conditions for mental health disorders to develop and potentially illicit drug use to flourish. I believe that the best form of welfare is to create economic opportunity, to grow jobs and

empower individuals to become productive. This builds self-esteem, resilience and self-reliance, all of which are very important individual qualities in a complex and challenging world. In western, industrialised parts of the globe we will face further social cohesive challenges and increasing security threats if we fail to engage the disenfranchised, the disaffected and those who are marginalised and, in turn, lack both educational and economic opportunity.

As the Roman philosopher Cicero once said—

To be ignorant of what occurred before you were born, is to remain always a child. For what is the worth of human life, unless it is woven into the life of our ancestors by the records of history?

In my electorate of Moggill, in recent times a number of issues that need addressing have had local bipartisan support. Road and transport infrastructure issues, particularly in view of the growing population in Bellbowrie and Moggill, need to be addressed as matters of urgency. A coordinated road and public transport plan for the electorate is about not just additional roads but also the widening of some existing ones, fixing the Kenmore roundabout and, following extensive community consultation, examining what is possible in relation to rail and bridge access. The paucity of public transport is also a major issue for residents of Lake Manchester, Karana Downs and Mt Crosby.

Cost-of-living pressures for ordinary families and, in fact, all residents in the Moggill electorate are becoming more problematic despite the perceived wealth of the area. In many of the suburbs of the electorate, an increasing population requires an investment in community services and an appropriate allocation of the state's resources. The Kenmore State High School requires urgent further investment in its strategic infrastructure master plan as enrolments at the school now exceed 1,800. An additional high school established via a public-private-partnership model needs to be seriously considered given projected demographic and population changes over the next few decades.

The electorate of Moggill also has many small business owners. Trevor Dixon, who is the Chairman of the Australian Small Business Foundation, President of the local Kenmore-Moggill RSL Sub-branch and owner of a horticulture entity, is but one example. Small business is a significant contributor to the success of our economy. The decentralisation of public policy decision-making for small business is a critical enabler for sustainability and expansion. Allowing small businesses to flourish free from unfair or excessive competitive advantage by government, individuals or large corporations is in the interests of my constituents and our state.

Ensuring that we have environmental sustainability via rigorous assessment processes and that a balance is achieved when it comes to economic development and environmental protection is a principle that I will always adhere to. As the father of four children, I care deeply about our natural environment and local heritage.

I now turn my attention to the issue of leadership in public life. I regard leadership by all political representatives at all levels of government as critically important given the uncertainty and plethora of issues many local communities face. Leadership is not just about the vision you espouse; leadership is the courage to stand by your beliefs in times of adversity. Leadership is also about the values you articulate. For me, those values are respect, justice, empathy, compassion, fairness, equality and the highest standards of public accountability.

I am very fortunate to have served as the president of both the Australian Medical Association of Queensland and the Rural Doctors Association of Queensland. The sustainability of our health system requires productivity, efficiency, accountability, transparency and the ongoing measurement and public reporting of the effectiveness of government investment. Unfortunately, often in health-care individuals and sectional interest groups pursue conflicted agendas related to power, profit and prestige with little regard to the interests of patients, despite the public protestations of those individuals and sectional interest groups to the contrary. That was evident during the recent public sector medical contracts dispute in Queensland.

I have not provided public media commentary on those matters since early last year. Whilst I could submit into the public domain additional information and facts that would fundamentally alter the public record on the events and decisions that took place during my tenure as President of the Australian Medical Association, I do not believe it is in the public interest to do so. However, I do believe it is important to state the following: those individuals who have and, in some cases, continue to harass and intimidate via social media forums and in other written contexts are cowards and bullies. Their actions have no place in a civilised society, let alone as individual registered professionals. With the right of freedom of expression comes a great individual responsibility to

ensure due diligence with an accurate factual basis to what is said, to act with manners, courtesy and respect, and to ensure a fair and reasonable approach is achieved when matters of contentious public policy are debated and implemented. I will exercise my right of parliamentary privilege to its fullest in the future to specifically address these aforementioned matters should it become necessary.

As a former president of both the AMA Queensland and RDAQ, I have also had the opportunity to be briefed by many health professionals on a number of population health challenges that will have to be dealt with not only now but also for many years to come. Those include a steady growth in chronic complex health conditions, emerging new infectious diseases, antibiotic resistant bacteria and growing obesity and eating disorder rates in children and adults, as well as an increasing prevalence of mental health and substance dependency disorders. As an addiction medicine specialist, I have assisted some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our community, as well as those from higher socio-economic backgrounds.

Whilst alcohol and tobacco consumption represent the greatest costs to our community in terms of morbidity, mortality and financial cost, I wish to highlight the public policy issues of illicit substance dependency, over-the-counter codeine misuse and the emergence of new synthetic drugs. Illicit drug use is associated with a range of physical, psychological, legal, economic and social impacts not only for individuals but also for their families and the community in general. Premature deaths, accidents, violence and family disruption can all be consequences of substance dependency. In Queensland, likely cost impacts based on a population approximation method suggest that drug use costs our state in excess of \$1.6 billion per year. We must ensure that there is balanced state public investment in demand reduction and supply reduction strategies, as well as adequate availability and access to treatment services and harm-minimisation strategies to continue to reduce blood borne virus transmission such as of hepatitis C, hepatitis B and HIV, and address other individual and community harms.

In relation to over-the-counter codeine-containing products and prescription analgesic medications, health professionals are assessing and treating increasing numbers of patients with dependency conditions necessitating a range of solutions, including an agreed cross-jurisdictional real-time electronic monitoring system recording the prescribing, supply and distribution of those products. The emergence of new synthetic drugs that mimic the effects of illicit drugs is of great concern to health professionals, parents, teachers, law enforcement officers and the community generally. The resultant physical and mental sequelae, including loss of life in some cases, as a result of the use of those substances requires a coordinated and multifaceted approach by government. Unfortunately, the internet has revolutionised access and availability and the exploitation of many young people.

Investing in our rural and regional health workforce and ensuring timely access and sustainable models of care need to be ongoing priorities of successive governments in Queensland. The extensive community role played by this workforce not only in delivering clinical services, but also by implementing public health strategies, facilitating broader economic development and maintaining social infrastructure is vitally important and cost effective. The significant efforts of many within the rural doctor movement such as doctors Col Owen, Bruce Chatter, Tony Balston, Denis Lennox, Dan Manahan, John Hall, Les Woollard, Pat Giddings, Cameron Bardsley and Jim Finn, as well as various administrative support people, including Natalie Taylor and Deanne Bond, have led to a robust rural generalist training framework being implemented.


When I was 25 years of age, I was fortunate enough to be appointed the medical superintendent of Mungindi Hospital, which was a sole-doctor position. The formative professional experiences and the knowledge and skills I gained there dealing with the complexity of social and health issues affecting rural and remote Aboriginal communities also motivated me to seek public office. Over the years, I have been very fortunate to be a recipient of the leadership and mentorship of Uniting Care Queensland Chief Executive Officer Anne Cross, Executive Director Richard Royle and other colleagues: Dr Luis Prado, Sue McKean and Cheryl O'Brien. I also acknowledge the executive and staff of St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital, including personal assistant Lisa Aitken and Kathy McCallum.


I am proud to be part of a political party where fellow elected representatives believe in and adhere to the great philosophies, principles and ideals espoused by our broader grassroots membership. The organisational wing of any political party is also fundamental to its sustainability and I acknowledge the work and dedication of the many Liberal National Party member volunteers, those employed in LNP headquarters and our party president, Bruce McIver, and his executive team.

I also acknowledge the service of the former member for Moggill, Dr Bruce Flegg, and his achievements during his tenure in public office as an elected representative within this place. Through you, Madam Deputy Speaker, I thank the members here for allowing me the opportunity to make this, my first speech. I conclude by quoting the 17th century English metaphysical poet John Donne—

No man is an Iland, intire of it selfe; every man is a peece of the Continent, a part of the maine; if a Clod bee washed away by the Sea, Europe is the lesse, as well as if a Promontorie were, as well as if a Mannor of thy friends or of thine owne were; any mans death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankinde; And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; It tolls for thee.

As a member of the LNP opposition, I will hold this government to account. In my view the Palaszczuk government has no vision and no plan and this is clearly apparent to all.

 **Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Grace): Order! Before calling the honourable member for Pumicestone, I remind honourable members that this is the member's first speech and it should be listened to with the courtesies reserved for such occasions. I call the member for Pumicestone.

 **Mr WILLIAMS** (Pumicestone—ALP) (3.50 pm): I rise to speak in support of the motion. I rise in this House today a humble man. I stand before God and before the members of this House, whom I congratulate on their election. I have been elected to serve the electorate of Pumicestone and I am deeply aware of the honour granted me and the importance of this role to my community. I only trust that the media and those who did not put their faith in me will give me a reasonable opportunity to be the very best local MP that I can be.

I wish to show my respects to the traditional owners of this land and acknowledge elders, past, present and future. In Pumicestone the Gabbi Gabbi people are the traditional owners. I have taken a responsible interest in involving myself in their needs. I would like to see dignity and cultural pride restored to these people.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I ask you to convey to Mr Speaker that I congratulate him on accepting the appointment as Speaker of the House. I genuinely thanked God when I heard the Premier had asked the member for Nicklin to become the Speaker of this House. I wholeheartedly believe that dignity and respect should be returned to this House and that someone of the Speaker's calibre would order just that.

I must first outline the reason I contested the most recent election. I found it more of a journey than a destination. Throughout the campaign my observations and the continuous representations made to me by my community—and might I say the representations of some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged members of the community of Pumicestone—demonstrated to me in no uncertain terms that they had been neglected and suffered at the hands of the Newman government. This created my resolve.

I have spent most of my life as a worker. But in later years I have run several businesses. I am someone who knows what it is like to take orders and to also give direction. I understand the needs of both employees who want good work conditions and employers who have every asset they have in this world at risk based on the performance of others.

I moved to the Pumicestone electorate after living in Ipswich for many, many years. Whilst in Ipswich I studied for five years and completed a diploma of financial planning through Deakin University and associated units through the Macquarie School of Law. I then became a certified financial planner and ran my own successful financial planning practice for many years.

In 2004 Mayor Paul Pisasale and chairman of town planning Paul Tully presented me with an award for services rendered to the City of Ipswich. My first involvement in being an activist was when I stood shoulder to shoulder with Paul Tully for six weeks fighting a proposed radioactive dump that was being put in at Redbank. We won the battle.

I live on Bribie Island these days with my wonderful wife, Cheryl. We bought another business. Shortly after that we found that Cheryl needed to have spinal surgery. We had to sell the business in 2013. Because I have always been community minded I worked for many local charities. I spent many years as honorary treasurer of the Bribie-Moreton Hospice Health Services, which provides free palliative care and respite facilities for the elderly.

I have always stood up for battlers. For several years I and my family have gathered up end-of-trade bakery bread that was destined for the bin and distributed it to those less fortunate in our community. I then provided free financial and insurance advice to those people engaged in battles with banks, insurance companies and other bureaucratic agencies who did not have the means to afford lawyers and fight their battles. I was appointed as a justice of the peace (qualified) in 1996 and have made myself regularly available to execute documents. I will leave others to that work while I am in this office.

The former Newman LNP government made shallow promises to the people of Pumicestone. They promised a reduction in water and electricity costs and merely duped constituents out of their vote. In the fullness of time people demanded a day of reckoning and that day of reckoning came on 31 January 2015. They did it with their votes.

In more definitive terms, under the former LNP government with Campbell Newman at the helm, bulk water went up by 41 per cent and electricity supply costs went through the roof. To that end, we saw in excess of 25,000 mums and dads with children—quality Queensland families—have their power turned off because they were unable to pay their bills. Our pensioners were made to struggle financially.

The realisation that is voiced to me is that they were always able to live and pay their bills under 20 years of Labor government, but under the LNP many of them resorted to having cold showers, were afraid to turn hot-water systems on, dangerously kept electric lights off at night and risked falls because they feared not being able to pay their power bills. These are proud people and so they should be. They have served their state and their country and deserve to have a government that cares for and considers them.

I wish to thank my wife, Cheryl, who, although being on daily doses of morphine, went out daily and worked on my recent campaign. She has been on the waiting list for surgery for 18 months. At the risk of being provocative—and that is not my intention—my wife in fact received one of those notorious letters saying that she had been taken off the surgical waiting list because she had failed to respond to a hospital letter. We found that that letter had been sent to the wrong address. We had lived at our residence for many, many years. I will save that for another time.

I wish to thank Uncle Jim and Aunt June Daniels, who have lived on Bribie for 30 years; Steve and Cath Walker from Caloundra; Bev and Barry Shoesmith, who were unselfish in supporting my campaign, which I paid for out of my own pocket; John and Kerry McNaught and Sam and Bushy Wheatley of Caboolture; and Fiona, Alisha and Genita. I also wish to thank my dedicated Labor branch members on Bribie and in Caboolture and my sons and other family and friends who were selfless in their commitment of time, standing out in the hot sun or the pouring rain for the cause. I remain indebted to them. Some others it would be an injustice not to mention are Dean Wells, a former member of this parliament for 27 years; Bernie Ripoll, the federal member for Oxley; Wayne Cunningham; Justin Foster; and Brad Carol. These people were instrumental in my election.

One major election issue in Pumicestone—and, yes, we remember that it was raised in this House—was the Moreton Bay regional draft plan. The Campbell Newman government's member for Callide and the former member for Pumicestone picked a fight with the Moreton Bay Regional Council to no avail, resulting in an unprecedented event in Australian history—a unanimous vote of the council of no confidence in the former member for Pumicestone. In stark contrast to this, I go on the record as a proud member of the Palaszczuk Labor government that I, too, was unhappy with the lack of community consultation with this plan, but I have had responsible discussions with Mayor Sutherland and I am working with the council and with the honourable minister, Jackie Trad, to resolve community issues. I hope to be able to move this on soon, as the people of Moreton deserve better than the treatment they received at the hands of the Campbell Newman government.

Under this Labor government, I would like to see cultural pride restored in our Indigenous people. Also, the dignity of having a job is imperative, and I believe that we will see a re-gearing of front-line and essential services to our communities to reinstate effectiveness. I have no distractions. I will be a full-time MP for Pumicestone, available for those who wish to see me at any time.

I would like to thank the former Labor member for Pumicestone, Carryn Sullivan, who won the seat four times over 11 years. During that time the Labor government provided many things, such as much-needed infrastructure, for the people of Pumicestone. Labor delivered a 24-hour police station on Bribie, the electricity substation, an ambulance station, vast improvements to the road network, the upgrade of the Caboolture Hospital and grounds, the Caboolture mental health facility, the planned relocation of Old Toorbul Point Road and the upgrading to four lanes through Ningi. I note that one of the things dropped by the LNP government was the roundabout that was to go in at the intersection of Old Toorbul Point Road and Bribie Island Road. This was a safety issue, and I will be lobbying to see this restored. Labor also delivered the new Toorbul Point Road that gives the people from Bribie Island, Sandstone Point, Godwin Beach and Ningi Highway access when it floods. Labor genuinely cares about the people of Pumicestone.

I will mention Jon Sullivan, the former member for Longman, who also assisted me. Without Jon we would not have a hospital in Caboolture. For 12 years the LNP promised that hospital—they said, if elected, they would build it. It never happened until Jon Sullivan was elected in 1989. Some four years later the hospital was opened.

- strategies to optimise the FIFO experience for employees and their families, communities and industry;
 - the commuting practices for FIFO workforces, including the amount of time spent travelling, the methods of transportation, and adequacy of compensation paid for commuting travel times;
 - the effectiveness of current responses to impacts of FIFO workforces of the Commonwealth, state and local governments; and
 - any other related matter.
3. Further, that the committee seek public submissions and consult with key stakeholders including local communities, resource companies, unions and local government.
4. Further, that the committee report to the Legislative Assembly by 30 September 2015.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT



Mr HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (4.33 pm): I move—

That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 9.30 am on Tuesday, 5 May 2015.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT



Mr HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (4.34 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 4.34 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Bailey, Barton, Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Byrne, Costigan, Cramp, Crandon, Crawford, Cripps, D'Ath, Davis, de Brenni, Dick, Dickson, Donaldson, Elmes, Emerson, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Frecklington, Furner, Gilbert, Gordon, Grace, Harper, Hart, Hinchliffe, Howard, Jones, Katter, Kelly, King, Knuth, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Lauga, Leahy, Linard, Lynham, Madden, Mander, McArdle, McEachan, McVeigh, Miles, Millar, Miller, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pease, Pegg, Perrett, Pitt, Powell, Power, Pyne, Rickuss, Robinson, Rowan, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Seeney, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Trad, Walker, Watts, Weir, Wellington, Whiting, Williams