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RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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WEDNESDAY, 2 DECEMBER 2015

The Legislative Assembly met at 2.00 pm.

Mr Speaker (Hon. Peter Wellington, Nicklin) read prayers and took the chair.

REPORT

Information Commissioner

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have to report that I have received from the Information Commissioner report No. 1 of 2015-16 titled *Camera surveillance and privacy—follow-up review: Review of agency adoption of recommendations made under the Information Privacy Act 2009.* I table the report for the information of members.

Tabled paper: Office of the Information Commissioner: Report No. 1 of 2015-16—Camera surveillance and privacy—follow-up review: Review of agency adoption of recommendations made under the Information Privacy Act 2009 (Qld) [1785].

PRIVILEGE

Speaker's Ruling, Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House by a Member

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, on 15 October 2015 the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills wrote to me alleging that the member for Mansfield deliberately misled parliament twice in his questions without notice, on 16 September and then again on 17 September 2015. I have circulated a ruling on this matter. I have decided that the matter does not warrant the further attention of the House via the Ethics Committee and I will not be referring the matter. I seek leave to have the ruling incorporated.

Leave granted.

On 15 October 2015, the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills wrote to me alleging that the Member for Mansfield deliberately misled Parliament twice in his questions without notice when he asked on 16 September 2015:

My question is to the Attorney-General. Attorney, I refer to the CEPU Plumbing Division disclosure return for the Redcliffe by-election in which it is disclosed that candidate D'Ath received the sum of $10,000 as a political donation. Will the Attorney explain why this $10,000 donation appears not to be disclosed in her return for the Redcliffe by-election?

And then again on 17 September 2015 when he asked:

My question is to the Attorney-General. Yesterday the Attorney indicated and announced to the House that the CEPU plumbing declaration regarding a donation to her as a candidate had been disclosed in the ALP's ECQ return. I table two declarations from the CEPU—one declaring a $10,000 donation to the ALP and the other declaring a $10,000 donation to Yvette D'Ath.

As the minister responsible for the administration of the Electoral Commission, what steps will the Attorney take to resolve this apparent discrepancy?

In her letter to me, the Attorney-General stated that the first question from the Member for Mansfield was deliberately misleading because the member deliberately framed the language to suggest wrongdoing by the Attorney-General by not declaring a donation, and would have known that donations are normally made to the registered political party, accounted for properly and declared to the ECQ.

The Attorney-General stated that the second question was deliberately misleading because it was false for the member to claim in the House to table two declarations from the CEPU—one declaring a $10,000 donation to the ALP and the other declaring a $10,000 donation to Yvette D'Ath when it was shown as one donation to the ALP on the ALP's disclosure return for the 2013-2014 financial year.

Standing Order 269(4) requires:

In considering whether the matter should be referred to the committee, the Speaker shall take account of the degree of importance of the matter which has been raised and whether an adequate apology or explanation has been made in respect of the matter. No matter should be referred to the ethics committee if the matter is technical or trivial and does not warrant the further attention of the House.

On the matter of the first question, at the time the question was asked I ruled the question out of order as it wasn't sufficiently related to the minister's responsibilities. I consider that I dealt with the question at the time it was asked, and therefore the matter does not warrant the further attention of the House via the Ethics Committee, and I will not be referring the matter.

On the matter of the second question, on the evidence before me I considered that the Member for Mansfield's Question Without Notice consisted of three parts; two statements of fact and then a question. In my view, neither the statement regarding the Attorney's General's announcement regarding the ALP's return nor the statement regarding the two CEPU Plumbing Division returns was misleading.

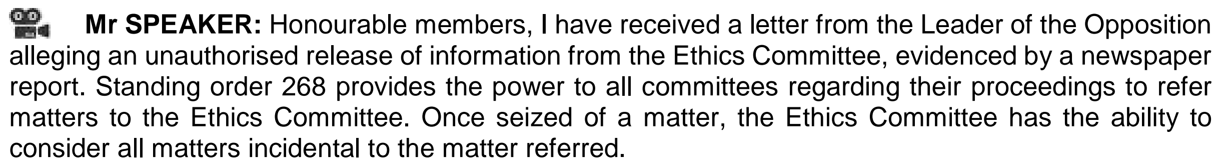
Had the third part of the Question Without Notice been a statement of fact (for example, that there was a discrepancy that needed to be resolved) it may well have been misleading, however, it wasn't, the third part was in the form of a question. To not allow questions as to whether the government is taking steps to resolve an apparent issue on the basis that some persons might jump to a false conclusion that something untoward has occurred would be contrary to the scrutiny function of question time.

I am satisfied that the second question without notice from the Member for Mansfield was not deliberately misleading, and, therefore, I have decided that the matter does not warrant the further attention of the House via the Ethics Committee and I will not be referring the matter.

I table the correspondence in relation to this matter.

Tabled paper: Correspondence, various dates, relating to an alleged deliberate misleading of the House by the member for Mansfield, Mr Ian Walker MP [1786].

Speaker's Ruling, Referral to Ethics Committee



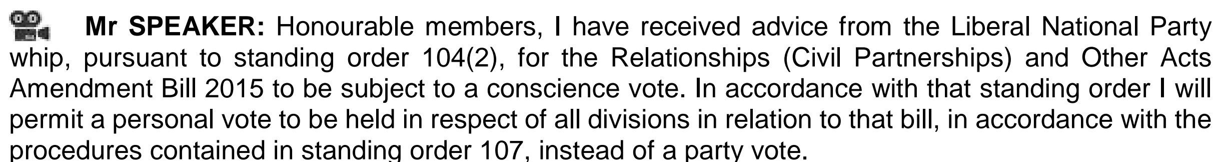
Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have received a letter from the Leader of the Opposition alleging an unauthorised release of information from the Ethics Committee, evidenced by a newspaper report. Standing order 268 provides the power to all committees regarding their proceedings to refer matters to the Ethics Committee. Once seized of a matter, the Ethics Committee has the ability to consider all matters incidental to the matter referred.

The Speaker generally has power to refer matters by own reference, under standing order 268, or on complaint, under standing order 269. In report No. 42 of the former Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee titled *Report on a matter of privilege: unauthorised release of correspondence between a committee and ministers* the committee outlined the procedure to be followed by committees in the future should an unauthorised disclosure of their proceedings take place. Whilst there are some precedents that exist to the contrary, the preponderance of precedent holds the view that an alleged breach of privilege relating to a committee proceedings should be first raised with the committee. The position may be different if an aspect of the matter also relates to proceedings in the House.

I have today forwarded the Leader of the Opposition's letter to the committee for its consideration, in accordance with established procedures. I expect that committee will report in due course. I remind all members that standing order 271 still applies to this matter.

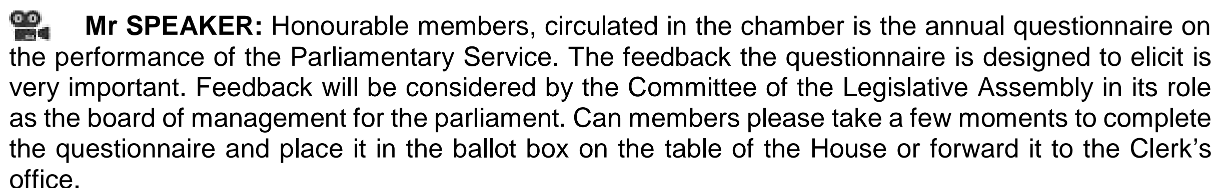
SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS

Relationships (Civil Partnerships) and Other Acts Amendment Bill, Personal Vote



Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have received advice from the Liberal National Party whip, pursuant to standing order 104(2), for the Relationships (Civil Partnerships) and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2015 to be subject to a conscience vote. In accordance with that standing order I will permit a personal vote to be held in respect of all divisions in relation to that bill, in accordance with the procedures contained in standing order 107, instead of a party vote.

Parliamentary Service, Questionnaire



Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, circulated in the chamber is the annual questionnaire on the performance of the Parliamentary Service. The feedback the questionnaire is designed to elicit is very important. Feedback will be considered by the Committee of the Legislative Assembly in its role as the board of management for the parliament. Can members please take a few moments to complete the questionnaire and place it in the ballot box on the table of the House or forward it to the Clerk's office.

PETITION

The Clerk presented the following paper petition, sponsored by the Clerk—

Dohles Rocks Road, Traffic Arrangements

349 petitioners, requesting the House to immediately review the timing and operation of the automated on-ramp lights via the Dohles Rock Road on-ramp with the view to their removal [1787].

Petition received.

TABLED PAPERS

MINISTERIAL PAPERS

The following ministerial papers were tabled by the Clerk—

Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade (Ms Trad)—

1788 Report by the Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade (Ms Trad), pursuant to section 424 of the Sustainable Planning Act 2009, in relation to the Ministerial Call In of a development application by Place Design Group on behalf of Huntsman Property Pty Ltd of Cedar Woods master planned residential community, Upper Kedron (Brisbane)

1789 Report by the Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade (Ms Trad), pursuant to section 424 of the Sustainable Planning Act 2009, in relation to the Ministerial Call In of a development application by Place Design Group on behalf of Huntsman Property Pty Ltd of Cedar Woods master planned residential community, Upper Kedron (Brisbane)—Annexure A

1790 Report by the Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade (Ms Trad), pursuant to section 424 of the Sustainable Planning Act 2009, in relation to the Ministerial Call In of a development application by Place Design Group on behalf of Huntsman Property Pty Ltd of Cedar Woods master planned residential community, Upper Kedron (Brisbane)—Annexures B-F

Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services (Mr C R Dick)—

1791 Response from the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services (Mr C R Dick) to an ePetition (2461-15) sponsored by Mr Pyne, from 41 petitioners, requesting the House to undertake a review into the inadequate provision of services and conditions at the Cairns Hospital Mental Health Unit

MEMBERS' PAPERS

The following members' papers were tabled by the Clerk—

Member for Cairns (Mr Pyne)—

1792 Non-conforming petition regarding the Dingaal family being provided with a land trust and requesting an investigation into the death of Stanley Charlie

1793 Correspondence and other documents, various dates, relating to the operation of local government in Queensland

Member for Buderim (Mr Dickson)—

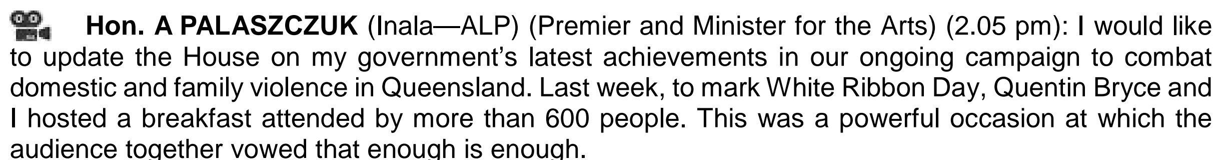
1794 Non-conforming petition regarding the use of cannabis for medical and research purposes

Member for Springwood (Mr de Brenni)

1795 Non-conforming petition regarding the alleviation of electricity costs for community organisations

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Domestic and Family Violence



Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (2.05 pm): I would like to update the House on my government's latest achievements in our ongoing campaign to combat domestic and family violence in Queensland. Last week, to mark White Ribbon Day, Quentin Bryce and I hosted a breakfast attended by more than 600 people. This was a powerful occasion at which the audience together vowed that enough is enough.

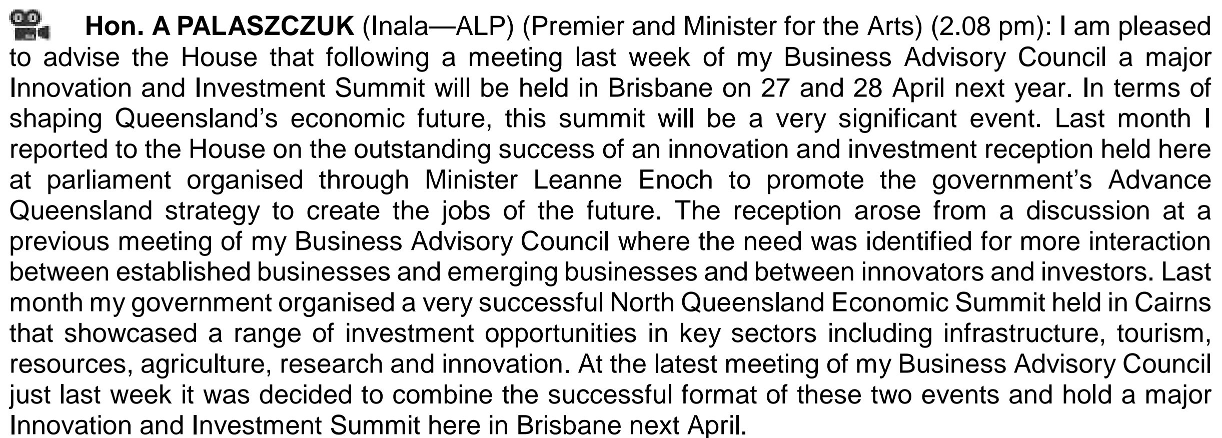
A panel of good men spoke about how we can galvanise the community to be outraged at this issue in our society. I would like to thank Aurizon CEO Lance Hockridge, psychologist Ed Mosby, league legend Darren Lockyer and magistrate Colin Strofield for taking part in the panel, for providing their insights and for their commitment to this cause. At the breakfast I named Lance, Ed and Darren as members of our Domestic and Family Violence Implementation Council, to be chaired by the Hon. Quentin Bryce. The council will oversee implementation of the 121 recommendations of the *Not now, not ever* report and the Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy. More than 90 of these recommendations are now actively underway and 12 have been completed. The implementation council's members have also been drawn from a range of locations and professions across Queensland.

At the breakfast I also announced the introduction of specific domestic and family violence leave for Queensland government employees. This new Public Service directive means an extra 10 days paid leave per year for employees affected by domestic and family violence. This is a precious time to cover emergency situations, counselling, attendance at court or legal advice. Countless personal stories of people affected by domestic and family violence have stressed the importance of compassionate and

understanding workplaces. The Queensland government has heeded this message. As the state's largest employer, the Queensland government must lead the way. I hope that other employers will follow.

Another significant step in our battle again domestic and family violence will be introduced in this House today. My government will introduce legislation to make nonlethal strangulation a stand-alone offence under the Criminal Code. We know that strangulation is a predictive risk factor in domestic violence, indicating an escalation. What is more, domestic violence workers tell us that it is an intensely personal crime. Perpetrators are staring into the eyes of their victims as they dominate and control. Many women have also raised this issue with me over the past nine months, and today my government acts. This legislation will make nonlethal strangulation a stand-alone offence punishable with up to seven years jail. This is about holding perpetrators to account. It was a recommendation of the *Not now, not ever* report. What is more, the sector is telling us that this step is vital. We know that we must tackle domestic and family violence from many angles, from prevention right through to punishment. My government's commitment to this cause will not waver.

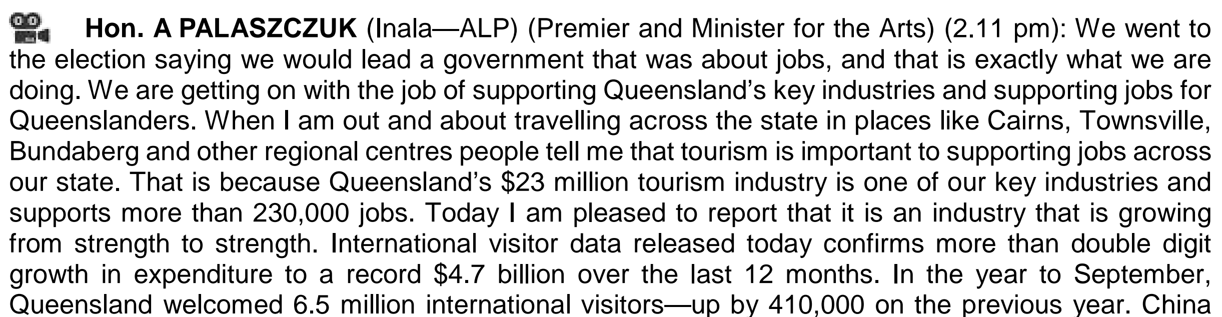
Innovation and Investment Summit



Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (2.08 pm): I am pleased to advise the House that following a meeting last week of my Business Advisory Council a major Innovation and Investment Summit will be held in Brisbane on 27 and 28 April next year. In terms of shaping Queensland's economic future, this summit will be a very significant event. Last month I reported to the House on the outstanding success of an innovation and investment reception held here at parliament organised through Minister Leanne Enoch to promote the government's Advance Queensland strategy to create the jobs of the future. The reception arose from a discussion at a previous meeting of my Business Advisory Council where the need was identified for more interaction between established businesses and emerging businesses and between innovators and investors. Last month my government organised a very successful North Queensland Economic Summit held in Cairns that showcased a range of investment opportunities in key sectors including infrastructure, tourism, resources, agriculture, research and innovation. At the latest meeting of my Business Advisory Council just last week it was decided to combine the successful format of these two events and hold a major Innovation and Investment Summit here in Brisbane next April.

The summit has the strong support of members of the Business Advisory Council. Professor Sharma from QUT said that we need to work together to identify competitive advantages that stick and to combine the areas where we excel with STEM expertise—that is, science, technology, engineering and mathematics—coding and robotics because that way we will build industries of the future based on our comparative strengths. Wayne Gerard from RedEye said the summit would be important for developing a start-up business environment that works in collaboration with established industry and also attracts investment where and when it is needed most. He further said that the summit could support the development of Silicon Valley business models in Queensland focused on our strong comparative advantages and world-leading technology in mining, agriculture, logistics, biotech and medical research. This summit will provide an opportunity for Queensland's companies, start-ups, researchers and investors to come together to promote their potential. Attendees will be offered a platform to showcase their talents here from internationally renowned speakers who are leaders in their field, be inspired by the latest thinking and technologies and build new networks and partnerships. Most importantly, the summit will foster investment opportunities. Not only will we seek to attract national and international investors but the summit will also help local Queensland investors to find their next market-ready deal.

Tourism Industry

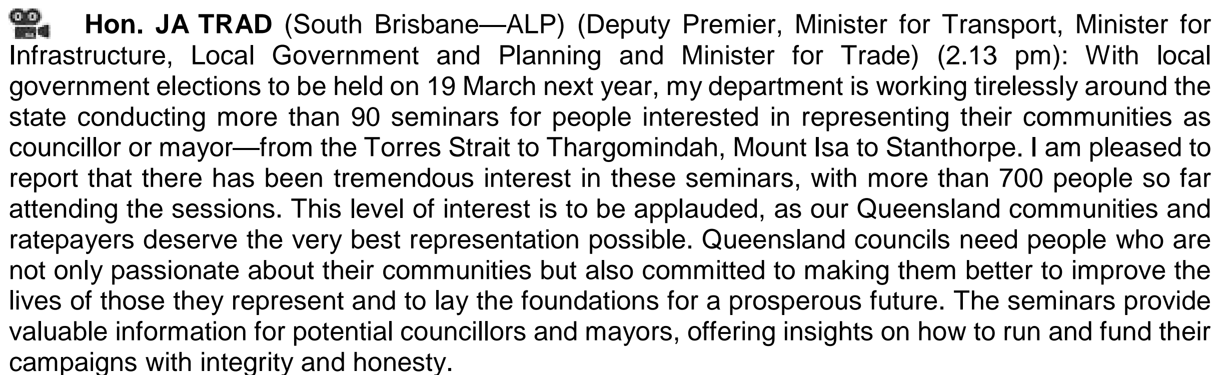


Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (2.11 pm): We went to the election saying we would lead a government that was about jobs, and that is exactly what we are doing. We are getting on with the job of supporting Queensland's key industries and supporting jobs for Queenslanders. When I am out and about travelling across the state in places like Cairns, Townsville, Bundaberg and other regional centres people tell me that tourism is important to supporting jobs across our state. That is because Queensland's $23 million tourism industry is one of our key industries and supports more than 230,000 jobs. Today I am pleased to report that it is an industry that is growing from strength to strength. International visitor data released today confirms more than double digit growth in expenditure to a record $4.7 billion over the last 12 months. In the year to September, Queensland welcomed 6.5 million international visitors—up by 410,000 on the previous year. China

remains our largest and fastest growing market, with Chinese visitor expenditure increasing 45 per cent to $854 million. Overall the number of visitors from China increased 22 per cent, holiday visitors from China increased 20 per cent, education visitors increased 25 per cent and employment visitors from China increased 67 per cent.

We know that Chinese visitors are staying longer and spending more time in Queensland. We recognise this market presents an incredible opportunity for tourism growth on the back of a low Australian dollar. That is why last month I sent the tourism minister to China where she met with international airlines and investors to talk about boosting tourism in our great state. As a result, Queensland is well positioned to capitalise on this new emerging market. That is why we have delivered on our $400 million four-year funding guarantee for Tourism and Events Queensland that was promised during the election. This guarantee ensures that we are in a strong position to secure the best events for Queensland. This government is committed to growing tourism in Queensland because we know it supports jobs for Queenslanders.

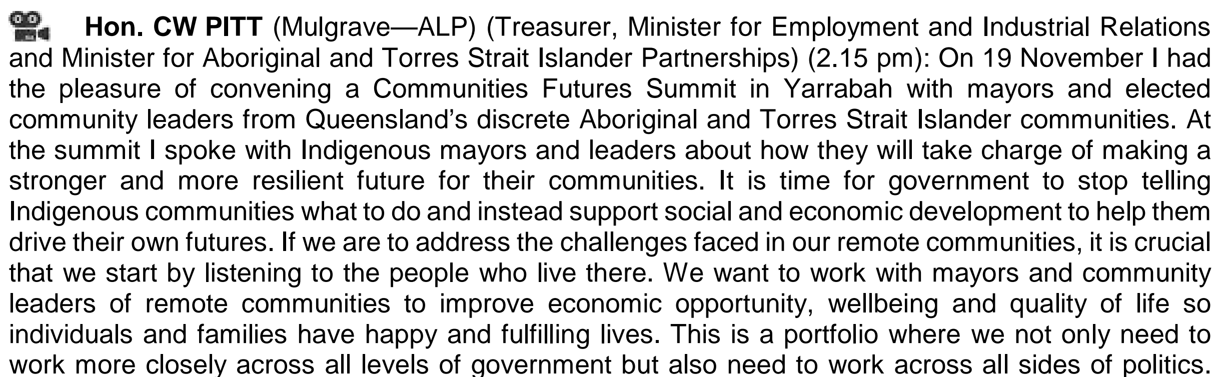
Local Government, Elections



Hon. JA TRAD (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade) (2.13 pm): With local government elections to be held on 19 March next year, my department is working tirelessly around the state conducting more than 90 seminars for people interested in representing their communities as councillor or mayor—from the Torres Strait to Thargomindah, Mount Isa to Stanthorpe. I am pleased to report that there has been tremendous interest in these seminars, with more than 700 people so far attending the sessions. This level of interest is to be applauded, as our Queensland communities and ratepayers deserve the very best representation possible. Queensland councils need people who are not only passionate about their communities but also committed to making them better to improve the lives of those they represent and to lay the foundations for a prosperous future. The seminars provide valuable information for potential councillors and mayors, offering insights on how to run and fund their campaigns with integrity and honesty.

The seminars also outline the responsibilities of mayors and councillors once elected as they provide strategic leadership to the community and make decisions in the public interest. Just like those of us in this place, councillors must disclose their personal, financial and non-financial interests. They must ensure that their conduct is lawful, ethical, generally appropriate for someone who holds public office and they must ensure always that they act in the public interest and keep proper records of decision-making. Given the recent findings of the Queensland Audit Office in relation to the former deputy premier and minister for state development, infrastructure and planning and member for Callide, it is perhaps a shame he did not attend those seminars when he was a councillor for Monto shire. Many of the seminars have had current or former mayors and councillors giving real-life advice from their firsthand experience including Noosa's Bob Abbot, former Townsville and Thuringowa mayor Les Tyrell and Logan's Pam Parker. I want to take this opportunity to thank them specifically for giving up their time free of charge to help guide the next generation of local government representatives. Some of the feedback my department officers received included that some people realised it was not for them while for others the information hardened their resolve to nominate. The government is committed to encouraging the best possible people to nominate for election to their local council. It is vital for all Queenslanders in terms of economic growth and job creation that we have strong government at every level and that those governments work together.

Indigenous Communities Futures Summit



Hon. CW PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (2.15 pm): On 19 November I had the pleasure of convening a Communities Futures Summit in Yarrabah with mayors and elected community leaders from Queensland's discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. At the summit I spoke with Indigenous mayors and leaders about how they will take charge of making a stronger and more resilient future for their communities. It is time for government to stop telling Indigenous communities what to do and instead support social and economic development to help them drive their own futures. If we are to address the challenges faced in our remote communities, it is crucial that we start by listening to the people who live there. We want to work with mayors and community leaders of remote communities to improve economic opportunity, wellbeing and quality of life so individuals and families have happy and fulfilling lives. This is a portfolio where we not only need to work more closely across all levels of government but also need to work across all sides of politics.

Despite federal funding cuts, the Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Senator Scullion, and I have a positive working relationship, and I would welcome the same with the member for Mount Ommaney. I should note that it was pleasing to hear the member speak in support of the Family Responsibilities Commission Amendment Bill yesterday, even if it was in the spirit of Christmas. I hope the member is able to keep the Christmas cheer going throughout 2016!

Last week I had the pleasure of visiting Kowanyama, Pormpuraaw, Napranum, Aurukun and the Northern Peninsula area communities of Bamaga, Injinoo, Seisia, Umagico and New Mapoon. My visit provided a valuable opportunity to meet with community members to have straightforward discussions about issues affecting their communities. To move forward with regional development in Cape York, these conversations are essential. In Kowanyama they have been campaigning for a local abattoir to be opened and I had the opportunity to hear about this local business opportunity and tour the proposed site. Should this business prove to be viable, it would not only improve the quality of meat available in the community but also create sustainable employment opportunities for community members. I was able to inspect the DATSIP Retail Store and discuss housing, street lighting and the future of alcohol management plans with community members in Pormpuraaw. Alcohol related harm remains an issue across our discrete communities and we are of course working together on a way forward that will reflect the individual needs and concerns of each community.

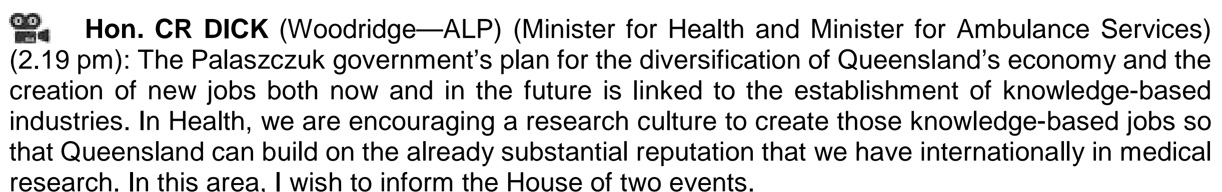
In Napranum I visited the impressive new library, local council offices, kindergarten and day-care facilities and met the passionate local staff. Additionally, the reception held by the local council provided an opportunity to engage with community members directly with issues that mattered to them. It was timely to visit Aurukun with the recent concerns for the safety of community members and government employees in town. It was pleasing to see the community was calm and people were starting to return to their normal daily routines. We know the community continues to face many complex social issues and discussions will continue following this visit with locals, elected leaders and government employees about how to address the challenges ahead. In Bamaga I was taken aback by the ingenious simplicity of the local school's approach to improving both health and education by providing parenting support classes after school. Their Love and Logic program helps parents manage their daily schedules and arms them with really simple parenting techniques to help raise respectful, healthy and smart kids.

At Injinoo we took a tour of the town's health services and homes and community centre. In Umagico I was able to christen the new boardroom by holding its first meeting. The post-construction clean-up had literally finished there just that morning. I will be having to raise issues of funding with my federal counterpart after learning that one of these centres lost funding and also missed out on an opportunity to apply owing to poor communication.

One of the positive common themes that kept coming up was partnerships. I was pleased to learn that Apunipima Cape York Health Council is keen to partner with the primary health network. It is my view that, through respectful partnerships, a higher quality and more holistic service can be provided to the community.

I want to thank all of those who made both the summit and my cape visits informative and enjoyable. I hope to visit other communities as soon as possible to broaden the conversations and continue to work in close collaboration with each of Queensland's remote Indigenous communities.

Queensland Health, Medical Research



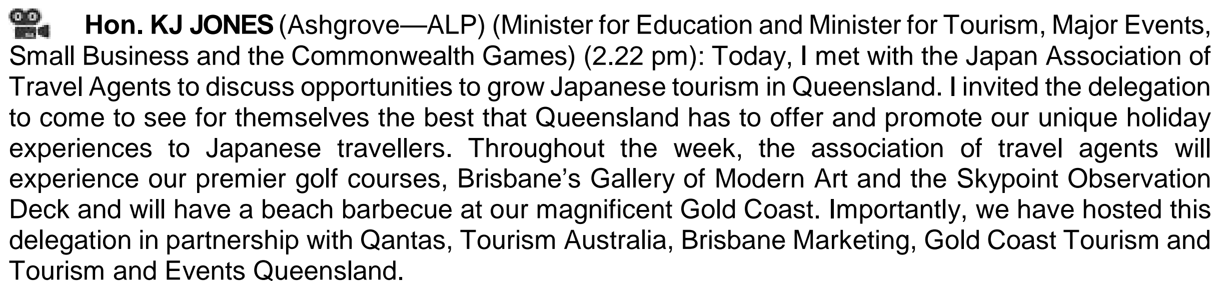
Hon. CR DICK (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (2.19 pm): The Palaszczuk government's plan for the diversification of Queensland's economy and the creation of new jobs both now and in the future is linked to the establishment of knowledge-based industries. In Health, we are encouraging a research culture to create those knowledge-based jobs so that Queensland can build on the already substantial reputation that we have internationally in medical research. In this area, I wish to inform the House of two events.

The first is the opening last week of the $134 million Centre for Children's Health Research in South Brisbane. Before the establishment of this centre, children's health researchers were scattered throughout Brisbane in various universities and hospitals. This centre brings them under the one roof and is co-located with the state's only specialist paediatric teaching hospital, the Lady Cilento Children's Hospital. In this facility, the Lady Cilento Children's Hospital's doctors, nurses, surgeons and allied health professionals will work side by side with researchers from the centre's university and academic partners, the Queensland University of Technology, the University of Queensland and the Translational Research Institute, to ensure that medical and scientific breakthroughs transfer quickly to improved health for children.

The centre is linked into international research networks. Researchers there tell me that they are collaborating in research projects with 30 other institutions around the world. Some key areas of research being undertaken in the centre include burns, childhood cancer, mental health, child development, rehabilitation and neurology, microbiological and virological research, and exercise and nutrition. The Centre for Children's Health Research represents the largest investment in child and adolescent health research in Queensland's history, with the state government contributing $89 million, supported with a further $45 million invested in equal parts by QUT, UQ and the TRI.

Another initiative that is being undertaken by the Palaszczuk government involves encouraging doctors at the start of their careers to undertake research projects by setting up a $5 million fund to allow junior doctors to do detailed research projects. Under the first round, four young doctors will be awarded fellowships of up to $500,000 each to undertake specific research under the guidance of a highly experienced senior clinical research fellow. Queensland already has a strong research culture, but this initiative is about extending and encouraging that culture, especially among doctors who are just starting their careers. They are among the best and brightest and we want to encourage them to undertake research throughout their entire careers. Taken together, these two initiatives show that we are serious about encouraging Queensland's flourishing research culture in Health.

Japan, Tourism

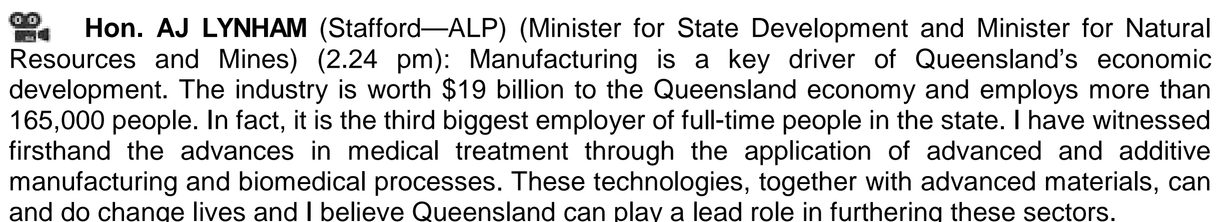


Hon. KJ JONES (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games) (2.22 pm): Today, I met with the Japan Association of Travel Agents to discuss opportunities to grow Japanese tourism in Queensland. I invited the delegation to come to see for themselves the best that Queensland has to offer and promote our unique holiday experiences to Japanese travellers. Throughout the week, the association of travel agents will experience our premier golf courses, Brisbane's Gallery of Modern Art and the Skypoint Observation Deck and will have a beach barbecue at our magnificent Gold Coast. Importantly, we have hosted this delegation in partnership with Qantas, Tourism Australia, Brisbane Marketing, Gold Coast Tourism and Tourism and Events Queensland.

We know how important our airline and travel trade partners are to growing Queensland's travel market. As the Premier said, Asia is an important tourism market for Queensland and it is primed for growth. Every year, Japanese visitors are spending more than $300 million in Queensland. The new daily direct flights from Tokyo, which took off in August, will bring up to 108,000 additional travellers to Queensland and inject an additional $64 million into the Queensland economy. Yesterday, I met with officials of the Brisbane airport and they said that they expect that flights from Tokyo to surge over summer.

Education is also a major focus for Japanese tourism. Tourism and Events Queensland is working with Japanese travel agents and schoolteachers to boost Japanese school trips to Queensland. We know that a growing tourism industry means more jobs for Queenslanders. That is why we are determined to secure more international flights to Queensland, grow our relationship with tourism officials in key source markets and encourage greater investment in local tourism products.

Manufacturing Industry



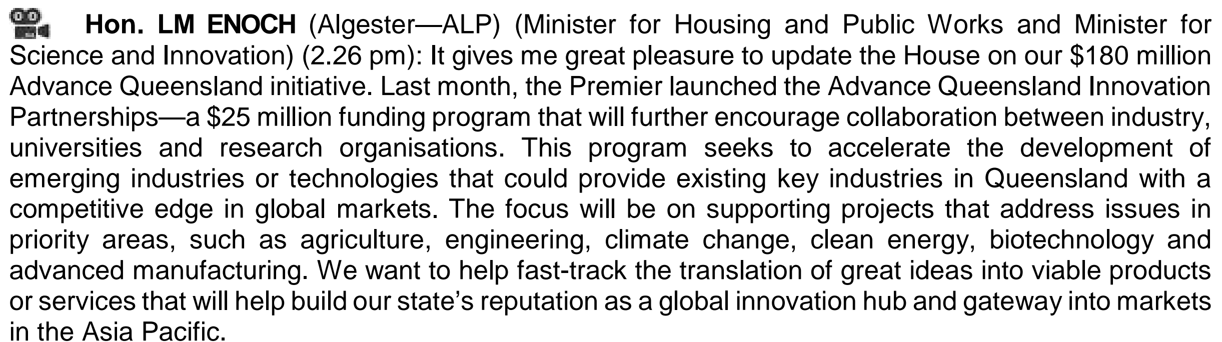
Hon. AJ LYNHAM (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (2.24 pm): Manufacturing is a key driver of Queensland's economic development. The industry is worth $19 billion to the Queensland economy and employs more than 165,000 people. In fact, it is the third biggest employer of full-time people in the state. I have witnessed firsthand the advances in medical treatment through the application of advanced and additive manufacturing and biomedical processes. These technologies, together with advanced materials, can and do change lives and I believe Queensland can play a lead role in furthering these sectors.

Last week, I chaired the first meeting of our new industry and manufacturing advisory group—one of our election commitments. The group will provide strategic and practical advice to the government on emerging trends and issues impacting on the manufacturing and manufacturing related sectors. It will also assist the government to get the settings right for this industry to grow. There are nine members on the group, including five women as well as representatives from industry and unions. They cover a wide range of different manufacturing areas, including metal products, beverage production, microwave products, defence and aerospace, heavy engineering and rail, and agriculture. These are critical jobs for Queensland's economy and we recognise the need to ensure that the manufacturing sector flourishes and continues to support economic development in our great state.

I wish I could say that the previous government had the same commitment to the manufacturing sector as our government. For the three years the LNP was in government, it had no policy and no plan for manufacturing. Only this year and after our election to government has the LNP recognised the importance of the manufacturing sector to our state. Construction and manufacturing are now the LNP's fourth priority area. But it is very scant on details of what its plans are for the sector other than reducing red tape.

This is not good enough. The manufacturing sector is facing a number of huge challenges and must undergo a transformation to remain having an integral role in the state's growing and prosperous economy. It needs more than just a line in the LNP's policy document; it needs a committed Palaszczuk government with a plan for its transformation and a plan for the future.

Advance Queensland Innovation Partnerships



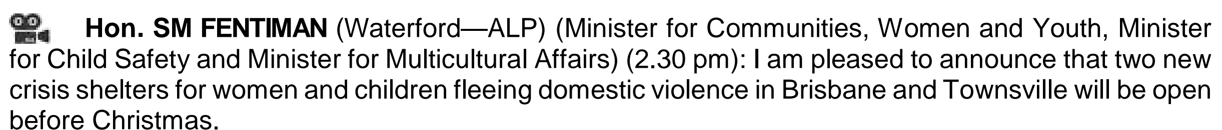
Hon. LM ENOCH (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works and Minister for Science and Innovation) (2.26 pm): It gives me great pleasure to update the House on our $180 million Advance Queensland initiative. Last month, the Premier launched the Advance Queensland Innovation Partnerships—a $25 million funding program that will further encourage collaboration between industry, universities and research organisations. This program seeks to accelerate the development of emerging industries or technologies that could provide existing key industries in Queensland with a competitive edge in global markets. The focus will be on supporting projects that address issues in priority areas, such as agriculture, engineering, climate change, clean energy, biotechnology and advanced manufacturing. We want to help fast-track the translation of great ideas into viable products or services that will help build our state's reputation as a global innovation hub and gateway into markets in the Asia Pacific.

Under this program, universities and research organisations can apply for grants of up to $1.5 million for projects with industry partners. The innovation partnerships will leverage on investment that applicants have already secured. This Advance Queensland initiative will encourage local businesses and multinational corporations to work with Queensland based research organisations to help translate innovative ideas into new products, services or business models.

The international evidence shows that collaboration between businesses, government and researchers increases the likelihood of successful innovation by more than 70 per cent. That is why we have introduced a further Advance Queensland program—the Global Partnership Awards—to support our best and brightest minds to create international partnerships and connect our start-up system with leading entrepreneurs. The Global Partnership Awards have two main categories. The first is the Innovation and Market Insight Program, supporting Queensland start-ups, business leaders, investors and support organisations to undertake accelerated learning by engaging with world-leading companies, venture capital and angel investors, accelerator programs and start-up systems. It will see high-profile entrepreneurs and investors in residence come to Queensland to engage with and mentor local businesses and investors. It provides enhanced opportunities for emerging or ambitious entrepreneurs to visit overseas markets and innovation hotspots.

The second major category of the Global Partnership Awards is the International Innovation Partnerships Program, which supports long-term strategic relationships with leading global centres of research or innovative companies. The Queensland Creative Entrepreneurship Program partnership with YouTube announced by the Deputy Premier last month is the first new collaboration under the program. This partnership between the Queensland government and YouTube, supported by QUT, Griffith University and Screen Queensland, aims to stimulate Queensland's creative entrepreneurs. We will also invest jointly with leading global research institutions or universities to support collaborative R&D. Advance Queensland is setting a course to reinvigorate our state's economy and it is creating jobs now and jobs for the future.

Domestic and Family Violence, Crisis Shelters



Hon. SM FENTIMAN (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (2.30 pm): I am pleased to announce that two new crisis shelters for women and children fleeing domestic violence in Brisbane and Townsville will be open before Christmas.

Government members: Hear, hear!

Ms FENTIMAN: Back in March, on International Women's Day, I announced that the two shelters would be established as the first commitment to a recommendation in the *Not now, not ever* report. When women make the brave decision to leave a violent relationship we must make sure we have the

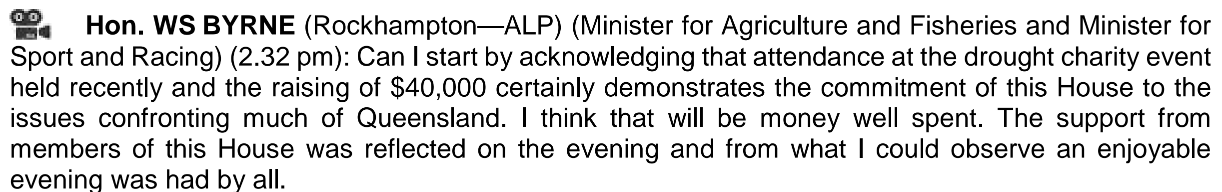
support and services there to help. These new shelters will give women and children a secure haven where they can start afresh. I was delighted to join the Minister for Housing and Public Works this morning for a walk-through of the new Brisbane shelter and I was very impressed with its feeling of warmth and calmness. Shelter staff will link women with specialist services to provide support until they have safe, stable housing in place, as well as connecting them with ongoing support for court, health or other issues. The Brisbane Crisis Shelter will offer 11 two-bedroom units of supported accommodation. The shelter in Townsville will provide a mix of two- and three-bedroom supported properties across the city. These shelters will have increased security and privacy, including CCTV, higher fencing, privacy screens and secure gates.

One of the unique aspects of these shelters is they will cater for pets, which was a recommendation from the *Not now, not ever* report, given women in violent situations can also have threats made against their pets and it is one of the barriers to women fleeing violent relationships. The government has allocated nearly $20 million over four years for the establishment and operational costs of these new shelters.

I would also like to call on all members and everyone across Queensland to donate to our Christmas appeal. We are partnering with the ABC and Queensland Rail to help people who have had to flee their homes as a result of domestic and family violence. Sometimes victims leave with just the clothes on their backs and face the daunting task of setting up home all over again. The aim of this appeal is to help rebuild their lives, whether it is Christmas gifts, homewares or school items for 2016. The Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services website has details and gifts can be dropped off at more than 50 places around Queensland and even here at Parliament House in the annexe under the Christmas tree—thank you, Mr Speaker.

This week members may have heard some of the terrible stories of women featured on 612 ABC Brisbane. One woman, Billy, described the terrible physical abuse she suffered before finally fleeing. When she had to set up house again, with support from RizeUp, one of the organisations which will benefit from the appeal, she broke down in tears describing what it meant to her to arrive at a home that was kitted out with absolutely everything she needed. Let us all this Christmas help make a home for someone like this in need.

Drought



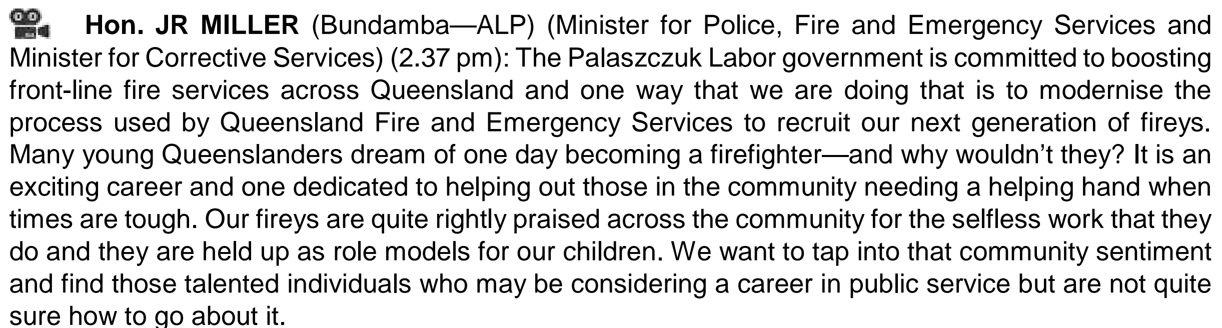
Hon. WS BYRNE (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Sport and Racing) (2.32 pm): Can I start by acknowledging that attendance at the drought charity event held recently and the raising of $40,000 certainly demonstrates the commitment of this House to the issues confronting much of Queensland. I think that will be money well spent. The support from members of this House was reflected on the evening and from what I could observe an enjoyable evening was had by all.

Last week I travelled to the Burdekin region. While I was there I met with some great young apprentices at the Invicta Sugar Mill. But while there it gave me no pleasure to announce that 86.11 per cent of the state is now in drought. This is a record percentage of Queensland to be so declared. Seven more council areas have been added to Queensland's drought declarations. The effects of the strong El Nino event have become apparent in areas such as the Burdekin and Townsville and there are now part declarations in areas such as the Cook, Whitsunday and Isaac council areas.

As the members of this place are well aware, the dry winter and persistent drought conditions has meant that there has been no relief for Queenslanders living and working in these parched areas. Although there has been recent rainfall in Western Queensland, some of which caused minor flooding around Barcaldine and Jericho, it is nowhere near enough, as everybody recognises. Our primary producers need a lot more follow-up rain in the coming wet season. Generally, local drought committees usually wait until the end of the wet season before recommending drought declarations or revocations. This year some have brought forward their recommendations. Primary producers in these newly drought declared areas are eligible for elements of the Drought Relief Assistance Scheme. DRAS includes freight subsidies for fodder and water for livestock and the Emergency Water Infrastructure Rebate. Drought declared livestock producers can access up to $20,000 per year. Under an approved drought management plan they can access up to $30,000 a year, increasing to $40,000 in the third and subsequent year of a drought declaration. The Queensland government also waives water licence fees and funds discounted water supply electricity charges. To date, 36 councils and five part-council areas are drought declared. Producers wanting to apply for DRAS assistance should contact their local Department of Agriculture and Fisheries representatives.

On top of that, I have recently had information from some of the south-west wool producers of programs that are running complementary to the drought declarations, including cluster fencing programs that have been run previously in the south-west under the NRM groups, as well as further programs that are being combined with federal assistance in other areas of Queensland. The good news I have had from one of those areas is that recent lambing rates have gone from 15 per cent prior to those cluster fences being put in place through to percentages in excess of 80 per cent. That is good news for the west, as most of those who understand the sheep industry would appreciate. These facts and measures demonstrate that the wild dog problem can be addressed and that productivity dividends can be derived. They are connected to those areas that are most sorely and directly affected by drought. Other measures that have been put in place by this government include the Rural Debt and Drought Taskforce. That program is moving forward. It is a productive environment that I am sure will come forward with sensible recommendations for government to consider. This government is attuned to the issues of Queensland and drought declarations and the circumstances of our communities and we will be doing everything within our power to assist them.

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, Recruitment

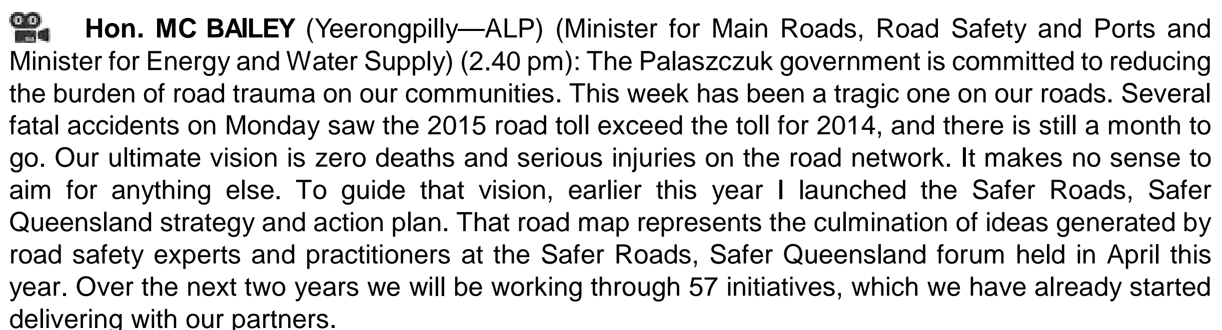


Hon. JR MILLER (Bundamba—ALP) (Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services) (2.37 pm): The Palaszczuk Labor government is committed to boosting front-line fire services across Queensland and one way that we are doing that is to modernise the process used by Queensland Fire and Emergency Services to recruit our next generation of fireys. Many young Queenslanders dream of one day becoming a firefighter—and why wouldn't they? It is an exciting career and one dedicated to helping out those in the community needing a helping hand when times are tough. Our fireys are quite rightly praised across the community for the selfless work that they do and they are held up as role models for our children. We want to tap into that community sentiment and find those talented individuals who may be considering a career in public service but are not quite sure how to go about it.

I am pleased to announce that applications are now open for prospective firefighters who can apply to join the ranks of the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services as part of our new recruitment strategy. We are moving away from a continual process of recruitment to a defined application period. Under the old system, applicants could be on the waiting list for years. The new system is streamlined so that applications will be processed quickly and people will have a clear picture of the status of their application.

Prospective recruits will undergo an extensive assessment process and before receiving an offer to join the service they will need to advance through a series of cognitive, physical and psychological tests. Applications to be part of this new batch of recruits close on Sunday, 20 December this year, with the first intake to begin training in April next year. Over the next week right across the state we will be holding information sessions, so I encourage all of our prospective fireys to get along to one and seriously think about applying to be part of Queensland's next generation of firefighters. The Palaszczuk government has already delivered 77 new firefighters for Queensland and a further 21 are expected to successfully graduate from the academy on 18 December. In nine months we have delivered more than two-thirds the number of firefighters those opposite delivered in their entire time in government. That is the difference between us on this side of the House and them in the opposition: we are for jobs and they are for cuts, and it has never been clearer.

Road Safety



Hon. MC BAILEY (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy and Water Supply) (2.40 pm): The Palaszczuk government is committed to reducing the burden of road trauma on our communities. This week has been a tragic one on our roads. Several fatal accidents on Monday saw the 2015 road toll exceed the toll for 2014, and there is still a month to go. Our ultimate vision is zero deaths and serious injuries on the road network. It makes no sense to aim for anything else. To guide that vision, earlier this year I launched the Safer Roads, Safer Queensland strategy and action plan. That road map represents the culmination of ideas generated by road safety experts and practitioners at the Safer Roads, Safer Queensland forum held in April this year. Over the next two years we will be working through 57 initiatives, which we have already started delivering with our partners.

Tragically, this year motorcycle riders have been overrepresented in road crashes. To help address that, we have launched a motorcycle safety campaign, The Perfect Ride, including website materials and tutorials, as part of Join the Drive to Save Lives. In August we released a discussion paper about proposed reforms to motorcycle licensing. We are responding to more than 1,000 public submissions and they will be published online later this week.

In July and September, over 100 young people from across Queensland participated in the CO-LAB youth road safety innovation challenge to brainstorm youth initiated road safety issues and responses impacting on their generation. In October I announced the winners and TMR is now working with the winning team of young people to fund and implement a targeted, online youth safety campaign targeting young male drivers who are our highest risk demographic on the roads.

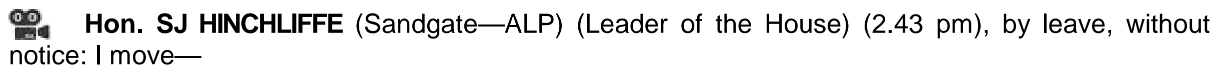
As part of our response to the April forum, we have also formed a citizens task force of everyday Queenslanders, who will make recommendations to government about how incentives could be used to encourage safe driving. Over two weekends last month, the citizens task force met and prepared recommendations in relation to incentives, road safety targets and drink and drug driving. Of course, on 1 September 2015 double demerit points were introduced for repeat mobile phone offences committed within one year of the first earlier offence. From 29 June this year we commenced a tougher practical driving test. The enhancements place a stronger emphasis on higher-risk manoeuvres and safer driving skills for learner drivers.

Under the Community Road Safety Grants program, more than $1 million will be shared across 40 Queensland schools, community groups and councils to improve road safety in their local area. Over the next two years, we will deliver more than $500 million on road safety programs, including improved road infrastructure targeting the highest risk locations. This includes rolling out wide centre-line treatments, which is an award-winning lifesaving treatment on the Queensland road network. Members can see it already on the Bruce Highway and a number of other highways. In this term of government, we are also rolling out 300 flashing light sets outside Queensland schools.

In August, with the Minister for Police I was pleased to launch the statewide Road Safety Week in partnership with the Queensland Police Service. Statewide road safety campaigns continued with the launch of the Distractions Campaign in August and a new drink driving campaign is planned for the Christmas-New Year festive season. Government cannot reduce the road toll alone. We will continue to work with Queenslanders to make travelling on our roads as safe as possible. I call on all Queenslanders to be safe every time they get behind the wheel.

MOTION

Referral to the Finance and Administration Committee



Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (2.43 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

1. That the Finance and Administration Committee inquire into and report to the Legislative Assembly by 30 June 2016 on the practices of the labour hire industry in Queensland.

   In undertaking the inquiry, the committee should consider:

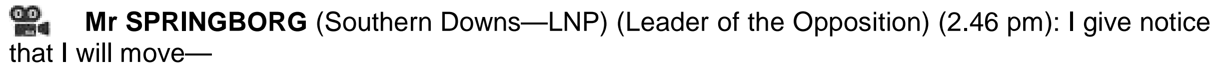
   a) the extent, nature and consequence of labour hire employment in industries and/or regions, including within industry supply chains and the responsibilities of entities involved;
   b) phoenixing, undercapitalisation and undercutting of conditions by labour hire companies ("companies") and their impact on the labour market and business;
   c) the social and economic impacts, including on regional communities, of replacing permanent employees, apprentices and trainees with labour hire workers;
   d) allegations that labour hire and sham contracting are being used to avoid workplace laws and other statutory obligations, such as:
      i. underpayment of wages and entitlements, including superannuation; and
      ii. avoidance of payroll tax and Workcover premiums;
   e) the effectiveness of enforcing current industrial relations laws and instruments, occupational health and safety laws and workers compensation laws in the labour hire industry;
   f) allegations of exploitation, harassment and other mistreatment of workers employed by companies;
   g) whether tendering and employment practices create an uneven playing field for competing businesses; and
   h) the regulation of labour hire in Australian jurisdictions and internationally and effective enforcement mechanisms, including bonds, licensing, registration and other forms of compliance.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services

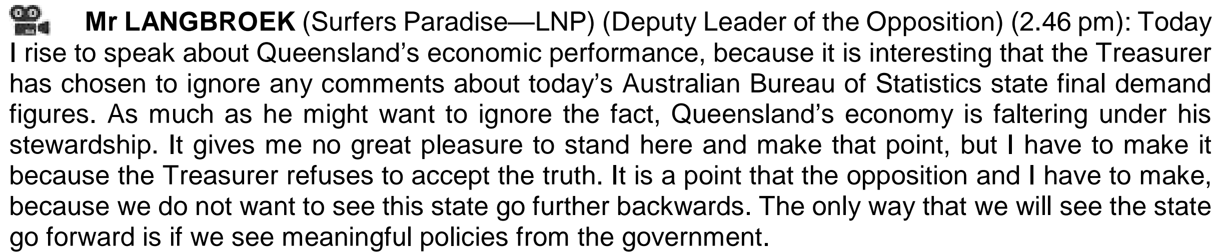


Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.46 pm): I give notice that I will move—

That this House has no confidence in the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Queensland Economy



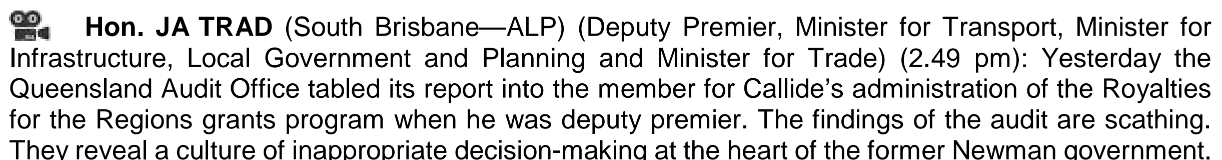
Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (2.46 pm): Today I rise to speak about Queensland's economic performance, because it is interesting that the Treasurer has chosen to ignore any comments about today's Australian Bureau of Statistics state final demand figures. As much as he might want to ignore the fact, Queensland's economy is faltering under his stewardship. It gives me no great pleasure to stand here and make that point, but I have to make it because the Treasurer refuses to accept the truth. It is a point that the opposition and I have to make, because we do not want to see this state go further backwards. The only way that we will see the state go forward is if we see meaningful policies from the government.

Today small business has said they want leadership from the government. They want a comprehensive economic plan. They want to see key infrastructure projects. They want to see the government reducing costs and regulatory shackles so that they can grow and create jobs. However, let us look at the specifics of the statistics. Today's figures from the ABS show that in the September quarter in Queensland, seasonally adjusted state final demand fell 0.2 per cent. Today's figures also show a downward revision in the figures from the June quarter, indicating negative growth of 1.3 per cent. The June quarter result for Queensland was by far the worst of any state in Australia. The trend state final demand figures tell the same story: Queensland is at the bottom of the pack on that measure. While it is important to note that state final demand figures exclude net exports, today's figures again confirm that Queensland's economy is stalling under this do-nothing Labor government. The figures come on top of national account statistics showing economic growth in Queensland was the worst of any state.

Since the March quarter, seasonally adjusted business investment in Queensland has dropped by 21.1 per cent. Yes: seasonally adjusted business investment has dropped by 21.1 per cent since the March quarter. In Queensland trend building approvals have declined for seven consecutive months. Just last month, seasonally adjusted building approvals declined almost 30 per cent. We have also seen two quarters of negative growth in retail trade. Queensland is now listed as part of a third tier of economies by the CommSec State of the States report, falling further behind states such as New South Wales. Unfortunately, rather than using these sobering numbers to outline his positive vision for growing the economy, the Treasurer has been playing the blame game—it is everyone's fault but his. At some stage the Treasurer is finally going to have to step up and accept responsibility for the Queensland economy.

We are now up to 80 reviews. They have to begin making some decisions soon. The Treasurer is going to have to outline his vision for Queensland because that is what Queensland businesses are crying out for. Queenslanders deserve better than an ineffectual Treasurer who is making it up as he goes. The LNP was managing our budget responsibly. Finances were back under control. Queensland needs the LNP to unleash Queensland's potential.

Royalties for the Regions, Auditor-General's Report



Hon. JA TRAD (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade) (2.49 pm): Yesterday the Queensland Audit Office tabled its report into the member for Callide's administration of the Royalties for the Regions grants program when he was deputy premier. The findings of the audit are scathing. They reveal a culture of inappropriate decision-making at the heart of the former Newman government.

Just like the recent Queensland Audit Office report into boot camps, this report shows that the Newman government ministers brazenly disregarded departmental advice and failed to keep records of their decision-making. Put simply, this is maladministration unseen since the Joh days. The member for Callide's belligerent rejection of this grave report yesterday portrays an arrogant disregard for accountability—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock! Members, when the Deputy Leader of the Opposition spoke there was responsible silence. I now urge you to allow the Deputy Premier to speak.

Ms TRAD: Thank you for your protection, Mr Speaker. The member for Callide's belligerent rejection of this grave report yesterday portrays an arrogant disregard for accountability, also unseen since the Joh days.

We can see his contempt for basic accountability in his letters to the QAO—challenging their audit findings published in the report. In fact, his denial about these findings is so extreme he even tried to deny that the Royalties for the Regions was a grants program. In his letter of 16 October the member for Callide writes—

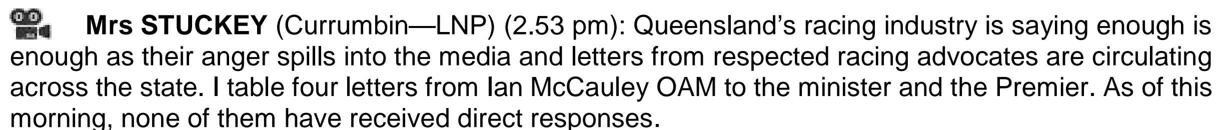
The basic assumption is factually and fundamentally wrong as Royalties for the Regions was never designed as a competitive grants program.

He even underlined it in his letter for effect. The QAO saw right through this ridiculous claim. They wrote that his claim 'is not supported by evidence we have available to us'. After all, the Royalties for the Regions guidelines signed off by the member for Callide when he was deputy premier on three separate occasions stated explicitly 'Royalties for the Regions is a competitive grants program'.

The program was managed through a DSDIP grants management system. The cabinet endorsed framework for the program called it a competitive grants program. The FAQs for round 4 from his old department's website specifically say that the Royalties for the Regions is a competitive grants program. My agency, the department of local government, which paid the grants to councils treated the funding as a grant in its financial statements.

Members will remember that in 2002 the member for Callide admitted to being a tactical liar when he made false claims about former premier Peter Beattie. Now he is at it again. This time it is clear—he is also into tactical cover-ups.

Racing Industry



Mrs STUCKEY (Currumbin—LNP) (2.53 pm): Queensland's racing industry is saying enough is enough as their anger spills into the media and letters from respected racing advocates are circulating across the state. I table four letters from Ian McCauley OAM to the minister and the Premier. As of this morning, none of them have received direct responses.

Tabled paper: Correspondence, various dates, from Mr Ian McCauley OAM to the Minister for Sport and Racing, Hon. Bill Byrne, and the Premier and Minister for the Arts, Hon. Annastacia Palaszczuk, regarding Racing Queensland [1796].

Inertia and arrogance by this minister, the Premier and this government have placed an enormous and unnecessary strain upon people's livelihoods. Does this minister not get what country racing means to country folk? Does he not care at all? If he did, he would have included them in discussions about their future. Instead, only two out of nine face-to-face forums were held outside Brisbane. They were in Cairns and Mackay. There were none west of the dividing range where the majority of country race meets are held, showing utter contempt for those living in the outback and rural towns. This minister has declared Queensland is 86 per cent drought affected and now plans to rip country racing away from them. How heartless is that? No wonder Minister Byrne is being called the Grinch before Christmas.

Racing media in particular are taking the blowtorch to this minister and this Palaszczuk Labor government. They can see disgraceful politics being played out with no concern for individuals or this proud industry. Already RadioTAB's David Fowler, ABC's Steve Austin, retiring race caller Alan Thomas, the *Courier-Mail*'s Nathan Exelby, the *Sunday Mail*'s Michael Madigan and country papers and radio have exposed the plight of this industry left headless, leaderless and rudderless for six months. I want to thank them for giving a voice to the many thousands of people who rely on racing for their livelihoods and are deeply fearful of this government's intentions to slash and burn their industry.

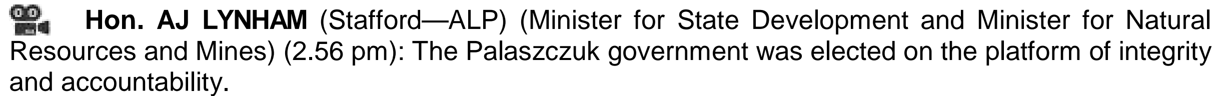
An article in the *Courier-Mail* on 27 November headed 'Racing stalls in a vacuum' highlights the growing frustration of industry leaders like Rob Heathcote, trainer of Queensland star Buffering, and former champion jockey, now trainer Chris Munce at this government's crippling inaction that is causing confidence to plummet and other states to pick up our business. Heathcote said—

It's tragic that we as an industry, leading into the critical sales season are left in limbo.

Munce said that Queensland was suffering because it did not have an autonomous administration fighting for its interests—'While you have people running a business they have no interest or knowledge of, it just continues to decline'.

Failure to release a tracking sustainability plan—or any plan for that matter—will have long-term effects on Queensland's racing industry, but this minister hides away. My records reveal that he has not even put out a release on racing since 16 July, yet he puts them out on agriculture all the time. I call on the minister to make public the contents of Ian Hall's report and recommendations on the tracking sustainability plan and to guarantee that there will be broader consultation with industry before any of them are implemented.

Royalties for the Regions, Auditor-General's Report



Hon. AJ LYNHAM (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (2.56 pm): The Palaszczuk government was elected on the platform of integrity and accountability.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock! Members, we will wait until there is silence.

Dr LYNHAM: I was pleased and surprised to see supporters of these concepts at the LNP state conference meeting in Kingaroy last month. They resolved to request the LNP parliamentary team on return to government to review the operation of the Queensland Public Service, within the context of the principles of the Westminster system, to ensure that it operates as a professional body free from political influence.

I am wondering where the former deputy premier stands on this issue following the release of the Auditor-General's report into the Royalties for the Regions program. That report, as we saw yesterday, raises very serious questions about the political influence he exerted on the administration of public funds.

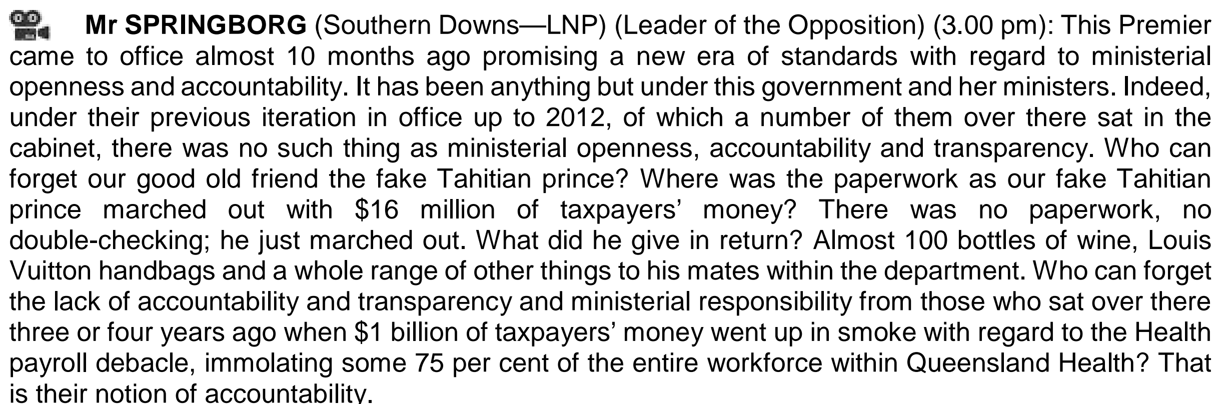
The key findings illustrate that the principle of a Queensland Public Service operating free from political influence was completely alien to the former deputy premier. At page 4—in case the member for Lockyer cannot find it today—it states that the member for Callide 'did not always select projects based on their relative merits as assessed by the department' and 'there was no documentation to support or explain the reasons for so doing'. The Auditor-General said that this lack of documentation 'exposes the decision-maker to the potential for accusations of bias or favouritism, which are harder to refute where there is no clear documentary trail'.

The former deputy premier has a sad record on matters of principle. I remind honourable members of an event in 2002. In this chamber he suggested a company had received incentives to set up a fruit processing plant because the then premier's brother worked for the company. The member for Callide admitted he knew it was false when he said it. He told the media at the time that this was an opposition tactic. What this is is disregard and disrespect for the Westminster principles that underpin our democracy here in Queensland.

I want to assure the House that our government's Building our Regions program could not contrast more with the former Royalties for the Regions program under the LNP. The member for Callide described this report as a 'wet lettuce leaf'. He describes himself on his own website as a man who supports regional Queensland. He came from local government but that did not stop him from wasting the time, money and resources of local governments across this state. He ripped off local governments, local communities and the mums and dads he said he would represent. These people are no wet lettuce leaf; these people are the people he betrayed.

(Time expired)

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance



Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (3.00 pm): This Premier came to office almost 10 months ago promising a new era of standards with regard to ministerial openness and accountability. It has been anything but under this government and her ministers. Indeed, under their previous iteration in office up to 2012, of which a number of them over there sat in the cabinet, there was no such thing as ministerial openness, accountability and transparency. Who can forget our good old friend the fake Tahitian prince? Where was the paperwork as our fake Tahitian prince marched out with $16 million of taxpayers' money? There was no paperwork, no double-checking; he just marched out. What did he give in return? Almost 100 bottles of wine, Louis Vuitton handbags and a whole range of other things to his mates within the department. Who can forget the lack of accountability and transparency and ministerial responsibility from those who sat over there three or four years ago when $1 billion of taxpayers' money went up in smoke with regard to the Health payroll debacle, immolating some 75 per cent of the entire workforce within Queensland Health? That is their notion of accountability.

Those who sat over there in the lead-up to 2012 have learnt absolutely nothing. What we have seen from this government in the last few months is a situation where they have hid behind committees. They have hid behind an absolute cluelessness and the fact that they are not prepared to take responsibility. Did the Fitzgerald process envisage a situation where journalists can ask a question of the Premier but members of the opposition cannot ask a question of the Premier? Did the Fitzgerald process envisage a situation where the government could use the committee system of the day to hide openness and transparency, not ensure openness and transparency? That is the action of this government over the last 10 months. Is it any surprise? No, it should not be, because we have a number of members, including the Leader of the House, the member for Woodridge, the member for Ashgrove and the member for Bundamba, who sat in that previous cabinet and learnt the worst possible habits.

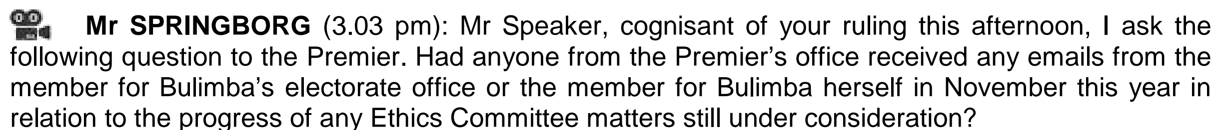
There was no ministerial responsibility whatsoever with regard to the fake Tahitian prince until we came along and started asking questions about an internally moribund process. There was no ministerial accountability for the former member for Lytton when $1.253 billion just disappeared like that. To have credibility you must reflect on the past and you must also be prepared to be accountable for it.

(Time expired)

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr SPEAKER: Question time will conclude at 4.03 pm.

Alleged Unauthorised Release of Committee Information



Mr SPRINGBORG (3.03 pm): Mr Speaker, cognisant of your ruling this afternoon, I ask the following question to the Premier. Had anyone from the Premier's office received any emails from the member for Bulimba's electorate office or the member for Bulimba herself in November this year in relation to the progress of any Ethics Committee matters still under consideration?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Mr Speaker, there is an ethics matter that is currently before a committee at the moment, so I would seek your ruling on that. Secondly, to the specifics of the question, I am happy to look into that. I do not have that information. I am happy to check my office.

Alleged Unauthorised Release of Committee Information

Mr SPRINGBORG: My second question does relate to the matter that I asked previously. I ask simply with regard to that reassurance that the Premier does undertake that and report back to the parliament—

Mr HINCHLIFFE: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. This is a preamble. Usually we worry about the length of the preamble. This time I am worried about the rambling nature of it. I am trying to understand when the question is going to come.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, Leader of the House. I would like to hear the question.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members, one moment. It is early. Leader of the Opposition, can you please ask your second question? I was not sure whether your introduction referred to the question you have just asked or an earlier question you have asked during this sitting.

Mr SPRINGBORG: My second question relates directly to my first question to the Premier this afternoon. I ask for a reassurance that the Premier does undertake to get that information and report back to the parliament by the close of business today.

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, does that question relate to the matter that is currently before the Ethics Committee?

Mr SPRINGBORG: No, it does not.

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members on the government side, I am trying to hear the answer. Leader of the Opposition, does your question relate to the matter before the Ethics Committee?

Mr SPRINGBORG: No. It relates to my previous question to which the Premier has given an undertaking to come back to the parliament. I am simply asking the Premier—

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, members! We will take all day. Leader of the Opposition, does your first question relate to the matter before the Ethics Committee?

Mr SPRINGBORG: No. It does not relate in any way to matters of deliberations, as we understand it, before the committee. It relates simply to the matter of conduct of a member of the committee and the potential unauthorised release of information.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The Leader of the Opposition has asked a question that ultimately seemed to be a question in order to make a direction to the Premier. I think that might be in the order of some sort of motion. That opportunity has passed. They might leave that until tomorrow. Mr Speaker, I think you should rule the question out of order and we move on. Twenty-six years after the Leader of the Opposition was elected he clearly has no idea about the standing orders.

Mr SPEAKER: I have received an assurance from the Leader of the Opposition that the first question, which the Premier answered, did not relate to the matter before the Ethics Committee. I have received an assurance from the Leader of the Opposition that the second question he has now asked also does not relate to the matter before the Ethics Committee. Premier, you may answer the question however you choose.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. My concern is not that the question is about those proceedings but that it relates to the proceedings of a committee. They are not matters that are questions for the Premier.

Mr SPEAKER: Standing order 271 says very clearly—

A matter referred to the ethics committee must not be debated in the House until such time as the ethics committee has reported on the matter if, in the opinion of the Speaker, such debate could prejudice the matter.

The Leader of the Opposition has assured me that his question to the Premier does not relate to the matter that is currently before the Ethics Committee. I call the Premier to answer the question as she chooses.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question, but I do seek your guidance, Mr Speaker. Is the Leader of the Opposition raising an issue that is currently before the Ethics Committee?

Opposition members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: No, this is very clear. He is giving you an assurance, but how do we in this House know that this is not the same tactic they used previously? I therefore seek your guidance, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: I think the question relates to the conduct of a member of that committee and correspondence with your office.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Mr Speaker, as I said before, I will check with my office. I cannot offer anything more than that honest undertaking that I will check with my office.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I do not need your assistance, member for Kawana. You will have an opportunity to ask a question shortly. Member for Lockyer, you will also have an opportunity if you want to contribute.

China, Trade Mission

Ms LINARD: My question is to the Premier. Will the Premier provide an update regarding the Premier's recent—

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Nudgee, I could not hear your introduction because of comments made by the member for Kawana. Member for Kawana, you are now warned under standing order 253A. You are indicating that you were provoked. I did not hear any comment from whoever was provoking you. I am not going to pursue the matter. Member for Nudgee, please ask your question again.

Ms LINARD: My question is to the Premier. Will the Premier provide an update regarding the Premier's recent trade mission to China?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Nudgee for that important question about our dealings with China. As I have said on numerous occasions, there is nothing more important than making sure we grow our economy and making sure we have our trading relationships established with overseas countries. It should be in the interests of every single member of this House to make sure that we grow our economy and foster and collaborate those relationships with overseas countries. I would hate to see that anything comes before this House that would jeopardise those trading relationships.

In relation to the specific question about my recent trade mission, I was very pleased to hear the final outcome that we will now be receiving direct international flights from Shanghai. I thank the Minister for Tourism very much for that, because we know that is about growing our market and growing the base. As I said earlier, recent figures that were released today show very clearly that the number of tourists coming from China has increased significantly. I had the opportunity to go to Noosa on the weekend to attend a function on Saturday night, and the head of the chamber of commerce was also speaking to me about tourism and growing tourism on the Sunshine Coast. I said that there is an enormous opportunity for everyone right throughout our state to capture the momentum here and make sure they change their attitudes in relation to dealing with Chinese tourists. What does that mean? It means, as I said previously, promoting food and wine but it also means learning the language so that we have people who can communicate. I see enormous opportunities for growing this market now and into the future.

Recently I received a letter from the Brisbane Airport Corporation which congratulated the Minister for Tourism for going to China as this has grown the market. In her comments she noted that—

> ... the senior government member supports the valuable role of companies seeking to expand and grow their business in China. Your role and that of a senior cabinet minister in Minister Jones has great significance to the Chinese and we are most grateful for your involvement in this important process.

That is great congratulations to the minister for growing that. Recently at the North Queensland Economic Summit the clear evidence to me from investors was that they want to invest in Queensland. We have to send the right signals to those markets and those countries overseas. I would hate to see anything jeopardise that. We must grow those markets, we must show confidence in our Queensland economy, and I do not want to see this House or any member of this House put in jeopardy those vital trade relationships.

Public Service, Pay Rise

Mr LANGBROEK: My question without notice is to the Treasurer. I refer to the Treasurer's statement yesterday that the Public Service pay rise was financially responsible. As he did not account for it from the budget, will the Treasurer explain how a non-budgeted pay rise is responsible financial management and tell the people of Queensland the total cost to the government of this non-budgeted increase?

Mr PITT: I thank the honourable member for the question. Clearly, what we know about the Queensland core Public Service in-principle offer that we made to the unions and workforce is that it is a fair and reasonable offer. The member opposite was asked several times yesterday about whether this was a fair offer. He would not answer the question. He kept saying that the previous government's offer was fair. I find that quite interesting because, if he thinks that the previous government's offer was fair, it is a response that is clearly not shared by the majority of Queensland public servants who rejected those offers on numerous occasions. Why did they reject those offers? It was because they were not fair. At the same time they were offering 2.2 per cent they were also sacking tens of thousands of workers and they were taking away their job security and working conditions.

As I have said on numerous occasions, this is a fair and reasonable offer. The offer of 2.5 per cent is within budget. It is contained within the 2015-16 budget. We account for a 2.5 per cent wages policy going forward. There is no magical voodoo. As I said on radio, and as the member opposite would know if he were listening or bothered to look at the budget papers, we have a section there which very clearly details our wages policy. It talks about a 2.5 per cent wages policy. That does not mean that is going to be the outcome of every enterprise bargaining agreement, but in this particular case it has been deemed to be an in-principle agreement by the Together union and other public sector unions that relate to the core. They will of course ballot their members, they will ballot the broader workforce and we will then know what the result is.

I have seen some commentary that the $1,300 payment in lieu of back pay is some kind of a bonus. It is not and is certainly not a wages precedent. In considering enterprise agreements for other parts of the workforce, it has been suggested that this is going to open the floodgates. Let me be clear:

this is about a very protracted period of arbitration that went on for nearly three years. That is because those opposite spent so much time trying to sack more people than they did on looking after the workforce that was remaining. It is very sad.

What did the CCIQ say about our pay rise? They said that the Queensland public sector pay rise is fiscally responsible. The CCIQ said that it is fiscally responsible. It is in line with what is happening in the private sector. If those opposite are not clear, if they have missed it, on 1 July 2015 the Fair Work Commission announced an increase to minimum wages of 2.5 per cent. There is nothing unusual about 2.5 per cent. Those opposite need to go back to the drawing board and understand workplace relations, because clearly they failed public servants for three years and they are failing them again in opposition. I am absolutely gobsmacked by his question.

Mr Nicholls interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Clayfield, you will have an opportunity to put a question shortly.

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Integrity and Accountability

Mr RYAN: My question without notice is to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on the importance of integrity and accountability measures in government?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Morayfield for that very important question, one that my government values and one that the Wayne Goss government, which was elected 26 years ago on this date, also valued. What did he say on the election of the Goss government? He said that 2 December 1989 is the end of the Bjelke-Petersen era. That is what he said 26 years ago. Yesterday we saw the handing down of this report by the independent Auditor-General.

Mr Minnikin interjected.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Can I say very clearly that I am absolutely—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Pause the clock. Member for Chatsworth and member for Lockyer, you are now warned under standing order 253A.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am absolutely disgusted at the way the member for Callide and the former deputy premier responded to this report. First of all, there was an attack on the independence of the Auditor. That is disgraceful. This was the hallmark of the LNP government when they were in government and it is the hallmark now they are in opposition—attack, attack, attack, just absolutely attack. This Auditor-General's report raises serious issues about the administration of public money in this state—the administration of taxpayers' money in this state. Was there a process? Yes, there was supposed to be a competitive process but, no, they picked and they chose who they wanted to win. What does that do? That goes back to the Bjelke-Petersen era. They have wound back the clock and what they have done is they have trashed the principles, they have weakened accountability, they have weakened transparency. What was the former deputy premier's excuse? 'We didn't think we were going to lose the election. I would have kept better records perhaps.' What else are they covering up? What else are they hiding? What else happened behind closed doors? What happened in those ministerial offices? More importantly, what happened in the cabinet room? Obviously the cabinet signed off on the program that the former deputy premier presided over. A lot of questions need to be answered and I am waiting to hear what the former deputy premier has to say about this important report. I am waiting to hear it and Queensland is waiting to hear it

VLAD Laws

Mr BLEIJIE: My question is to the Premier. I refer to an ABC report which confirmed that alleged child exploiters and paedophiles are now being charged under the LNP's successful VLAD laws. Will the Premier now admit that her government's policy to abolish our VLAD laws will not only be detrimental to the safety of Queensland's citizens but will also put Queensland kids at risk?

Ms PALASZCZUK: We have said very clearly in relation to the VLAD laws that were introduced by the previous LNP government that these are under considered review at the moment. There is a process and it is called consultation—something that is foreign to the LNP in this state. It is very foreign to the member for Kawana, the former attorney-general. We have another report here on him, don't we, Mr Speaker? Here it is. I have got two reports; I have got a collection—one on the member for Kawana and one on the member for Callide. Who is going to be next? That is a reflection on their administration of this state. It is the independent Auditor-General who has come out and found weakness in transparency and accountability—

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

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock.

Mr BLEIJIE: My point of order is in relation to the standing order for relevance. I asked about the VLAD legislation, kids' safety and the ABC report last night.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Kawana. Thank you, Premier.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Mr Speaker, I will just finish by saying that, as I said, there is a process in place, stakeholders are involved and we will await that outcome.

Regional Airport Development Scheme

Mr BROWN: My question is to the Deputy Premier. I refer to the cessation of the Regional Airport Development Scheme, formerly administered by the department of transport, in 2013. What state funding has been made available for regional airports since that time?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for Capalaba for the question; I think it is an important question. The Regional Airport Development Scheme was a scheme that was implemented by the former Labor government and it was an important program because it funded regional air service development or emergency access for the Royal Flying Doctor Service right across Queensland. The scheme provided $48 million over 15 years to improve infrastructure at local airports. Unfortunately, this was discontinued by the former Newman LNP government. Local councils were told at the time, 'Don't worry about it. Don't you worry about that. You can apply through the Royalties for the Regions program to upgrade your airstrips for the important reason of emergency access and to provide the Royal Flying Doctor Service with access.'

As members will know from yesterday's Auditor-General's report, we know now that the former deputy premier's department offered up guidelines but the former deputy premier did not follow those guidelines when funding was approved for regional airstrips. The Auditor-General said—

He—

being the former deputy premier—

funded council projects that did not align well with his own guidelines.

Additionally, the report went on to say—

Lack of documentation of the reasons for such decisions means it remains unclear what actual criteria were used to decide which projects were to be funded.

When you look at the actual projects that he approved to be funded, you start to get a picture of why the decisions were made. The Auditor-General makes special mention of three airport upgrades that were funded by the former deputy premier under the Royalties for the Regions program—all are within two hours drive of each other and all were in the electorate of Callide. Also, according to the Auditor-General, none of the three airstrips he funded were: one, economically significant; two, listed in the regional disaster management plan; or, three, identified for upgrading in the council's 10-year infrastructure plan. Funding was meant to meet new requirements of the Royal Flying Doctor Service, but the Auditor-General found that one of the airstrips at Monto was already long and wide enough to accommodate the Royal Flying Doctor Service plane.

There was someone else who used the Monto airstrip regularly back then—it was the member for Callide himself. Who could forget his charter flights as deputy premier when he racked up more than $600,000 as he flew backwards and forwards in the government jet over three years to his electorate? Who could forget that? But now we know that, if he knew there was going to be a change of government, maybe he would have documented the reasons why he upgraded the airstrips in his electorate better—maybe he would have done a better job of document keeping.

Workers Compensation

Mr WALKER: My question is to the Treasurer. I table a copy of correspondence recently referred to in an article in the *Weekend Australian* from the WorkCover CEO, Mr Tony Hawkins, to a senior departmental official.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 17 June 2015, from the CEO of WorkCover Queensland, Mr Tony Hawkins, to the Deputy Director-General, Office of Fair and Safe Work Queensland, Dr Simon Blackwood, regarding the stakeholder working group reparation scheme proposal [1797].

Can the Treasurer outline why there was no actuarial assessment undertaken on the introduction of a reparation scheme proposal which will reportedly cost the workers compensation scheme approximately $90 million and spark 'uncertainty and volatility', in Mr Hawkins's words?

Mr PITT: I thank the honourable member for Mansfield for his question. The document that was referred to in the *Australian* article did talk about the process of consultation that was undertaken by this government when it came to looking at what the future of the workers compensation scheme was here in Queensland. There was a process of consultation undertaken in part during the former term of office, and that process was actually a parliamentary committee review of the workers compensation scheme—and we all remember very clearly what happened during that period. It was a period where we had the former attorney-general and former minister responsible looking at that—

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

Mr PITT: I will get to it, member for Mansfield. There is a story here.

Mr SPEAKER: One moment, Minister. The member for Mansfield has a point of order.

Mr WALKER: The question was clearly about Mr Hawkins's comments on the reparation scheme, not an invitation to rehash what happened in the committee last time around.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you. Treasurer, will you make sure your answer is relevant to the question please?

Mr PITT: Mr Speaker, I think my answer is very relevant and I will tell the member for Mansfield why. We are only having to deal with the situation of a reparation scheme as it relates to the chasm that was created there—the period of time where workers who were injured by negligent employers were not able to actually have their common-law rights accessed through the court system—because those opposite took it away by putting in place a five per cent threshold. They put in place a five per cent threshold and took away the common-law rights.

They can argue all they like and they can try to rewrite history, but the reparation scheme in itself is only required because there was a deep natural injustice of those people who are not able to actually sue a negligent employer as a result of the imposed five per cent threshold. Mr Hawkins's comments were talking to a range of different matters. The point he made on numerous occasions is that we as this government, on the endorsement of the WorkCover board, have considered and maintained premiums at an average of $1.20. We are able to do that not because of the things that those opposite say they were able to do. Why do I know this? I know this because the reforms which came out under the previous Labor government in 2010—

Mr WALKER: I rise to a point of order.

Mr SPEAKER: One moment, Treasurer.

Mr PITT: Mr Speaker, he clearly does not want to hear the answer to the question.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! One moment, Treasurer. One moment, members. Member for Mansfield, what is your point of order?

Mr WALKER: The question was about Mr Hawkins's comment, a $90 million blowout and why no actuarial assessment was done. However, the Treasurer is wandering around everything except the relevant answer to the question.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I rise to a point of order. The member for Mansfield has heard references to the question that he has raised. He is not in the position to decide what the answer should be. It is clear in the standing orders that the minister has the ability to determine what the answer is.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, Leader of the House. I call the Treasurer.

Mr PITT: The point is we have a statutory requirement to ensure that the fund is always 120 per cent funded. That is very important. What is that done on? It is done on the basis of actuarial advice. We have not made any decisions that go against actuarial advice. In fact, the scheme is in such a healthy position as a result of changes made after the 2010 recommendations under the previous Labor government when Minister Dick was the minister responsible that we now see a scheme that is well above the 167 per cent funded mark. It is actually at 167 per cent—well above 120 per cent. Clearly it is affordable. I think there are other questions, but I go back to the point about consultation. The only reason this letter has even surfaced is that, even though we had a very clear election commitment, we consulted a range of stakeholders before making changes that those opposite never gave anyone the opportunity to do.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Coomera, you have a loud voice, but I give you notice that if you persist you will then be formally warned.

Funding Programs, Oversight

Mr KELLY: My question is of the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer please advise the House of financial oversight provisions needed for major funding programs?

Mr PITT: I thank the honourable member for the question. When it comes to financial management it is essential that the Treasurer of the day maintains the oversight required over large expenditure programs. That is to ensure accountability and value for money for Queensland taxpayers. This is particularly critical when we look at large competitive grant programs like the $495 million Royalties for the Regions program. The need for financial oversight comes into stark focus, particularly when we have a supposed budget about fiscal repair. Of course, the former treasurer, the member for Clayfield, made that his personal crusade in terms of cutting tens of thousands of jobs and at the same time cutting front-line services. It is time for the member for Clayfield—

Mr Nicholls: Don't like those words? You don't like those words. You have no understanding of what fiscal repair is. You don't even understand the words. You did it on radio yesterday.

Mr PITT: He is very noisy today but he has been very silent since the Auditor-General's report came out. It is about time he comes clean and reveals just what sort of financial oversight he had over the former deputy premier's program in terms of his Royalties for the Regions pork-barrel. We know that the member for Clayfield has form in terms of lacking the transparency and accountability expected of the Treasurer.

Mr SPEAKER: Excuse me, Treasurer, I would urge you not to provoke the member for Clayfield.

Mr PITT: Despite not having a mandate, we know the member for Clayfield sought Governor in Council approval to spend up to $250 million on the Strong Choices asset sales program. Of course, let's not forget that is on top of the $20 million he spent on the Strong Choices asset sales propaganda campaign. All of that aside, there is a clear figure, a $43.6 million figure, that was in the 2015-16 budget which Treasury had to pay back to Queensland Treasury Corporation as a result of the member for Clayfield. We still have not seen the scoping studies that the Leader of the Opposition promised in the first week. Before we even came in here we asked will we be able to get a copy of the scoping studies, and we have not seen them, just like we have not seen any of the other requests that other ministers have asked of this so-called open and transparent opposition.

The Royalties for the Regions failure, exposed by the Auditor-General, brings to mind another example of financial mismanagement. On 16 June the former treasurer finally admitted on the ABC's Steve Austin program that there was no business case whatsoever prepared for 1 William Street. In his December 2013 report the Auditor-General said—

No business case was developed, which is an expectation under the value for money framework.

Government buildings were sold by the State ... which represented an accounting loss on sale of $237 million ...

This will cost the Queensland taxpayer $2.6 billion over the next 15 years. Thankfully, the LNP's pork-barrelling has now been corked. We know that Treasury has been consulted about the Auditor-General's report in terms of accepting all the recommendations arising from this latest report around Royalties for the Regions.

Mr Boothman interjected.

Mr PITT: We know that these recommendations will be applied to the Building our Regions program, which we know is going to be a far superior program because it will be truly and genuinely a competitive process which is going to involve multiple ministers and will have oversight that those opposite never had.

Mr SPEAKER: I give the member for Albert early notice that if you persist you will also be warned under standing order 253A.

Tourism Investment Guide

Mr BENNETT: My question without notice is to the Minister for Tourism. Given that the state is about to enter into its peak tourism season and we still do not have a published, up-to-date version of the mistake ridden tourism investment guide, can the minister confirm that the minister's department is now spending $44,000 for the commissioning of a brand-new ecotourism investor tool kit?

Ms JONES: I thank the member for the question. I am very confused. He said the tourism investment guide and then he said $44,000 for an ecotourism investment guide. They are two different guides. Are you asking your question about—

Mr Bennett: Tourism guide please, Minister.

Ms JONES: You said ecotourism guide at the end.

Mr Bennett: Can I correct it? It is tourism guide.

Ms JONES: We are so busy over here that we have a tourism investment guide and an 'ecotourism investment' guide. That is how excited we are about tourism. We are working really hard. We have also got an events guide out there. We are working so hard to promote tourism in Queensland. I want to thank the *Gold Coast Bulletin* for recognising the work that we are doing as a government to grow tourism, particularly on the Gold Coast.

Ms Palaszczuk interjected.

Ms JONES: I take the interjection from the Premier asking to see where I feature. I feature fourth, Premier, in the guide, not at 123.

Mr STEVENS: I rise to a point of order. There was a ruling yesterday in relation to props.

Mr SPEAKER: There has been a point of order made in relation to props.

Ms JONES: I did not do the list. I did not put him at 123.

Mr SPEAKER: No, Minister. Minister, do you have anything further to add to your answer? Otherwise I will proceed to the next question.

Ms JONES: Mr Speaker, you know that I can talk about tourism all day because I am so passionate—

Mr SPEAKER: No, Minister.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: One moment, members. I do not want you to talk generally about tourism. Do you want the member for Burnett to repeat the question so you can make sure your answer is relevant to the question?

Ms JONES: What I wanted from the member for Burnett was to have a question that made sense. He asked me can I confirm that I am now spending another $44,000 on an ecotourism guide. There are two different guides; that is the point that I am making. Whether it is ecotourism, tourism on the Gold Coast or tourism at the Great Barrier Reef, I will always ensure that we are out there trying to grow market share. I will be doing that everywhere I go across this state.

An honourable member interjected.

Ms JONES: Absolutely. I will be holidaying in Queensland, too, in January. What I am saying here today is—I will answer this question.

Mr Boothman interjected.

Mr Cramp interjected.

Ms JONES: What I said in parliament last time we were here was that my director-general is working with JLL on a new guide, and that process is progressing. I rule out categorically the accusation that the member made in his question. I can say that there is an ecotourism guide as well.

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call the next member for the question, I now formally warn the member for Albert under standing order 253A and to your adjoining colleague the member for Gaven, whom you were leading astray, I say you are now also warned under 253A.

Royalties for the Regions

Mr BUTCHER: My question is to the Minister for State Development. My electorate is one of the highest royalty-producing regions in Queensland. Will the minister advise the House how the Gladstone region fared under the former Royalties for the Regions program and any other lessons it presents regarding the allocation of government funds?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for Gladstone for his question. He raises a very important point in what is a very serious situation revealed by the Auditor-General's report into the previous government's Royalties for the Regions program. In 2014 the Fitzroy and Mackay statistical divisions together accounted for almost 80 per cent of Queensland's royalties. The Fitzroy statistical division includes both the Gladstone Regional Council and the Rockhampton Regional Council and they produced 28 per cent of Queensland royalties in 2014. Even the former deputy premier acknowledged in his media statement of October 2014 that Gladstone has experienced significant growth as a result of new residents serving the resources sector.

Mr SPEAKER: One moment, Minister. Member for Nanango, I can hear your private conversation with the Leader of the Opposition. Member for Hinchinbrook, I can also hear parts of your conversation with your adjacent colleague. I do not want to put more members on notice, but I would urge you to listen to the question in silence unless you are provoked.

Dr LYNHAM: Therefore, we now know that they are important resource communities that produce significant royalties. The report, however, shows that the Gladstone Regional Council applied for funding for more than 20 different projects. How many did they get? Two alone. This is despite a number of these projects being rated as strongly meeting the criteria. It is also interesting that at that time Gladstone was one of the few non-government held electorates in Queensland, so I am very confused. The former Deputy Premier has admitted that the Gladstone Regional Council has been impacted by the resource sector, yet despite meeting these criteria he only approved two projects.

However, we know that the criteria did not really mean much to the former Deputy Premier. Look at how many projects were successful for the Western Downs region. In his and the member for Warrego's electorate—so that is taking Callide and Warrego together—17 projects were successful, and yet they only produce two per cent of Queensland's royalties. I am not saying that the Western Downs should not have received funding, but I do know that not all of these projects strongly met the criteria. What was the point in having criteria, when clearly the former Deputy Premier ignored departmental recommendations. He made captain's picks just like Tony Abbott, Mr Speaker. Let me assure you that I will be a very different administrator of the Palaszczuk government's Building our Regions program to the former deputy premier: I will be fair and above reproach.

Electricity Prices

Mr POWELL: My question is to the Minister for Energy. Solar owners are learning today of a new seven-cent-a-day charge for the privilege of producing their own power. Can the minister explain why the goalposts keep shifting for Queensland families and can he guarantee that these charges will not increase even further?

Mr BAILEY: I thank the member for Glass House for his question. I am happy to talk about solar in this place at any time. Our record on solar in this state is absolutely exemplary. We lead the world in solar PV adoption rates right across Queensland compared to anywhere in the world. Twenty-eight per cent of Queenslanders have solar PV on their rooftops because of Labor. Who is responsible for getting our large-scale solar industry started in Queensland? Labor! Who has a solar reverse option underway? Labor! Who is going to have a renewable energy task force? Labor! Let us talk about solar.

Mr STEVENS: I rise to a point of order. I would like the minister to answer the question, which is about the 7-cent-a-day charge for producing solar power. I would ask that under standing order 118 he keep his answer relevant.

Mr SPEAKER: I ask the minister to make sure his answer is relevant to the question.

Mr BAILEY: I am happy to speak to the specifics of the question. What the member has asked about and what he is referring to—in a very selective question, I might add, Mr Speaker—is the national regulator's requirements around smart metering for electricity consumers. It is a national process and it is not related to the state government whatsoever. This is about them separating the meter charge across the nation so that it is a transparent charge and so that we have an equal situation across the national energy market. In fact, these measures were announced four months ago, so he is really quick on the uptake! These were announced four months ago and adopted by other providers earlier this year. Origin Energy had decided not to pass on these charges until 1 January.

This is not a new charge; it is a different way of calculating the charge. Rather than spreading the cost of metering across all customers, the national regular is requiring that charges are now based on individual metering requirements. The solar metering charge equates to about 7 cents per day and will not materially affect the benefits that customers receive through their feed-in tariff payments. For example, a customer on a premier feed-in tariff receives credits of around $3 per day on average, and a customer on a standard feed-in tariff receives around 50 cents per day.

This government is absolutely committed to renewable energy in this state. We are committed to getting large-scale solar going in this state. We are committed to spreading one million solar rooftops by 2020, and we have been working hard this year to achieve that. We will not abuse people for having solar by calling them latte sippers and champagne drinkers, as the former treasurer, the member for Clayfield, did. We will not abuse them for contributing to renewable energy. We will praise them and we will assist them. We will partner with them for a cleaner energy future for this state.

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Integrity and Accountability

Ms FARMER: My question is of the Attorney-General. Will the Attorney-General please outline matters of integrity and accountability that the Attorney has been addressing in the Justice portfolio?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for her question. Mr Speaker, since day one of this government we have been working hard to restore integrity and accountability through electoral reform and donation disclosure levels, through restoring respect for the judiciary and the legal profession and through our approach to the Crime and Corruption Commission, nominating well-respected intelligent individuals of high integrity. An important element of restoring integrity in government is the decision-making process as a minister, particularly when it comes to the awarding of contracts.

This government is still facing the legacy left behind by the LNP government: a legacy of poor decision-making based on political intervention and interference. In my portfolio we have been facing the legacy of a boot camp tender process that was an example of political interference at its most blatant. The Auditor-General concluded that—

The lack of transparency ... ultimately leaves the process of awarding the two contracts open to accusations of favouritism, which in the absence of a clear documentation trail cannot be readily rebutted.

The Auditor-General goes on to say that the substantive issue raised in the report is the lack of evidence to document decision-making processes. In response to the member for Kawana, the Auditor-General said—

As you have not addressed this matter in your response, I take this as your confirmation that no such evidence exists.

He also said—

Lack of documentation of the reasons for such decisions means it remains unclear what actual criteria was used to decide which projects were to be funded.

He further states—

This absence of documentation reduces transparency and weakens accountability. It also exposes the decision-maker to the potential for accusations of bias or favouritism, which are harder to refute where there is no clear documentary trail.

But I am no longer reading from the Auditor-General's boot camp report: the last quote was from page 2 of the *Royalties for the regions* report. During question time I have heard members on the other side say, 'Read the first sentence.' What I suggest to the members on the other side is that they read after the first sentence—the remainder of the report—because what they will find is that it is absolutely scathing. The reality is that when I read these two reports it is 'Bleijie ja vu' all over again, which would actually be funny if these reports were not so shocking. It is an absolute disgrace!

I have seen reports that the member for Callide has acknowledged that he should have kept better paperwork and actually provided evidence of his decisions to avoid claims of favouritism and bias. The question is: does the former attorney-general now feel the same way—that he should have kept documents so there were not accusations of favouritism or bias? And this is not even mentioning the almost $15,000 wasted on two helicopters by the former attorney-general.

We now have examples of not just one former LNP government minister but two former ministers—both senior positions: the former attorney-general and now the former deputy premier. This shows a pattern of secrecy by the LNP in government. It is disgusting and the LNP and the Leader of the Opposition have to answer for it.

Taxi Services

Mr KATTER: My question without notice is to the Minister for Disability Services, Minister for Seniors and Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland. In regard to recent media reports of Uber recruiting drivers who own wheelchair accessible vehicles in Queensland to provide transport services, given that many of the privately owned wheelchair accessible vehicles in Queensland have been purchased with the assistance of the taxpayer funded Vehicle Options Subsidy Scheme, will the minister advise the House of actions taken on this issue to date to ensure these vehicles are not being used to provide a taxi service without a taxi licence?

Mrs O'ROURKE: I thank the member for the question. I am aware that concerns have been raised that Uber could be recruiting people with a disability who may have benefited from the Vehicle Options Subsidy Scheme. I can confirm that my department and Queensland Health are not aware that this practice is occurring. The Vehicle Options Subsidy Scheme provides about $4½ thousand to purchase a modified vehicle. It also provides about $4,300 to modify an already purchased vehicle. I have asked

that the application and paperwork clearly identify the purpose of the subsidy that is available and that the vehicle is to be used solely for the person with disability to access the community for themselves and for no other purpose.

We are all aware that the Uber ride-sharing offer is an illegal ride-sharing scheme and that a task force review is underway. That task force will report back to the government in August next year. What we do from a disabilities perspective is make sure that people with a disability have the opportunity to access the community in their own vehicle that has been modified specifically for their use.

Gold Coast Commonwealth Games

Mr STEWART: My question is to the Minister for Tourism. Will the minister update the House on planning and preparations for the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games?

Ms JONES: I thank the honourable member for Townsville for his question. I know that he is just as passionate as I am—indeed, I hope all members of the House are—about ensuring that we deliver an excellent Commonwealth Games. I had the privilege of being in Townsville recently when we announced Townsville as one of the live sites for all Queenslanders to enjoy what the Commonwealth Games will bring to Queensland—$2 billion worth of economic activity and hundreds of jobs.

Last night I had the privilege of having a very productive meeting with the Commonwealth Games commission, which is in Queensland this week to review planning and preparations for the Gold Coast 2018 games. Members will recall that CoCom’s last report acknowledged that this government had taken the right steps to improve governance around the games. I think members will also recall that one of the very first meetings I had when I became Minister for the Commonwealth Games was with the Auditor-General. I had that meeting because one of the things I inherited was a very damning report about how the former government was managing the governance of the Commonwealth Games. I sat down with the Auditor-General and went through his recommendations. I am very pleased to say that the last CoCom report endorsed the steps this government has taken to ensure that proper governance is in place. I found the meeting we had yesterday also very productive. I hope that, going forward, we will continue to see praise for the improvements we have been making.

This approach is in stark contrast to the two Auditor-General reports we have seen which criticise and clearly show the lack of oversight by the former LNP government here in Queensland. For the member for Callide to get up and say that the only thing he wishes he had done differently was cover his tracks better demonstrates how those opposite treated taxpayers’ money and the people of Queensland. It is shameful. Those opposite can sit in here and deny it, but when you have an Auditor-General’s report clearly showing—

Mr Nicholls: There was no taxpayers’ money—not a brass razoo.

Ms JONES: That the member for Callide’s defence was ‘I wish I had covered my tracks better’ shows that those opposite are getting no leadership from the Leader of the Opposition. What is the Leader of the Opposition going to do about his team when there is a report like this which shows that they clearly manipulated for political gain? The member for Kawana’s boot camps saw a 78 per cent reoffending rate. Seventy-eight per cent of the children who were in his boot camps reoffended. How many millions of dollars did he waste on that? Today the Leader of the Opposition is celebrating 26 years of being in this parliament. He lived through the Fitzgerald era, but this is what he has to show for his 26 years in this parliament.

Vegetation Management

Mr CRIPPS: My question without notice is to the Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines.

Ms Trad interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Deputy Premier, if you persist I will warn you under standing order 253A.

Mr Hinchliffe interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: No, Leader of the House. You can be quiet too, please.

Mr CRIPPS: Will the minister please advise the House on what date the Premier informed him that he had been stripped of the responsibility for leading the changes to the Vegetation Management Act?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for Hinchinbrook for his question. When we first came to government, one of our priorities was to look at the Newman government’s vegetation management plan. We had two ministerial meetings—involving the Deputy Premier, me, the Minister for Agriculture

and the Minister for Environment—to work out how we would look at reforming the Newman government's vegetation management laws. I was then tasked with undertaking a comprehensive consultation process—a consultation process those opposite never practised—over a year. I engaged one of the leading professors in natural resources from James Cook University, Professor Allan Dale, as part of that process. We consulted widely. We have now reached a grounding on where we are with vegetation management. We met earlier this week and now we are preparing for the delivery of our reforms in vegetation management.

I understand that 86 per cent of Queensland is suffering drought at the moment. I understand what the people in agriculture are going through at present. I also know that the agriculture sector and the farmers of the community understand fully climate change, because they are living climate change day by day. That is why we are here with our reforms, standing up for the whole of Queensland with our reforms on vegetation management. We will be bringing forward a suite of vegetation management plans for the whole of Queensland to assist—

Mr CRIPPS: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I waited for as long as I could in relation to relevance. Is the minister going to tell the House the date he was told by the Premier that he would no longer be responsible for managing the Vegetation Management Act in the state of Queensland?

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you. Minister, it was a specific question. If you are able to answer that, I would like you to answer it.

Dr LYNHAM: I think it was probably a week after we gained government and we had our first meeting to discuss how our plan for vegetation management would be enacted. Since that time, as I said before, we have undertaken a consultation process. Now we are just about to deliver our comprehensive suite of vegetation management plans—reforms that are fair to all and reforms that are much needed for Queensland and much needed for climate change.

Cairns Hospital

Mr CRAWFORD: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services. Will the minister inform the House of the government's efforts to improve the flow of patients at Cairns Hospital?

Mr DICK: I thank the member for Barron River for his question. Obviously, as a former paramedic he knows well the need to effectively treat people in our community, both outside of hospital and inside hospital. A short while ago I was able to convene a Cairns round table to discuss issues in relation to hospital access in Cairns. I was very pleased to convene that high-level round table involving leaders from our hospital and health service and leading clinicians. I also invited a number of industrial organisations—trade unions—to attend such as United Voice, the Together union, the Salaried Medical Officers' Federation Queensland and of course the Queensland Nurses' Union. All had input, including doctors and nurses. Why did I do that? Why did I invite all of those organisations? So we could get the best outcome. If you sit down and listen to all of those individuals and organisations, including their representatives—their trade union representatives—you get the best possible outcome. I am pleased to say that one of the outcomes was the creation of a low acuity response unit for Cairns, which commenced operation last Monday. There are already low acuity response units—LARUs—operating in Brisbane, Townsville and the Gold Coast. During the six-month pilot period in Brisbane north in 2013, the LARU attended 1,462 cases and identified that 39 per cent of those patients did not require transport to an emergency department. So by using that mechanism we can take pressure off emergency departments, and I can report to the House that we want to do that in Cairns and we have started that process.

In the time since it has started, I am advised that the LARU has responded to a total of 80 cases of which 44 cases or 55 per cent have either not been transported or have gone to an alternative health facility. There has been no compromise in health care, but we have been able to treat them in the right place. Some of the instances the LARU in Cairns has addressed include a patient who complained of dizzy spells who was taken to a medical centre, a young man who stubbed his toe and was treated at the scene by paramedics and a man with an earache who was scheduled an appointment with a GP. All of those people had their medical needs addressed without tying up hospital resources. It is a terrific initiative of the Queensland Ambulance Service. I am very pleased to support it and I know that the member for Mulgrave, the member for Cairns, who supports this, and the member for Barron River know the positive impact this will have on their communities. It is a forward-thinking initiative of a Labor government to implement these sorts of responses. It will have a positive impact on paramedics, nurses, doctors and, most importantly, the patients who they treat in Queensland. I thank the members from

the Far North for their support. We want to engage in this sort of innovation. It is the innovation that Queensland Health is well known for and we will roll this out further as we can, but I am pleased it is having a positive impact on the community of Cairns.

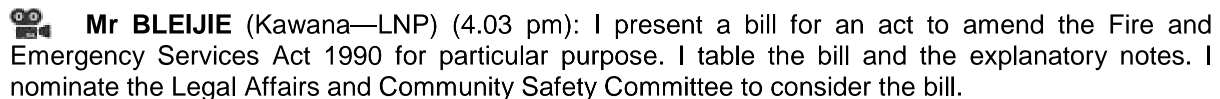
Cairns IRD Project

Mr COSTIGAN: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines. After failing to attend the Major Projects Summit in Bowen recently, can the minister confirm that the state government is now, as part of its ongoing series of reviews, spending $100,000 to conduct an independent analysis of the Cairns IRD project?

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, the time for question time has expired.

FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES (SMOKE ALARMS) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction



Mr BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (4.03 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990 for particular purpose. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Fire and Emergency Services (Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill 2015 [1798].

Tabled paper: Fire and Emergency Services (Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill 2015, explanatory notes [1799].

A domestic house fire occurs in Queensland every 4.7 hours. It is a well-established fact that smoke alarms in Queensland and around Australia save lives. Tragically, just before midnight on 23 August 2011, a fire started on the ground floor of a house located in Slacks Creek. The first of 23 triple 0-emergency calls were made at approximately 12.04 am and the first responder crew arrived at the scene some seven minutes later. By that time, police were already in attendance and the house was fully engulfed in fire. This fire caused the greatest loss of life in a domestic house fire in Australian history. Eleven people lost their lives, including eight children. The findings of the coronial inquest into the house fire were delivered on 28 November 2014. In the case of the Slacks Creek house fire, the Coroner found that smoke alarms were either not present in the dwelling or were not maintained. He also found that had the smoke alarms been working there was a reasonable prospect that some or all of the victims could have escaped and survived. Based on the recommendations of the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services and other testimony before the coronial inquest, the final recommendations of the Coroner were that photoelectric smoke alarms should be the only type of smoke alarm that is the approved smoke alarm for the purposes of residential homes. This bill achieves that goal.

The Coroner's report noted that Chief Superintendent Neil Reid of the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services outlined the difference between ionisation and photoelectric smoke alarms and explained why it is the view of QFES that photoelectric smoke alarms are far superior. Photoelectric smoke alarms are already compulsory in commercial premises in Queensland and the alarm responds more quickly to a broader range of fires and is less likely to cause false alarms. The bill that we are introducing today provides the staged transition to photoelectric smoke alarms for domestic dwellings in Queensland as was recommended by the Coroner. The commencement date is set at 1 July 2016. Within one year of that date, tenants and landlords need to comply with the new arrangements as set out in this bill. Those who comply with the existing arrangements that are in the current act will have three years from the commencement date to comply with the new requirements. If after the commencement a smoke alarm installed in a domestic dwelling does not operate when tested or was manufactured more than 10 years before the commencement, the owner of that dwelling must immediately replace the smoke alarm with one that complies with the requirements in this bill. It is vital at the very least that we increase the awareness for smoke alarms—working smoke alarms—in Queensland homes.

On Boxing Day 2011 a house fire in Tewantin on the Sunshine Coast changed the life of Matt Golinski forever when he tragically lost his wife and three children. The coronial investigation into their deaths was released very recently on 23 November 2015 and the recommendations of that inquest were linked with that of the Slacks Creek house fire that I referred to earlier. Based on investigations as part of that report, it was concluded that the alarms in the Golinski house were most likely the ionisation type, nine-volt battery operated stand-alone smoke alarms. Neither Mr Golinski nor any of the neighbours could remember hearing the sound of an audible smoke alarm on the night of the tragic fire. It also notes that the peak body for public sector fire, land management and emergency

organisations in Australia and New Zealand, the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council, made it clear that it advocated that all residential accommodation should be fitted with photoelectric smoke alarms instead of ionised smoke alarms. The Coroner also noted that the Queensland government has not yet responded to the Slacks Creek coronial investigation that was published in November 2014.

While I note the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs References Committee is currently conducting an inquiry into the use of smoke alarms to prevent fires and fire related deaths and is due to report on 16 March 2016, the LNP believes that there is currently enough evidence for the Queensland government to take action now. Photoelectric smoke alarms are already mandated for use in commercial premises in Queensland. The Queensland Fire and Emergency Services on its website recommends—

The QFES recommendation exceeds the minimum legislative requirements but does provide better safety.

- All residential accommodation be fitted with photoelectric type smoke alarms.
- Smoke alarms either hard-wired or powered by a 10-year lithium battery.
- Smoke alarms located—
    - on each level of living space;
    - outside each bedroom; and
    - in every bedroom
- All smoke alarms should be interconnected.
- Every home should have a practised escape plan.

If it is good enough for commercial premises, it should be good enough for residential premises as well. While the bill does not mandate interconnectivity between the alarms, I note the QFES recommends that this should be considered by home owners as an additional option that could enhance the protection of their home.

I support the advice and believe that the first priority is getting all homes protected by photoelectric alarms. A process of further encouraging interconnectivity between alarms may be something worth considering in future years. In that context, since 2014, interconnectivity for new homes in Queensland is already mandated. So with this issue we are effectively dealing with existing properties rather than new properties.

As it is a matter of the safety of our loved ones, I think we can go one better than recommending it: we can legislate the requirement for photoelectric smoke alarms in Queensland. The bill does not stipulate that smoke alarms should be mandated in every bedroom. However, we understand that this is an issue that has also been raised by submitters to the Senate inquiry and would be happy for the parliamentary committee considering this bill to review that matter as part of its further consideration.

Although this current government in Queensland has done nothing and this Minister for Fire and Emergency Services has sat on her hands and has sat on these coronial recommendations for 12 months now and has been completely missing in action on this issue, we will act. Like we did in government, our priority is all about community safety first.

In terms of the commentary about the photoelectric smoke alarms, I think it is important to point out the difference between the various types of alarms in the state of Queensland. For the benefit of members, I have them with me. There are ionised smoke alarms in Queensland. If Queensland citizens looked at their smoke alarms, they would generally be hardwired but they would also have a nine-volt battery. They have a radiation symbol on them. If a Queenslander goes home tonight and has a look at their smoke alarm in the hallway of their bedroom, if they take off the cover, generally it should be hardwired and they will see that it has a nine-volt battery for extra protection if the electricity is cut. It will also have a radiation symbol. That means that it is an ionised smoke alarm. If the smoke alarm does not have a radiation symbol on it, which is the little black and yellow symbol, it will be a photoelectric smoke alarm. As I said, at the moment all the evidence is suggesting that photoelectric smoke alarms are the best in the business. If a smoke alarm has one of these little batteries, that is a nine-volt battery.

Mr Nicholls: Put it on your tongue.

Mr BLEIJIE: I will not put it on my tongue. For the benefit of the House, I should disclose that I do not have a contract with Duracell batteries. I am achieving no beneficial interest in Duracell batteries or Quell smoke alarms. That nine-volt battery will last one or two years. Unfortunately, people rely on the hardwiring of the alarms in their house. But, in a house fire, that can go first. If these batteries die, then the house is not protected. The photoelectric alarms that are on the market these days, both hardwired and interconnected by wireless activation, have a 10-year lithium battery.

This bill offers the best protection for Queensland citizens by offering smoke alarms like these. There is no need to replace the battery. The battery lasts for 10 years. It is tamper proof, it is sealed and it is a 10-year lithium battery, which is better than a nine-volt battery, which will die after a couple of years. So our bill—

Mr Pyne interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: The member asked a question about cost. There is a discernible difference between the cost of an ionised smoke alarm and a photoelectric smoke alarm. That is why we have given a transitional period of over three years for all smoke alarms to be changed from ionised smoke alarms to the photoelectric smoke alarms. The evidence shows that the photoelectric smoke alarms offer the best protection in the majority of house fires at a smouldering level.

I refer to an ABC news article dated Monday, 26 October 2015 about Keith Golinski, the father of Matt Golinski, who lost his wife and three children in a house fire. That article states—

A Queensland man whose three granddaughters and daughter-in-law died in a house fire has backed calls for photoelectric alarms to be made mandatory, saying ionisation alarms are not as effective.

…

He has backed calls for photoelectric alarms to be made mandatory, saying that ionisation alarms were not as effective.

I refer to the recommendations arising out of the coronial inquest, which was handed down by the Coroner, Terry Ryan, with respect to the Golinski family. On behalf of the House, I pay tribute to Matt Golinski. No-one should ever have to face his situation—a man who loses his wife and three daughters in a tragic house fire. But I pay tribute to Matt's father who, since that tragic incident, has been campaigning to have smoke alarms changed in Queensland. The Coroner's recommendations into the Golinski case were tabled very recently—on 23 November 2015. I think it is important to note a couple of things from the report of the State Coroner, Terry Ryan. He stated at item 27—

The smoke alarms failed to perform their role in warning the occupants of the house that the fire had commenced. The house was engulfed by fire by the time the occupants were awake and able to understand what was going on, resulting in Rachael and her daughters not being able to escape from the burning structure.

At item 28 he stated—

Police concluded that if the smoke alarms had been functioning effectively, the fire, and consequently the deaths, could have been prevented. I agree with that conclusion.

Terry Ryan also states in that report—

Throughout the course of my investigation, I have received and had regard to information provided to me by the World Fire Safety Foundation.

Terry Ryan is aware that representatives of the foundation liaised with Detective Senior Constable Hutton throughout the course of this investigation. He states further—

The Foundation, among many other organisations, holds concerns about the continued use and the apparent failings of ionisation type smoke alarms. Ionisation alarms have been demonstrated to be less effective in detecting smouldering type fires. Photoelectric alarms respond more rapidly to a broader range of fires and are less likely to cause false alarms.

The Coroner says at item 44—

On 17 November 2014, Coroner McDougall handed down his findings in relation to the Slacks Creek House Fire which occurred in August 2011.

He states further—

... Coroner McDougall made a number of comments and recommendations in this regard.

One of those recommendations was the implementation of a change to photoelectric alarms. The report states further—

If installed in an existing domestic dwelling in addition to, or replacing existing smoke alarms, a 240 volt hard wired smoke alarm where access is available to the ceiling space or, otherwise, a 10 year lithium battery smoke alarm which is interconnected wirelessly, to all other required smoke alarms ...

So it is clear that, unfortunately, the recommendations from the first coronial investigation into the Slacks Creek house fire have sat on the desk of the Minister for Fire and Emergency Services for 12 months now without any action by the state Labor government.

I commend the members of the Logan House Fire Support Network, who have met me on a number of occasions and who have met with the opposition leader. In the short period after we met them, we have acted. We have acted because we are putting community safety, the safety of kids, first in this state. Just like we did with the rural fireys with presumptive legislation, we acted first and then the government was forced to respond. We are doing that again with this legislation.

With respect to this bill, I believe that the government should implement an education and awareness campaign in terms of photoelectric smoke alarms.

Mrs Miller: There is.

Mr BLEIJIE: The minister can interject and say, 'There already is a campaign.'

Mrs Miller: There is.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection again. If that is the best that the minister can do in response to many Queenslanders dying in the last 12 months while this report has sat on the minister's desk, then it shows the type of minister that we have in the state. She is satisfied that a TV ad, a radio ad is sufficient. We on this side of the House do not believe that that is sufficient. That is why we have the foresight in taking the action in introducing this bill. On that note, I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Mr BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (4.17 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 Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee

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

Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date

Mr BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (4.17 pm), 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 Fire and Emergency Services (Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill by 4 March 2016.

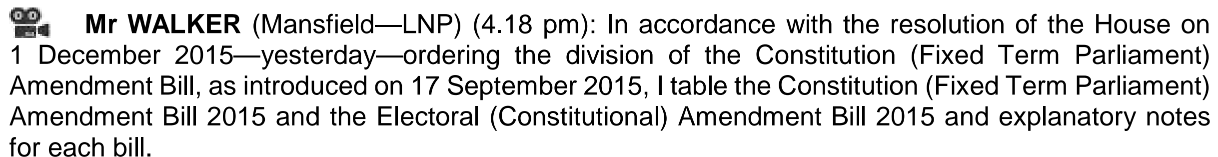
Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

CONSTITUTION (FIXED TERM PARLIAMENT) AMENDMENT BILL

ELECTORAL (CONSTITUTIONAL) AMENDMENT BILL

Tabling of Bills



Mr WALKER (Mansfield—LNP) (4.18 pm): In accordance with the resolution of the House on 1 December 2015—yesterday—ordering the division of the Constitution (Fixed Term Parliament) Amendment Bill, as introduced on 17 September 2015, I table the Constitution (Fixed Term Parliament) Amendment Bill 2015 and the Electoral (Constitutional) Amendment Bill 2015 and explanatory notes for each bill.

Tabled paper: Constitution (Fixed Term Parliament) Amendment Bill 2015 [1802].

Tabled paper: Constitution (Fixed Term Parliament) Amendment Bill 2015, explanatory notes [1803].

Tabled paper: Electoral (Constitutional) Amendment Bill 2015 [1800].

Tabled paper: Electoral (Constitutional) Amendment Bill 2015, explanatory notes [1801].

Motion

Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (4.18 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That the House accepts the Constitution (Fixed Term Parliament) Amendment Bill 2015 and the Electoral (Constitutional) Amendment Bill 2015 presented and circulated to members as complying with the order of the House to divide the Constitution (Fixed Term Parliament) Amendment Bill 2015, introduced on 17 September 2015, and orders that each bill is deemed read a first time and now stands as an order of the day for the second reading to be moved.

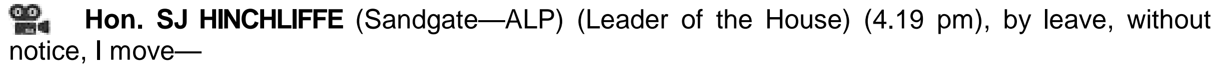
Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

CONSTITUTION (FIXED TERM PARLIAMENT) AMENDMENT BILL

CONSTITUTION (FIXED TERM PARLIAMENT) REFERENDUM BILL

Cognate Debate



Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (4.19 pm), by leave, without notice, I move—

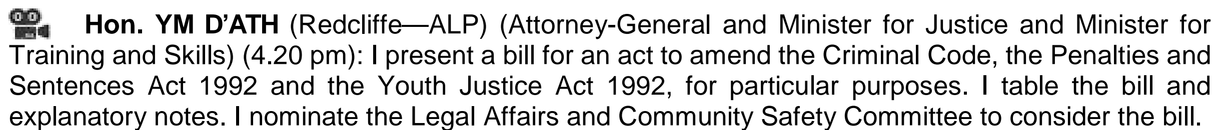
1. in accordance with standing order 172, the Constitution (Fixed Term Parliament) Amendment Bill and the Constitution (Fixed Term Parliament) Referendum Bill be treated as cognate bills for their remaining stages, as follows:
    (a) second reading debate, with separate questions being put in regard to the second readings;
    (b) the consideration of the bills in detail together; and
    (c) separate questions being put for the third readings and long titles;
2. standing order 136(6) be suspended for the Constitution (Fixed Term Parliament) Amendment Bill and the Constitution (Fixed Term Parliament) Referendum Bill, to allow the commencement of the second reading debate despite three calendar months not having elapsed since the tabling of the portfolio committee report.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

CRIMINAL LAW (DOMESTIC VIOLENCE) AMENDMENT BILL (NO. 2)

Introduction



Hon. YM D'ATH (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (4.20 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Criminal Code, the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992 and the Youth Justice Act 1992, for particular purposes. I table the bill and explanatory notes. I nominate the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Criminal Law (Domestic Violence) Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2015 [1804].

Tabled paper: Criminal Law (Domestic Violence) Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2015, explanatory notes [1805].

I am pleased to introduce the Criminal Law (Domestic Violence) Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2015. This year the Palaszczuk government made a commitment to end domestic violence in Queensland. We have pledged to take action to combat the pervasive culture of domestic and family violence which is at epidemic levels in our community. This is a difficult challenge but the government believes it is achievable. We must all stand united together and say that domestic and family violence in any form and at any level is completely unacceptable. It is a time for optimism as well as action, not just by the government but all members of this parliament and the entire Queensland community. It is time for us all to stand up to the challenge and tackle this problem head-on.

On 28 February 2015 the Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland, chaired by the Hon. Quentin Bryce AD, CVO, released its report *Not now, not ever: putting an end to domestic and family violence in Queensland*. The task force made 140 recommendations on how the government and the community of Queensland can better address and reduce domestic and family violence. The Bryce task force report has a strong focus on action to bring about cultural and attitudinal change, the delivery of more integrated services and improving law and justice system responses. This includes reforms to better support those affected by domestic violence, achieve fair and protective outcomes for victims and ensure perpetrators are held to account.

The Palaszczuk government accepted all 121 recommendations directed at government in our response released on 18 August 2015. Importantly, on White Ribbon Day last week, the Premier announced the establishment of the Domestic and Family Violence Implementation Council to monitor the implementation of recommendations from the Bryce task force report and the Queensland Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy. The council will also champion ongoing implementation of this strategy. The creation of the council addresses the need for an independent oversight body as recommended in the Bryce task force report to maintain momentum and ensure accountable implementation of the report's recommendations. The council will report to the Premier on implementation progress and action taken by the relevant sectors to eliminate domestic and family violence. The council is chaired by the Hon. Quentin Bryce AD, CVO and includes representation from key sectors in the community.

Over 30 task force recommendations are relevant to my portfolio which are aimed at reforming the law and justice system response to domestic and family violence. Implementation of a number of these recommendations is already well underway. One key initiative has been the establishment of a

six-month trial of a specialist domestic and family violence court at Southport Magistrates Court to improve the efficacy of system responses. Funding of $1.1 million was also provided in 2015-16 to expand Legal Aid Queensland's domestic violence duty lawyer service to 14 locations across the state. In the wake of three very tragic and public deaths that occurred in September, the government also made reforms to establish a new independent Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board. Recruitment of the board is underway.

Further amendments have been made to ensure that criminal offences that occur in a domestic violence context can be clearly noted on the face of an offender's criminal history. Other changes to the Evidence Act 1977 were made to ensure that victims automatically have status as special witnesses thereby allowing the court to make a range of directions to support them in giving evidence. But there is much more work to be done. The reforms in the bill I am introducing today make further changes to increase perpetrator accountability based on two recommendations in the Bryce task force report following consultation with key stakeholders. These recommendations provide for the introduction of a circumstance of aggravation of domestic and family violence to be applied to all criminal offences so as to increase the maximum penalty for the offence—this is recommendation 118—and for the consideration of the creation of a specific offence of strangulation, recommendation 120.

The Queensland government committed to consult stakeholders on recommendations 118 and 120 and the best way to achieve the objectives underpinning them. To facilitate this consultation, a public discussion paper was released by the Department of Justice and Attorney-General. This discussion paper set out the background for each of the two elements to be considered and provided a number of possible approaches to implementing the recommendations. Thirteen specific questions were posed to encourage engagement and to prompt useful and constructive debate. Twenty submissions were received on the discussion paper from a range of individuals and agencies. I thank all of those who responded for their considered views and dedication to this very important cause. Your opinions are very important to this government. We have listened and carefully considered each and every submission.

Task force report recommendation 118 provides for the Queensland government to introduce a circumstance of aggravation of domestic and family violence to be applied to all criminal offences. A circumstance of aggravation increases the maximum penalty for offences. It must be charged by the prosecution and therefore becomes a matter that must be proved beyond reasonable doubt. Stakeholder responses to the discussion paper acknowledge the inherent complexities of applying a circumstance of aggravation across all criminal offences. One particular limitation of a circumstance of aggravation is that it cannot apply to an offence which already attracts a maximum penalty of life imprisonment. This issue was not canvassed by the task force. While it was not the approach preferred by the task force, there was wide support from stakeholders who responded to the discussion paper for an alternative proposal to amend the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992 to make provision for domestic and family violence as an aggravating factor on sentence. This amendment is included in the bill.

An aggravating factor increases the seriousness of the offence and means that the offender should receive a higher sentence within the existing sentencing range but not exceeding the maximum penalty for the offence. The bill makes it clear that criminal offences that are committed as an act of domestic or family violence require a higher penalty. This will show that the Queensland community will not tolerate this conduct and make these offenders accountable. It is proposed that the impact of this amendment to the Penalties and Sentences Act will be evaluated by the Sentencing Advisory Council, once reinstated, as part of a reference to consider the impact that maximum penalties have on the commission of domestic violence offences. This will enable the government to have a clear evidence base on what works in sentencing perpetrators of domestic and family violence so as to guide future law reforms.

The Bryce task force report told us about the prevalence of strangling or choking conduct in domestic violent offending. It identified that this serious behaviour is not only inherently dangerous but is a predictive indicator of escalation in domestic violent offending, including homicide. The task force noted the importance of identifying this conduct to assist in assessing risk to victims and increasing protections for victims. Unlike recommendation 118, there was, however, no consensus among stakeholders who responded to the discussion about the legislative approach that should be taken to strangulation. In light of the divergence of views that has emerged during consultation, a new offence is proposed but has been framed with a view to addressing a number of the difficulties raised by those stakeholders who did not support a new offence. For example, limiting application to a domestic and family violence context should address the concerns about the unintended capture of a range of conduct such as law enforcement, security and sport. The bill therefore amends the Criminal Code to create a

new offence of choking, suffocation or strangulation in a domestic setting. The new offence will apply if a person, without consent, chokes, suffocates or strangles a person that they are in a domestic relationship with or that constitutes associated domestic violence. The offence will have a maximum penalty of seven years imprisonment. This offence and the significant penalty attached reflect the serious and dangerous nature of the offending behaviour and recognise the importance of deterring this prevalent conduct.

Stakeholders overwhelmingly agreed that any legislative reform in the area of strangulation must be coupled with system-wide changes to ensure that offenders are charged by police and that timely intervention and support is available for victims. Education, training and communication were all identified as imperative. The Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy will provide an opportunity for suggestions made by stakeholders in this area to be considered. This bill is a key step closer in achieving the Queensland government's vision to eradicate domestic and family violence from our communities.

Not related specifically to domestic and family violence reform, the bill also contains amendments to restore the longstanding and established sentencing practice in Queensland. The amendments to the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992 and the Youth Justice Act 1992 will give courts the discretion to receive a submission from both the defendant and the prosecution on what they consider to be the appropriate penalty or the range of appropriate penalties to be imposed at sentence. In February 2014, in the judgement of Barbaro & Zirilli v The Queen [2014] HCA 2, the High Court of Australia held that prosecutors were not permitted to make a submission to the court during sentencing proceedings on the appropriate sentence or the bounds of the range of appropriate sentences to be imposed by the court. This judgement resulted in a significant change to sentencing practice in Queensland. The amendments in the bill return to the previously existing practice where such submissions were provided for the assistance of the court and will improve courtroom efficiency. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. YM D'ATH (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (4.31 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 Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Furner): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the 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) (4.30 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

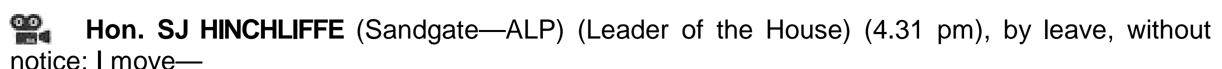
That under the provisions of standing order 136 the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee report to the House on the Criminal Law (Domestic Violence) Amendment Bill (No. 2) by 7 March 2016.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Order of Business



Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (4.31 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That government business orders of the day Nos 1 to 4 and general business order of the day No. 1 be postponed.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

ELECTORAL (IMPROVING REPRESENTATION) AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 12 November (see p. 2853).

Second Reading

Mr KATTER (Mount Isa—KAP) (4.32 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Representation and bipartisanship are at the core of the Electoral (Improving Representation) and Another Act Amendment Bill 2015. Importantly, the bill ensures that Queenslanders will have more equitable and improved access to representation. We are conserving and improving current access, not stretching our electorates beyond capacity. That is an important point to think about, because much of the media has been reporting that this is a grab at power for the bush. It cannot be like that. At best, this bill preserves the representation that exists now. There is no way it can increase the representation of the bush or rural seats. That is a completely misleading proposition that has been put up by the media.

The Electoral (Improving Representation) and Another Act Amendment Bill does this in three ways. The bill provides for further seats in Queensland, increasing the number of seats in the Legislative Assembly from 89 to 93 to improve representation. It is expected that they will be distributed in urban areas, as per the existing models. Again, the additional seats probably will be of more benefit to the people in the south-east corner, but at best it offers that there will be no sinkhole in the south-east corner that pulls out and enlarges seats in rural and regional Queensland. The bill ensures that the Electoral Commission of Queensland is chosen through bipartisanship support, as opposed to single nominations by the government of the day. Further, the bill requires an appointee with qualifications in demography.

I will explain what this bill does not do. This bill does not disrupt or attempt to amend the district weighting system for the five large rural seats of Cook, Gregory, Warrego, Dalrymple and Mount Isa, therefore leaving voter weighting consistent. The one vote, one value ideology will remain as it stands under the current system. The bill does not add more seats in rural and regional areas. I wish it did, but it does not. Alternatively, it is likely to add more seats in urban areas. The bill simply retains the status quo to maintain the current boundaries, ensuring the rural voice is not diluted or restricted any further than it is already.

Unless this bill is passed, the next redistribution, which is due in 2016, will most likely result in more rural and regional seats being lost to South-East Queensland. We need to amend this outdated system. In 1986 the average electorate had 17,500 constituents; now each has 34,000. I repeat: the system is outdated. It has been almost 30 years since the last increase in the Queensland Legislative Assembly, with the number of seats rising from 82 to 89, serving a population of 2.5 million. Today there are over 4.8 million Queenslanders.

By comparison, New South Wales has 93 electoral districts represented in its lower house and an upper house of 42 members, which is a total of 135 elected members. Often I find the point that is lost in the media and public discussion on this issue is that ours is a unicameral system and there is a hell of a lot more members of parliament in all of the other states than we have here, so already we are doing a bigger job. Victoria has 88 electoral districts represented in its lower house and an upper house of 40 members, which is a total of 128 elected members. Neither New South Wales nor Victoria has the huge land mass and huge distances that we have in Queensland. The proportionate increase in major urban areas has led to an expansion in many rural seats that can least afford it.

The Mount Isa electorate alone covers 570,502 square kilometres, which is over 30 per cent of the entire state of Queensland. In total, Mount Isa has 23 police stations, 40 schools, 19 ambulance stations, seven fire stations, 20 hospitals and healthcare centres and 14 shires. To give a bit of a snapshot, in November I travelled 9,100 kilometres from Mount Isa to Brisbane, 560 kilometres in a single trip from Mount Isa to Richmond, 1,040 kilometres from Mount Isa to Hughenden and 1,374 from Mount Isa to Birdsville, which is a total of 12,000 kilometres in one month. All up, in November I travelled an average of 5,100 kilometres per week. Although it may seem trivial, I would like to illustrate this point and the simple impracticality of the size of electorate. While most members with urban seats have been able to carry out community duties, especially over the Christmas season, most of my electorate goes without their local member. I am unable to attend school events, graduations and awards nights due to the sheer vastness of the electorate. Therefore, today I wish all the schools in my electorate well and acknowledge those events that I will not be able to get to: the Barkly Highway State School awards

parade, the Mount Isa Central State School awards night, the Normanton State School awards, the Townview State School awards day, the Barkly Highway State School farewell night, the Mornington Island State School awards, the Mount Isa School of the Air awards, the St Francis School awards, the Boulia State School awards, the Birdsville State School awards, the Burketown State School awards night and Christmas carols, the Dajarra State School awards night, the Forsayth State School awards night, the Camooweal State School awards, the Georgetown State School awards, the Gulf Christian College awards in Normanton and, last week, the Julia Creek State School awards, the Cameron Downs State School awards, the Edmund Rice Education Australia awards day, the Healy State School graduation evening, the St Joseph's School awards and the Croydon State School awards night. All those school events will happen without the presence of the local member and that situation will continue under the status quo, if not get worse. I think members would be doing an injustice to those schools and the people involved in them if they do not vote for this bill tonight.

The Clerk of the Parliament stated with regard to the redistribution in 2009 that the parliament needed another 10 seats otherwise, it was suggested, each redistribution would result in fewer country and regional seats. This would result in less representation of country and regional people in the Queensland parliament. Like we have said before, that is not good for anyone.

I will labour that point. We talked about this last time. This is not about Rob Katter or my successor getting extra electoral allowance; it is about a legacy of this parliament that there is representation for a significant portion of the state which has significant industry that is neglected. We know that there is always a gravitation of funds from this parliament towards where the votes are. I can tell members now that it will get worse. Members will be part of the legacy of contributing to the vacuum out there. It is bad for the future if we continue down this path.

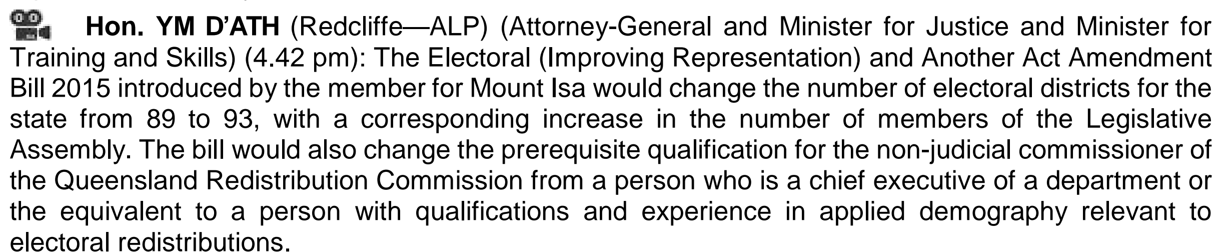
There is such a deficit in terms of the concentration on issues out there. Every now and then there are good things done by governments for western areas, but we are definitely losing the battle. Towns are dying and industries are dying. That might not mean much to a lot of people. A lot of people on the coast and in urban areas might still have a good lifestyle, but for those in western areas it is diminishing at a rapid rate.

The big problem is that a lot of the mining, agriculture and primary industries, which are vital to the robust integrity of our economy, have been severely compromised. We cannot run these industries remotely and we cannot have fly-in fly-out for every job out west, even though that is happening in increasing numbers.

There will be a day of reckoning. At some point someone is going to have to arrest the momentum and the trajectory we are on. We on a trajectory to oblivion. These areas have vital industries which are critical to the normal functioning of our economy.

Five or 10 years ago everybody was saying that the mining industry is going to get us through and we do not need to worry about agriculture and some of the other primary industries. People should look at that now. The mining industry is dying out there and we all need agricultural jobs. That should play out across all areas of the state. The resources will not be allocated there if there are no votes there.

My seat may end up being a Labor seat or a Liberal seat after the next election. We should take the party politics out of it. We have to think about what we are doing in this parliament. What sort of legacy will we leave for future governments and future parliaments? We are already down that road, but we can arrest the momentum. All we are asking is that we put a stop to the loss of seats. There will not be any gain here. We are just asking to put a stop to the loss of seats and increase the representation in city seats. I commend this bill to the House.



Hon. YM D'ATH (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (4.42 pm): The Electoral (Improving Representation) and Another Act Amendment Bill 2015 introduced by the member for Mount Isa would change the number of electoral districts for the state from 89 to 93, with a corresponding increase in the number of members of the Legislative Assembly. The bill would also change the prerequisite qualification for the non-judicial commissioner of the Queensland Redistribution Commission from a person who is a chief executive of a department or the equivalent to a person with qualifications and experience in applied demography relevant to electoral redistributions.

Further, the bill would make the appointment of the Electoral Commissioner and the QRC commissioners subject to bipartisan support of the parliamentary committee. Bipartisan support is defined to mean unanimous support or majority support, other than a majority consisting wholly of government members.

The Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee reported on the bill on 27 November. It was unable to reach a majority decision as to whether the bill should be passed. It did not make any recommendations.

The government opposes the bill in its entirety on the basis that the proposals are unnecessary and have not been developed through a process of wide consultation. The current electoral district boundary arrangements were agreed, with cross-party support, following the review of Queensland's electoral laws by the former Electoral and Administrative Review Commission, EARC. EARC tabled its report in November 1990.

The Electoral Act generally requires that an electoral district redistribution take place every 7½ years or after three parliaments have been elected on the existing boundaries. The next redistribution is due to commence in February 2016. The redistribution process is intended to address the changing demographics in electoral districts that can result in the relative numbers of voters across the electoral districts becoming unbalanced over time. It provides a process for the existing electoral boundaries to be independently reviewed and modified.

The substantive issues in this bill and the issue they raise were effectively dealt with by the parliament when the parliament rejected the private member's bill put forward by the member for Mansfield. This bill does not present any new evidence that should change the position of this House.

The first proposal in the bill would increase the number of electoral districts for the state from 89 to 93, in the absence of a compelling, evidence based case for such a change. When I travel around the state and I talk to people about growing jobs in this state to deliver a high-skilled workforce and innovation, not a single person has suggested that what they want is more politicians. I find it astonishing that the LNP members opposite would come into this House and tell Queenslanders their jobs plan is to employ more politicians.

The bill gives no guidance as to where the extra districts would be located, as this would obviously be the domain of the independent redistribution commission. It may have a marginal impact on whether some electorates change, but adding new seats would likely see new seats pop up in South-East Queensland. Are those opposite pretending that this is about rural MPs when in fact there might be some within the LNP party room who will see this as an opportunity to fight for more South-East Queensland Liberal seats and help topple the control of the old Nats. The technology and communications landscape has significantly changed and transformed and enhanced the way that members fulfil both their constituency and legislative roles.

There are also existing mechanisms in place under the current members' remuneration arrangements, including an additional general travel allocation and provision for additional electorate office accommodation and services, to assist members to effectively represent large rural electorates. Indeed, as recently as October this year, the Remuneration Tribunal awarded additional travel resources for large electorates. In his submission to the LACSC, Professor Orr observed that the bill does not explain how or why the increase by four seats was decided upon and it is speculation as to whether the increase will impact on the issues that the bill is purported to address.

The second proposal in the bill would change the prerequisite qualification required for the non-judicial commissioner of the QRC from a person who is a chief executive of a department or the equivalent to a person with qualifications and experience in applied demography relevant to electoral redistributions. Section 46 of the Electoral Act already provides that the QRC must consider economic, social, regional and other interests in each proposed electoral district, the methods of communication and travel, the physical features within each proposed electoral district and the boundaries of existing electoral districts and demographic trends in the state when preparing a proposed electoral redistribution.

The extensive consultation process that is mandated by the Electoral Act also provides the opportunity for stakeholders and experts to provide their input into the process. The QRC can access the advice of professionals with qualifications and expertise in demography, statistics and regional and town planning as needed. In his submission to the LACSC, Professor Orr queried that the amending provision would unduly limit the pool of people who would qualify for appointment.

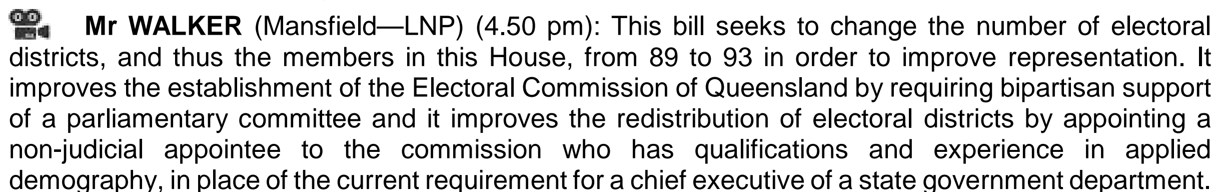
The third proposal in the bill would make the appointment of the Electoral Commissioner and the QRC commissioners subject to bipartisan support of the parliamentary committee. Bipartisan support is defined to mean unanimous support or majority support, other than the majority consisting wholly of government members. The current composition of the QRC is sufficient to ensure the independence and integrity of the redistribution process.

As is the case with the chairperson, the non-judicial member may only be appointed if the minister has consulted with each political party leader in the Legislative Assembly and the parliamentary committee. The appointment of the Electoral Commissioner already follows a statutory process which involves public advertising and consultation with each political party leader in the Legislative Assembly and the parliamentary committee. Currently, there is no requirement for the appointment of any commissioner to be subject to cross-party approval.

A requirement for the appointment of the commissioners to be subject to bipartisan support of the parliamentary committee would have the potential to frustrate the redistribution process in the event of a stalemate. The bill offers no alternative mechanism in the event of such a stalemate. It is fair to say that unfortunately, when it comes to bipartisan appointment processes, the immaturity of some opposite is frustrating what would otherwise be a constructive and inclusive process.

The reality is, unlike other bipartisan support for positions that require or allow an acting appointment, no such provisions exist in this bill. What that means is that, if I, as the Attorney-General, am unable to get bipartisan support of the parliamentary committee, the Queensland Redistribution Commission cannot be formed. If the Queensland Redistribution Commission cannot be formed, the redistribution cannot occur. So it could lead to significant ramifications and substantial delays as a consequence.

In summary, the government opposes the bill on the basis that a compelling evidence based case has not been made for an increase in electoral districts, the qualification for appointment as the non-judicial commissioner is unnecessary and unduly restrictive, and the requirement for bipartisan support for the commissioners has the potential to frustrate the upcoming redistribution process in the event of a stalemate. The government opposes the bill.



Mr WALKER (Mansfield—LNP) (4.50 pm): This bill seeks to change the number of electoral districts, and thus the members in this House, from 89 to 93 in order to improve representation. It improves the establishment of the Electoral Commission of Queensland by requiring bipartisan support of a parliamentary committee and it improves the redistribution of electoral districts by appointing a non-judicial appointee to the commission who has qualifications and experience in applied demography, in place of the current requirement for a chief executive of a state government department.

As has been pointed out by previous speakers, this bill follows on from the debate that the parliament had on 28 October about issues around the next redistribution, which is due to commence in February 2016. It was clear in that debate that members on this side expressed the great concerns that they had about the continual population shift from rural and regional Queensland to the south-east corner of the state, coupled with the geographic size of the state, which, put together, means that residents living in rural and regional Queensland will have less access to the services and representation by their elected representatives than those who live in other parts of the state.

We believe that our bill was the correct way to go. It in fact created a mini EARC and ensured that the decision on the two big issues that EARC itself decided on 30 years ago—the number of seats and the weightage to be given to the larger seats—was handed completely to an independent body to ensure that whatever system was determined by that independent body satisfied the needs of Queensland. We thought that that was the most appropriate way to deal with the issue, and we still do. But the House rejected that measure. The view of this side of the House is that the measure proposed by the member for Mount Isa is in the category of doing something is better than doing nothing at all.

Why we need to do something was best illustrated by the comments of the Clerk of the Parliament in his submission to the previous debate. In terms of the issue of rural representation and the current large electorate formula, Mr Laurie remarked as follows—

> It needs to be made clear, however, that the status quo (i.e. no extra seats) will mean that each redistribution will result in less country and regional seats. This will result in less representation in the Queensland Parliament of country and regional people.

The Clerk has put it pretty straight there. He says that the absolute consequence if we do not do anything is that we lose country and regional seats. That is the way the House voted, I believe unfortunately, back in October. But this is another opportunity to deal with the matter in a slightly different way.

In terms of the issues of fair representation, all of the members in the House today will recall the impassioned pleas in the previous debate from those members who represent rural and remote Queensland. I remark particularly on the contribution that evening of the member for Mount Isa, who gave a contribution at that time that I think rang in all of our ears and not only affected minds but affected hearts as well. It was an incredibly moving speech. The member for Mount Isa, as we know, is someone who represents the largest electorate in Queensland—one that is equivalent to the size of France. We

heard the stories in the last debate of the issues that he has dealing with his constituents and them in turn dealing with getting to see him and the issues that he has had to face of sleeping in his car overnight as he moves from one centre to another in that electorate—something that is not within the daily experience of most of us who sit in this place, apart from the member for Clayfield, who says he struggles greatly getting around his electorate! In that impassioned speech, the member for Mount Isa said—

A deficit of infrastructure and policies go through this House beyond the term of this government, whether it is Liberal or Labor. That happens because we do not have the seats, and I think that is a proposition everyone can agree upon. The population is dwindling because there is less opportunity because we are not investing.

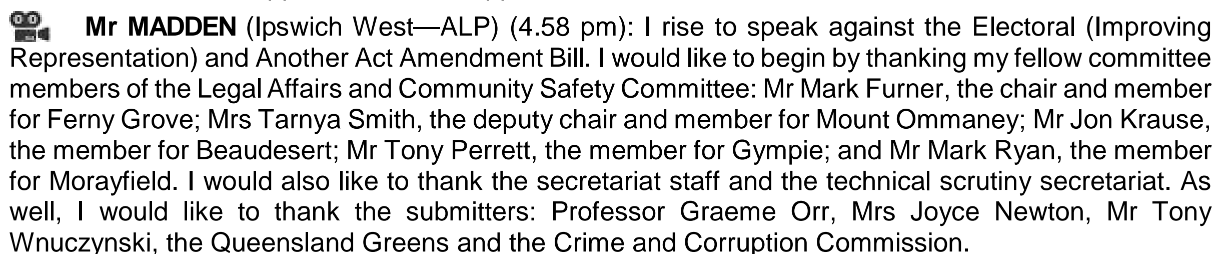
The Premier has spoken about additional resources for members who service these larger electorates, but there is a clear limit to the extent that additional resources and technology will achieve when it comes to access to services and representation in this parliament. It struck me that some of the speakers in the last debate believed that the members for Mount Isa, Dalrymple, Gregory or Warrego could drive around their electorates happily phoning people up on their mobile phone as they move from place to place. It does not work. There is no connection in a lot of those places. While it seems fantastic in theory that that could be done, it cannot be done in practice. That really puts before us the issue that we need to address when we look at the make-up of this parliament. We do not believe that the additional resources that are being talked about make up for the inequity that occurs already in these large electorates, let alone what will be occur if nothing is done prior to the next redistribution.

Remember this next redistribution will last effectively for a cycle of seven or eight years, and those five larger seats are highly likely to become four if nothing is done and then three and then two. Again, I interpose the comments of the Clerk when he gave evidence to the committee last time. He said, if we do not do anything, the southern boundary of the member for Mount Isa's electorate will be the western suburbs of Toowoomba. That is a totally unacceptable outcome. It is unacceptable for those on the other side to not only oppose the previous measure but now oppose this and give no credence whatsoever to the problem that these rural and regional electorates face.

The member for Mount Isa made a point about this inability to access his constituents. He said—

Over 90 per cent of that time I am out of mobile range, so telecommunication does not mean a thing.

Extra resources by way of mobile phones or computers or staff does not make up for the fact that people deserve to have reasonable contact with their local member. While we believe that the previous measure put to the House would do that in the fairest way possible, continuing the EARC process and allowing an independent body to make these decisions, the view of the opposition is that we will support the bill that is before the House. It creates an additional four seats. That may assist the situation. As the member for Mount Isa said, those seats are most likely to go to the south-east, but they may be just enough to preserve the five large rural and regional seats. It is with that great hope that on behalf of the opposition I offer support to the member for Mount Isa's bill.



Mr MADDEN (Ipswich West—ALP) (4.58 pm): I rise to speak against the Electoral (Improving Representation) and Another Act Amendment Bill. I would like to begin by thanking my fellow committee members of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee: Mr Mark Furner, the chair and member for Ferny Grove; Mrs Tarnya Smith, the deputy chair and member for Mount Ommaney; Mr Jon Krause, the member for Beaudesert; Mr Tony Perrett, the member for Gympie; and Mr Mark Ryan, the member for Morayfield. I would also like to thank the secretariat staff and the technical scrutiny secretariat. As well, I would like to thank the submitters: Professor Graeme Orr, Mrs Joyce Newton, Mr Tony Wnuczynski, the Queensland Greens and the Crime and Corruption Commission.

The objects of the bill are to increase the number of electoral districts from 89 to 93; require bipartisan support for appointments to the Electoral Commission; and require the appointment of a member of the commission with qualifications and experience in applied demography. As the chair stated in the foreword to the committee report by the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee, the report details the examination by the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee of the Electoral (Improving Representation) and Another Act Amendment Bill 2015, a private member's bill introduced by Mr Robbie Katter MP, the member for Mount Isa. In conclusion, he said that the committee was unable to reach a majority decision to recommend that the bill be passed.

The objectives of the bill are similar to those of the Electoral (Redistribution Commission) and Another Act Amendment Bill, a private member's bill debated and defeated in the Legislative Assembly on 28 October 2015. This bill before the House is more limited in its scope than the previous bill. It seeks to increase the number of electoral districts to a specific number—93 from the current 89—by an act of parliament rather than delegating that decision to the commission.

The bill would see the commission appointed with bipartisan support of a parliamentary committee instead of the current situation whereby the government must consult with the leader of each political party represented in the parliament about the proposed appointment. The appointment of the Electoral Commissioner would retain the current requirement of consultation with leaders of all parties represented in the parliament about the appointment, consultation with the committee about the selection process and the appointment, as well as requiring bipartisan support of the committee. Like the previous bill, it seeks to appoint a non-judicial member of the Electoral Commission with qualifications in applied demography, but here the appointment would be instead of the position designated for a department CEO rather than in addition to that position, as was proposed in the previous bill. The total number of members of the commission would remain at three rather than increase to five as proposed in the previous bill.

Significantly, this bill does not seek to make any changes to the additional large district number system which currently applies weightings to electoral districts with large geographic areas and relatively small populations. The previous bill proposed allowing the commission the discretion to increase the weighting of two per cent up to a maximum of four per cent. In Australia, citizens in the six Australian states enjoy three levels of political representation at local, state and federal government levels. Effectively, three politicians, not including federal senators, represent every citizen of the six Australian states. While campaigning and since being elected as the member for Ipswich West, I have not had one single constituent suggest to me they would like to see more state politicians.

Mr Watts: That's because you live in a city electorate.

Mr MADDEN: My constituents are aware that the costs of wages and expenses for state members are considerable and to increase the number of state members of the Legislative Assembly by four members is a cost that could not possibly be justified.

Mr Watts interjected.

Mr MADDEN: If members of this House are concerned about the workload of state members, as they appear to be from their interjections, rather than increasing the number of members a more appropriate option would be increasing the staff, allowances and resources provided to members of the Legislative Assembly.

Professor Graeme Orr noted in his submission that the bill does not explain how or why the bill proposes to legislate specifically for an increase of four seats. He also observes that he can only speculate as to whether doing so might have any impact on the issues identified by Mr Katter in introducing the bill, and by the proponents of the previous bill, in relation to limitations on representation in large remote districts. If it did have an impact, he suggests this may be on a short-term, stopgap basis. Professor Orr also pointed out that that demographics capacity required in the bill as to a 'person with qualifications and experience in applied demography relevant to contemporary redistributions' clashes with the qualifications traditionally implied in such appointments and cautioned that—

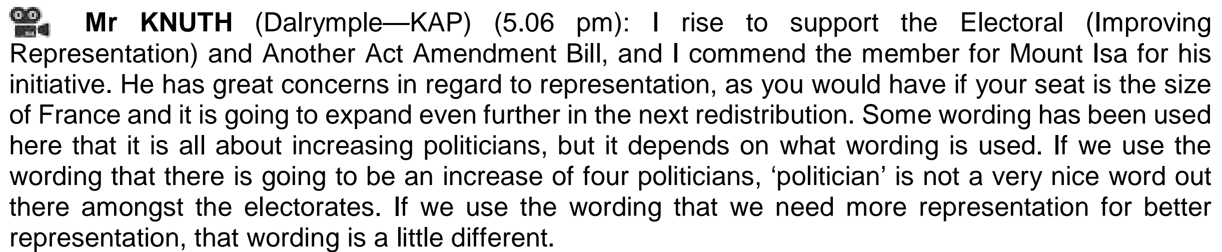
> ... parliament should be careful about the language used ... lest it unduly limits the pool of people who can be nominated to that role.

By way of example, he suggests that well-known psephologist and political commentator Mr Antony Green would be unlikely to qualify under the proposed wording yet 'few people would have his breadth of knowledge of statistics, computing and electoral redistributions'.

The Crime and Corruption Commission identified a potentially serious issue were the bill to be passed in respect of the upcoming 2016 electoral distribution. It relates to time frames for the appointment of an Electoral Commission which is constituted in the manner proposed by the bill, and the potential for a delay in appointments according to the act to cast doubt on the validity of the commission undertaking the 2016 redistribution. As the Crime and Corruption Commission stated in its submission—

> The proposals, if enacted, may create uncertainty about the validity of the existing appointments of the members of the ECQ/QRC. Currently Commissioner appointments do not require the bipartisan support of the Parliamentary Committee. Commissioners hold office, subject to the Electoral Act 1992, Part 2 for the term specified in their instrument of appointment. Whilst the current Commissioner appointments may continue by virtue of s 20B of the Acts Interpretation Act 1954, the CCC considers the preferable course would be to enact appropriate transitional arrangements continuing the existing membership of the ECQ/QRC until such time that the ECQ/QRC is comprised by members appointed with the bipartisan support of the Parliamentary committee. This would prevent legal challenges and potential delay to the 2016 electoral distribution on grounds that it was not being conducted by a properly constituted QRC.

For these reasons, I would urge members to reject the bill.



Mr KNUTH (Dalrymple—KAP) (5.06 pm): I rise to support the Electoral (Improving Representation) and Another Act Amendment Bill, and I commend the member for Mount Isa for his initiative. He has great concerns in regard to representation, as you would have if your seat is the size of France and it is going to expand even further in the next redistribution. Some wording has been used here that it is all about increasing politicians, but it depends on what wording is used. If we use the wording that there is going to be an increase of four politicians, 'politician' is not a very nice word out there amongst the electorates. If we use the wording that we need more representation for better representation, that wording is a little different.

Some might say that we do not need more politicians. That is fine, but after a redistribution where an elector finds that his member of parliament is 600 kilometres away he might think rather differently of the terminology and that we do not need more politicians when he finds his member of parliament has disappeared. There may have been an electorate office right at his door and all of a sudden it is 600 kilometres away, but this is the reality of redistributions.

Most people here tonight have not been through a redistribution. One minute you have a seat; the next minute you do not have a seat. One minute you have a seat; the next minute you find that your seat has expanded by another 200 kilometres. You might also find yourself battling it out with another parliamentary colleague who is a good mate of yours or one who is on the other side of the fence. This is what it is about.

We have a bill before the House at the moment with regard to four-year terms. If we were to use the language that we want to push for a four-year term while the Bligh government was selling assets, they would race to the ballot box and tick 'no'. Likewise, if we were to push for a four-year term when the Newman government was in power and under the Newman government's regimes, they would do exactly the same thing. However, if we used the wording of a four-year term for better representation and to save financial cost it would be more saleable to the electorate. This is why this bill is before the House: it is about better representation. Back in 1986 we had 89 members of parliament. By the time this is finalised and we go to the polls with regard to redistribution, it will be 2016 or 2017 and we will have 34,000 constituents, yet we still have 89 seats.

I do recall what happened in the last redistribution—Darling Downs disappeared and was merged with I believe the seat of Cunningham; Fitzroy disappeared and Mirani now stretches from Mackay to Rockhampton and takes in a part of that old Fitzroy seat; Mount Isa is now bigger than France; Gregory is now bigger than Victoria; Warrego is now bigger than Victoria; and Cook now stretches down into what they call the Atherton Tablelands, where once it used to be the Atherton Tablelands and now it is the seat of Cook and that is all split up.

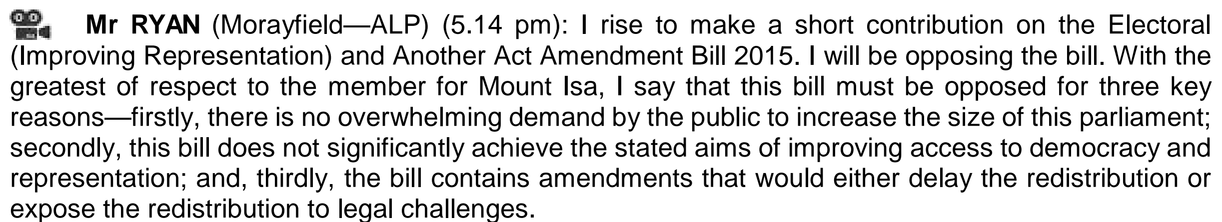
So these extra four representatives is about trying to keep the status quo. It will ensure that Mount Isa's 530,000 to 540,000 square kilometres does not become 700,000 square kilometres. It will ensure that Gregory—which is over 330,000 square kilometres—does not become 450,000 square kilometres and wipes out the seats that are on the coast and all of a sudden the seat of Gregory takes in the coast. At some time, we have to make a decision. It is disappointing. We can say that four-year terms are fine, but we could promote it as a four-year term of bad government—and I do not think I will use that terminology.

What we are saying here is that we are trying to use four more politicians. This is about representation. Do other members know what it is like to wake up in the morning and know that you have to get in your car and drive to your electoral office and it is 570 kilometres of driving—and that after this redistribution it is going to be 770 kilometres? That is the reality, and this is about simplifying this process. This is about ensuring that there is a balance. This is about ensuring that we have better governance. We brought this bill back in the House because our people out there are saying that they are sick and tired of seeing these seats abolished and then placed into the city areas. The city areas are going to be impacted as well as a result of this redistribution, but we are trying to get a balance and we are trying to get better representation.

We are trying to keep these places, such as the Burdekin. What once was the seat of Burdekin many, many years ago now stretches from Townsville through to Bowen and through to Collinsville. Hinchinbrook now stretches from Townsville through to Innisfail. It is the same with the seat of Mirani—and these are the small seats. If nothing is going to change, these seat are just going to swallow up other seats. It will come into the territory of other members and it will affect rural and regional seats but it will also hurt the areas of southern Queensland such as Brisbane, the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast.

We are trying to do something sensible here and something tangible to ensure that we have that better representation. The time has come to be sound minded about this. People can say, 'We've got mobile phones,' but it has made the work harder for us because all of our day is spent on the phone when we are trying to get out there amongst the constituents and do the job that we are supposed to do and that we did years ago. We used to be able to represent our constituents. We could be seen and be available and be on call, but it is not the case anymore. People are saying to us, 'We want to see our MPs.' It is physically impossible. Half the time we are on the phone so that we can keep up with this modern world, but then we are told that we are going to get more constituents and get stretched even further and it will be made harder and harder. We have to be sensible about this.

I encourage members in the House to have a good look at what is going on here because your seat is going to go in the next redistribution. We are trying to sustain it, we are trying to hold it intact and keep it all together, and we are trying to ensure that you are available for your constituents—that you are there to communicate, you are there to go to their functions, you are there to go to their deb balls, you are there to open their shows, you are available. It is becoming virtually impossible to do that. I commend the member for Mount Isa and I commend this bill to the House. I ask everyone to support this bill.



Mr RYAN (Morayfield—ALP) (5.14 pm): I rise to make a short contribution on the Electoral (Improving Representation) and Another Act Amendment Bill 2015. I will be opposing the bill. With the greatest of respect to the member for Mount Isa, I say that this bill must be opposed for three key reasons—firstly, there is no overwhelming demand by the public to increase the size of this parliament; secondly, this bill does not significantly achieve the stated aims of improving access to democracy and representation; and, thirdly, the bill contains amendments that would either delay the redistribution or expose the redistribution to legal challenges.

Before I touch on that point, I want to respond to a comment the member for Mansfield made in his contribution tonight that related to some of the provisions he had in his private member's bill which was debated by this House a couple of months ago. In that contribution, the member for Mansfield stated that one of the objectives under his bill was to create a mini EARC. But in respect of that particular point, it is important to draw the distinction between what the member for Mansfield was hoping to achieve in his bill and also the fundamental role of EARC in the 1980s and 1990s. The proposal in the member for Mansfield's bill would effectively outsource the decision-making powers of this parliament to the Queensland—

Mr WATTS: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I ask you to rule on relevance. The member is discussing a bill that has already been debated in this House. I would like the member to debate the current bill.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I rise on the point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. The member for Mansfield quite extensively reflected on and made comments about the bill that was previously debated and I sought no objection because these bills have very similar provisions. The Speaker made a ruling that this could be debated and he did not rule this bill out of order. Mr Deputy Speaker, I think you should follow the Speaker's guidance and allow some latitude, as your predecessors did for the member for Mansfield.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Elmes): There is no point of order. I call the member for Morayfield and ask him to stick within the guidelines.

Mr RYAN: I am talking to the points about redistributions over time, which of course is one of the central principles of this bill. The proposal that the member for Mansfield put would effectively outsource the decision-making powers of this parliament to an unelected, democratically unaccountable body, which was the QRC in respect of Mr Walker's bill. There is no precedent for an extraordinary approach like that, nor is there in my view an appropriate framework established under Mr Walker's previous bill to safeguard key democratic principles.

I make that point because it is really important when we are discussing redistributions that we do have a transparent and accountable approach, and it is important when we are discussing redistributions that we make sure the people of Queensland have faith in the process and that the process can achieve its stated aim. That comes back to my first point I was making before. When the member for Mount Isa introduced this bill, he stated that the bill would address issues of population density and distance which are seen to limit the effectiveness of representation in the Queensland parliament. He said that one of the stated purposes was to improve representation, and there were also some statements made about how increasing the number of members of this House—as proposed in the member for Mount Isa's bill—would effectively keep the size of those large electorates stable or even shrink them to some extent. There was no evidence presented to the parliamentary committee

which considered the member for Mount Isa's bill that said that would be achieved. In fact, there was some evidence by one particular witness that said it was questionable whether the stated purpose would actually be achieved. Some of the evidence presented by that witness actually highlighted that, if anything, the quota in state electorates around Queensland would probably only reduce by about 1,000 voters.

So to say that this bill achieves a purpose of significantly increasing representation of electors in Queensland probably overstates that particular point quite significantly. The committee concluded on page 6 of its report—

It is unclear how legislating for an increase in electoral districts by four will achieve any improved representation for the existing large, remote electorates in the short term ...

If one of the stated purposes is to improve representation, there is no evidence to say that this bill will achieve that. In fact, there is some evidence which was produced by witnesses to the committee that suggests that it will not achieve that purpose at all.

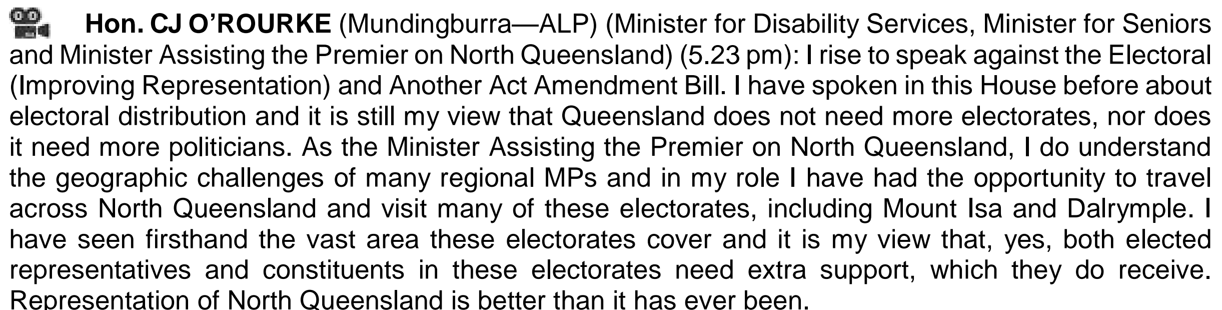
The other point I want to make relates to the provision in the bill to change the representation of the Redistribution Commission. There is some quite significant comment there by one of the witnesses, and that was the Crime and Corruption Commission, which said that if that proposal is indeed enacted, there may be some uncertainty about the validity of the existing appointments of the members of the Queensland Redistribution Commission. In fact, if this bill is passed without amendment, there are some quite serious questions about how the Redistribution Commission will be able to do its job of conducting the redistribution, which is due to start next year. Also, if it did do that redistribution without being reconstituted, it opens up the whole process to legal challenge, which again delays any potential redistribution and, in fact, may undermine the redistribution entirely. So the bill itself does not achieve its stated goals. In fact, it creates some quite serious legal problems if it is passed without amendment. For those reasons alone the bill should be opposed.

The other point relates to whether or not there is any overwhelming demand in the community to increase the size of the parliament. I am on the parliamentary committee which considered this bill and also considered Mr Walker's private member's bill. In respect of Mr Walker's bill we conducted some quite significant public consultation. In respect of Mr Katter's bill, we did put the call out for public submissions again and there were very few responses in respect of the proposal to increase the size of the parliament, whether as proposed by Mr Walker or Mr Katter. In the absence of any particular demand by the public, I struggle to see how this bill will not only satisfy the requirements of the people of Queensland for a parliament that is representative of them but also achieve its stated goals.

When we conducted our inquiry in respect of Mr Walker's bill, there was some evidence that was provided by witnesses which suggested that they would support additional resourcing for members of parliament so that those members of parliament can be more appropriately connected to their communities. I am pleased to see that the recent decision of the Independent Remuneration Tribunal does go to some extent to increasing that resourcing, which hopefully will mean that members of parliament who are representing those larger electorates are able to do so more effectively.

I acknowledge the contribution that the member for Mount Isa has made in this debate. It is with the greatest of respect that I do say that the bill must be opposed.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Elmes): Order! Before calling the member for Mundingburra, I welcome to the public gallery the former member for Burdekin, Rosemary Menkens, and her husband, Ray.



Hon. CJ O'ROURKE (Mundingburra—ALP) (Minister for Disability Services, Minister for Seniors and Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland) (5.23 pm): I rise to speak against the Electoral (Improving Representation) and Another Act Amendment Bill. I have spoken in this House before about electoral distribution and it is still my view that Queensland does not need more electorates, nor does it need more politicians. As the Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland, I do understand the geographic challenges of many regional MPs and in my role I have had the opportunity to travel across North Queensland and visit many of these electorates, including Mount Isa and Dalrymple. I have seen firsthand the vast area these electorates cover and it is my view that, yes, both elected representatives and constituents in these electorates need extra support, which they do receive. Representation of North Queensland is better than it has ever been.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Just one moment, please. There is a gentleman in the public gallery with a camera. Taking photographs in the parliament is not allowed so please desist. I call the member.

Mrs O'ROURKE: The Palaszczuk government is a government for all Queenslanders and I am pleased to say that North Queensland is a priority for this government. As the Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland, I am the champion—and do champion—for the region, a direct voice to the cabinet table for North Queenslanders. I work every day to get results for North Queensland, to work with my cabinet colleagues and to deliver positive outcomes for the region.

Earlier this year I was delighted to join the Premier, the member for Mount Isa and the member for Dalrymple to reopen our government's North Queensland office. This is an office that was closed by the LNP. It is a dedicated office staffed by—

Mr Cripps interjected.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Those on my left—

Mr Cripps interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Hinchinbrook. Those on my left will cease interjecting. I call the member.

Mrs O'ROURKE: This is a dedicated office staffed by employees of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet located in Townsville and servicing the entire region, a tangible sign of our commitment to the north. Along with our focus on the north, changing technology and innovation means the tyranny of distance is not the barrier that it used to be. Yes, these electorates are vast and diverse, but we should be looking at more innovative ways to overcome and address the size. The answer is not to create more electorates.

This Labor government remembers what happened in the dark old days before the Fitzgerald inquiry and the public's response to the manipulation of electorate representation. It is also worth noting that the Fitzgerald recommendations received bipartisan agreement and now is not the time to put those landmark recommendations at risk. We cannot erode the principle of one vote, one value. The reality is that the last thing Queenslanders want is more politicians. They just want us as politicians to get on with our jobs, to serve the people of Queensland and to work hard for our constituents, and that is exactly what we are doing. We are working every day to create jobs and opportunities in regional Queensland. We are a government that listens and cares about Queensland, but I firmly believe that the approach taken in this bill is not the right way to address the challenges of having a large electorate. It is for the reasons I have outlined that I cannot support this bill.

Mr FURNER (Ferny Grove—ALP) (5.27 pm): I rise this afternoon also to speak to and oppose the Electoral (Improving Representation) and Another Act Amendment Bill 2015. As the chair of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee, I say that it was unfortunate the committee was not in a position to go further as we did in our previous bill, which was similar to this bill, in terms of going through a correct, thorough process. Certainly we called for submissions and we only got five-odd submissions on this particular bill. It was good to have people like Professor Orr, who is in my opinion an expert witness in terms of providing submissions to this particular bill. He certainly provided his expert evidence in examining the contents of what it would do should it be passed. Other members also had commitments that made it impossible to hold a public hearing. That is the nature and the reality of what occurred in terms of the committee meeting its obligations of going through a thorough and lengthy process, which is what the committee structure would normally do in this parliament.

The mover of the bill, the member for Mount Isa, advised that the bill would ensure that Queenslanders would have more equitable and improved access to representation. He indicated that the bill would address the issues of population density and distance which are seen to limit the effectiveness of representation in the Queensland parliament for people in the large and lightly populated electoral districts of Queensland. I shine a sympathetic light on the member for Mount Isa and the other four members of those large regional seats, because they do have a task ahead of them. In previous careers and roles I have seen the tyranny of distance in those vast regional parts of Queensland, so I am somewhat sympathetic and quite knowledgeable in terms of what they experience on a regular basis. When I reflect back in my career in the Police Union as an industrial officer, I thoroughly enjoyed my fortnightly travels into some of those country locations and particularly meeting with the partners and children of police men and women. They are such genuine and decent people in those country locations. I imagine that when those five regional members are touring in their areas they have the same opportunities and experiences that I did, and I thoroughly enjoyed meeting with those people.

The objectives of the bill are similar to those of the Electoral (Redistribution Commission) and Another Act Amendment Bill 2015, which unfortunately was not passed on 28 October this year due to a variety of reasons, one of which was that it did not have the support of the crossbenchers. When the

committee held its deliberations it went to Mount Isa, Weipa, Cairns and the Indigenous communities of Napranum and Bamaga. Some telling facts came from Mount Isa. The member for Mount Isa was, of course, unable to meet the committee face to face and had to give evidence over the phone. We accepted that on the basis of his busy workload, being the member for Mount Isa. When we arrived at Bamaga it was interesting to hear the arguments from Indigenous and Torres Strait Islands mayors, because the view was put to the committee that possibly there should be a new seat up in the cape somewhere across the line of the Lockhart River over to the other side, as opposed to a change in the current distribution of seats as presented in that particular bill. Had the opportunity arisen, it would have been interesting for the committee to go up into that region to see what the communities thought of this particular bill now before the House.

Professor Orr, who provided expert evidence to the committee on this bill and the previous one which was defeated in October, said that the bill does not explain how or why the bill proposes to legislate specifically for an increase of four seats. He also observes that he can only speculate as to whether doing so might have any impact on the issues identified by the member for Mount Isa in introducing the bill and by the proponents of the previous bill in relation to limitations on representation in large remote districts. If it did have any impact, he observes, it may be on a 'short-term, stopgap' basis. So there you have an expert who appears before the committee on a regular basis indicating that providing four extra seats, as provided for in this bill, would only be a stopgap exercise. In my opinion, this is a correct observation when compared to the previous failed bill which provided for an increase in the weighting—or, in the words of Professor Orr, 'phantom voters'—and this bill fails in setting any defined relief for those five larger regional seats. In his contribution to this bill, the member for Mount Isa indicated as well that it may be the case that there may be little or no impact as a result of adding four extra seats as proposed by this bill. With the greatest respect to the member for Mount Isa and those other four members in the larger regional seats, I wish to reflect on the evidence given to this committee in Mount Isa on the previous bill. The member for Mount Isa provided detailed evidence on his day-to-day experiences as the member for his electorate. He said—

In a typical week I might be in the car for 50 per cent of my time and 80 or 90 per cent of that time that I am in the car I am out of mobile range. I can drive anywhere up to 10½ hours to get to the edge of my electorate.

That is a true statement, and as parliamentarians we understand that that would be the case in some of these regions. It would be great if we had a federal government that was more committed to providing better telecommunications to the regions of Queensland and other parts of the nation to make sure that people like the member for Mount Isa and other members in those regional seats have reasonable access to their constituents. But that is not the case. The member explained the hardships he experiences when travelling. He said—

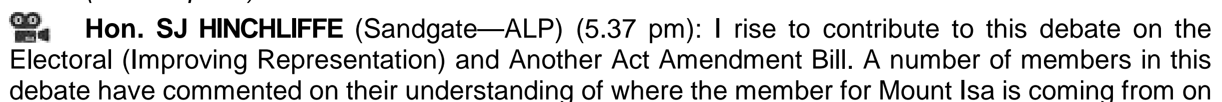
I have slept in my car twice this year not because I like sleeping in my car, but I was trying to get home and the roadhouse and the motel in the town I was passing through were shut. That is just the life when trying to do this job properly. It is a pretty large personal problem as well trying to juggle these things. The first time my travel budget ever ran over was in the last six months. I was out of pocket $8,000, which I was not really happy about.

You cannot blame him for that, and that is one of the reasons the Independent Remuneration Tribunal handed down a decision to enhance the travel entitlements of those members in the five regional seats so that they can represent their constituents.

Professor Orr's submission goes on to outline a number of measures which might offer improved representation in the large remote electorates without diluting the one vote, one value principle, such as pairing members. He did advocate this in a hearing on the previous bill as well, and it is a model that is featured in other locations around the countryside such as the ACT and Tasmania, which is known as the Hare-Clark system. I do not know whether we are ready for that and I do not know whether that is a system that would be entertained by this parliament.

In closing, I want deal with the argument that we have senators in the states and territories to assist in members' electorates. That is a complete fallacy, and as a previous senator myself I am in the best position to argue that. Outside of sitting weeks senators do other work such as being members of committees, and they travel throughout their states and throughout the nation—and in many other cases also around the world—to deliberate and gather evidence on their particular portfolios. I was responsible for just under 500,000 constituents out of five duty seats, so it gives members an example of the workload in the Senate. I oppose this bill.

(Time expired)



Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (5.37 pm): I rise to contribute to this debate on the Electoral (Improving Representation) and Another Act Amendment Bill. A number of members in this debate have commented on their understanding of where the member for Mount Isa is coming from on

this legislation. The concerns about the very large size of the electoral division of Mount Isa and some of those other large seats is something that we do appreciate is very challenging and difficult. That is why there are extra resources and assistance in place to assist the members who represent those electorates.

I have to note that the government opposes this bill because we do not think the measures put forward in it are appropriate. They do not, as the title seems to imply, seek to improve representation. They undermine some of the principles of representation and they do not necessarily result in the outcomes we would like to see. If I had had the opportunity to make a contribution to the debate on the Electoral (Redistribution Commission) and Another Act Amendment Bill, I might have wanted to make a few points in that context, but those points do apply to the Electoral (Improving Representation) and Another Act Amendment Bill. That is, as the member for Mount Isa pointed out in his introduction, we do not see any attempts to further fiddle with the weightage that applies to those larger electorates. I think that is a good thing. This is an improvement on other bills we have debated in the 55th Parliament. But the very nature of the existing weightage is in fact part of the problem. The way it provides the existing weightage—by effectively making it easier for redistribution commissions to add extra real estate rather than to add extra voters—partly creates the very large, unwieldy and difficult-to-service electorates such as Mount Isa.

I have great sympathy for the member for Mount Isa. I can assure the member that we as a government and those associated with this government who make submissions to the Redistribution Commission will make representations based upon wanting to see communities of interest put together in the way these redistributions are undertaken.

From various speakers we have heard a few comparisons with federal electorates. Federal electorates in this state are subject to a 10 per cent tolerance. It is genuine one vote, one value. The weightage issue is not applied to it. We do not hear the same sorts of criticisms and concerns expressed by members representing very large federal electorates, partly because those redistributions use better communication lines and better communities of interest. You will see—I have had this discussion with the members for Mount Isa and Dalrymple—those federal seats reaching east-west across the state. One of the great challenges we have had with the current system in Queensland is that we have seen redistribution commissions create seats that go north-south and so do not follow the traditional lines of communication in the state. Anyone who has any understanding of this state's history will appreciate that the key communication lines and the key communities of interest run east-west along those rail lines and those major highways that service our ports. That is one of the things that is very important. It is very important to deal with the issue of communities of interest. We should be looking at that to try to overcome these issues.

Rather than going down the track that is not being called upon by the broader community—that is, increasing the number of members in this parliament—

Mr Molhoek interjected.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I take that interjection from the member for Southport. I think the fact that we saw five submitters to the committee inquiry on this bill—not even a majority of them were supportive of the idea of increasing the size of the House—shows that that is not the case. There is not a great clamour for this.

I encourage those opposite and the progenitors of this bill before the House to influence those who stand alongside them in the Liberal National Party, Katter's Australian Party and any of those other activists in our political system to make submissions to the Redistribution Commission to redistribute the 89 seats provided for in our Constitution to ensure better recognition of communities of interest. I would be quite happy to see those electorates completely broken up and reshaped. That is necessary, I think, to see a better set of electoral divisions and boundaries in this state that are reflective of traditional communities of interest that would allow members like the members for Mount Isa and Dalrymple to better represent their communities. They would have the ability to get around those communities.

Unfortunately, frankly, the malapportionment that is part of our system—what I think is one of the regrettable parts of our system—perversely creates these larger seats. As I said earlier, it is much easier for the redistribution commissioners to add real estate and hit the magic number than to corral the communities into creating the electorates that are required.

Mr Cripps: You do not have a demographer on the commission. The bill asks for more expertise.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I take that interjection from the member for Hinchinbrook. We saw submissions to the committee on this particular matter—that providing a narrowcast of persons who could be appointed to the commission, in the form of a particular demographer, would be narrowing the field of people who could provide some understanding of these processes. I do not think that would help.

Thankfully, while I think the commission can do a better job of making sure it corrals communities of interest, I do think we have a much better system based on the 1991 Electoral Act, which provides who those commissioners are and how they do their job. It is a whole lot better than when it was done in 1986, up in room B28 in this House, when the ministers of the Crown of the day got together and cobbled together what the appointment would be.

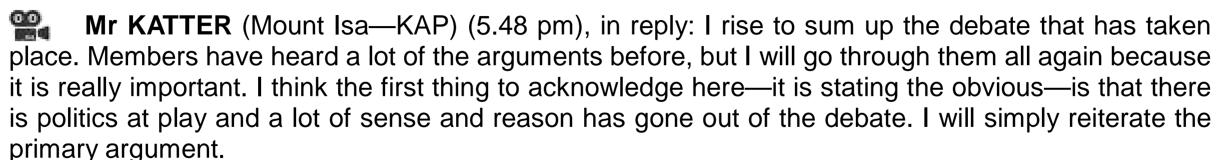
Ms Simpson interjected.

Mr Minnikin interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Elmes): The members for Maroochydore and Chatsworth will cease interjecting.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I want to conclude my contribution to the debate on the Electoral (Improving Representation) and Another Act Amendment Bill by reiterating why this government opposes the bill. We oppose the bill because we do not believe there is the demand in the community to have extra politicians. We are the party that has been accused this very week by those opposite about being all about jobs for us. The party opposite is about extra jobs for politicians. I also believe that this is not the way to achieve the best outcome for Queenslanders.

(Time expired)



Mr KATTER (Mount Isa—KAP) (5.48 pm), in reply: I rise to sum up the debate that has taken place. Members have heard a lot of the arguments before, but I will go through them all again because it is really important. I think the first thing to acknowledge here—it is stating the obvious—is that there is politics at play and a lot of sense and reason has gone out of the debate. I will simply reiterate the primary argument.

This is not a plea from Rob Katter for the seat of Mount Isa, Gregory, Cook or Dalrymple. That really misses the point. The point is that there has been, as was said before, a deficit of policy and investment in rural and regional Queensland. Intrinsically, we are an economy and a state that relies very heavily on those areas. I want to give members a little snapshot of how that can play out in electorates like mine when there is ignorance or there is just not that focus or you do not have that representation. During the last term of government we had the introduction of the year 7 transition, which had support from both sides of this House and federally. The year 7 transition rolled out and most of the towns in my electorate did not have a high school or go through to year 12, so in many towns this was a big problem. I do not think many people realised that, but once everyone realised how big an effect this had on those towns you were left with the impression that people ran this policy out without actually realising how much it hurts those little towns. Those towns only have small numbers and are pretty insignificant in terms of the broader population of Queensland, but it is very significant if you live in Julia Creek, or Karumba, or Georgetown. It is very significant.

When you lose one more teacher or lose one more family from those towns, those towns are trying to hold it all together and are saying to people, 'Don't move away. We'd love you to still stay here. You can build a future here,' when they are seeing more people ripped out of the school. We still have not repaired the damage from that, but you just get forgotten. I do not really blame people for doing that. It is just how it works when you do not have the numbers or the representation out there or if you are not on the ground enough. It has been said ad nauseam, but I am not on the ground enough so I do not expect anyone else here to get on the ground out there much. Unless we want to have a vacuum out there and service these places from the coast, I do not see how else this plays out because the trends are there now. If you look at a couple of communities where there has been some population growth, the future still does not look good. Intuitively you can see how this all plays out because in these towns you do not get the investment.

I will pick on the last government in terms of the Royalties for the Regions program, but this is a theme that is played out with both sides of parliament through many governments. With regard to the Royalties for the Regions program, the world's biggest fertiliser plant in the Southern Hemisphere is the Incitec Pivot plant at Phosphate Hill. It needed 30 or 40 kilometres of bitumen to give all-weather access to one of the biggest fertiliser plants in the Southern Hemisphere. None of the employees are from

Cloncurry or Mount Isa. Rather, they are all Townsville or Brisbane employees so the benefits are really more to the coast than those places and all of the royalties come to Brisbane. All the benefits come down there, but they have a disadvantage in that they have not got a sealed road into their mine so consumables cannot get into that mine in the wet weather most months of the year. Money went everywhere else in that program, but there was no money for roads like that. That is a theme that plays out all of the time because the numbers are not there, the votes are not there and country representation in parliament is not there. Whether we like it or not, it might not be a huge part of the economy but it is a very important part of our economy that gets neglected because it does not have the representation.

There is a really important point that has not been raised tonight in this debate—that is, pound for pound, it is much harder for the member for Dalrymple, the member for Mount Isa and the member for Gregory to match it with a city MP. There is a distinct comparative advantage from the start if you are a city MP. For instance, if I am a city MP on the coast, you have direct access to TV cameras and newspapers. You are at your desk more often so you are in touch with the media. I am out on the road for half the day and there are big limitations on what you can do on your phone because you cannot pick up papers and look at your diary and make reference to things. You can make some phone calls that do not take too much, but there is a lot that you cannot do when you are not at your desk. If I am driving in the electorate most of the time, I am at a distinct disadvantage when trying to debate with someone else who has a different opinion or view and who has the opportunity to get a lot more outreach due to their contact with the media and who has a lot better connection with the media and is not spending as much time on the road as I am. Already there is a distinct disadvantage for rural MPs to come down here and try to compete on a level pegging. I know there is a lot of sympathy in this House for rural areas, but sympathy does not play a part in it when it comes to numbers in parliament because the politics will win at the end of the day. It always does. Again, we are not talking about increasing those numbers; we are just talking about stemming the flow and stopping the haemorrhaging.

In summary, the bigger point that is being missed is that this is a real risk to our economy and our future as a state because representation has to be adequate in those areas. Everyone would acknowledge that it cannot be done with a bit more communications allowance or technology. That does not make a scrap of difference to what we are talking about here, and this bill goes some way to try to address that. It does not correct it, but it goes some way to try to address that. At best it can get us close to a position of fairness where we are not expected to go these enormous distances. For a few more seats in parliament, if Queenslanders saw the full picture—and all of those people making submissions saw the full picture—and had access to those arguments I think they would agree. I think they would want good representation for those areas. Just as I want good representation for the people of Brisbane, I hope that they would want fair representation for their rural cousins as well. I do not think that that is a big ask and I think it is dreadfully unfair if the government does not support that ideal. It really limits us in the future as a state and I can absolutely assure members that we will be paying the price in terms of the way that we develop and the impact of how this plays out in the future. I do not just commend this bill: I plead with members of the House to seriously consider this bill and the impacts that it will have on our state. I ask members to try to put their political prejudices aside so that we have a good outcome for the people of Queensland. I commend this bill to the House.

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

AYES, 44:

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.

KAP, 2—Katter, Knuth.

NOES, 44:

ALP, 43—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Byrne, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Donaldson, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, 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.

INDEPENDENT, 1—Gordon.

The numbers being equal, Mr Speaker cast his vote with the noes.

Resolved in the negative.

MOTION

Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services

Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (6.02 pm): I move—

That this House has no confidence in the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services.

Many people have asked me: what is the political advantage in standing here and moving a motion of no confidence in the member for Bundamba? It would be to our grand political advantage if the member for Bundamba, the Minister for Police, stayed in her current position. But the simple reality is that, for the people of Queensland, enough is enough. The bungling must stop. It is time for this parliament to pass judgement on the member for Bundamba, who has been nothing but an absolute embarrassment not only for this government but also for public administration in Queensland since she was given her commission in around about February of this year.

Who can forget that, in March this year, the member for Bundamba as Minister for Police made the grand statement that she was going to let offenders out of our prisons and that we were going to have more community service orders, only to be slapped down very quickly by the Premier? The minister was also embroiled in the ongoing issue of her membership of the CFMEU amidst issues relating to the royal commission and a conflict of interest that goes with that. Also, who can forget that on 4 June, through this parliament, we had the Premier tell the people of Queensland that the Minister for Police was on her final warning?

Since that time the bungling and incompetence of the Minister for Police, the member for Bundamba, has continued to go on and on and on. The Premier has not remained true to the covenant that she swore to the people of Queensland in June of this year and that was that the member for Bundamba was on her final warning. Since that time, the member for Bundamba has been embroiled in issues around the closure of the Yamanto police communications centre. The Premier had to step in to try to mollify that community, who had been most concerned about the incompetence and the mishandling of this issue by the member for Bundamba. Only in the last week, after the member for Bundamba came out and said that that centre is going to remain open, we have had the mayor and the Police Union saying that it was only a six-month reprieve.

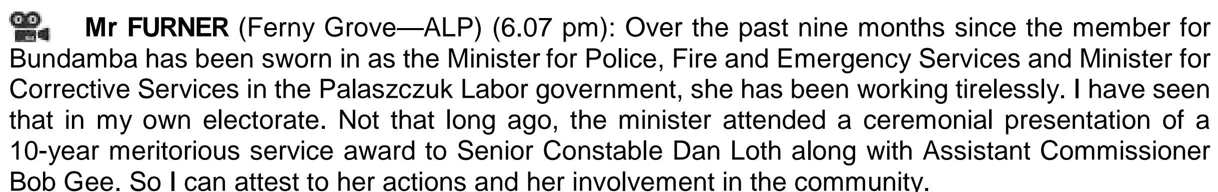
In among all of that the member for Bundamba has been on the ‘get Paul Pisasale campaign’. The deputy mayor of Ipswich has verified in a statement that that is what she said. So she is out there to get Paul Pisasale. I do not know why the member would take on Paul Pisasale. I would suspect that Paul Pisasale is probably a little bit more popular than the member for Bundamba. We also have a set of circumstances where this police minister, this member of parliament, is under a serious cloud as a reference has been made to a very important committee of this parliament with regard to prima facie events and evidence.

As a very well-respected Australian said recently, the standards you accept are the standards that you are prepared to walk past. Tonight, there are no circumstances whatsoever under which those members opposite should be prepared to walk by the very low standards that have been practised by the member for Bundamba, particularly in her time as the Minister for Police in Queensland.

I refer to some of the other issues, such as her failure to meet with and re-establish the firearms advisory council in Queensland, which is critically important to ensuring public safety in terms of contemporary gun laws—what is working and not working. That advisory council, which is critically important, has not been re-established.

Quite simply, this minister is not capable or competent to hold such an important portfolio in Queensland. Indeed, we have had the Police Union saying that she would be the worst police minister in the country. I reflect upon the words of the member for Nicklin, who indicated that we must have the highest of all ministerial standards. I put it to Mr Speaker that the member for Bundamba does not live by and does not practise the highest of ministerial standards.

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Ferny Grove, this morning I gave the Deputy Premier notice. I urge her to not provoke the member for Callide in a discussion that has no relevance to the matter before the House.



Mr FURNER (Ferny Grove—ALP) (6.07 pm): Over the past nine months since the member for Bundamba has been sworn in as the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services in the Palaszczuk Labor government, she has been working tirelessly. I have seen that in my own electorate. Not that long ago, the minister attended a ceremonial presentation of a 10-year meritorious service award to Senior Constable Dan Loth along with Assistant Commissioner Bob Gee. So I can attest to her actions and her involvement in the community.

The minister has also been keeping our Queensland community safe. Since the election earlier this year this has been said many times, but it bears repeating tonight: the three years of the LNP government in Queensland were tough on many across the state. That goes for every single one of the dedicated women and men whom the minister represents in this place as the minister. In the months since 31 January, the LNP members have been busy in a manner of speaking but, sadly, what they have been busy flies in the face of every message that the Queensland people sent them at the election. Have they been busy developing policies? No. Have they been busy mending the bridges they burned with nearly every stakeholder group across the state? Definitely not. Have they been busy learning from their defeat? It certainly does not look like it, does it?

Were they busy during estimates? The shadow minister for police could not even ask a proper question in estimates that was suitable under the standing orders in this place. For the last nine months of the LNP government they were busy playing nasty, divisive and personal politics. But what else would you expect from those opposite. This stands in stark contrast to the approach taken by us on this side of the House. The minister has hit the ground running because that is what the people of Queensland expect from their government. The minister recognises that money spent on police and emergency services is an investment in lives and quality of life for Queenslanders. That is the difference between us and those opposite.

Just a few sitting weeks ago the minister stood in this House to announce that the crime rate in Queensland has continued its decade-long downward trend and has remained relatively stable over the last financial year. I am very fortunate to have the opportunity to have a fortnightly meeting with the officer in charge of the Ferny Grove Police Station, Acting Senior Sergeant Rob Colthrope. We discuss the crime statistics in Ferny Grove. It is humbling to see the reduction of crime over the period of time since this government has been in place. Queensland continues to be a safer place to live, work and visit than it was 10 years ago. The crime rate has dropped by 12 per cent since 2005-06, continuing its decade-long downward trend. The reinstatement of the Queensland Police Service annual statistical review was an important plank of the Palaszczuk Labor government's measures to restore integrity and accountability to government and the minister was at the heart of that.

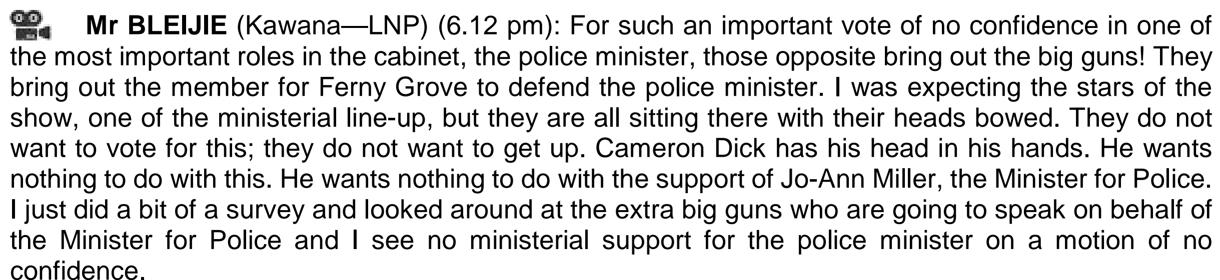
The LNP has a shameful track record of misrepresenting crime statistics for political gain. We know the LNP cherrypicked statistics to suit themselves, but that is not how this minister operates. That Queensland is a safer place now—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr FURNER: Listen up. That Queensland is a safer place now than it was 10 years ago is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our women and men in blue who I used to represent and I am proud to know that you were a police officer yourself, Mr Speaker. Since we were elected the minister has delivered 250 new police officers to hit the beat across Queensland. Under the minister's leadership we have begun the rollout of body worn video cameras on our front-line officers. That is providing results by capturing images to assist in apprehending offenders in circumstances where the men and women in our Police Service put themselves in danger to protect fellow Queenslanders. The minister fast-tracked the rollout of 300 new body worn video cameras on the Gold Coast, unlike the LNP who sat idly by while police officers were left to purchase their own body worn video cameras. The minister will not allow that. We have delivered as a Labor Palaszczuk government to make sure that our women and men in blue are protected with all the measures they can possibly have.

Mr Langbroek interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Thank you. Deputy Leader of the Opposition, you will soon have your chance to speak.



Mr BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (6.12 pm): For such an important vote of no confidence in one of the most important roles in the cabinet, the police minister, those opposite bring out the big guns! They bring out the member for Ferny Grove to defend the police minister. I was expecting the stars of the show, one of the ministerial line-up, but they are all sitting there with their heads bowed. They do not want to vote for this; they do not want to get up. Cameron Dick has his head in his hands. He wants nothing to do with this. He wants nothing to do with the support of Jo-Ann Miller, the Minister for Police. I just did a bit of a survey and looked around at the extra big guns who are going to speak on behalf of the Minister for Police and I see no ministerial support for the police minister on a motion of no confidence.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I rise to a point of order. In no way does this—

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order, Leader of the House, resume your seat.

Mr BLEIJIE: The Leader of the House says this does not mean anything. 'Just because the senior ministers are not defending the police minister, do not draw too much into that,' he says. This side of the House knows what is going on. We know the police minister does not have the support of her ministerial colleagues.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I rise to a point of order. I do not appreciate being verballed by the member for Kawana.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, members.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Come on, members, that is enough. The Leader of the House has taken objection and the standard procedures are—

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I find the statements he made personally offensive and I ask that he withdraw.

An opposition member: Where was your name mentioned?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: He did mention my name. He said the Leader of the House.

Mr BLEIJIE: I withdraw. For the last few hours I have been contemplating what to say in this motion. I had the hardest time in my life thinking of where to start when talking of no confidence in the police minister. It only took a Google search to find plenty. We could have this debate all day about why we should express no confidence in the police minister. Let me refer to the *Queensland Times* rap sheet because I think they summed it up—bearing in mind this is the local newspaper of the police minister. Her own local newspaper has a big hashtag at the moment 'Time to go, Jo', which, I admit, I think they copied off me because I have had that hashtag running on Twitter for some months now. On 13 March the Premier slapped down the police minister because she wanted to release all the dangerous prisoners into the community. She wanted to be judge, jury and executioner. Then in May at a workers' rally—because she is a good union official—she wore a Louis Vuitton belt. Then we had the referral to the CCC because the police minister phoned a witness in a police investigation. The Premier said it will not happen again, she has high standards. Then we have litany after litany—

Mrs MILLER: I rise to a point of order. The member for Kawana is misleading the House. I would like to table from the CCC a document that says the CCC will not investigate the police minister. I find his comments personally offensive and I ask him to withdraw.

Tabled paper: Media release, dated 18 June 2015, by the Crime and Corruption Commission, titled 'CCC will not investigate Police Minister' [1806].

Mr SPEAKER: My understanding is that the first part of your point of order is not a point of order. If you find the comments the member for Kawana has made about you personally offensive you can ask that they be withdrawn.

Mrs MILLER: I find the comments of the member for Kawana personally offensive to me and I ask him to withdraw.

Mr BLEIJIE: I withdraw. Let me talk about what the Police Union said about the police minister. The Police Union has said that this Minister for police has no idea about policing. Then we had Paul Pisasale saying that the police minister is the worst police minister in the country. Then only last week the Premier in a press conference stood up and said, 'No-one has spoken to me about Jo-Ann Miller. I don't know what's going on. Why does anyone have an issue with the police minister? I haven't seen anything. I haven't heard anything about the police minister.' Then we had 20,000 dog calendars that had to be pulped because they had the wrong dates on them. Welcome to the tourism minister who had the same problem. Then we have the ethics investigation on foot at the moment because of alleged behaviour. Then we had the minister failing to attend the launch of her own road safety strategy campaign that she co-wrote the forward to. She forgot to turn up to that. Then we had the minister subject to another ethics investigation in relation to throat slitting and threatening members of the opposition.

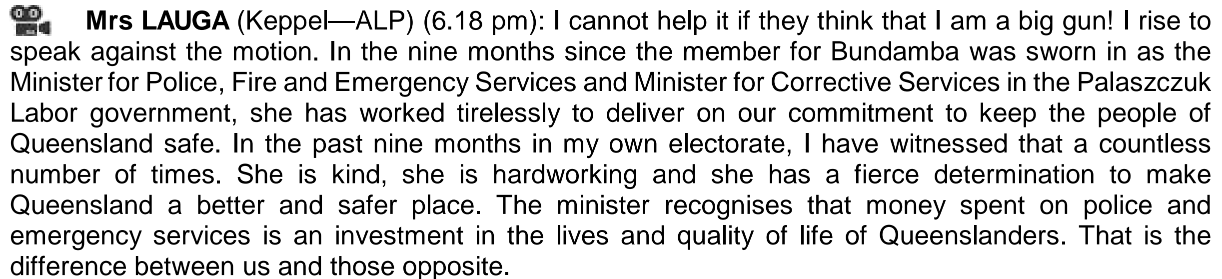
I want to refer to an article that the *Queensland Times,* her own local newspaper, has been running. They have this poll running at the moment, the Jo-Ann Miller Poll. I thought that as the shadow police minister I ought to fill in this poll. It is only a few short questions. It says here, 'Would you vote for Jo-Ann Miller if she stood as an Independent?' I am going to say no to that. Then the poll asks, 'Do you think Jo-Ann Miller has been an effective local MP?' I am going to say no to that. 'Do you think Jo-Ann Miller has been an effective cabinet minister?' That is a big no. Then, 'Do you think Premier

Annastacia Palaszczuk should sack Jo-Ann Miller from the cabinet?' That is a big yes. I vote yes for that. I table a copy and I will forward that to the *Queensland Times* signed 'Jarrod Bleijie MP, Kawana Waters'.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Queensland Times*, dated 1 December 2015, titled 'Jo-Ann Miller Poll', completed by the Member for Kawana, Mr Jarrod Bleijie MP [1807].

This minister has had a litany of errors and bungle after bungle. In May this year, the Premier stood up and said that it was an error of judgement by the minister and that it would never ever happen again. The Premier, who could not express confidence in her own police minister, said, 'All my ministers are doing a good job'. She could not mention the police minister by name. Yesterday, she could not mention the police minister by name. This is about accountability, integrity and, as I have said for six months, #time2goJo.

Opposition members interjected.



Mrs LAUGA (Keppel—ALP) (6.18 pm): I cannot help it if they think that I am a big gun! I rise to speak against the motion. In the nine months since the member for Bundamba was sworn in as the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services in the Palaszczuk Labor government, she has worked tirelessly to deliver on our commitment to keep the people of Queensland safe. In the past nine months in my own electorate, I have witnessed that a countless number of times. She is kind, she is hardworking and she has a fierce determination to make Queensland a better and safer place. The minister recognises that money spent on police and emergency services is an investment in the lives and quality of life of Queenslanders. That is the difference between us and those opposite.

Since we were elected, the minister has delivered 250 new police officers to hit the beat across Queensland. Under the minister's leadership, we have begun the rollout of body worn video cameras for our front-line officers. The rollout also forms an important part of a comprehensive domestic violence package announced by the Premier. Unlike the LNP, who sat idly by while police officers were left to purchase their own body worn video cameras, the minister will not allow that. That is why she is committed to ensuring that our hardworking and dedicated police are properly resourced to get on with the job of keeping Queenslanders safe. She is also investing an extra $20 million over four years for police to tackle organised crime, alcohol fuelled violence and the insidious drug ice, which is ripping families and communities apart.

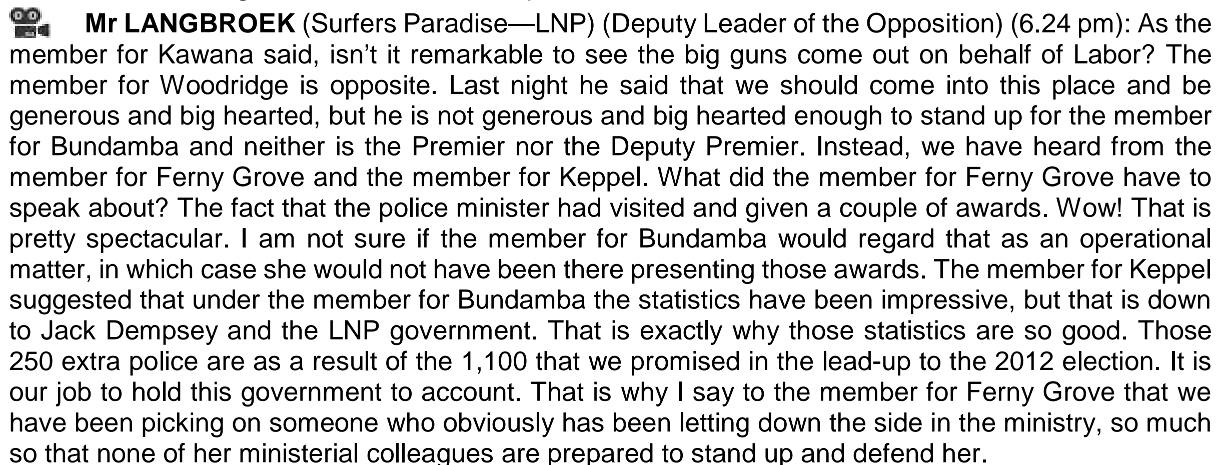
We are in the midst of one of the worst bushfire seasons Queensland has seen for many years. The minister has committed to keeping safe people in bushfire-prone areas such as my own electorate of Keppel and ensuring that fire safety is on everyone's mind, no matter where they live across the state. We have already delivered 77 new firefighters to the front line and a further 21 are expected to successfully graduate from the academy on 18 December. That means that the minister has delivered more than two-thirds of the total number of fireys delivered in the entire time the LNP was in government. The minister has also invested in training for our fireys with the delivery of a brand-new training facility for North Queensland. She has also opened new fire stations in Ingham, Pittsworth, Pomona and Severnlea, with work already started on new and improved facilities in Bundaberg, Petrie and Dayboro. She has rolled out state-of-the-art decontamination vehicles for the regions, new fire appliances and new flood boats for our state Emergency Services volunteers.

In addition, the minister has reinstated vital community safety programs that were cut by the LNP. Shame on the Leader of the Opposition for being part of a government that would cut road safety initiatives such as the road attitudes and awareness program designed to give a life-changing lesson to high school students about how their driving behaviour can have a devastating impact. Shame on the member for Kawana for being part of a cabinet that cut the Fight Fire Fascination program designed to teach our young ones about the dangers of playing with fire. And shame on the member for Indooroopilly for cutting funding to the vital 'If it's flooded forget it' campaign, which shone a light on how dangerous it is to drive through flooded roads.

However, that is not all: the minister has been a champion for women firefighters and women looking to join up. The QFES will now embark on a targeted recruitment campaign to promote firefighting as a career for women and establish a network of trained equity advisers to provide advice to employees concerned about discriminatory behaviour, harassment and bullying. Women in the workplace deserve to be treated with respect at all times. The government and the people of Queensland would expect nothing less.

Finally, allow me to vouch for the minister's warmth and compassion in times of trouble. The minister gave generously of her time when my region was hit by a natural disaster earlier this year in the form of Tropical Cyclone Marcia. She visited Byfield, Yeppoon and Rockhampton to inspect that

damage, offer her support and, in her own unique way, offer a shoulder to cry on. I remember visiting Ferns Hideaway. Marto and Jen were grateful to have the minister visit their beautiful hideaway, which was devastated by the cyclone. They were comforted by the mere presence of the minister that day and six months later when she returned to visit them. They were stoked that she could take the time to comfort them. Her special brand of warmth was of enormous comfort to voters in my electorate and I thank her from the bottom of my heart for taking the time to talk and to listen. All of us in the Palaszczuk government work hard each and every day to ensure the safety and security of all Queenslanders. The minister is delivering for Queenslanders in spades and I have full confidence in her.



Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (6.24 pm): As the member for Kawana said, isn't it remarkable to see the big guns come out on behalf of Labor? The member for Woodridge is opposite. Last night he said that we should come into this place and be generous and big hearted, but he is not generous and big hearted enough to stand up for the member for Bundamba and neither is the Premier nor the Deputy Premier. Instead, we have heard from the member for Ferny Grove and the member for Keppel. What did the member for Ferny Grove have to speak about? The fact that the police minister had visited and given a couple of awards. Wow! That is pretty spectacular. I am not sure if the member for Bundamba would regard that as an operational matter, in which case she would not have been there presenting those awards. The member for Keppel suggested that under the member for Bundamba the statistics have been impressive, but that is down to Jack Dempsey and the LNP government. That is exactly why those statistics are so good. Those 250 extra police are as a result of the 1,100 that we promised in the lead-up to the 2012 election. It is our job to hold this government to account. That is why I say to the member for Ferny Grove that we have been picking on someone who obviously has been letting down the side in the ministry, so much so that none of her ministerial colleagues are prepared to stand up and defend her.

Because of the assertions of the member for Bundamba that she does not get involved in operational matters, it is obvious that the crime rate has gone down despite her and not because of her. The member for Keppel has just said that women deserve to be treated respectfully in the workplace. Why then is it that the member for Bundamba was able to use a throat-slitting gesture to the member for Mount Ommaney? Was that treating women in the workplace respectfully? When advised of that the Premier, who wanders around in a little blissful haze of ignorance, said, 'I didn't know about that'. It is just another thing that the Premier does not know. She had to be told about it—'It's a staff member who must have done it; another minister who has done something off his own bat.' She was not even aware that the member for Bundamba had done a throat-slitting gesture at another woman in this House, in her workplace, yet, as the member for Keppel says, all women deserve to be treated respectfully. We do not hear anything from the member for Waterford or the member for Algester, yet we are constantly talking about domestic violence and respect for women in this place and in the workplace.

Another important issue is that in this House members have to stand up for their own areas. On 7 July the *Queensland Times,* under the heading, 'Jo-Ann Miller has betrayed Ipswich', stated—

During her time in opposition Jo-Ann Miller was the attack dog for the ALP.

I think we all remember that. When she sat over here she was a different person from the one we see now. The article stated further—

There were few parliamentary sittings where she wasn't standing up and shouting down LNP decisions she felt weren't in the best interests of her community.

But it now seems the bark in the dog has become an inaudible whimper.

That was from her own local Ipswich paper.

She is also at odds with her fellow MP the member for Ipswich West. When the story came out about the closure of the communications centre, the member for Ipswich West said that he intended to hold talks with the police minister. Mr Madden was quoted as saying—

I want to talk to the Minister as soon as possible because I am concerned by this announcement.

I want to hear from her as to why this is necessary, but I am hoping to have the decision reversed.

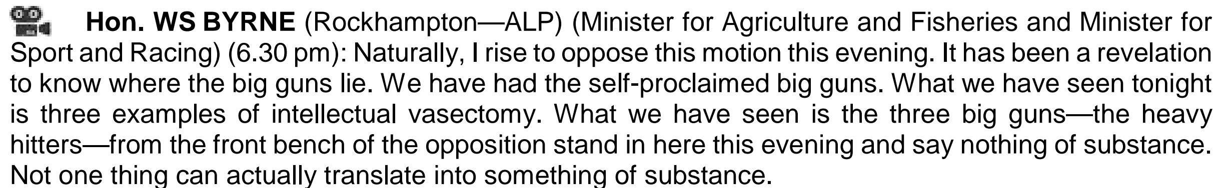
Our government has a commitment to employ more public servants in Ipswich but this goes against that commitment.

I want to increase the number of public servants employed in Ipswich, so I would be disappointed by any decision that saw fewer public servants employed here.

Last week, under pressure and in an attempt to keep her job, the police minister announced a stay of execution for the communications centre in Ipswich for six months. That is all the people of Ipswich can be reassured about. Paul Pisasale, who I think received over 80 per cent of the primary

vote in the last Ipswich election, is coming up for re-election. Obviously, this has been about a vendetta. It is alleged that the police minister recruited another member of that council to try to bring down the mayor.

It is inappropriate behaviour for a minister of the Crown. There is no better evidence of that than the fact that no ministerial colleagues have stood to defend her. We have had those opposite say, 'Get up and read a speech. Make up anything you can for five minutes.' It is not good enough. It is not good enough for this police minister and this government, which has clearly been found wanting in appointing this person in the first place. That is why members should be supporting the motion before the House.



Hon. WS BYRNE (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Sport and Racing) (6.30 pm): Naturally, I rise to oppose this motion this evening. It has been a revelation to know where the big guns lie. We have had the self-proclaimed big guns. What we have seen tonight is three examples of intellectual vasectomy. What we have seen is the three big guns—the heavy hitters—from the front bench of the opposition stand in here this evening and say nothing of substance. Not one thing can actually translate into something of substance.

Here we are in the very last sitting week this year for the Queensland parliament, after the first year or so of the Palaszczuk Labor government, and what have those opposite decided to run with in their motion on this the critical mid day of the week, when they want to seize the initiative, go forward and demonstrate that they take the moral high ground? They decided to run with a personal attack motion.

That shows the forte of the Liberal National Party and what it always has been. It is a matter of them having a vacuum between their ears. They have nothing left but to run a personal attack. On the second last opportunity they have to make their point before the Christmas break the opposition decided to run a personal attack. It is quite reflective of the temperament we see within the Liberal National Party.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, one moment please. I am flat out hearing the minister, and he is very close to me.

Mr BYRNE: Let me make this point so that it is clear for one and all. Jo-Ann Miller, the Minister for Police, is a friend of mine. She has been for a long time and will be regardless of the inane efforts of those opposite. She has done a very good job. Nothing that has been put forward by those opposite of substance rather than smear has had any resonating effect in this debate. What they have got up and done is repeat smear and innuendo that has no substance and has no character. It says much about the character of the people in front of me.

Two of the members from the opposition who have spoken are people whom I actually listen to in this House and whom I have some personal respect for. The other one I would describe as a marionette or perhaps a bantam rooster. It is hard to work out which is most appropriate.

The point is that this has done no service to the issues that we should be debating in the last week of sittings—the issues of substance. I still look forward to the day when this House rises above the personal attacks and actually has a debate about substance, content, policy and where we are going. This is the opposition's opportunity to lay a foundation for a debate on policy, a debate about where we want to be, a debate about where we see the state going.

What do the opposition members want to do? They want to have these personal, vitriolic attacks and continue these smear campaigns—try to be the executioner, perhaps, before any of the court sittings have concluded. Whatever is going on in the parliamentary process is being prejudiced, perhaps. They are trying to get ahead of the curve.

I do not know what is going on outside this chamber and nor should I. What I do know is that every member of this chamber deserves a certain amount of respect. When the LNP were in government I knew when they were in trouble in question time. The way they would answer is that they would have one minute reflecting on what they thought of past Labor administrations, then another minute of a personal attack on whomever asked the question across the chamber and it was brought home with some LNP cliches.

That is what we see here today. We see after nearly a year in opposition their desperate attempts to try to get a scalp. There were seven of us in opposition. How many ministers did we knock off in the first year? It was like an avalanche of ministers falling off cliffs.

Ms Trad: And defections.

Mr BYRNE: And defections. There was chaos across the chamber. What those opposite have to understand is that we stick together. Nothing that has been said today has done any credit to those opposite. In fact, it has lowered the tone of this House to a new pit and it typifies the conduct of this opposition.

Mr SPEAKER: Before I put the vote, member for Toowoomba can I draw to your attention that I propose to give you notice that if you proceed with your interjections and behaviour you will be warned. That is similar to the notice I gave to the Deputy Premier at the commencement of this debate.

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

AYES, 44:

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.

KAP, 2—Katter, Knuth.

NOES, 44:

ALP, 43—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Byrne, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Donaldson, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, 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.

INDEPENDENT, 1—Gordon.

The numbers being equal, Mr Speaker cast his vote with the noes.

Resolved in the negative.

Sitting suspended from 6.40 pm to 7.40 pm.

SUGAR INDUSTRY (REAL CHOICE IN MARKETING) AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 16 May (see p. 616).

Second Reading

Mr KNUTH (Dalrymple—KAP) (7.40 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

For the record, this bill is not about reregulation like the millers and the Labor Party would have us believe. This bill is about millers being able to mill—that is what they normally do. Growers grow and QSL markets the sugar. What this bill does is give a choice to growers in who they want to market their sugar. At present the mills want to market all the sugar themselves. But this bill is not about reregulation. The Queensland Law Society even gave this bill a tick. This bill is about pro-competition. How can choice in marketing be reregulation? How can choice in marketing—choosing who you want to market your sugar—be reregulation? It is a myth that the mills are spreading. The mills want it all for themselves. This is about an institution that has been around since 1923 that has proven to work. The growers are not saying, 'We just want to go with QSL.' They are not saying that. What they are saying is, 'We want a choice.'

I will give a bit of history. The Sugar Industry (Real Choice in Marketing) Amendment Bill 2015 was developed in consultation with growers in the Queensland sugar industry. It was introduced on 19 May 2015. The policy objectives of the bill ensure that growers have a real choice in terms of appointing the marketing entity for raw sugar in which they have an economic interest and, further, ensures quick, fair and final resolution of commercial disputes that arise between growers or their bargaining representatives, and mill owners are included by way of arbitration if necessary.

The bill does not reregulate the Queensland sugar industry. Canegrowers and the Australian Sugar Milling Council executed a memorandum of understanding with the Queensland government in 2005. It was intended to establish a competitive environment for marketing entities. The mill owners want to force growers to use the mill that crushes their cane as a marketing entity, cutting out Queensland Sugar Ltd—full stop. What the growers are asking for is a choice in who markets their sugar because they have an economic interest.

At the end of the day, the price of raw sugar influences growers' income. Why should they be forced to use millers as their only option as a marketing entity? The fact is, if Queensland Sugar Ltd is cut out, growers will operate in a market which is not truly free. By and large, they will be forced to sell

their product by a single monopoly miller. The overreach by millers seeking to further entrench a lack of competition in the market by monopolising the marketing of sugar has caused widespread anxiety amongst all of the growers. It has caused a growing lack of confidence in the future of the sugar industry amongst growers—both family farm enterprises and corporate farmers alike.

The supply chain is very simple. Farmers grow cane and harvest it. Then it is transported to the mills and processed into raw sugar. The cane is supplied under cane supply agreements, CSAs. At the moment, after the cane is produced into raw sugar, most of it is transferred to Queensland Sugar Ltd, and this occurs under raw sugar supply agreements, RSSAs, between mill owners and Queensland Sugar Ltd. Mill owners retain the marketing of the quantity of raw sugar rather than QSL, taking on the responsibility for the mills' economic interests. QSL then markets the bulk of the raw sugar via the Intercontinental Exchange, effectively taking on the responsibility for growers' economic interest. Significantly, raw sugar supply agreements between mill owners and Queensland Sugar Ltd are due to expire on 30 June 2017. When the raw sugar supply agreements expire, growers simply want a choice in deciding the marketing entity for the export of raw sugar in which they have a legitimate economic interest.

Ultimately, the marketing entity may be the mill owner, Queensland Sugar Ltd or any other marketing entity. However, allowing the mill owners to restrict growers' options in terms of nominating their preferred marketing entities will effectively entrench the lack of competition by monopolising the market of sugar with the mill owners. Allowing this to occur would in fact result in an anticompetitive outcome for the sugar industry. At present the millers are more or less saying to us that this is reregulation and that this is not about competition. That is what the growers are asking for at the moment. They are asking to have competition because, if the mill owners want to win the growers over to market their sugar, they have to work a lot harder—likewise if QSL want to win the growers over. But it is a choice and a choice of who is best serving the interests of the grower in regard to the sugar market and who is giving the best price. That is a natural thing.

Mill owners and growers each hold an economic interest in raw sugar extraction from cane. For about 100 years the mill owners and growers' economic interest has been based on a formula. Basically the formula is applied to allocate the actual amount of economic interest each has in raw sugar, with the greatest portion of economic interest traditionally retained by growers. This is why the growers must have a say in who markets the export of raw sugar. Importantly, it will cause marketing entities to compete and prove that they are able to achieve the best returns for growers. I will say that again: importantly, it will cause marketing entities to compete and prove that they are able to achieve the best returns for growers. At present the millers want to be the only marketing entity. This bill is saying, 'We are over those days. The time has come.'

This is not about a monopoly but about pro competition, and that is what this bill does. It does not reregulate. It actually fulfils the pro-competition objectives of the competition policy that was handed down by the federal government and passed on to the states. This is not reregulation; this is actually pro-competition. To put this into perspective, the policy objectives of the bill will improve competition in the Queensland sugar industry. It will also ensure that the mill owners are not the only marketing entity available to growers. It will ensure that growers are not forced to use mill owners as their marketing entity simply because the mills crush the growers' cane. As stated, the bill will give growers real choice in terms of appointing their marketing entity for raw sugar in which they have an economic interest.

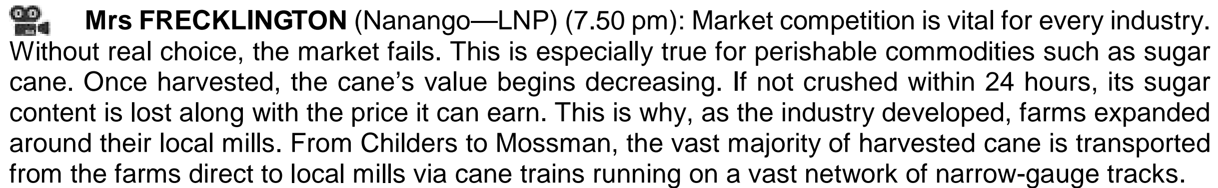
The bill does not amount to reregulation; it is in fact pro competition. The Chair of the Competition and Consumer Law Committee of the Queensland Law Society supports this view. Pages 1 to 5 of the transcript from the public hearing of 31 August 2015 reveal that the Queensland Law Society rejects the mill owners and the Labor government's claims about reregulation and ex-appropriation, among others. Growers' investment and contribution to employment is significant. There are 21 mills compared to 4,000 growers in Queensland. That said, it is acknowledged that mill owners have billions of dollars invested in Queensland sugar. However, it should not be overlooked that collectively growers have many more billions of dollars invested. There are about 16,000 people employed in the Queensland sugar industry. Most of those 16,000 workers in the sugar industry are employed by growers, not millers.

I am getting sick and tired of hearing about the poor millers—the multinational millers—their investments and their shareholders. What about the growers, their communities, the people, the children and the towns? But what are we hearing? We have to back the millers. Why? How about backing those who are out there with the crows, the sun, the heat and the dust making a living and contributing to this country, not overseas shareholders? That is why we have put this bill before the House. The government is not standing up for the growers or the workers on cane farms. It is not standing up for the harvesters and the farmhands. The government is not considering the billions of dollars of investment by growers in the economy of Queensland.

I would like to table the amendments that I will be moving in the consideration in detail stage and the explanatory notes that go with that. I will continue after the summing-up of my bill.

Tabled paper: Sugar Industry (Real Choice in Marketing) Amendment Bill, amendments to be moved during consideration in detail by the Member for Dalrymple, Mr Shane Knuth [1808].

Tabled paper: Sugar Industry (Real Choice in Marketing) Amendment Bill, explanatory notes to Mr Shane Knuth's amendments [1809].



Mrs FRECKLINGTON (Nanango—LNP) (7.50 pm): Market competition is vital for every industry. Without real choice, the market fails. This is especially true for perishable commodities such as sugar cane. Once harvested, the cane's value begins decreasing. If not crushed within 24 hours, its sugar content is lost along with the price it can earn. This is why, as the industry developed, farms expanded around their local mills. From Childers to Mossman, the vast majority of harvested cane is transported from the farms direct to local mills via cane trains running on a vast network of narrow-gauge tracks.

This system works well, but it also locks farms into supplying those local mills. This is why the grower does not have a real choice in the mill that it uses. The further they transport their crop and the longer they wait to process it, the less valuable it becomes. This is a fundamental point that millers will not talk about and the minister does not understand or deliberately ignores. The minister carps on about market vandalism and destruction of the free market. If you do not have a real choice in to whom you sell your cane to, there is no free market.

The overwhelming majority of growers are locked into supplying the local mill, giving those mills a position of monopoly market power. This is the key point the Queensland Productivity Commission has failed to recognise. The limited examples where a grower has an option, such as the Tablelands, are constrained by distance and cost.

As the member for Hinchinbrook and the member for Burdekin know only too well, this lack of competition is a real issue in the Burdekin—indeed, right from the Herbert down to Proserpine, a vast cane-growing region where all the mills are monopoly owned. I have stated many times that the LNP would much prefer that this industry had achieved a negotiated settlement to this impasse. We have been waiting since 2004 for this negotiation to succeed. As we rapidly approach 2016, we are still waiting.

Tonight's debate is not about reregulating the industry, as the minister has claimed in his endless stream of media statements with his wild, alarmist claims about scaring off investment and destroying jobs. This private member's bill with the LNP's amendments—and I will table those amendments and the explanatory notes that I will be moving in consideration in detail—are aimed at ensuring a decent outcome for both growers and millers so there is a level of competition in sugar marketing, and there is a logical and stepped process for dispute resolution; nothing more, nothing less.

Tabled paper: Sugar Industry (Real Choice in Marketing) Amendment Bill, amendments to be moved during consideration in detail by the Member for Nanango, Mrs Deb Frecklington [1810].

Tabled paper: Sugar Industry (Real Choice in Marketing) Amendment Bill, explanatory notes to Mrs Deb Frecklington's amendments [1811].

We have heard so much nonsense about this economic vandalism and winding back the clock to the 1950s. Everyone understands the industry has been deregulated and no-one is seeking to undo those changes. On the record is the memorandum of understanding between the Queensland sugar industry and the Queensland government signed by Canegrowers, the Australian Sugar Milling Council and the Hon. Peter Beattie MP, the then premier and treasurer on 13 October 2005. I table a copy of that document. I also table a copy of the joint letter from Canegrowers and the milling council welcoming the MOU, the removal of the statutory vesting arrangements and the move to a new contractually based system that has operated since the 2006 crushing season.

Tabled paper: Document, dated 13 October 2015, titled 'A memorandum of understanding between the Queensland Sugar Industry and the Queensland Government' and related letter [1812].

The MOU contains a fair degree of goodwill and hope for the future of the industry with the millers advising they remain committed to working with QSL to assist QSL to remain the preferred marketer by suppliers and customers of Queensland produced bulk raw sugar for export. The minister either forgets or deliberately ignores this point and also the additional investment and improved deficiencies that have occurred under those arrangements. These longstanding marketing arrangements have not impeded that investment, including foreign investment in the milling sector.

The decision of Wilmar on 21 May 2014 followed soon by MSF and Tully Sugar to step away from those longstanding marketing arrangements with QSL from the end of the 2016 season and deny growers any real choice in sugar marketing is why we are standing here today. It would be a gross

understatement to say canegrowers feel let down and betrayed—logistically locked in to supplying monopoly mills and now about to lose any real choice in marketing. This impasse has dragged on and on for 18 months. It has not been resolved and it needs to be.

I note in the past week there has been an announcement by Wilmar about Burdekin growers signing contracts, and I welcome any agreement between millers and growers. It is worth noting that these 22 grower agreements are a fraction of the statewide industry and all contain an escape clause. If a better deal comes along, they can jump ship. If this deal is really giving the growers what they have asked for, why is that clause needed? The main grower representative groups have dismissed this as a media stunt by Wilmar, which brings us to the sugar industry amendment bill along with our amendments.

The industry is in this position because our canefarmers have received absolutely no help from the Palaszczuk Labor government and Minister Bill Byrne, who has not even bothered to schedule meetings with canegrowers despite repeated requests. He has not bothered to meet with these canegrowers but appears to take a certain position without getting out and about. It is disappointing that this Minister for Agriculture has abandoned Queensland farmers.

Unlike Labor, the LNP is committed to doing all in its power to support the great sugar industry. Our amendments are about giving growers a fair go, ensuring there is a degree of competition in marketing and industry where the millers are in a unique monopoly position. Without real choice, the market fails. The LNP is well aware that sugar is Queensland's second biggest agricultural export industry and there should be no rush of any decisions that could threaten its viability and growth. Our sugar industry generates income of around $2 billion a year. Our 4,000 cane farms and 21 sugar mills support more than 16,000 jobs. The LNP is acutely aware of the vital importance of cane farming and sugar milling to Queensland. That is why we have spent so much time on this issue.

At a federal level, over 50 submissions and three public hearings to the Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport and over 30 submissions to the coalition's Sugar Marketing Code of Conduct Taskforce demonstrates that the issues at stake have been widely canvassed. This evidence, as well as the hearings of the Agriculture and Environment Committee, have influenced the LNP's amendments. No-one has been blindsided. Every interested party has had the opportunity through many forums to have their say on this issue. This bill and our amendments have not been rushed. We have consulted widely with all sectors. Our amendments represent fair and common-sense changes that reflect the needs of our canefarmers and help the millers. Despite the nonsense from the minister, the amendments do not transfer ownership rights of cane, and as it does now that will be determined by the terms of commercial contracts. This bill does not alter that with the amendments.

The testimony heard during the hearings of the committee is of interest. The Queensland Law Society evidence is not reflected in the final report. Comments by the chair of the Queensland Law Society are extremely relevant. Regarding arbitration, it states—

> I do not think that the fact that the negotiation period is fixed at the end, that there will be arbitration, should be seen as a threat. Rather it should be seen as this: parties can decide to keep the matter within their own control and reach agreement. Once it goes to arbitration, it is outside your control and both parties know that. Both parties are at risk. There is always risk in litigation and there is always risk in arbitration, but there has to be a provision that brings finality to the business of the negotiator.

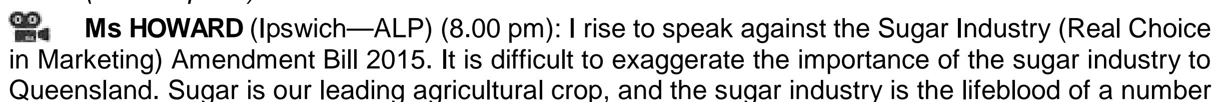
The bill's arbitration provisions deliver a mechanism to break the existing deadlock and provide certainty. The LNP's amendments do not force control from the parties unless they choose to do so. Regarding interests and rights, the Queensland Law Society stated—

> I do not think the argument about the expropriation of property rights in sugar is a fair one, given that it has taken in sugar cane, processed it and gets paid for that. I think the producer should have the right to say, 'So-and-so should market it.' If there is to be some sharing of the profit between the miller and the grower in relation to that process, that can be done as part of the term of the contract—

The LNP's amendments will ensure that that fairness is delivered.

Much has been made in hysterical public debate about this bill and its amendments destroying the market. The simple truth is that without real choice the market fails. Only one side of this debate has attempted to remove real choice. This bill, with the LNP's amendments, restores the choice that Queensland canefarmers are asking for. No-one should be afraid of competition. It is through competition that the best outcomes for Queensland's cane industry will be delivered.

(Time expired)



Ms HOWARD (Ipswich—ALP) (8.00 pm): I rise to speak against the Sugar Industry (Real Choice in Marketing) Amendment Bill 2015. It is difficult to exaggerate the importance of the sugar industry to Queensland. Sugar is our leading agricultural crop, and the sugar industry is the lifeblood of a number

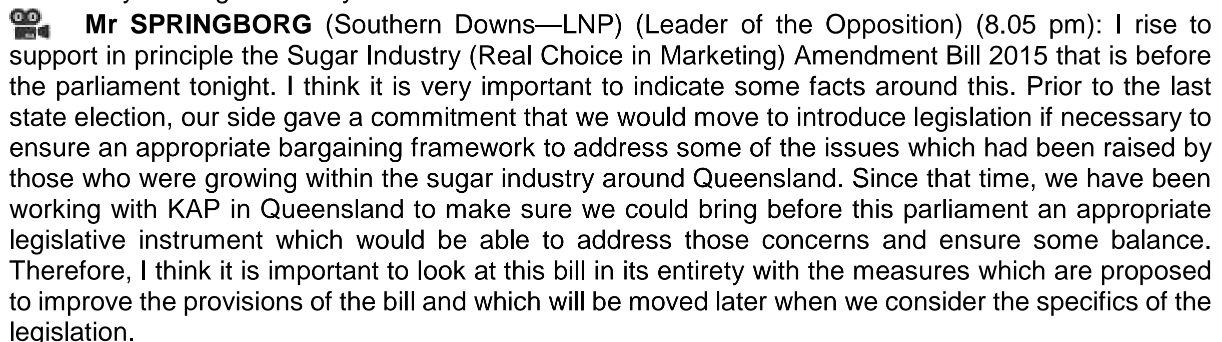
of communities along the Queensland coast. With an industry located mainly along Queensland's eastern coast from Mossman to Rocky Point, Queensland contributes 95 per cent of Australia's raw sugar production. The significance of this figure is made particularly clear when we take into account the fact that Australia is the third largest exporter of sugar in the world, after Brazil and Thailand. The sugar industry in Queensland is valued at just under $2 billion. This includes sugar production, electricity generation and the production of molasses, which is so vital to our stockfeed sector, particularly in time of drought.

Australian sugar exports as a whole are worth around $1.5 billion in export earnings, and the Queensland sugar industry is almost entirely export focused. It is clear that the sugar industry is absolutely vital to our state's economy, and that is why we have a responsibility to ensure that we get the policy settings right in this area. We have a responsibility to the 4,400 canefarming entities growing sugar cane on a total of 380,000 hectares annually, supplying 24 mills owned by seven separate milling companies. We have a responsibility to the just over 15,000 people the sugar industry employs, which includes around 300 apprentices in training. And we have a responsibility to our regions for which the sugar industry is a major contributor to rural and regional economies and infrastructure investment, along with a significant source of local employment and training opportunities for young people.

As chair of the Agriculture and Environment Committee, I am well aware of my committee's extensive examination of this bill. For my committee, there were too many unresolved matters and concerns for the possible regulatory impacts of this bill to provide unequivocal support for the bill in its current form. Such an important piece of legislation should not proceed without there being robust and independent assessment of its regulatory impacts. So I am very pleased that the government accepted the committee's recommendation that the Sugar Industry (Real Choice in Marketing) Amendment Bill 2015 should not be passed in its current form without a consideration of the bill's impacts. My committee did not take this decision lightly. We consulted widely through industry and public hearings. We wanted to make sure that every scrutiny was given to this bill.

As members would be aware, the Productivity Commission undertook a comprehensive regulatory impact assessment of the bill, which is available to inform all members when they consider how to vote on this legislation. That Productivity Commission noted that the sugarcane industry takes issue with this regulatory impact assessment—which is not surprising given its findings. The regulatory impact assessment found that there was no market failure in the sugar industry and no case for regulatory intervention. The regulatory impact assessment found that the arrangements in the bill before the House would cost up to $1.5 billion and take up to 18 months to implement. This is not good legislation. This is costly and time consuming and unnecessary.

When an objective analysis was undertaken of this bill, divorced of emotion, each point of the argument for the bill was refuted by the Productivity Commission. I commend the member for Dalrymple and his party for their commitment to agriculture in this state, but this is not the way forward for the sugar industry. Combined with the Productivity Commission's concerns that the bill will introduce a sovereign risk into the sector, which would make Queensland a less attractive investment option than the alternatives, my committee's findings made it clear that this bill would be bad for the sugar industry, bad for the regions and bad for Queensland. This is a dispute that should be resolved in a commercial manner by the sugar industry.



Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (8.05 pm): I rise to support in principle the Sugar Industry (Real Choice in Marketing) Amendment Bill 2015 that is before the parliament tonight. I think it is very important to indicate some facts around this. Prior to the last state election, our side gave a commitment that we would move to introduce legislation if necessary to ensure an appropriate bargaining framework to address some of the issues which had been raised by those who were growing within the sugar industry around Queensland. Since that time, we have been working with KAP in Queensland to make sure we could bring before this parliament an appropriate legislative instrument which would be able to address those concerns and ensure some balance. Therefore, I think it is important to look at this bill in its entirety with the measures which are proposed to improve the provisions of the bill and which will be moved later when we consider the specifics of the legislation.

We have seen a lot of hysterical language and a lot of hyperbolic actions and language, not least from the honourable minister opposite. We heard the Deputy Premier embark upon that journey again today on radio. Some of that language was quite extraordinary and it was almost on the basis of being demented. Indeed, it does not stand up to any scrutiny whatsoever. It just simply does not.

Let us look at this legislation and see what it does not do. It does not re-regulate the sugar industry. It does not take the sugar industry back to the 1950s. It does not reinstate statutory vesting of the Queensland sugar crop. It does not remove voluntary marketing arrangements. It does not dictate

Queensland sugar must be marketed through the QSL or single desk. Those things are not being proposed by way of this legislation and what will be considered later on when we break into the committee of the House. It does not reinstate the sugar authority, and it does not reinstate the cane production area, or CPA, system which restricted growers transferring cane between mill areas.

By and large, what this legislation and the proposed enhancements do is create an environment that makes deregulation work. It creates an environment that ensures there is some balance in an area where there may be a power imbalance. Indeed, I was most intrigued to listen to the hyperbolic performance of the Deputy Premier this morning on radio talking about this amazing free market that we have to be out there to support. I have never, ever understood Labor to be in favour of the free market, because the exact same side that was proposing that came in here today and indicated that the committee of this parliament should now be looking at issues of labour hire and that Labor in itself believes in an arbitration system in other areas. It is completely inconsistent with what the Premier, the Deputy Premier and the minister have been saying.

Indeed, the hyperbolic language has not been contained there either. I have seen some from the Sugar Milling Council in recent times. In the past they have accused growers of being a little bit over the top. I have seen some pretty over-the-top language. I am not interested in all that hyperbole from either side because it does not solve anything. It does not solve the problem of having to make the reality of deregulation of the sugar industry work. What is proposed here by way of this legislation and the enhancements to be moved in committee will ensure that there is an appropriate process of arbitration, that there will be choice for growers in Queensland. Indeed, those on the other side want to have a choice about where people can transact their labour and the circumstances and ways in which they transact. What is the difference with regards to this? In my view or the view of the LNP, it does not impact upon or affect the deregulated environment for sugar in Queensland.

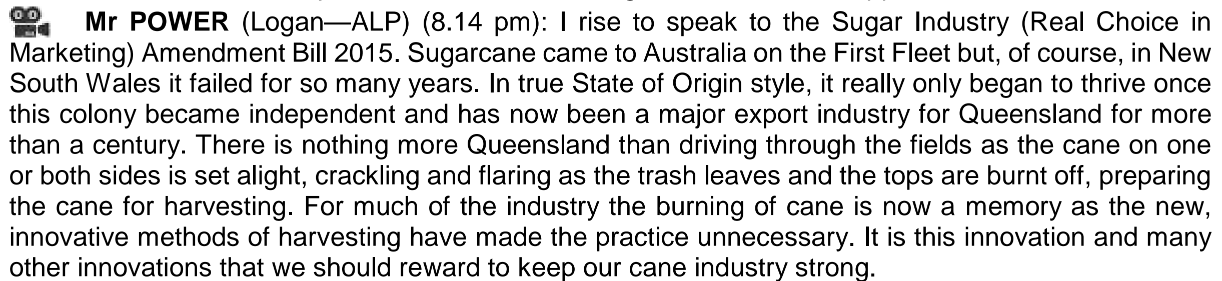
If honourable members want to say that this bill re-regulates, they should go back and have a look at what the Sugar Industry Act in Queensland used to be like compared to what it is like today. They are poles apart. The current act bears absolutely no resemblance to that which grew out of the events of 1915 and beyond. It bears no resemblance whatsoever to what was around in 1999. Indeed, it is a very, very deregulated environment out there and this bill does not seek in any way whatsoever to turn back the clock. It seeks to ensure that there is an appropriate environment to ensure confidence by way of negotiation and also by way of choice. It is very interesting that those opposite are saying that they are not in favour of choice when they are in favour of choice in so many other areas and things for which they advocate in this parliament. This bill has an appropriate balance.

If we are talking about consultation, there has not been any consultation by the minister or those opposite with the canegrowers around Queensland. Indeed, there has been a real paucity of consultation. I have met with the Sugar Milling Council on at least two and probably three occasions as well as other major millers in Queensland, including Wilmar, when we have discussed their issues. That is why we have been able to come up with some of the enhancements which will be moved later by way of agreement between ourselves and the principal proposers of this legislation.

This is about ensuring an appropriate balance. This is about making sure that growers have a choice. Indeed, if those who propose deregulation in its purist form—and there is no problem with that—believe what they are proposing by way of liberating latent financial capacity within the marketing of sugar, then they will have absolutely no problem in convincing those growers out there that the choice they should have is to use that particular marketer, and it may very well be the mill that they are consigning their cane to. The other thing that this does not do is expropriate property, which is something that we need to be very careful about. What it seeks to do is to keep the historical understanding around the division of interest between growers and millers and simply references it to the supply contract.

It is about time that we get some reality in this. This is not a re-regulation. This is ensuring that we have an environment which encourages the best possible framework to be able to negotiate and ensure protections in a market of deregulation, and that is the way that it should be. Tomorrow morning, if this legislation passes, the sun will still rise and, depending upon the cycle, the moon may rise tomorrow afternoon or whenever and the stars will still be in the sky. They are not going to fall out of the sky, as one may think to hear some of the hyperbolic language that has been used over the past few weeks, some by the minister. Needless to say, we will continue to have a very, very strong and vibrant sugar industry in Queensland because those communities which it supports rely upon it in so many ways. It is not going to disappear overnight.

This is making sure it works and that there is fairness in the system. That is why this legislation has been brought before the parliament. It was a commitment by our government. It has been introduced by KAP and there has been much agreement throughout that particular process. There should be some real information and understanding in what is being proposed here, not ignorance as we have seen so much in public statements including from the minister opposite.



Mr POWER (Logan—ALP) (8.14 pm): I rise to speak to the Sugar Industry (Real Choice in Marketing) Amendment Bill 2015. Sugarcane came to Australia on the First Fleet but, of course, in New South Wales it failed for so many years. In true State of Origin style, it really only began to thrive once this colony became independent and has now been a major export industry for Queensland for more than a century. There is nothing more Queensland than driving through the fields as the cane on one or both sides is set alight, crackling and flaring as the trash leaves and the tops are burnt off, preparing the cane for harvesting. For much of the industry the burning of cane is now a memory as the new, innovative methods of harvesting have made the practice unnecessary. It is this innovation and many other innovations that we should reward to keep our cane industry strong.

I note with concern the dangerous amendments that undermine industry confidence foreshadowed by the member for Nanango. They have only been distributed this afternoon and they were not part of the process of the discussions of the committee. I do know that an earlier version was given to some industry figures and was widely rejected by all parties, grower and miller alike. In fact, at times some growers and some millers find it difficult to reach agreement on any aspect of the sugar industry. However, they were as one in rejecting the draft amendments of the LNP. The LNP outside of the Agriculture and Environment Committee have been without principle in this debate, undermining confidence and investment by both grower and miller. They should be ashamed of their role.

Madam Deputy Speaker, through you, I wish to thank the member for Dalrymple. Throughout the debate he has stood as a voice for the growers who felt the relative power imbalance between themselves, as often a family business, and a large multinational company with hundreds of millions or even billions invested. However, it is because there is such a large investment required to keep the sugar industry alive that a partnership between grower and miller is needed. At this stage I would be reluctant to suggest to this House that we take steps to re-regulate this industry at a time when innovation and investment are required to enhance the value of the cane crop and to further add value to the product we create in Queensland.

When it comes to the laws that regulate this industry, we want multiple positive outcomes for Queenslanders. We want good returns for growers, building the confidence to use best practices. We want safe and good jobs for the mill workers, train drivers, harvesting contractors and port workers. We also need to create the confidence to invest in this industry. The creation and maintenance of a mill is a major investment, requiring the confidence in and support of government. Finally and most importantly, we want innovation to get more value from our sugar.

Yesterday in this place we passed legislation to give a kickstart to the exciting biofuel ethanol industry. We need innovation and investment in partnership with growers and millers to build this industry. But innovations in biofuel are just part of this potentially exciting story. Cane by-product in the form of the fibre that is left over after the juice is crushed out of the cane is used in the production of electricity. The cane fibre is burnt and creates steam that is either used directly in the mill or put through a turbine with surplus electricity being exported to the wider Queensland electricity grid. Along with the member for Burnett, I visited the Pioneer Mill and saw firsthand the fibre being burnt and generating electricity through the large turbines inside the mill. The Pioneer Mill stockpiles fibre and continues to generate electricity through the hot summer months even after the crush is complete.

The Queensland sugar industry is the largest producer of renewable energy from biomass in the country, contributing to clean green energy for sugar-producing areas and for all of Queensland. We all know of the sugarcane mulch we use on our gardens, but members may not know that bioplastic has already been developed from cane that can replace PET bottles and other types of plastic products. I know we in this place can encourage the innovation and investment that will continue to develop the products that add value to the industry.

The Agriculture and Environment Committee was referred the member for Dalrymple's bill, and I commend the chairperson and the deputy chairperson for their leadership, goodwill and interest in the issues we canvassed throughout the process. The committee had briefings from the member for Dalrymple and Canegrowers Queensland. It also sent representatives to meet with grower groups in Maryborough and Mackay as well as sending representatives, including me, to the Pioneer Mill to meet with representatives of the mills and to see the crushing and refining process firsthand. On 31 August the committee held public hearings to hear from witnesses and seek submissions. Members can avail themselves of a full list of submissions on the parliamentary website.

Members who may not have followed this issue should understand, firstly, that the sugar industry has a long history of legislation to strongly regulate the industry and has a history of disputes. The growing and selling of cane is distinctive from many other agricultural products. If you grow cucumbers in the electorate of Logan, you have the ability to reach a number of different buyers, both wholesale and even directly. While we have a concern over the duopoly of the two big grocers, we know that a grower of vegetables can find a number of buyers and that the number that exists makes the market more closely resemble a classical free market where price is competitive based on supply and demand.

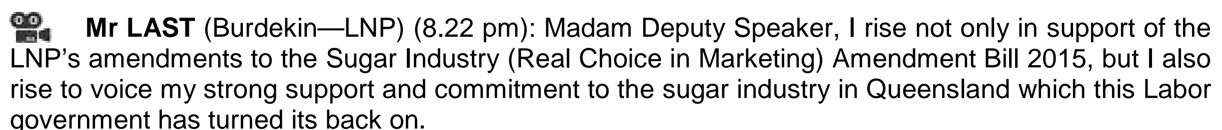
However, cane is not a finished product. It requires extensive refining from capital- and engineering-intensive mills before the cane can be transformed into a saleable product and stored as raw sugar. Further, cut cane is highly perishable. The sugar content of the juice reduces quickly after it is harvested. It is also a heavy and bulky product, and for it to be moved any great distance is costly. This means that effectively the grower of sugarcane has limited or no choice over the buyer of the cane they produce. This is quite different from other agricultural products. In short, the production of sugar has to be a partnership between the grower and their local mill. However, the industry has long recognised the problem and has come up with an elegant solution.

Even if the local selling of sugarcane does not represent a classical marketplace, the international market for raw sugar is a more competitive marketplace. So in agreement between the growers and millers, and originally as directed by legislation, there is a calculation to pass through a percentage of the final price of the raw sugar known as the ‘sugar formula’. Further, up until recently the former monopoly marketer and transporter of Queensland raw sugar, QSL, was the only seller of Queensland sugar for export. Recently, however, the majority of millers have made the decision that they would be better off to market and sell their own sugar, and they feel that they would deliver better value for both the grower and the milling company.

Many, but not all, growers—and I met some growers from Babinda upstairs who share these views—are deeply concerned about the change in arrangements away from an agreed single marketer to the miller being both miller and marketer. Others were more comfortable with the new arrangement. Growers who were concerned felt that there would be no transparency over the final sale price and therefore little confidence that growers would receive the true market price. The true market price follows closely the New York Sugar No. 11 futures price but is more complex. Due to geographical and quality issues, growers receive a premium above the ICE Futures Sugar #11. To restore this confidence, growers expressed a desire for legislation that would allow the grower to impose on the miller which organisation would market and sell the percentage of sugar that would be agreed as representing their economic interest in the final product.

I understand the growers are uncertain about the changes the millers are making. However, millers are also under pressure from growers moving to other crops. The mills are reliant on maximising the size and sugar content of their crop. I also recognise that the mills have a number of competing companies who market sugar, which should give a clear indication of price. The committee heard that the QSL will continue to be a marketer, which will also be a price signal to indicate if there is fairness in the marketplace.

I recognise that the mover of this motion has brought up important issues about the changes in this industry and given the mill-owning corporations a reminder that they have a corporate social responsibility to share fairly the value of their final product and deal fairly with the farmers with whom they are so closely bound. However, given the rapid innovation in the field and the capital-intensive nature of the operations, I would suggest that this legislation is not the right way for the government to once again enter into the sugar marketing chain. As I said, I spoke with some farmers from Babinda, south of Cairns, who are upstairs. I know they are great Queenslanders, and I remain open to hearing from them in the future. I urge the milling companies to work with the farmers and the sugar communities up and down the coast.



Mr LAST (Burdekin—LNP) (8.22 pm): Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise not only in support of the LNP’s amendments to the Sugar Industry (Real Choice in Marketing) Amendment Bill 2015, but I also rise to voice my strong support and commitment to the sugar industry in Queensland which this Labor government has turned its back on.

Up to 35 million tonnes of sugarcane are grown annually, producing up to 4.5 million tonnes of raw sugar, one million tonnes of molasses and 10 million tonnes of bagasse. Approximately 85 per cent of the raw sugar that is produced in Queensland is exported, generating up to $2 billion in export earnings for Queensland. It is the second largest agricultural commodity in Queensland, generating 15,500 jobs directly and over 70,000 jobs indirectly, accounting for 15 per cent of employees in coastal

Queensland. If you add to that the $7 billion in land and $4 billion in infrastructure assets that are controlled by the industry, you start to get an appreciation of what the sugar industry means to this state.

The Burdekin is the largest sugar-producing region in Australia, with the value of raw sugar production alone from this years sugarcane harvest estimated at around $500 million. The region is home to around 1,000 sugarcane farmers employing 20 per cent of the population. I am proud to represent these farmers in this parliament and to take up the fight on their behalf. Whilst it may not be a priority for Labor, agriculture will always remain a strong pillar as far as the LNP is concerned, and I am resolute in my commitment to resolve this issue. Sugar is the beating heart of the Burdekin economy, and the LNP has been proactive from the outset working with growers, producers, even millers and other stakeholders, to try and resolve the sugar marketing issues which have been plaguing the industry. The LNP has said from the outset that if growers and millers could not resolve their sugar marketing woes—after the millers' decision to cease marketing of sugar through QSL in 2017—legislation would need to occur.

The issues have been festering for a number of years, and growers came to us wanting a workable solution. Unlike those opposite, the LNP has not—and will not—turn their backs on the sugar industry. I am bitterly disappointed that the Minister for Agriculture has not taken up my offer to visit the Burdekin electorate to speak firsthand with growers and canegrower organisations regarding this issue. I wrote to the minister back in March and invited him to come and meet the sugarcane growers to gain a full understanding of the issues facing the industry, but he has distanced himself from our hardworking farmers who are desperately seeking a resolution to this dispute.

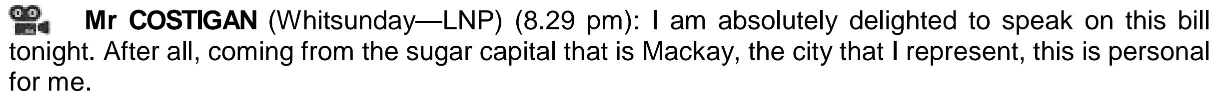
Last week we witnessed the minister perform a fly-in fly-out stunt when he visited the Invicta Mill at Giru to scaremonger and create uncertainty amongst our mill workers and apprentices. His claims of job losses in the milling sector if this legislation is passed are nothing short of shameful, because while ever sugarcane is being grown there will always be milling jobs to be had. The fact that the minister did not bother to catch up with any of the Burdekin's canegrower groups—and I am referring here to Canegrowers Burdekin and Kalamia, Invicta and Pioneer canegrower groups, some of whom are in the gallery here tonight—is a disgrace, particularly when these groups have been endeavouring to meet with the minister for months on this important issue.

We need to get this right for the sake of the industry. We cannot afford to have our sugarcane growers across Queensland being let down by an out-of-touch minister. The passage of this bill is critical to Queensland's canegrowers. This is about creating genuine and greater competition which will benefit growers and the industry. That is right, Madam Deputy Speaker: genuine competition which can only lead to better outcomes for our farmers. I have met with our farmers from the paddock to the boardroom, and never in my life have I met a more passionate group of people with such an intimate knowledge of what is commonly known as a very complex industry. Our cane farmers have embraced world's best practice, and if there is one thing they know how to do, it is to grow sugarcane.

The mills in this instance are seeking to take away the right of growers to choose who markets their share of the sugar and channel all sugar marketing through their own commercial businesses. In so doing they will effectively be establishing themselves as a monopoly marketer. Growers are worried that, without a system to prevent it, their premiums will be expropriated to millers. They have lost trust in the mills to treat them fairly, and this distrust has been amplified over 18 months of negotiations during which time the mills have refused to consider allowing growers to maintain their right to choose who markets their share of the sugar.

Canegrowers, the Australian Cane Farmers Association and Burdekin District Cane Growers Ltd support this bill because it recognises the undisputed and long held economic interest growers have in the raw sugar produced from their cane. It provides protection for growers against millers' misuse of their regional mill monopoly power. It provides growers with a choice in how their sugar is taken to market and how its value is determined. It provides for the Commercial Arbitration Act 2013—a robust commercial dispute resolution process—to resolve deadlocks in the negotiation of cane supply agreements. It takes effect only when and if mills cannot effectively negotiate appropriate supply agreements with growers, and it provides an ability for growers to choose between a miller and other entities that may market the sugar for which growers have price exposure under their cane supply agreements with mills.

All the growers are seeking is a fair go and a fair return from their share of what is produced as a result of their investment. This state was built on the back of the sugar industry, and we have an obligation to ensure we continue to look after the interests of our hardworking canefarmers and not desert them in their hour of need. I support in principle the bill before the House.



Mr COSTIGAN (Whitsunday—LNP) (8.29 pm): I am absolutely delighted to speak on this bill tonight. After all, coming from the sugar capital that is Mackay, the city that I represent, this is personal for me.

Mr Power: Poor old Proserpine!

Mr COSTIGAN: I will disregard the rot coming from the government members to my left.

This is personal for me. It is personal for many of my relatives. It is certainly personal for countless constituents, some of whom are in the gallery tonight. Whether they are from Mackay, Proserpine or anywhere in between, I represent them all, regardless of who they vote for. This is pretty important to me, and I make no apology for saying so. Tonight they are watching from the gallery or on the World Wide Web and they are wondering if common sense will prevail in this chamber tonight.

Fundamentally, I believe in choice for the canegrower in relation to the marketing of sugar. We had hoped for a commercial based outcome, did we not? But it did not eventuate. As individuals we all have a choice when it comes to going to the supermarket or following the sporting teams that we love or deciding who to vote for—and on it goes. Why can the canefarmer not have choice when it comes to sugar marketing? Seriously, what is the problem with that? The LNP believes in competition. It is my fear that competition here will dry up.

I can assure the cane-cockies who have come down to Brisbane tonight—they are up in the gallery, praying that we do get it right—that I have been very consistent in relation to these matters for some time. In fact, I am proud to say that when Wilmar made its intentions clear to the world in April 2014 I was the first elected representative to go into the Wilmar office in Denham Street, Townsville, and make it clear to John Pratt that I did not like what I heard and nor did my constituents.

I turn my attention to the Labor minister responsible for what many of my constituents still call primary industries. Just a couple of weeks ago the Minister for Agriculture referred to canegrowers being ‘militant’. It was nothing short of disgraceful. I call on the minister, regardless of what happens in this chamber, to apologise to the canegrowers of Queensland. I can understand the North Korean government being described as militant and I can understand the member for Mirani’s mates in the CFMEU being described as militant, but the poor old Queensland canegrower? I can see it now: growers just picking up scones and hurling them into the minister’s office. Sound the air-raid sirens!

Let us not forget: this is the same minister who was a no-show at the sugar industry’s agricultural expo in Mackay this year. He also failed to show up at FarmFest on the Darling Downs—something noted by the member for Toowoomba South, who gave his all in the portfolio prior to the change of government. The minister was also a no-show at the FNQ Field Days at Mareeba. I am sure the member for Dalrymple remembers it. He was there. I was there. Where was the minister? It is poor form.

I can advise the House that the language used by the minister—that term ‘militant’—was certainly noted at the recent AGM of Canegrowers Mackay. Guess what? There was no apology from the member for Mirani, who was there, or the member for Mackay, who was also there. I understand that this was just the second time Labor’s member for Mackay had attended an AGM of Canegrowers Mackay in the last 20-odd years. How is that for industry support?

In my electorate, from Foulden to Foxdale, home to many canegrowers over the generations, we would be lost without sugar. In the central district we have five mills, a cogeneration plant, the refinery at Racecourse, the ethanol plant at Sarina—and on it goes. It has been our economic mainstay since the early days of European settlement. Today we have more land under cane in that central district between Plane Creek and Proserpine than anywhere else including the Burdekin. Yes, we contribute still—big time—to Australia’s $1.5 billion sugar industry. That is something I am fiercely proud of.

This is an industry that multinationals like Wilmar think they can hijack. How dare they come into this state and think they can change the fabric of our sugar industry? If they succeed, growers are denied choice in marketing. They will turn our farmers into 21st century peasants. What will that do for our communities up and down the Queensland coast, from Bundaberg to Bloomsbury and Mackay to Mossman? I say to Wilmar: if your marketing operation is so good, let the farmers come to you, but do not come here and change the culture of our industry. What is next? Taking control of our bulk sugar terminals. Let us not forget: these terminals were partly funded by the levies imposed on growers many moons ago. Those growers will be turning in their graves at the sheer thought of that and the dictatorial approach of the multinationals when it comes to the marketing of our sugar.

I have here a book authored by the late Ken Manning, a famous name from Kolijo, killed in a tractor accident some years ago. It is the history of the Farleigh mill and is called *In their own hands*. Tonight the future of our industry is in our hands. This industry has seen plenty since John Spiller

planted that first bit of cane in Mackay in 1865. It has had its ups and downs. Tonight we reach a tipping point. We come to the crunch. Either we want a sugar industry to kick on, to attract the next generation of growers, or we say, 'No, let it go down the gurgler.' I say: over my dead body. I support the principle of the bill.

Mr SAUNDERS (Maryborough—ALP) (8.38 pm): I rise to speak against this bill. We have heard a lot of waffle tonight. I would say that we have just heard from the king clown, but that would be an insult to the clowns. He forgot about Maryborough as a sugar-producing area.

Mr Bennett interjected.

Mr SAUNDERS: I take that interjection from the member for Burnett. Thank you very much. This bill will have a devastating effect on the Maryborough economy. My growers and my mill have a fantastic relationship.

Mrs Frecklington: Therefore, it does not affect you.

Mr SAUNDERS: I am sorry, but it will. This will have an effect on the money MSF will spend in my electorate. I refer to the committee hearing that was held on Monday, 31 August and a question asked by the member for Hervey Bay to Mr Mike Barry, Chief Executive Officer of MSF. Mr Sorensen asked—

Anyone can answer this. If this bill were passed and made law, how would that affect your operations at the Maryborough sugar mill and right across-the-board as well? How would it affect your operations?

Mr Barry, the Chief Executive Officer of MSF, said—

There are a couple of material issues with the bill. One is that it does transfer title of the end product. I heard the commentary earlier about ex-appropriation, which is exactly right. So today by law MSF Sugar has the right to market 100 per cent of the sugar that we produce. That is a right. If the bill goes through, that right will be taken away from us. That is a material issue. It will affect our balance sheet. It has a lot of knock-on effects, so that is a major issue.

Mr Barry went on to talk about the effect that this bill would have on the Maryborough economy. The company is a great company. It is a very good corporate citizen, but those opposite are asking how a Labor man can stand up and protect a company. I will say this on the record: it is a very good corporate citizen. It employs 122 people directly and about 680 are indirectly employed in Maryborough city through MSF Sugar. This bill will limit the money that MSF Sugar will put back into the Maryborough community. In fact, it will become a toll manufacturer as Mr Barry said to me. It has spent an absolute fortune in Maryborough standards in terms of the money it has put into the community of Maryborough together with Pivot in terms of looking after farmers and it has a great relationship with its growers. Jeff Atkinson is the head of the Maryborough Canegrowers association. I have met Jeff and we have a great relationship.

An honourable member: You two are mates, though.

Mr SAUNDERS: Of course we are. Jeff said this in answer to a question during the committee hearing—

Yes. We have had differences at times, but we have always managed to sort it out without arbitration. Maybe in our area it is not a problem while maybe up north it could be a different issue, but certainly in our area we have been able to work through it and come up with a solution.

Why can we not do that for the rest of Queensland? Why do we have to go backwards? These companies have put a lot of money into my city and yet those opposite want to make it a toll manufacturer when Mike Barry has said that that will dry up the money. That money will be dried up if this bill passes. Yesterday it was glowing in here when we were talking about biofuels and ethanol. I have a commitment from MSF that it will move down this track. If this bill is passed, this commitment is finished. There is a commitment from the company that we will get cogeneration, a particleboard plant and biofuels in Maryborough. It may come as a shock to members on the other side, but they left Maryborough in a hole—an absolute hole.

A government member: Abandoned it.

Mr Rickuss: You only got 75 per cent of the vote!

Mr SAUNDERS: It was enough to win the seat because I am on this side of the chamber. Let me tell you: 62 per cent of the shops were vacant in my CBD. We came to power nine months ago and that is now down to 22 per cent. I have worked hard as the local member with canegrowers and with the mill to get unallocated state land for the mill to advance the mill and produce more cane to take it up over the benchmark 1.2 million tonnes to make the mill viable. We have worked very hard. This bill jeopardises that.

Those opposite are not happy with flogging us to death when in government; now they have to flog us to death when in opposition. Fair go. I do not know what the people of Maryborough have done to the LNP—I do not know what they have done—but those opposite talk about our members not going up to see them. We have not seen any LNP people—straight through like Flash Gordon, gone! Those opposite should come up and talk to the people of Maryborough and tell them that they are going to kill off the sugar industry. They talk about us not going anywhere. I am inviting those opposite to come up and talk to the growers and talk to the millers, because this bill is going to have devastating effects.

We have heard the members for Mount Isa, Dalrymple and everyone else talk about how passionate they are for their city. There is no-one more passionate than I am for Maryborough city and I will never forgive. If this bill passes tonight, I will never forgive any of them. We heard the opposition leader and member for Southern Downs say that the sun will rise tomorrow and it is going to be great. I tell members what: if this bill passes tonight there will be dark clouds over Maryborough city.

Mr Bennett interjected.

Mr SAUNDERS: Member for Burnett, thank you very much.

Mr Bennett interjected.

Mr SAUNDERS: Thug? You should just go and look after your men's shed and forget about everything else!

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SAUNDERS: What can I say? I want to put this on the record: here we are discussing the future of one of the oldest cities in Queensland—Maryborough city—and those opposite are a bunch of clowns. No, I apologise to the clowns association. We have a bunch of clowns over there and I have been called a thug by the member for Burnett. I would like him to withdraw that. I would like a withdrawal. He has just called me a thug.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Ryan): Order! The standing orders are quite clear. If a member finds a statement personally offensive, then they can ask for it to be withdrawn. Member for Burnett?

Mr BENNETT: In the interests of this debate, given that it is really serious, I do withdraw and hopefully the debate can continue in a dignified manner which you might be able to leave—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Burnett, I will have an unconditional withdrawal.

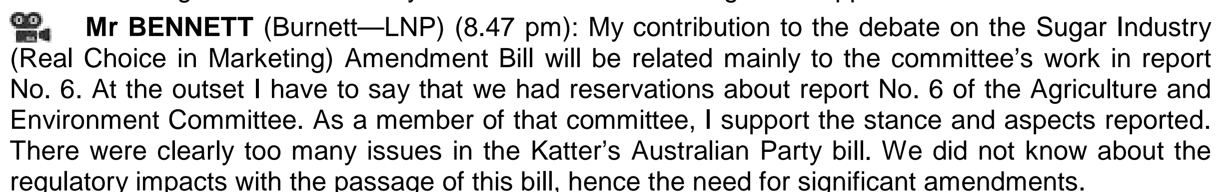
Mr BENNETT: I withdraw.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Lockyer, you have been warned a number of times by the Speaker today. I will be taking close note of your interjections. I now call the member for Maryborough.

Mr SAUNDERS: As I said, in such an important debate as this when we are talking about the absolute future of Maryborough city—one of the oldest cities and cane-growing areas in Queensland—we degenerate into that sort of thing. I cannot support this bill. During my election campaign I vowed to put Maryborough first, and I will always put Maryborough first. This bill does not put Maryborough first. It does not put my canegrowers first. It does not put the manufacturer, Maryborough Sugar Factory, first. It puts in jeopardy the money that will be invested in the City of Maryborough by MSF. This bill puts that in jeopardy.

I am honestly very disappointed that I am standing here tonight debating this bill because the opposition always talks about how it is for industry and how it is promoting jobs and how we do not have a plan. We have a great plan for MSF in Maryborough and a great plan with the growers, but unfortunately it does hurt me to stand here tonight and say that if this bill passes I fear for the sugar mill in my city. I absolutely fear for it. As the local member, one thing I should never have to worry about is that mill closing down. It is a heavy burden to stand here tonight and oppose this bill.



Mr BENNETT (Burnett—LNP) (8.47 pm): My contribution to the debate on the Sugar Industry (Real Choice in Marketing) Amendment Bill will be related mainly to the committee's work in report No. 6. At the outset I have to say that we had reservations about report No. 6 of the Agriculture and Environment Committee. As a member of that committee, I support the stance and aspects reported. There were clearly too many issues in the Katter's Australian Party bill. We did not know about the regulatory impacts with the passage of this bill, hence the need for significant amendments.

One important issue that I fully support is the committee's recommendation that the Treasurer consider making the confidential advice on the regulatory impacts from the Queensland Productivity Commission available in terms of the development of private members' bills going forward. There is

evidence that in this instance we are not adequately dealing with legislative proposals that should demonstrate best regulatory practice which should include balanced consultation and impact assessment, and that is clearly missing in this bill in its current form. The bill clearly had problems from the outset at its tabling in May 2015 with the explanatory notes needing further amendments and changes, with replacement explanatory notes tabled in July 2015. Katter's Australian Party acknowledged that the bill needed amendments in its statement of reservation to the committee report before it could proceed, and this sent alarm bells that more work was needed to be done.

The committee's work on the Sugar Industry (Real Choice in Marketing) Amendment Bill highlighted a real weakness not only in this bill and its development but also in some private members' bills, as examples from both the 54th Parliament and 55th Parliament show that proposed legislation failed to reflect any objective regulatory impact assessment. We are proposing to make amendments to legislation governing the operation of the state's largest agricultural export industry, making changes to how the sugar industry operates with far-reaching consequences for the future of the industry as well as regional communities and businesses that depend on a sustainable and prosperous sugar sector. Although opposition members and crossbench members receive confidential advice and assistance from the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel when drafting private members' bills, we receive no expert advice or assistance in relation to assessing the regulatory impacts of the proposals tabled.

After spending months examining this bill, the objectives of the bill and considering the information provided by the department and many submitters, there appears to be significant and unresolved issues with the bill, such as an unsatisfactory consultation process that excluded key stakeholders; the potential for the bill to impose significant and unknown changes on the sugar industry and the absence of an objective assessment of the bill's regulatory impact; insufficient clarity of evidence of regulatory or market failure to justify the need for significant regulatory amendments; the conflicting and irreconcilable position of key industry participants regarding support for and material impacts of the bill's proposals; and possible interference with the fundamental legislative principle of the rights and liberties of individuals to conduct businesses.

The committee concluded that the bill should not be passed in its current form. During the final stages of the committee's examination of the bill, I proposed that the bill be amended in line with some proposals from an exposure draft of the Sugar Industry (Facilitating Grower Choice) Amendment Bill 2015, developed by the member for Nanango and released for public consultation and comment. Principally, those proposed amendments strengthened this bill to the extent that they seek to recognise in the Sugar Industry Act 1999 grower economic interest in a proportion of the total raw sugar manufactured and to mandate the inclusion of particular terms in cane supply agreements to allow growers to nominate their choice of marketing entity for the sugar. The amendments adopt a different language and approach—in particular, setting up a number of conditions that need to be triggered before particular terms of supply would be mandated in cane supply agreements, which is intended to give parties the choice to avoid the triggers that are activated only by default.

The earlier proposed substantive amendments relating to grower economic interest and grower choice of marketing entity revolve mainly around new subsections 33A and 33B of the Katter's Australian Party bill and replaced lines nine to 33 to allow growers and mill owners to agree that payment for the supply of cane can be on some basis other than a related sugar pricing term and for the related sugar pricing term, which links the cane price to the sale price, only by default. Further, it provides that it is only if the contract includes the related sugar pricing term that the contract is required to include terms allocating sale price exposure for the on-supply sugar. It also provides that the sale price exposure is first allocated to the mill owner and, as previously explained, the clause allows for the possibility that the mill owner could accept the sale price exposure for 100 per cent of the on-supply sugar. As conversations continued about the mill owner, these issues went on and on—the mill owner would not accept the sale price exposure; the growers would not accept the on-supply sugar. A further term of the contract is required to allocate the sale price exposure for the remaining on-supply sugar to the grower.

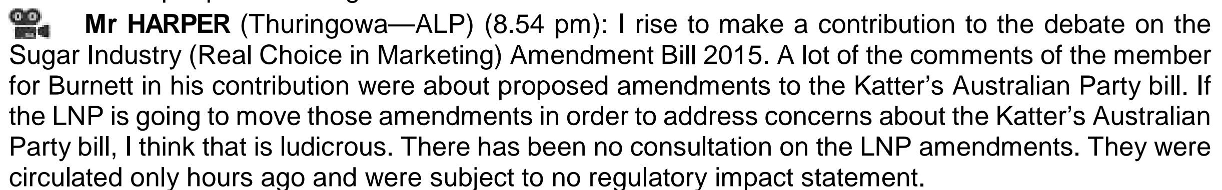
I also proposed that the bill be amended to remove the right for growers and their representatives to refer to arbitration pre-contractual disputes with mill owners. I must say that, earlier this year, I was buoyed by the federal minister appointing a mediator to resolve this issue. I again stress that this issue should have been sorted out by the industry and not through government intervention. This issue has been around for 18 months, and I commend the federal minister for effectively bashing together the heads of the growers and the millers in seeking a commercially negotiated outcome, which is what the Queensland sugar industry needs and deserves. However, nothing has happened. We still hear, 'We are close to an outcome,' but, sadly, here we are tonight. So I support the shadow minister's

amendments that have been circulated and which will be moved during the consideration in detail. I commend all the millers and growers who are here in the gallery tonight, particularly those local growers who have come down to witness tonight's debate. I thank them for indicating their continued support of Queensland Sugar Ltd and the marketing arrangements that exist in the Bundaberg region.

Mr Rickuss: There's probably a grower there from Rocky Point.

Mr BENNETT: I take that interjection from the member for Lockyer. There are a lot of growers and a lot of millers, but this is about my region. All of us here are passionate about the region that we represent. I want to acknowledge the commitment of those growers who are in the gallery in their continued negotiations.

In conclusion, I note that our original intention was to support the passage of the bill with significant amendments. Those amendments are around four articulated principles: avoids the expropriation of property rights, maintains reference to cane supply agreements where grower economic interest is recognised, does not prescribe pre-contractual arbitration but rather a mechanism for dispute resolution, and allows growers choice of who markets their sugar through cane supply agreements. I must say to my colleagues that I look forward to the conclusion of this debate tonight, because the people in the regions need this issue to be concluded. This issue needs to be resolved.



Mr HARPER (Thuringowa—ALP) (8.54 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Sugar Industry (Real Choice in Marketing) Amendment Bill 2015. A lot of the comments of the member for Burnett in his contribution were about proposed amendments to the Katter's Australian Party bill. If the LNP is going to move those amendments in order to address concerns about the Katter's Australian Party bill, I think that is ludicrous. There has been no consultation on the LNP amendments. They were circulated only hours ago and were subject to no regulatory impact statement.

Mrs Frecklington: They never normally are.

Mr HARPER: But let me continue. It should be noted—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr HARPER: Thanks very much. I take members' interjections. It should be noted that the perishable nature of sugar cane and the limited time available between harvest and crush makes the growers and millers co-dependent. One needs the other. It should also be noted that many farming communities and workers within this industry are also dependent on the best outcome of this bill before the House in relation to the growing, milling and marketing of this important and vital worldwide commodity.

Disputes between canegrowers and sugar millers have long been a characteristic of this industry before, during and following deregulation. History shows that during the early years of regulation the sugar industry was able to grow and develop within the context of the competitive environment of the day. However, the environment into which Australia's sugar is supplied has not remained static. Sugar is a major commodity and, like others, the ability to compete is largely determined by the cost of production.

The rise of Brazil as a major sugar producer following the deregulation of its industry greatly altered the competitive environment internationally. The influence of Brazil meant that other producers, such as those in Queensland, had to increase productivity and create efficiencies throughout their supply chains in order to remain competitive. The production of sugar has increased at a much greater rate and, since 1999, has largely been in oversupply. This point is particularly important to the Australian industry, as the smaller domestic market results in over 80 per cent of production being exported.

In 2003, the Queensland government released a statement in relation to the regulatory reform of the sugar industry. On Monday, 30 November, there was an open letter published in the *Courier-Mail* to Queenslanders regarding the future of the sugar industry. It was written by Mr Dominic Nolan on behalf of several sugar-producing communities from Wide Bay to the Tablelands. In that letter, Mr Nolan outlines that the sugar industry generates $3.5 billion annually and employs over 16,000 Queenslanders. He goes on to say that, almost a decade ago, taxpayers funded a $450 million assistance package to the Queensland sugar industry to deregulate and points to the fact that the Queensland sugar industry cannot afford to go back to regulation. Mr Nolan points out further that, today, Queensland growers are among the most efficient in the world, mills are more globally competitive and production has increased in the last six years in a row.

In that letter, there is the further comment that Queensland cannot afford to lose this successful export industry. On that note, with the Townsville port being the biggest exporter of sugar with the bulk sugar terminal close by, this is a commodity that I and many other Townsvillians do not want to see reduced either as our port is producing some excellent outcomes in terms of exporting some 31 commodities. We can ill afford to lower the bar on sugar.

The Queensland Productivity Commission assessment highlights the risks posed to the sugar industry with the introduction of this bill. It found that the bill will lead to higher industry costs and potential court costs. I am concerned about jobs being put at risk in this important and vital agricultural sector. Last Saturday, the *Townsville Bulletin* reported what I thought was a good journalistic piece on this subject. In that article, local farmers from the Burdekin area were able to have their say on the issue. I stress that the article does not say that all growers in the area would agree, but I thought that this article on what is an effective reregulation of this industry should be shared in this debate.

The rural reporter for the *Townsville Bulletin,* Mr John Anderson, reported on 27 November in the *Townsville Bulletin* on both sides of the argument. He wrote—

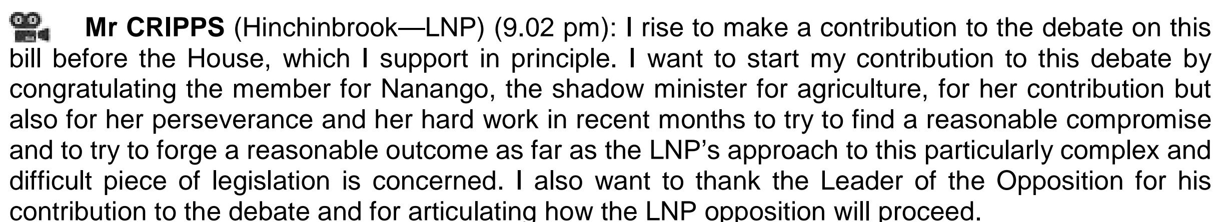
If the bill is rejected and the miller Wilmar takes control of all of the sugar made in its eight mills, growers would be up in arms.

He further wrote—

On the other hand, if the amendments being put up by the Katter Australian Party are passed and the miller is denied full marketing rights over the sugar it owns and makes in its mills, future foreign investment will be placed at risk.

I do see both sides of this issue. In the last few months canegrowers from the Herbert district have met with MPs, including myself and the member for Townsville, to put their side of the story. I acknowledge the growers and representatives who are in the public gallery. They are passionate about their side of the issue. There is no doubt about that and I applaud them for their representation on behalf of canegrowers who have made it abundantly clear they want grower choice in marketing. However, to provide in my mind some balance there is a group of growers who made comment in the same story in that *Townsville Bulletin* report. A Burdekin grower, Ben Nelson, who is a member of the Burdekin Independent Growers Association, stated that the sky is the limit with these blokes—Wilmar—and they are one of the biggest sugar traders in the world. He goes on further to say that it is his belief that his future as a farmer rests with a multinational miller and that he will prosper if the company is given the opportunity to market sugar grown on his farm. Mr Nelson stated that he is one of the 21 growers who have signed to Wilmar, with more waiting for the dust to settle on this debate. He further stated that Wilmar has reinvested in mills in the area and that they are running so much better.

On one side of Townsville we have the Herbert district represented by the canegrowers here tonight and on the other side of Townsville in the Burdekin district we have 21 farmers from that Independent Growers Association who at this stage have signed with Wilmar. It is no secret that Wilmar is the world's leading sugar trader. On balance a decision has to be made and in my mind the risk of regulation to this industry is too risky. It was deregulated for good reason and at great expense to the taxpayer and I therefore will not be supporting this bill.



Mr CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (9.02 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on this bill before the House, which I support in principle. I want to start my contribution to this debate by congratulating the member for Nanango, the shadow minister for agriculture, for her contribution but also for her perseverance and her hard work in recent months to try to find a reasonable compromise and to try to forge a reasonable outcome as far as the LNP's approach to this particularly complex and difficult piece of legislation is concerned. I also want to thank the Leader of the Opposition for his contribution to the debate and for articulating how the LNP opposition will proceed.

This is not a simple issue. This is a complicated issue. To get to the bottom of it people need to understand the differences between the sugar industry and other agricultural industries. In most agricultural industries a farmer's responsibility ends and they get paid at the farm gate or at the point of sale where ownership changes. This is not the case in the sugar industry. In the sugar industry ownership of the grower's product of harvested cane transfers to the miller before it is processed, but the grower does not get paid at that time. The miller then processes that sugarcane into raw sugar and it is transferred to large holding facilities at ports up and down Queensland's east coast waiting to be sold into the world raw sugar market. But the grower does not get paid at that point either. Not until that raw sugar is sold, usually on the world raw sugar market, does the grower get paid. At that time the grower, by convention and through a formula established decades and decades ago, receives roughly two-thirds of the value of that raw sugar with the other third going to the relevant miller. That two-thirds of the sale price is generally known as the grower economic interest.

The grower has that economic interest because of the relationship between the final sale price for the raw sugar and what they get paid. They carry two-thirds of the risk, or the exposure, without owning the sugar itself. This is the skin in the game that growers continue to have after ownership of the cane transfers to the millers prior to processing. For decades that sugar was sold into the world market by a compulsory single desk. Since the deregulation of the industry Queensland sugar has been

sold into the world market by a not-for-profit company owned by both millers and growers known as Queensland Sugar Ltd. Growers, despite QSL being a single desk, have confidence in the transparency of this arrangement because it is a not-for-profit company and they are amongst the shareholders.

Having said that, this debate is not about QSL. This is about the growers being able to exercise choice in terms of who markets the sugar in which they have a longstanding, legitimate and real economic interest. It is also about ensuring that when that sugar is sold into the market those growers are confident that transaction is occurring in a transparent fashion.

Another issue which makes the sugar industry practically different from other agricultural industries is the perishable nature of the harvested sugarcane. It must be processed within a certain period of time after being harvested otherwise the sugar content of the harvested cane declines and it eventually spoils. In the overwhelming majority of cases in Queensland sugar growing areas this practically limits growers to selling their product if not to a single mill then almost certainly to a single milling company. In other words, the grower is faced with a natural monopoly situation in relation to whom they must sell perishable product. Practically obliged to enter into such a transaction, this bill offers a degree of fair and reasonable assistance to growers allowing them to exercise a degree of choice and observe a degree of transparency with respect to the transaction that occurs involving the raw sugar owned by the miller but in which growers have a vested, legitimate economic interest.

The member for Thuringowa a moment ago made observations in relation to a media report in the *Townsville Bulletin* where he quoted a grower from the Burdekin who said that the sky was the limit, or words to that effect, with Wilmar marketing his cane in the future. It has been reported that a number of growers in my electorate of Hinchinbrook from the Herbert region have also entered into those contracts with Wilmar. I acknowledge that it is their right to do so. The member for Thuringowa should not be scared of this legislation if that is how he feels because if he supports this legislation then those growers in the Burdekin, and reportedly those growers in the Herbert, will be able to exercise their right to have Wilmar market their sugar. They will be able to exercise that choice. That is the point that the member for Thuringowa totally missed during his contribution and his interpretation of that article which I also read in the *Townsville Bulletin*.

There has been a lot of inflammatory statements made about sovereign risk and foreign investment in the Queensland sugar industry. I do not think that these are real or likely. I represent a sugar seat in which foreign owned companies own four mills. Foreign investment has been a part of the Queensland sugar industry since it began and that is a fact. I recognise this investment and I acknowledge the jobs that these mills provide in communities that I represent in the Hinchinbrook electorate. The scenario that we have before us tonight in the Queensland parliament is not a simple one. It is a complicated one. This bill has been introduced into the House by the Katter's Australian Party and as it currently stands the LNP does not support it. Indeed, the Agriculture and Environment Committee of this House produced a report that did not recommend that the bill be passed in its present form. The Katter's Australian Party itself has already circulated proposed amendments to its own bill.

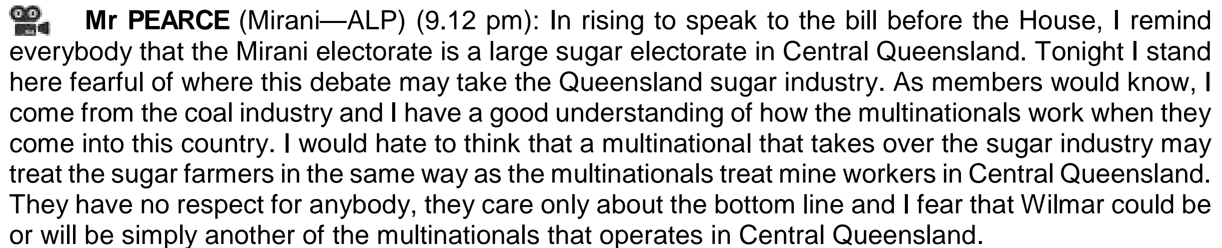
The LNP will be proposing a series of amendments that we consider need to be agreed to by the House for us to support the eventual passage of the amended bill. These amendments have been the subject of extensive negotiations between the LNP and the Katter party.

The LNP has taken an interest in this important and complex issue since well before the state election in January this year. The matter was investigated by the agriculture cabinet committee of the former LNP government and, prior to the election, we gave an undertaking that if no commercial agreement could be reached between growers and millers we would act. We welcomed the additional information that was put into the public domain by the Senate inquiry into sugar marketing arrangements and the federal government task force that resulted in the release of a draft code of conduct. The LNP then publicly released an exposure draft of our private member's bill and invited submissions from all interested stakeholders and those have been considered.

As I said earlier, this is not a simple issue; this is a complicated issue. I will not pretend that this has not been a very difficult issue for me personally. I represent a significant sugar growing area in the state of Queensland and we have a difficult proposition in front of us tonight, to balance the interests of the growing sector and the milling sector. However, the LNP made an election commitment to act if necessary. A significant period has elapsed since then and there has been no commercial agreement reached between the growers and the millers. Therefore, tonight we will be honouring our election commitment.

Over the past few weeks the behaviour of the Minister for Agriculture has been ungallant and unedifying for someone who is supposed to be a minister of the Crown. He has made a series of allegations that this bill was preventing good faith negotiations from taking place between growers and

millers. I put it to this House and to stakeholders from across all of the sectors involved in the Queensland sugar industry that in recent weeks the most significant impediment to good faith negotiations between growers and millers has been the juvenile, divisive and alarmist interventions of the Minister for Agriculture.



Mr PEARCE (Mirani—ALP) (9.12 pm): In rising to speak to the bill before the House, I remind everybody that the Mirani electorate is a large sugar electorate in Central Queensland. Tonight I stand here fearful of where this debate may take the Queensland sugar industry. As members would know, I come from the coal industry and I have a good understanding of how the multinationals work when they come into this country. I would hate to think that a multinational that takes over the sugar industry may treat the sugar farmers in the same way as the multinationals treat mine workers in Central Queensland. They have no respect for anybody, they care only about the bottom line and I fear that Wilmar could be or will be simply another of the multinationals that operates in Central Queensland.

With regard to the bill before the House, I am concerned most for the growers. I have publicly stated that I would prefer to give them what they want. As long-term industry stakeholders, growers know what is best for themselves. I have said that we should be able to say to the industry, ‘Okay, you know what you want. Take it, but do not come back and blame anybody else. It will be your decision.’ As I have just said, I support them in the concerns they have about Wilmar. Wilmar is one of the biggest multinationals in the world. They really do not care about the sugar industry growers and where they will take communities into the future. I have seen it in Central Queensland and I doubt whether Wilmar is any better than any other multinational operating in this state.

Tonight I have heard members talk about the process whereby sugarcane is harvested, it goes to the miller and the miller sells the sugar. However, the way I understand is that the grower does not get paid until the sale has been finalised, which I think is what one of the members spoke about earlier. My concern is that the ownership of the cane concludes—it finishes—once the sugar goes to the mill. That is a little bit different to what other members have been saying.

As I am sure members would understand, I have had some correspondence from Canegrowers. In a letter to me, Peter Sheedy stated—

> This Bill is simply about spelling out a code of conduct to guide industry participants. The Bill being put forward looks to enforce the existing rights of owners and to ensure ongoing security for farmers and millers into the future.

He further stated—

> All the major grower collectives are totally united in fighting against being stripped of their right to have their economic interest sugar marketed through a marketeer of their choice.

Because of the position that I hold and the way that I feel about multinationals, I care about the farmers, regardless of where they come from or what industry they support. I care about outcomes and what it will do to people, to families and to the local economy.

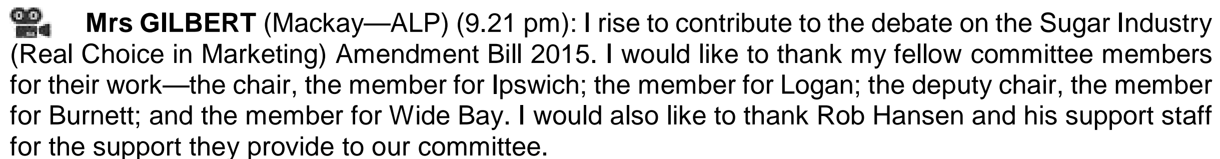
I sought some advice to try to get an understanding of the legal aspects of the bill. I have been told that ownership of a good or an asset is, on the face of it, an easy concept to understand: if you pay for something in its entirety, it is yours and you expect to be free to do with it what you wish. If you manufacture something, you own the good or the product by virtue of the fact that you made it. That is how our society and economy operates today. Mill owners unambiguously own the sugar they produce. They own it because they made it. While I am not an expert in this area, there is a body of case law that supports this position. Mill owners also own the raw material used to make sugar. That removes any doubt that they own the sugar. When the sugarcane goes through the manufacturing process, it no longer exists. Canegrowers have only ever owned the cane; they have never owned sugar. The thought that a manufacturer and owner cannot sell its product to whomever they choose is wrong.

I understand that in some industries there are contract manufacturers. They base their capital investment decisions and their pricing on the knowledge that they are undertaking a fee for service. That is not the case in the sugar industry. In fact, a submission to the Agriculture and Environment Committee told us that toll crushing was not a sustainable business model. For the government to legislate or to allow a raw materials supplier to dictate who manufacturers can sell the product to would be close to unprecedented in the modern western economy. It would be a very bad look.

After the arbitration, the mill owns the cane. They may have paid too much for it, but at least they have it. They can do what they do best—make sugar and use their expertise to sell it for the best price. If they sell it for the best price, the grower gets a fair share of that particular sale. Legal precedent tells us that giving that right to growers is taking away an important aspect of ownership from the mills. Even if the precedent did not tell us that, we know deep down that it is true.

My position with regard to this legislation is that I am deeply concerned about what will happen to canegrowers once Wilmar gets a firm footing in the industry. I am concerned that Wilmar will be no different to the multinationals that are now operating in this country which have no respect for the people who choose to live and work in areas and produce a product.

That is a situation we cannot accept. I have just gone through a few legal comments. This puts me in the situation where, quite frankly, I am really concerned about what I might do to the industry and the future of farmers by not supporting the bill before the House.



Mrs GILBERT (Mackay—ALP) (9.21 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Sugar Industry (Real Choice in Marketing) Amendment Bill 2015. I would like to thank my fellow committee members for their work—the chair, the member for Ipswich; the member for Logan; the deputy chair, the member for Burnett; and the member for Wide Bay. I would also like to thank Rob Hansen and his support staff for the support they provide to our committee.

This bill is a highly emotive issue for both canegrowers and millers. This was very evident at our public hearing. My electorate of Mackay was built on the sugar industry. The industry began as a very hands-on industry, with gangs of workers planting and harvesting the crop. Today it is mechanised with many producers using contractors for their harvesting.

Mills near my electorate have diversified beyond the milling process. Racecourse Mill has diversified with a sugar refinery and a co-gen electricity plant—generating one-third of Mackay's electricity. Plane Creek Mill is leading the production of ethanol. The sugar industry is evolving and modernising and employing over 16,000 workers.

In 2006 the sugar industry took another step towards modernisation with the deregulation of the industry, costing about $444 million to transition this industry. Last night in the House we voted unanimously to introduce mandated ethanol fuel. This will be a great boost for the industry.

The industry is no longer merely just a sugar industry; it is a cane industry, with potential for a range of bioproducts to be developed from the whole stick of the cane. If the industry is allowed to develop, the future for millers and farmers will be exciting.

The Productivity Commission, in a consultation regulatory impact statement on the Sugar Industry (Real in Choice Marketing) Amendment Bill 2015, stated—

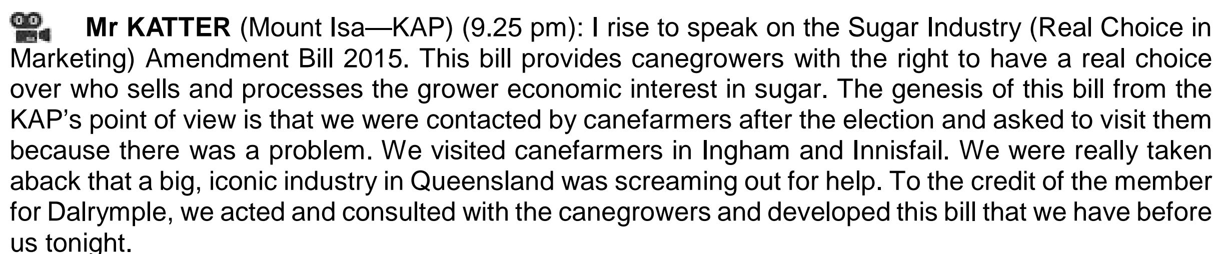
There is evidence that there has been generated improvements, there has been consolidation of farming and milling activities—and significant investment in improving milling. It is also evident that the sector is seeking to add value through the supply chain and through international trading arrangements.

The industry is in danger of stagnating if reregulation is introduced in the form of this bill. A commercial agreement between growers and millers can be reached. There are mills and growers in the industry already with commercial agreements.

MSF Sugar in the Maryborough and Mulgrave area has agreements with growers. When given the choice, 91 per cent of growers voted to stay with the mill instead of going with QSL for the sale of sugar. It was reported in the media that growers and Wilmar in the Burdekin area have reached an agreement.

This bill is ill-timed. Growers and millers need to reach a commercial agreement rather than a legislative solution. The industry is too important for the future of growers, millers and the thousands of Queensland workers in the industry. The bill is getting in the way of each group reaching an agreement. Millers and growers are relying on the vote on this bill to support their particular wishes, which may not be the best outcome for the industry.

The draft conclusion for the consultation regulatory impact statement noted that the potential benefits that may be accrued from the passage of this bill outweighed by the potential costs. I cannot support this bill in its current form.



Mr KATTER (Mount Isa—KAP) (9.25 pm): I rise to speak on the Sugar Industry (Real Choice in Marketing) Amendment Bill 2015. This bill provides canegrowers with the right to have a real choice over who sells and processes the grower economic interest in sugar. The genesis of this bill from the KAP's point of view is that we were contacted by canefarmers after the election and asked to visit them because there was a problem. We visited canefarmers in Ingham and Innisfail. We were really taken aback that a big, iconic industry in Queensland was screaming out for help. To the credit of the member for Dalrymple, we acted and consulted with the canegrowers and developed this bill that we have before us tonight.

We need to realise the enormity of the industry that we are dealing with here. There is 35 million tonnes of sugarcane over 380,000 hectares. Some 95 per cent of Australian sugar is produced in Queensland. The sugar industry is one of Australia's largest and most important rural industries and Queensland's largest agricultural commodity. I believe it is one of Queensland's largest employers. It is an industry that we have to take notice of if it is in trouble or is threatened.

In April last year Wilmar came out with a statement indicating its intention to exit its marketing agreements, meaning farmers would have no say on the sale price of their sugar. That is an interesting point. Something that has been raised a lot in the media and by opponents to the bill is that deregulation was imposed on the industry and a big assistance package was given to farmers at the time.

Looking back, we would have to ask what that was all about. Did deregulation deliver what it was supposed to for the industry? One thing that we could acknowledge is that the number of canefarmers has reduced since deregulation. In terms of one of those measures, it has failed.

One of the important things to realise is that deregulation was done, delivered and accepted by canegrowers on the basis that there was a circuit-breaker, which was QSL. I wonder whether deregulation would have ever been adopted if QSL were not there. I suggest that it would not have been. It was adopted and accepted because QSL existed. When a multination miller, a foreign miller, comes in and completely changes the dynamic of the market and QSL is made obsolete we have a problem. Deregulation was done on the basis of having QSL.

It annoys me when people say that we are reregulating the market. We are not going back in time and reregulating the market. That is a fallacy. This is simply giving growers a choice. A lot of people who would have been the proponents of deregulation in the first place believe in choice and in competition, and that is what we are advocating here. I think there is some hypocrisy in the positions that are being put forward in that respect.

The bill supports a robust but fair supply chain relationship between the mill owners and growers so that it contributes towards long-term sustainability in the industry. We keep saying this is compromising the millers' viability, but I do not hear the millers saying, 'We are worried about the farmers' viability as well.' The industry is the sum total of both parties. There is no point worrying about the millers and saying we have to protect their viability when the farmers are not being looked after.

I think one of the key components of this bill is that it addresses a market imbalance. No-one in this room could seriously argue that there is not a market imbalance when you are forced to sell to the one mill closest to you—there are some anomalies where people are taking their cane 100 kilometres to another mill. But effectively you can only take it to the one mill. They have all the market power. You have reduced the cooperative power of the farmers. You have reduced the market power of the grower and delivered it to the miller.

All we can achieve with this bill is getting the growers back to the table at best. It does not deliver them any excess power. At best it can take them back to a level or near to a level platform with the mills. I do not think anyone should be too worried about the mills' power. There will always be a market imbalance favouring the millers. That is how the industry works. Millers have shareholders and so they should try to make money. They see the farmers as an input cost. That is how they treat them. Despite the rhetoric, they are not there to preserve the income or the viability of farmers. They are there to look after their own interests and so they should. They see farmers as an input cost. That is where the interest ends. That is an important point to recognise. If the viability of the farmers is compromised, that is not of great concern to the mills. They still have a future.

It has been made out that this bill is a radical change and we are trying to take things back to the way they were before. That is a very misleading interpretation of what we are doing here. We are preserving the pre-existing arrangements. We are trying to preserve the way the industry is going now into the future. The millers have ruined the dynamic. They have come in in a dominant position and said, 'We don't need QSL. We're doing it.' They have changed the dynamic in the market: 'We want more power so we have more control over the price.' They want to further strengthen that market imbalance. We are trying to say, 'Hang on, we don't want you to have any more power and have more of an imbalance.' They are the ones making the change, precipitating the change. We are the ones trying to preserve the status quo. It is false and misleading to say that this is a change to take things back to the way they were before. This is trying to preserve the status quo.

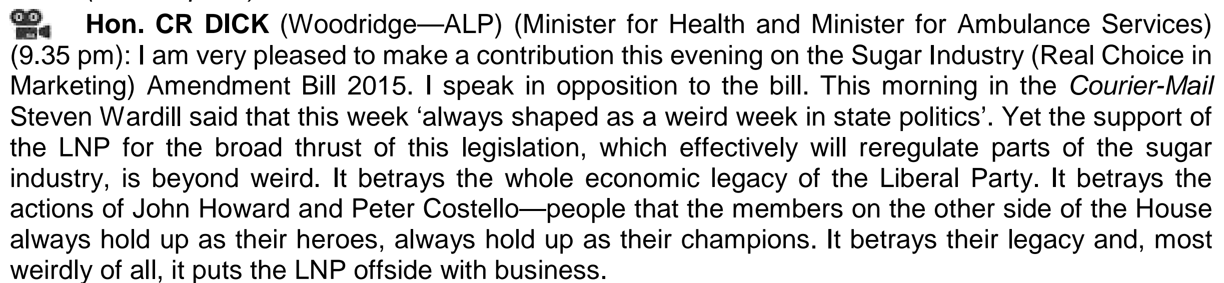
I sat and listened to the department when they gave their initial feedback on this bill, and it is one of the very few times that I have got really angry in a committee. There was a report given on the aspects of the bill. The first part of the report said how wonderful deregulation was because it welcomed all of this investment in mills. Perhaps there is logic in that. It is good to have investment in the mills.

Then we were told how much this bill could threaten the interests, the profitability and the investments that millers have made in their mills—full stop. That was the end of the report. I said, 'You don't seem to understand that this bill was written with the interests of the growers in mind and you have not mentioned them. You didn't mention the growers once in the report. You mentioned the millers and the threat to their investment but you didn't mention the growers.'

I can see where a lot of the advice is coming from, and I question it. Time and time again these people are just obsessed with keeping any sort of intervention out of the marketplace. I feel that there has been far too much weight and value put on the millers' interests. That is important. They are a very important part of the industry, but they are not the sum total. There is the growers' interests as well. They have invested a lot in their farms. They might have a million dollars invested in their farms individually across the 4,400 cane-farming families. They have an investment as well. We should be looking after their profitability, their investment and their asset. We have a market imbalance. The mills are quite entitled to chase profitability, but government has to ensure that both sides can have a fair crack and can operate on a level playing field.

The other point to make is that, if we have vertical integration in the supply chain, who knows what the price will be. If they are smart, millers over the next 10 or 20 years will give just enough to keep the farmers in the game to make sure the cane is coming through the mill, but they will squeeze the profitability. If we want to get an idea of that, go through the cane-farming towns. I challenge all members to go through the cane-farming towns and talk to the businesses, talk to the GPs, see how the mental health of the farmers and farmers' families are going. They have some big problems and we need to help them out. Stop talking about the millers and start talking about the farmers as well in the same sentence. They are part of the equation just as much as the millers which is why this bill is needed tonight.

(Time expired)



Hon. CR DICK (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (9.35 pm): I am very pleased to make a contribution this evening on the Sugar Industry (Real Choice in Marketing) Amendment Bill 2015. I speak in opposition to the bill. This morning in the *Courier-Mail* Steven Wardill said that this week 'always shaped as a weird week in state politics'. Yet the support of the LNP for the broad thrust of this legislation, which effectively will reregulate parts of the sugar industry, is beyond weird. It betrays the whole economic legacy of the Liberal Party. It betrays the actions of John Howard and Peter Costello—people that the members on the other side of the House always hold up as their heroes, always hold up as their champions. It betrays their legacy and, most weirdly of all, it puts the LNP offside with business.

I respect the views of the members of the Katter party in introducing this legislation. I do not agree with those views but I respect them. The reason I respect them is that the member for Mount Isa and the member for Dalrymple are at least consistent in the economic views that they hold. They are consistent when they come into this parliament, and I respect them for it. They are consistent in their overall economic approach. I do not agree with parts of that approach, but at least they have the courage of their convictions and they hold to their convictions in this parliament—which is what members of parliament are expected to do. It is the approach of those city based Liberals—none of whom are on the speaking list for this bill—who in the past have been the champions of free markets and open trade arrangements, which are the most puzzling.

Mrs Frecklington: We have two hours.

Mr DICK: I take the interjection. The member for Nanango says that we have only two hours. Where is the member for Clayfield? He is in the House. I look forward to hearing from the member for Clayfield and the member for Indooroopilly and the member for Caloundra and the member for Surfers Paradise. I look forward to them speaking. I will tell you why every Queenslander has an interest.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DICK: I will tell you why they have an interest shortly. They are selling out their main supporters for a measure which will turn back the clock to a world which no longer exists. The world in which Australia sheltered behind tariff laws is over, and there was bipartisan support for that—that is, until the LNP saw that they could get some short-term political advantage out of turning their backs on their own economic legacy. About 95 per cent of Australia's sugar industry is in Queensland, and it is an industry which was tightly regulated by governments for many years.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DICK: But the sugar reform package in 2004, put together by both the federal coalition government of John Howard and the state Labor government of Peter Beattie, gave $444 million to the sugar industry to restructure itself and eventually open itself to the free market. That is why every

member in this House has a right to speak on this bill, because I know the taxpayers of Woodridge contributed $444 million. I hear the cries from the members opposite that somehow the taxpayers who contributed quite properly to the restructuring of an industry should not be heard, that somehow city based people, city based electors and city based representatives should not be heard.

I am happy to be heard for the people of Woodridge, the battlers, many of whom are on the average weekly wage or less, who contributed out of their own pocket to restructure the sugar industry because it was the right thing to do for the industry, for the state and for the nation. But we will not hear the city based Liberals stand up for what they believe in. They are deeply compromised and they have sold themselves out to the dead hand of the National Party yet again. The dead hand of the National Party from 1957 to 1989 that held this state back is back in spades running the show.

For the years before 2004 the government acquired the entire sugar crop grown in Queensland and marketed it as a block through Queensland Sugar, a government body. The changes foreshadowed in 2004 meant that Queensland Sugar became a grower owned body and farmers could use that body to market their crop, even if that crop was processed through a mill owned by large companies, many of them owned by companies based outside of Australia. Not surprisingly, overseas companies entered the Australian sugar-milling market as the main company which used to process sugar, CSR, retreated to the US and concentrated on other parts of its business.

There was never any secret about the intentions of companies like Wilmar, the China Oil and Food Company, or the Thailand owned Mitr Phol Sugar and why they came to Australia to invest. All of those companies wanted a steady and constant supply of the world's best sugar grown in Queensland, firstly, for their own value-adding operations back in their home country or, secondly, to sell around the world because it is the best, as they all have sources of raw sugar from growing operations in countries other than Australia. These are large companies which have invested in our state and deserve to be supported by the right structure in our state which will benefit growers, our state and our nation.

As I have said, I can understand and respect the views of the member for Mount Isa and the member for Dalrymple on this matter even though I do not agree with them. What I find staggering is the way that members on the other side such as the member for Clayfield, the member for Indooroopilly and the member for Surfers Paradise have changed from being economic rationalists to agrarian socialists. Someone should tell them what John Howard and Peter Costello did. The member for Clayfield wants to turn Australia back into a closed shop, not open for business, closed for business, everything regulated, with Australia moving away from the 1980 reforms.

The member for Clayfield last night claimed the economic legacy of Hawke and Keating. Remember that? He cannot even claim Costello and Howard, let alone Hawke and Keating. He said that our government eschews reform and abandons the heritage of its great leaders Hawke and Keating. Yet he is the one abandoning the legacy of Howard and Costello. As the *Australian Financial Review* said this morning of the situation in Queensland, 'This is slightly bizarre because the LNP's protectionist policy stance is at odds with federal Liberal Party policies.'

The member for Clayfield was the champion of free trade in 2012. What did he say in a ministerial statement? He said, 'Two-way trade is vital to the Queensland economy.' In August 2012 he told the House, 'Last month I undertook a trade mission to China, Japan and the United States, which among other things aimed to open discussions between Queensland businesses and potential international partners.' In August 2012 he said, 'The trade mission succeeded in its aim to build on existing relationships with our major trading partners to reinforce the state as an attractive investment decision.'

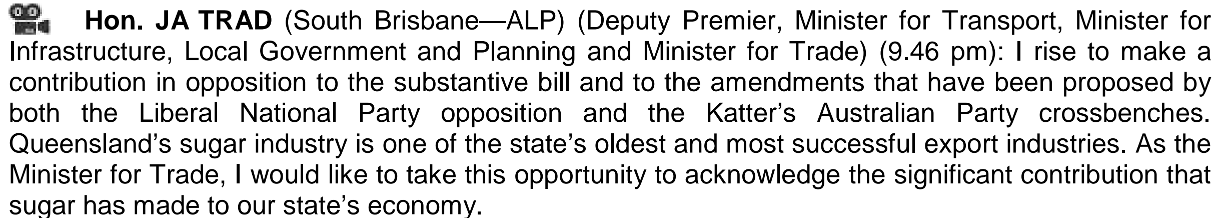
In November 2013 he was banging away again as the minister for trade, and now the shadow minister for trade: 'growing our exports and attracting foreign investment is vital to that process' of creating jobs. That was the past when the member for Clayfield was economically rational. As Treasurer he understood the need for foreign investment in Queensland and promoted that, but when it all got too tough he went to water because we know about the member for Clayfield. When the going gets tough, the member for Clayfield gets going. He does not have the stomach to put up a rational argument within his party. Maybe that is because he is trawling for the numbers to get the dead hand of the National Party to push him up the leadership scale. He is quite prepared to put his party's perceived electoral interests ahead of the Queensland economic interest.

If this legislation is passed, it will send a terrible signal overseas—a signal that Queensland changes the rules if it does not like what is happening. If ever there were a disincentive to foreign investment, that would be it. What this incident shows is that the Liberal Party of 2015 has gone back to being a Liberal Party of the pre 1980s: surrendering to the National Party. The Liberal Party is the surrender monkeys of the LNP, putting its hands up and surrendering to the National Party.

We saw in the last session of parliament how the member for Mansfield, who in the 1980s was a firm and vigorous opponent of the gerrymander, tried to put in place an electoral system which was a return to the bad old days of the gerrymander, and this is the same thing over and over.

An opposition member interjected.

Mr DICK: I will take the interjection: resorting to slurs and personal invective because that is all they have. They do not have a rational argument. That is all they have. Attack the personality and not the policy because they know fundamentally the policy is flawed. They are trying to take us back to a world that no longer exists. Yet again with the LNP it is, as always, forward to the past.



Hon. JA TRAD (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade) (9.46 pm): I rise to make a contribution in opposition to the substantive bill and to the amendments that have been proposed by both the Liberal National Party opposition and the Katter's Australian Party crossbenches. Queensland's sugar industry is one of the state's oldest and most successful export industries. As the Minister for Trade, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the significant contribution that sugar has made to our state's economy.

Sugar cane is Queensland's leading agricultural crop and we produce the lion's share of Australia's raw sugar production, approximately 95 per cent of the total, with the remaining five per cent produced in northern New South Wales. This national industry covers more than 4,400 farms across the country and it is the lifeblood for many regional communities in these areas, supporting the economy and supporting local jobs. In Queensland, the industry employs 16,000 people with around 3,000 apprenticeships in training. As Deputy Premier, I am concerned about any damage to a vital industry that injects millions of dollars each year into our regional economies and which provides employment almost the length of the Queensland coastline and west into the Atherton Tablelands. It is about the whole industry that I come to this debate.

As Queensland's Minister for Trade, I am also deeply concerned for our state's reputation as an investment destination of choice. Governments of all persuasions have worked hard over a number of years to promote Queensland as a stable and secure place to invest, and my colleague the Minister for Health has outlined statements in this place that the former trade minister and member for Clayfield contributed in terms of his comments in this place in relation to the importance of trade and the importance of foreign direct investment into the Queensland economy.

I have just returned from a trade mission to Indonesia, Singapore and India to do just that, but this bill has the potential to seriously undermine this aim and the groundwork that governments of all persuasions have laid to establish Queensland as an important trading partner and economy well-placed to attract investment. Singapore's Wilmar Sugar owns and operates eight sugar mills in north and Central Queensland. Thailand's Mitr Phol group is the largest sugar producer in Asia and owns the South Johnstone and Tablelands, Mulgrave Central Mill and the Maryborough Sugar Factory. Chinese company COFCO acquired the Tully Sugar Mill in 2011 and owns and operates a number of cane farms in the Tully region.

If this bill is passed, there is the potential for any or all of these companies to approach their national government and seek to initiate the investor-state dispute mechanism under the provisions in the free trade agreements between their country and ours. The bill has the potential not only to damage relations between Queensland and existing significant investors in this state but also to give pause to prospective investors thinking about investing in Queensland.

Successive Queensland Labor governments have managed major legislative reforms over many years in order to bring about much needed and appropriate competition reform in the state's industries, and the sugar industry particularly. The passage of this bill will effectively re-regulate the industry and that would increase the perception of sovereign risk in Queensland. Make no mistake about it—it will introduce the fear and the perspective of sovereign risk here in Queensland.

According to the Queensland Productivity Commission's November 2015 *Decision regulatory impact statement*—

The impact on property rights implied in the Bill introduces sovereign risk into the sector. We consider this will make Queensland a less attractive investment than alternative options, particularly for companies with the option to invest across a range of countries and agri-businesses.

The successful passage of this legislation would place the Queensland government in the middle of what should be a negotiation between millers and growers and would unnecessarily jeopardise Queensland's hard-won reputation as a secure and desirable investment destination. As the Australian

Sugar Milling Council have stated, the Liberal National Party's support for this bill to re-regulate Queensland's sugar industry 'spells doom for the industry' and 'contravenes their own party's recently released real economic plan'.

If the LNP do not back away from their plans to support this bill, they are gambling with Queensland's economic future and they will be responsible for introducing sovereign risk into the sector and casting a long shadow over investment in our state. Queensland has always been a safe place to invest from a political perspective. However—

Opposition members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Grace): Order!

Ms TRAD: Queensland has always been seen as a safe place to invest from a political perspective. However, if this bill passes or if any of the LNP amendments are passed, then it will risk our enviable reputation. The people of Queensland expect their government to act in the state's best interests, and I encourage all parliamentarians to heed this today.

This bill will only kill investment in our sugar industry and poison our state's prospects with business, jeopardising our reputation as a strong economy to invest in. This outcome would not benefit Queensland—

Opposition members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Premier has the call.

Mr Cripps interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Hinchinbrook, the Deputy Premier has the call. I have called order a number of times. There are conversations happening around the chamber and I am struggling to hear her. The Deputy Premier has the call.

Ms TRAD: This bill will only kill investment in our sugar industry and poison our state's prospects with business, jeopardising our reputation as a strong economy to invest in. This outcome would not benefit Queensland; it will only hurt our economic credibility. As the Farm Institute warned—

Australian governments need to be extremely careful not to take actions that discourage foreign investment.

Capital investment in the sugar industry has been a positive consequence of deregulation and helps to modernise the industry. It has provided the funding needed to upgrade aged infrastructure and improve productivity in the sector during a period when many growers and cooperatively owned mills were under financial stress. The new directions in the industry—where millers are diversifying into value-added products such as biofuels—have been supported by investment. This bill only has the potential to discourage future technological investment and innovation. With nearly all raw sugar production sold on a deregulated international market, the stark reality is if this bill passes it will place regulatory burdens on the industry and if producers are not competitive they will not survive.

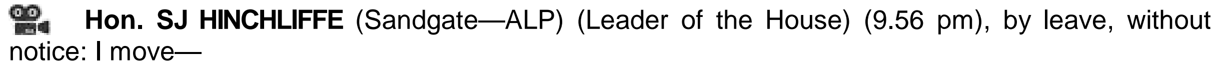
Queensland's own Productivity Commission has weighed up the bill and concluded that there is no evidence of market failure and there are no benefits to additional regulation for the industry. The Queensland Productivity Commission report warned the bill, which seeks to reintroduce pre-arbitration between canegrowers and the sugar mills, has the potential to cost the industry millions.

Ultimately, as members of this parliament, we must ask ourselves what is the problem we are seeking to remedy here? Given there is no market failure in the sugar industry, there is no cause to support this bill. The government strongly believes that a fair and commercially sound environment for reaching agreements that suit the growers and mills is the only way forward for the industry. The Palaszczuk Labor government cannot support the Sugar Industry (Real Choice in Marketing) Amendment Bill 2015 before parliament here tonight because it will fundamentally be detrimental to the future of the sugar industry as a whole in Queensland and it will be detrimental for the state more broadly. If this bill passes it will only stifle investment and condemn the industry to a future of legal challenges and red tape. It will destroy our reputation internationally as a choice place for foreign investment, and this government will not sit by and see this happen. We intend to ensure that this is appealed as far as we can possibly take it.

Debate, on motion of Ms Trad, adjourned.

MOTION

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders



Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (9.56 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That, notwithstanding anything contained in the standing and sessional orders for this day's sitting, the House will continue to conduct general business beyond 10 pm until the adjournment is moved.

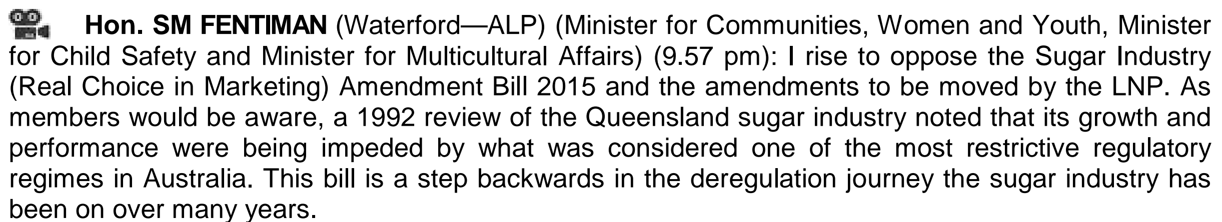
Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

SUGAR INDUSTRY (REAL CHOICE IN MARKETING) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 3126.



Hon. SM FENTIMAN (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (9.57 pm): I rise to oppose the Sugar Industry (Real Choice in Marketing) Amendment Bill 2015 and the amendments to be moved by the LNP. As members would be aware, a 1992 review of the Queensland sugar industry noted that its growth and performance were being impeded by what was considered one of the most restrictive regulatory regimes in Australia. This bill is a step backwards in the deregulation journey the sugar industry has been on over many years.

Sugar is of course a significant contributor to Queensland's economy, including in my own region of Logan and Beenleigh. A strong, viable, sustainable sugar industry is important for the secure employment for tens of thousands of Queenslanders. The only privately owned mill—the Rocky Point Sugar Mill—is in Woongoolba, which is close to my own electorate of Waterford. It has been a family owned mill for generations, owned by the Heck family, and Bill Heck is an active participant in the Beenleigh Yatala Chamber of Commerce, which I participate in and support. I saw Bill at a Chamber of Commerce breakfast just last Friday, and he discussed with me the risks to the industry should this bill be passed.

I can understand the motivations behind this bill. We know that farmers everywhere are struggling. I know that members of Katter's Australian Party who have brought this bill before the House care deeply about the success of Queensland's primary industries and about the farmers who have worked hard to create this success. I am certain that the intentions behind this bill stem from a desire to help the sugar industry, but it carries with it a great risk that it will not only hinder the sugar industry's future growth but risk damaging Queensland's reputation as a free economy and as a desirable destination for international investment

The Palaszczuk government firmly believes this matter should be resolved by commercial agreement, not require the intervention of the state to move backwards decades in terms of regulatory frameworks. The best people to develop and negotiate future marketing arrangements that benefit the entire Queensland sugar industry are the people who work in the industry and who rely on it operating efficiently and profitably.

A number of recent agreements have shown that commercially agreed outcomes can be achieved between millers and growers without government intervention. It is not clear from the information provided that consultation has occurred with all sectors of the industry. As the AMWU pointed out in their submission to the Agriculture and Environment Committee's consideration of this bill, adequate consideration of the potential impacts across all sectors of the industry has not occurred. It is important that we consider the potential impacts carefully. No-one benefits from an industry that is unproductive, unprofitable and unsustainable. The sugar industry is currently internationally competitive and the Queensland economy cannot afford that being put at risk.

In recent years billions of dollars of investment have flowed into the industry primarily from international companies. The regulatory impact statement undertaken by the Queensland Productivity Commission on the bill concluded that there is no evidence of a market failure. In fact, there was no evidence or economic analysis that supports that this bill is the best way to take the industry forward into the future. It is difficult to see how the benefits outweigh the risks. It is concerning to think that after decades of regulatory reform in this area we would interfere with that overnight without having completely analysed the potential impacts on all sectors including mill workers.

Mr RYAN (Morayfield—ALP) (10.00 pm): I rise to make a short and sweet contribution to the Sugar Industry (Real Choice in Marketing) Amendment Bill 2015.

Mr Crandon: Being frivolous—that is typical.

Mr RYAN: Sweeten up, member for Coomera. We have heard a lot of contributions tonight from members of both sides of the House. I will be opposing the bill before the House. We have heard a lot from both sides of the House about the industry over many decades. What is concerning to me is that many decades of hard work will be unwound by this bill and—in addition, if the bill is passed—by the amendments proposed by the LNP. Only 10 years ago did the state and federal governments work very closely to effect some pretty significant industry reform and invested significant public money in supporting that reform. I note in particular that an amount of $444 million over five years was invested to support the industry adjustment package and, indeed, support great reform in the sector to ensure efficiencies but also to allow investment in the sector. We heard a very good contribution tonight from the member for Maryborough.

Opposition members: Oh!

Mr RYAN: No, it was. It was a fantastic contribution from the member for Maryborough because he spoke about his home town and the investment that is going on there as a result of the decades of industry reform. The member for Maryborough spoke quite passionately about how that investment has rejuvenated the town of Maryborough. He is very proud of Maryborough and he is very proud of how that investment has created additional opportunities for not only growers, but also other businesses within the Maryborough region. I think it is quite frivolous for members opposite to laugh at the contribution that the member for Maryborough made because that is a real example of how industry reform and deregulation, when it is supported appropriately through industry assistance packages—and well-thought out reform in that space—can deliver good outcomes for regional towns and, in fact, all of Queensland.

Mr Costigan interjected.

Mr RYAN: No, he spoke quite passionately and I think it is quite frivolous for other members to knock that contribution just as it was for other members to knock the contribution of the member for Mackay, who spoke about the importance of—

Mr Costigan: He put us to sleep.

Mr RYAN: Member for Whitsunday—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Grace): Order! Member for Whitsunday, the member for Morayfield has the call.

Mr RYAN: The member for Mackay, of course, spoke passionately about her home town and also the history that sugar has played in the Mackay region. She again spoke about the importance that the current regulatory framework provides in the Mackay region and, in fact, for many parts of Queensland. We play a very dangerous game when we start to unwind decades worth of regulatory reform. Certainly the bill before the House will significantly impede that regulatory reform and actually undermine some pretty significant commitments of investment in the industry and the sector more broadly. We heard about the government assistance packages and the investment that they have provided. We also have heard from other speakers on this side of the House about the investment that has been made not only by foreign entities in the industry, but also by local industries investing in expanding the capacity of the mills and in broader community infrastructure and investment as well. That is all at risk as a result of this bill. It is interesting, of course, to hear from those opposite who espouse a virtue of being the party of deregulation and cutting red tape, yet they want to re-regulate and impose more red tape on the industry.

This is a bill which will have a significant impact on the sugar industry. It will undermine significant efforts to reform the industry and create an important regulatory framework and, in addition, undermine a lot of that good investment that is happening in communities right across Queensland.

I would also like to remind those opposite of some of the submissions that were received by the parliamentary committee in respect of this bill. One particular submission I note was from the Australian Industry Group. They noted that after examining the draft bill they had numerous concerns. This should be of concern to all members of the House because one of our fundamental roles as legislators is to make sure that the legislation we pass is not only appropriate, but is in the best interests of Queenslanders and also can withstand legal challenges if those legal challenges are brought. The Ai Group said in respect of this draft bill that it is their understanding that if the bill is enacted it is likely to breach the terms of various fair trade agreements and, in fact, section 51(xxxi) of the Constitution. That

should be of concern to us as legislators that we are potentially passing some legislation which may not withstand a constitutional challenge and may, in fact, breach a number of fair trade agreements that our governments have entered into. The Ai Group also said—

- If enacted, the Bill would effectively transfer property rights over about two-thirds of the raw sugar produced by mills to growers who supply cane. It would also introduce compulsory pre-contract arbitration between sugar millers and cane growers.
- It would adversely impact on investments that have been made over recent years on the basis of the deregulated approach to sugar marketing.
- As a consequence it would adversely impact on Australia's reputation as a fair place to do business and it would detract from our ability to attract foreign, and indeed, domestic investment.

That is a contribution from the Ai Group. When the opposition want to knock a contribution from the Ai Group, they are really knocking a leading organisation in Australia which is providing not only a fair assessment on investment in business, but also about how we can attract more investment to Queensland and Australia. So they should probably listen to some of those contributions. They went on—

- This would prove particularly damaging at a time when the country is seeking to lift investment in non-mining sectors as part of the important task of rebalancing the Australian economy.

The concerns expressed by the Ai Group should have caused a second thought for those who support this bill. Those opposite may not always listen to all points of view, but surely they should take into account the view of the Queensland Productivity Commission because the Queensland Productivity Commission's conclusion was—and I ask all members to listen very carefully to this because this is the Queensland Productivity Commission, an independent statutory body.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr Ryan: Just listen very carefully because you will make a fool of yourself in a moment when you vote. It states—

> We have considered in detail the extensive submissions made in response to the Consultation RIS, and made some amendments to the analysis. However, the conclusion of this RIS remains unchanged, specifically:
>
> (a) there was no evidence to support a case for market failure in the Queensland sugar industry that would indicate the need for additional Government intervention; and
>
> (b) that the benefits of additional regulation, as proposed by the Bill, do not outweigh the costs.
>
> The Decision RIS concludes that retaining the existing regulatory framework—with no additional regulation—will provide the greatest net benefit to Queensland.

I return to the point that I made before: our duty as legislators is to make sure that we pass good legislation in the best interests of Queensland. The Queensland Productivity Commission, an independent statutory body, said—

> The Decision RIS concludes that retaining the existing regulatory framework—with no additional regulation—will provide the greatest net benefit to Queensland.

The bill before the House is not good legislation. If passed, it will take the industry backwards. I ask all members to oppose it.

Mr GORDON (Cook—Ind) (10.10 pm): It gives me pleasure to rise in support of the bill before the House which was introduced by the member for Dalrymple, Shane Knuth, on behalf of Katter's Australian Party. I also support the amendments put forward today.

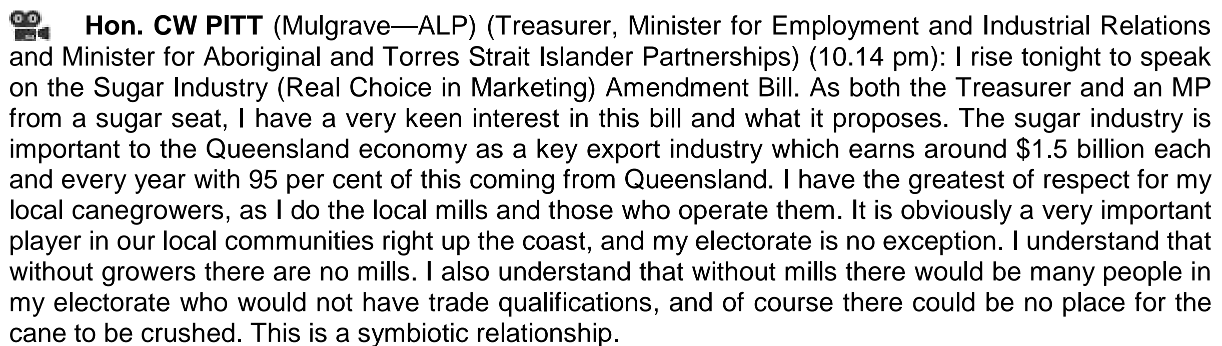
Australian sugar is world class. It is a brand that makes us proud, and as a Queenslander I stand proud to do what is right today. I have given this matter much consideration, and I sincerely mean this. I have had an open door policy and I have met with millers and growers; I have considered the report of the Queensland Productivity Commission and the views of the Queensland Law Society; I have met various parties and heard views for and against the bill and its amendments; and today I have made a principled decision.

This bill gives the canegrower a real choice in the marketing of their share of sugar. They can go to the mills, QSL or whoever they choose as a matter of free choice. In so doing, the bill provides for more robust competition and transparency. It gives greater confidence to grow the world's best sugar and inevitably promises better prices to cane farmers and millers. The bill brings balance to the emergence of an uneven playing field in the market, where the control of the marketing of sugar has shifted disproportionately away from canegrowers with the effects we have seen at the mediation process.

I support this bill because the industry deserves a legislative framework that enables the continuation of the current voluntary market structure while protecting the growers' economic interest in the sugar that they supply for processing. It is a framework that paves the way for the continuation

of growers' rights and provides an incentive for growers to remain in an industry of their choice and to face global competition and embrace opportunities in Asia. The bill provides for supply agreements to be negotiated and reached between growers and millers. To suggest otherwise is just wrong. It is not the intention of this bill to force growers to use pre-arbitration processes to reach an agreement offered by a third party: far from it. The bill aims to build greater trust and prevent the misuse of market power. If there is no agreement the bill provides a safeguard that does not exist. It provides a framework in which policy objectives regarding the protection of our finest agricultural crop can be met by stipulating the mandatory process that parties must follow to resolve disagreements in the negotiation of cane supply agreements. In this regard this bill is deliberate in its intent to use the Commercial Arbitration Act 2013.

Sugar farming touches me at a very personal level as the proud grandson of a gun cutter who cut cane by hand in the Innisfail, Silkwood and South Johnstone districts. Having worked on cane farms myself in North Queensland and having grown up with farmers and millers, I have experienced the dynamics of the industry and the hardships and the successes. Restoration of a proper balance through legislative safeguards is the cornerstone of my decision. Today I stand for fairness and the campaign of choice in sugar marketing. Whilst I may not always be a member of this House, I will always be a Queenslander. I commend the bill to the House.



Hon. CW PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (10.14 pm): I rise tonight to speak on the Sugar Industry (Real Choice in Marketing) Amendment Bill. As both the Treasurer and an MP from a sugar seat, I have a very keen interest in this bill and what it proposes. The sugar industry is important to the Queensland economy as a key export industry which earns around $1.5 billion each and every year with 95 per cent of this coming from Queensland. I have the greatest of respect for my local canegrowers, as I do the local mills and those who operate them. It is obviously a very important player in our local communities right up the coast, and my electorate is no exception. I understand that without growers there are no mills. I also understand that without mills there would be many people in my electorate who would not have trade qualifications, and of course there could be no place for the cane to be crushed. This is a symbiotic relationship.

With the industry employing over 15,000 people across the state, including cane farms and mills, any industry shakeup has to be carefully considered before being implemented. The bill as it stands is not carefully considered. Enacting this bill would put at risk billions of dollars' worth of investment and wind the clock back unnecessarily. I certainly acknowledge the outcomes that growers are trying to achieve, but this bill is not the answer. It is a heavy-handed approach that has more potential drawbacks than benefits. In any industry where there is not a parity of size between businesses engaged in supplier-purchaser arrangements there can be disputes or concerns raised from time to time. Whilst the regulatory environment of the sugar industry has not changed substantially since the reforms in 2006, I acknowledge that new players have entered the industry and others have consolidated their market share. But there are existing safeguards to stop market share being exploited via mechanisms such as allowing collective bargaining and provision for dispute resolution.

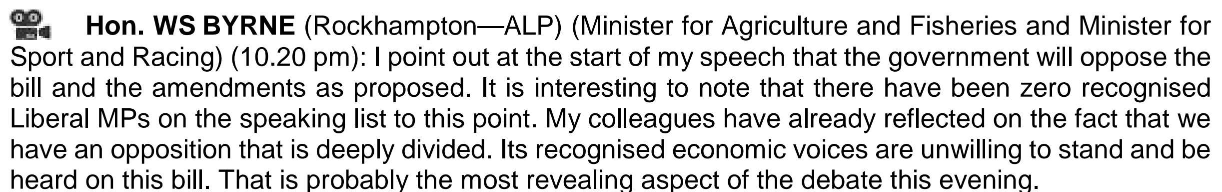
Since the last phase of the sugar industry deregulation that occurred in 2006, billions of dollars of investment have flowed into the industry under the current legislative framework. It is arguable that much of this investment may not have occurred over the last decade were it envisaged that parliament would reregulate the industry in 2015. That is not to say that we should not always be looking to see if regulation can be improved. The approach taken by this bill is a sledgehammer and potentially only minor tinkering is what should be being pursued. It is a shame that the LNP have seemed to jump on board with the sledgehammer approach—a party who have held more positions on this than they have had MPs.

Due to concerns over the bill, following the recommendation of parliament's Agriculture and Environment Committee I requested that the Queensland Productivity Commission undertake a regulatory impact assessment of the bill. Because this is a private member's bill, it was not subject to the regulatory impact assessment that would normally be undertaken with government-initiated legislation. On 26 November 2015 the QPC released its Decision Regulatory Impact Statement on the bill. They concluded that retaining the existing regulatory framework with no additional regulation will provide the greatest net benefit to Queensland. This is based on the QPC's assessment that there is no evidence to support a case for market failure in the Queensland sugar industry that would indicate the need for additional government intervention at this time, and the benefits of additional regulation as proposed by the bill do not outweigh the costs.

It is worth pointing out that the QPC is not specifically making comment on the intention behind the bill, but on the practicalities of what the bill is seeking to achieve. Whilst some may not be happy with the conclusions of the QPC, it is difficult to fault their methodology and conclusions. The proposal to re-regulate the sugar industry as it stands would be counterproductive for growers, as the industry would potentially be tied up in legal challenges for the foreseeable future. Investment in mills and associated milling infrastructure brings in much needed employment and opportunity to regional centres through skills development, training and value-adding infrastructure. Deregulation has resulted in billions of dollars of investment into an industry that was previously struggling. To reverse all of this because of a breakdown in commercial negotiations would be throwing the baby out with the bathwater. At a time when we are looking for more investment in Queensland, particularly in our agricultural and industrial sectors, re-regulation is a dangerous message to be sending to potential investors.

This bill as it stands would introduce sovereign risk into the sector which would negatively impact on investment in rural and regional communities throughout the state including in my electorate. Globalisation has led to increased competition for every investment dollar, risking our state's reputation. Sovereign risk is a hard accusation to shake once you start interfering with the ownership of rights or products that have been long established and previously agreed upon. This bill should be voted down and parties should be encouraged to go back to the negotiating table. Whilst there may be an argument that the existing regulatory environment may need some tinkering, it should not be turned on its head.

A further example of why this bill is not needed is the recent agreement between Burdekin growers and Wilmar. Twenty-two growers have recently signed interim 2017 arrangements. This agreement accounted for over 500,000 tonnes of sugar. Commercial solutions are possible under the current arrangements. I would certainly encourage members to vote against this bill, not because they are anti grower but because they are seeking the best long-term outcome for the sugar industry—for growers, for farm workers, for millers and for mill workers alike.



Hon. WS BYRNE (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Sport and Racing) (10.20 pm): I point out at the start of my speech that the government will oppose the bill and the amendments as proposed. It is interesting to note that there have been zero recognised Liberal MPs on the speaking list to this point. My colleagues have already reflected on the fact that we have an opposition that is deeply divided. Its recognised economic voices are unwilling to stand and be heard on this bill. That is probably the most revealing aspect of the debate this evening.

The sustainability and profitability of the sugar industry are vitally important to Queensland. This bill will take the business environment of the sugar industry back to where it was in the 1990s—uncompetitive, on the verge of collapse and viewed unfavourably by investors. During the 1990s, independent analysis assessed that unless there were significant increases in productivity and efficiency there would be catastrophic reductions in industry profits. That would have been the fate of the Queensland sugar industry but for deregulation and the investment that flowed from it. It is now a great irony that it is the LNP that is trying to wind back that deregulation.

The bill would reintroduce precontract arbitration. It is important to remind everyone that this practice was removed back in 2006 because it was determined to cost the industry money and because the process was slow and arduous.

As minister I have been very clear on my views since day one that the matter was best dealt with at a commercial level. I remind those opposite of the contribution of Senator Matt Canavan when a proposal was put to the Senate on sugar. He said—

> Negotiations are still occurring between sugar mills and sugar growers and it is not the right time for the government to act before those negotiations are concluded. Everybody in the sector appreciates that the best outcome here is a commercial outcome, that the best outcome is for millers and growers to come back together.

Unlike many contributions from the good senator, this one was right on the money. Julie Bishop, the foreign minister, wrote to me in June outlining her concerns. It is unusual for a foreign minister to write to a state agriculture minister about a particular bill. The letter states—

> … it is important that Australia continues to maintain a credible reputation for being an effective and reliable partner with an exceptional record of compliance within the terms of our international trading agreements.

The LNP is meant to be the champion of business and industry. The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry commented on this proposal. Its submission states—

> This type of legislative transfer of controlling interest in a downstream manufactured product would be unprecedented in Queensland and Australian business. It would also set a concerning precedent for other Queensland-based manufacturing and processing sectors.

What about the comments from the Australian Industry Group, who commented on this legislation—

… it would adversely impact on Australia's reputation as a fair place to do business and it would detract from our ability to attract foreign, and indeed, domestic investment. This would prove particularly damaging at a time when the country is seeking to lift investment in non-mining sectors as part of the important task of rebalancing the Australian economy.

In one ignorant stroke the LNP has abandoned its business supporters, federal Liberal ministers and basic good economics. Ultimately, it is the LNP at the state level—those opposite—who have allowed the industry to become moribund by allowing this delay while the legislation was on the table. In fact, the LNP's stance has been the decisive and divisive factor in spearing a commercial outcome. It is its actions that have made sure a commercial outcome could not be achieved.

The reactionary Country Party elements of the LNP have decided that the only good industry in Queensland is a regulated one. That is where it comes from. Those small-l liberals cowering across the chamber must be embarrassed holding their tongue when the members for Southern Downs and Nanango are promoting their version of sugar re-regulation. More embarrassing was when the member for Nanango could not even explain the details of her amendment with Craig Zonca on *Country Hour* yesterday. The member for Nanango will move LNP amendments that have had no adequate consultation. The member admitted in the same interview—

… listening to the canegrowers. I mean, that is my job: to represent farmers up and down the state …

I hate to tell the member for Nanango, but in agriculture you have to listen to the entire sector—growers, millers, exporters and consumers. You represent the entire sector. You do not pick sides; you represent the entire sector. That is your job—not to go around trying to pick little pieces that may be part of your National Party branch, not just one element of the sector. That is what this is all about: one element of the sector, playing LNP Country Party politics.

Playing politics with agriculture is not good for Queensland. Ultimately, the LNP bill will come back to haunt the members opposite, particularly the leadership team. The tenor of this process has shown that the LNP still holds dear their vision of agrarian socialism—one where the government directly intervenes in the market that has not demonstrated a need for intervention. The Productivity Commission says that there is no market failure and other advice says that there is no likelihood of market failure, but that whole assumption underpins what we have seen from those opposite. Those liberals opposite who pontificate on cutting red tape and allowing businesses to be free of regulation are supporting direct government intervention. By supporting this bill the LNP is stripped of its liberalism. Those opposite might well rename themselves now the Queensland Country Party, because that is where they are at.

I look forward to hearing from the member for Clayfield, who has been repeatedly asked to stand in this chamber and defend this legislation. What does he have to say about it? What about the members for Mansfield, Everton and Indooroopilly? They are all quiet. I cannot wait to see them swinging through the Liberal branches explaining how they now support extreme government intervention in functioning markets. That will be an interesting conversation.

For a supposed party of market principles, they should be interested in what the independent Queensland Productivity Commission has to say about the potential cost to business in both money and time. The QPC has determined as part of its assessment of the bill that reintroducing precontract arbitration will cost the industry between $1.2 million and $1.5 million every time an arbitrator is engaged, and if the arbitration is fast-tracked it will take nine months. That sounds like a brilliant and efficient process! There is a reason that was removed.

The LNP has sold out on its constituents because of the leadership problems fundamentally demonstrated this evening by the opposition. We know that it took two goes for the member for Nanango to get it into shadow cabinet. We know that the Liberals in the shadow cabinet spoke against the member for Nanango and that the Leader of the Opposition is beholden to the old National Party core principle. We know this; what goes on is not exactly a state secret.

The sugar industry has been held to ransom and this parliament is being held to ransom to appease the leadership tensions across the chamber. How does this look to foreign investors?

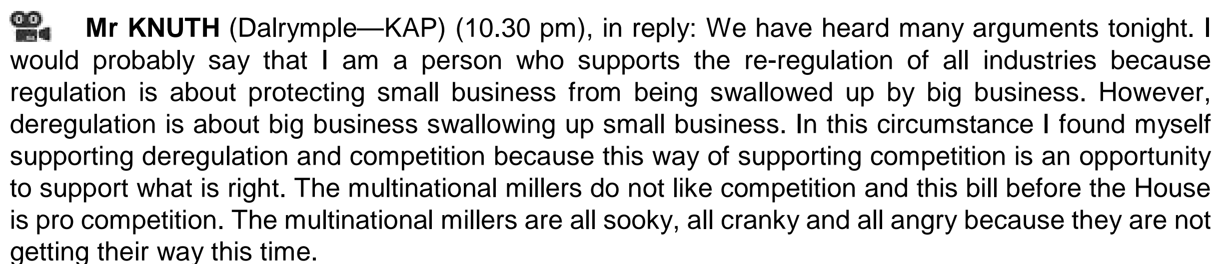
A government member interjected.

Mr BYRNE: I know. They have told us how it looks. How does it look to Queensland businesses?

Opposition members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Grace): Order, members! The hour is late. We do want to get through this debate. There is a bit too much audible conversation. The minister's time has nearly expired. The minister has the call.

Mr BYRNE: How is this going to look to the voters of Queensland? There is no question that the effects of this bill will be long and painful for the industry. That is especially so in light of last night's passing of the ethanol mandate. Where will the investment come from? We have already heard an example from the member for Maryborough in that we know what the consequences of this are going to be for the aspirations of ethanol mandates. No right thinking investor would risk an investment that the LNP could turn around on and further regulate. I want to make it clear: I do not believe that this bill is the best way forward for the whole industry. I think the best way forward to provide long-term security for an industry is to provide a business platform that is economically sustainable in a commercial environment, in a commercial world. If this bill passes, there is a very real possibility that the authorisation of anticompetitive behaviour that this bill would enshrine will be overturned by the Australian government. Maybe that is what the Liberals on the other side are hoping for. While the parliament may authorise growers choosing the marketer, the Australian government is within its rights to rescind this authorisation if it has concerns that there are no public benefits by introducing the legislation. This bill and the amendments stand as condemnation of the economic credentials of the opposition.



Mr KNUTH (Dalrymple—KAP) (10.30 pm), in reply: We have heard many arguments tonight. I would probably say that I am a person who supports the re-regulation of all industries because regulation is about protecting small business from being swallowed up by big business. However, deregulation is about big business swallowing up small business. In this circumstance I found myself supporting deregulation and competition because this way of supporting competition is an opportunity to support what is right. The multinational millers do not like competition and this bill before the House is pro competition. The multinational millers are all sooky, all cranky and all angry because they are not getting their way this time.

We have heard many different tokens and the multinational millers published an open letter to Queenslanders on the future of the sugar industry that the bill will lead to higher industry costs, costly court challenges and risks to our reputation as a good place to invest. We have also heard from the Productivity Commission that we do not need to support this bill because there have been no market failures. There have been no market failures because at this present moment we are still under the old system. The reason there have been no market failures is that the system at this present moment where QSL markets the sugar works. It works. However, this bill is providing some leeway in that it will get better for the multinational millers because not only do they receive a third of their mill's economic interest of the sugar but it also gives the opportunity for growers to participate with the mills if they want to get their sugar to market. This bill looks after the mills better, but they do not want it because they want no competition and no QSL and growers marketing with the mills whether or not they like it.

People talk about challenging the law, and I refer to the Agriculture and Environment Committee public hearing inquiry into the Sugar Industry (Real Choice in Marketing) Amendment Bill held on 31 August this year. Present at that hearing were Mr Shane Budden, Manager of Advocacy and Policy from the Queensland Law Society; Mr Michael Fitzgerald, President of the Queensland Law Society; and Mr David Grace, Chair of the Competition and Consumer Law Committee of the Queensland Law Society. They spoke strongly in favour of this bill and said that it was illusionary if people think that this bill is not pro competition. I will quote some of what Mr Grace, the Chair of the Competition and Consumer Law Committee, had to say, and I am happy to table this at the end of my speech. Mr David Grace said during the public hearing—

The principles of competition would advocate choice. Therefore, for the growers to have the right to choose who should market their product, their sugar, at the end of the process I think is a fair one. The right of choice is an essential and critical path for protection of competition. The policy of competition is not to protect corporations but rather to protect competition. The right of a grower to elect who it is that will market his, her or their product is, I think, fundamental to protect competition policy.

We keep hearing about re-regulation, but the lawyers are saying that it is actually there to protect competition policy. He continues—

I think this bill addresses it in a fair way.

Mr Grace from the Queensland Law Society also said—

Arguments about expropriation of rights simply deny the fairness of the notion of the grower's economic interest, because it means that the miller would have the sole rights to determine your markets. They may do a good job or they may do a bad job, but the grower is totally dependent upon the commercial ability of a miller to market. That miller may be a very good miller; it does not make him a very good marketer.

Who wants to market the sugar? The millers. They may be a good miller, but they may not be a very good marketer. We have to remember that we have a marketing system that has been around for 100 years. The mills are saying that they are now going to be great marketers, but what has been in place for 100 years is bad. Mr Grace continues—

Understanding world markets in sugar is not a simple thing in that there are great changes in that from time to time. The miller gets the milling fee anyway. He gets paid to do what he does, as he should. But the end result of what the grower gets in an international marketplace for sugar is a very different question, and the grower should have the right to protect that economic interest by nominating someone else to market the sugar if he, she or they believe that it is better to do so.

To address your point, the expropriation of property rights is, I think, an illusory expression ... the bill ... recognises the growers' economic interest, recognises the millers' rights to mill. The miller gets paid for that. The grower is totally dependent upon that process occurring within a period of time.

In continuing, Mr Grace said—

I do not think the argument about the expropriation of property rights in sugar is a fair one, given that it has taken in sugar cane, processed it and gets paid for that. I think the producer should have the right to say, 'So-and-so should market it.'

This bill will provide growers with the ability to choose how the sugar that determines 100 per cent of value in cane is marketed. He is saying that by sharing in the revenue from the sale of raw sugar growers currently have had a say in the marketing of raw sugar for 100 years. There is no dispute over the fact that growers have a clear economic interest in raw sugar produced from their cane. Some mills are seeking to remove the growers' right to have a say. This bill simply continues growers' rights. That is what the bill does.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Grace): Order! Member for Dalrymple, there is just a hum coming mainly from those on my left. There is some from my right as well. I please ask that you just keep it down. I am struggling to hear the member for Dalrymple. The member for Dalrymple has the call.

Mr KNUTH: This bill operates if growers and mills cannot reach an agreement in the negotiation of a cane supply agreement. The bill is clear in providing for and allowing mills and growers to reach agreement for a supply of cane price marketing for sugar on whatever terms they agreed. If there is no agreement, this bill—this is not coming from Shane Knuth; this is coming from the Competition and Consumer Law Committee of the Queensland Law Society—will resolve any deadlocks in the negotiation of the cane supply agreement using the Commercial Arbitration Act.

So the society is saying that, if negotiations break down between the canegrowers and the multinationals, it goes to arbitration. I want to talk about arbitration, because it is very important. The member for Mirani said that. Growers are forced to negotiate with multinational mills about a cane price agreement. The mills do not want QSL, they do not want any other competitor; they just want to negotiate a cane price agreement with a farmer. Can members imagine the big mining companies negotiating wages with a worker? Can members imagine that? What would they do? They would look to have some form of representation, some form of arbitration, some form of union to negotiate on behalf of that worker or, in this regard, canegrower. But the mills want to negotiate with the canefarmer themselves. They do not want QSL, they do not want canegrowers or canefarmers representing them; they just want to negotiate with them and, if they do not like it, the mills say, 'Take us to court.' The mills have billions of dollars with which to challenge the poor farmer who is trying to make a living growing the cane that is providing the jobs. This bill gives access to arbitration.

This bill is not about re-regulation; it is pro competition. Millers mill, growers grow and Queensland Sugar Ltd markets the sugar. But this bill is saying to the multinational millers, 'You can also market the sugar. You can have a part of it, but we want a competitor.' So all the mills need to do is work hard, negotiate hard and strive to get the best cane supply agreement with those farmers. That is all they have to do and, do members know what? They will win them. Likewise, this bill also brings about competition as QSL is going to do the same thing.

The other day I spoke to a canegrower. The multinational mills are accountable to their shareholders. They talk about international investment and all of that. Those shareholders want their money. They are not going to pull out because their shareholders are going to sack the CEO; they are going to sack the next person behind them, because they want their money. They are going to say, 'Get a commercial arrangement.' This bill does not stop a commercial arrangement between the millers and the growers. It provides the foundation and the mechanism, providing both parties agree. I say to every member here that, if this bill is agreed to, it is not the be-all and end-all. They can still have a commercial arrangement. There is a little fallback there because, if negotiations break down, it can be taken to arbitration. The Labor Party understands that. Also, there is going to be a competitive body. If someone does not do the right thing, then they can go to the other person.

In the end, this bill is the be-all and end-all. It does everything. That is why we proposed it. They are in a better position than what they were previously. This is important legislation for canegrowers. That is why we have canegrowers here. It is important for the cane farming industry, which stretches from Port Douglas right down to the Sunshine Coast. This bill is about whether they will continue to grow cane.

The multinational millers made out that this arbitration was a boogie. As I was saying, the reason they were saying it is a boogie—it is a bad thing—is they want to negotiate straight with the farmers and have nobody representing the farmers. They do not want to have any other competition; they just want it for themselves. I am very proud to introduce this bill. I am very proud to be able to represent the cane farming industry, the cane farming communities and the canefarmers right across Queensland. I commend this bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 5—

Mr KNUTH (10.45 pm): I seek leave to move amendments en bloc.

Leave granted.

Mr KNUTH: I move the following amendment—

1 **Clause 2 (Commencement)**

Page 4, lines 5 and 6—

omit.

Non-government amendment (Mr Knuth) agreed to.

Clauses 1 to 5, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 6—

Mr KNUTH (10.45 pm): I move the following amendments—

2 **Clause 6 (Insertion of new ss 33A and 33B)**

Page 5, line 3, after 'mill owner'—

insert—

, whether the grower is acting on the grower's own behalf or is in a group of growers that has appointed a bargaining representative to negotiate the contract on behalf of the group

3 **Clause 6 (Insertion of new ss 33A and 33B)**

Page 5, line 4, after 'grower'—

insert—

or bargaining representative

Non-government amendments (Mr Knuth) agreed to.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I move the following amendments—

2 **Clause 6 (Insertion of new ss 33A and 33B)**

Page 5, lines 14 and 15, from '(the ***referral agreement***)' to 'arbitration.'—

omit, insert—

(the ***referral agreement***)—

(a) to refer the dispute to arbitration; and

(b) for the dispute to be arbitrated under the *Commercial Arbitration Act 2013* subject to subsections (5) to (9).

3 **Clause 6 (Insertion of new ss 33A and 33B)**

Page 5, line 20, 'and (5)'—

omit, insert—

to (9)

4 Clause 6 (Insertion of new ss 33A and 33B)

Page 5, after line 26—

insert—

(6) Subsection (7) applies if a GEI sugar marketing term is a proposed term of the intended supply contract and the grower proposes to nominate an entity to be the GEI sugar marketing entity.

(7) A term of the intended supply contract must not have the effect of unreasonably treating the grower less favourably than the grower would be likely to be treated if a mill-related entity were to be the GEI sugar marketing entity.

(8) Without limiting subsection (7), a term of the intended supply contract would have the effect of unreasonably treating the grower less favourably for the subsection if the effect were that the grower would unreasonably pay more for a service provided by the mill owner under the intended supply contract than the grower would pay for the service if a mill-related entity were the GEI sugar marketing entity.

(9) Each party must bear the party's own costs of the arbitration.

5 Clause 6 (Insertion of new ss 33A and 33B)

Page 5, line 27, '(6)'—

omit, insert—

(10)

6 Clause 6 (Insertion of new ss 33A and 33B)

Page 5, line 33, '(7)'—

omit, insert—

(11)

7 Clause 6 (Insertion of new ss 33A and 33B)

Page 5, after line 35—

insert—

mill-related entity means—

(a) the mill owner; or

(b) a related body corporate of the mill owner.

8 Clause 6 (Insertion of new ss 33A and 33B)

Page 6, lines 9 to 33—

omit, insert—

(a) a term providing for the amount, or the basis for working out the amount, of the payment to the grower for the supply of the cane (the ***cane payment***);

(b) unless the grower and mill owner otherwise agree—a term (a ***related sugar pricing term***) requiring the amount of the cane payment to be worked out in a stated way by linking that amount to the sale price of the on-supply sugar to which the supply contract relates;

(c) if the supply contract includes a related sugar pricing term, both of the following, unless the grower and mill owner otherwise agree—

(i) a term requiring the mill owner to bear the sale price exposure for the sale of a proportion of the on-supply sugar that is worked out in a stated way;

(ii) a term (a ***GEI sugar price exposure term***) requiring the grower to bear the sale price exposure for the sale of the remaining on-supply sugar (the ***grower economic interest sugar***);

(d) if the supply contract includes a GEI sugar price exposure term—

(i) a term (a ***GEI sugar marketing term***) requiring the mill owner to have an agreement with a stated entity (the ***GEI sugar marketing entity***) to sell the quantity of the on-supply sugar that is at least equal to the quantity of the grower economic interest sugar; and

(ii) unless the grower and mill owner otherwise agree, a term providing for an entity nominated by the grower to be the GEI sugar marketing entity;

(e) if the supply contract provides for an entity nominated by the grower to be the GEI sugar marketing entity—a term requiring the mill owner to deliver for sale the quantity of the on-supply sugar that is at least equal to the quantity of the grower economic interest sugar, as directed by the entity, within a stated reasonable period.

9 Clause 6 (Insertion of new ss 33A and 33B)

Page 6, line 34, 'and (e)'—

omit.

10 Clause 6 (Insertion of new ss 33A and 33B)

Page 6, line 37 and page 7, lines 1 and 2—

omit, insert—

(4) Without limiting subsection (2)(e), the stated period must be reasonable having regard to the likely period in which the mill owner could deliver the on-supply sugar for sale to a related body corporate of the mill owner.

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

AYES, 45:

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.

KAP, 2—Katter, Knuth.

INDEPENDENT, 1—Gordon.

NOES, 43:

ALP, 43—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Byrne, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Donaldson, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, 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.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Non-government amendments (Mrs Frecklington) agreed to.

Clause 6, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 7—

Mr KNUTH (10.53 pm): I move the following amendments—

4 Clause 7 (Amendment of s 34 (Parties must use dispute resolution process stated in supply contract)

Page 7, line 12, 'The'—

omit, insert—

Subject to subsection (4), the

5 Clause 7 (Amendment of s 34 (Parties must use dispute resolution process stated in supply contract)

Page 7, after line 13—

insert—

(4) Each party must bear the party's own costs of the arbitration.

Non-government amendments (Mr Knuth) agreed to.

Clause 7, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 8—

Mrs FRECKLINGTON (10.53 pm): I move the following amendments—

11 Clause 8 (Insertion of new s 238)

Page 7, lines 21 and 22, from 'the term' to '(e).'—

omit, insert—

a GEI sugar marketing term.

12 Clause 8 (Insertion of new s 238)

Page 7, lines 25 and 26, from 'the term' to '33B(2) (d).'—

omit, insert—

a GEI sugar marketing term.

13 Clause 8 (Insertion of new s 238)

Page 7, line 29, 'paragraph (b).'—

omit, insert—

paragraph (b);

14 Clause 8 (Insertion of new s 238)

Page 7, after line 29—

insert—

(d) a grower and mill owner being taken to have made a supply contract under section 33A(10).

Non-government amendments (Mrs Frecklington) agreed to.

Clause 8, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 9—

Mr KNUTH (10.54 pm): I move the following amendment—

6 **Clause 9 (Insertion of new ch 10)**

Page 8, lines 8 to 26—

omit, insert—

(1) This section applies to a contract (an ***existing cane supply contract***) that, immediately before the commencement, was a supply contract in force under chapter 2.

(2) Section 33B does not apply to the existing cane supply contract.

(3) Subsection (2) stops applying if both of the following happen—

(a) the current contract period for the existing cane supply contract ends or the contract is terminated;

(b) the current agreement period for an existing related raw sugar supply agreement, if any, for the existing cane supply contract ends or the agreement is terminated.

(4) Despite subsection (3), subsection (2) stops applying on 1 July 2017.

(5) Section 34, as in force immediately before the commencement, applies to—

(a) the existing cane supply contract; and

(b) any existing arbitration.

(6) Subsection (5)(a) stops applying—

(a) when the current period for the existing cane supply contract ends; or

(b) if the existing cane supply contract is terminated.

(7) Despite subsections (2) and (5), the existing cane supply contract is taken to be a supply contract.

(8) In this section—

current agreement period, for an existing related raw sugar supply agreement, means the period stated in the agreement for which it is in force but does not include a period to which an extension or renewal of the agreement relates.

current contract period, for the existing cane supply contract—

(a) means the period stated in the contract for which it is in force; but

(b) if the contract is extended or renewed on or after the commencement, does not include a period to which the extension or renewal relates.

existing arbitration means an arbitration proceeding authorised by the existing cane supply contract that has started and not been completed before the commencement.

existing related raw sugar supply agreement, for the existing cane supply contract, means an agreement—

(a) for the sale of raw sugar that has been manufactured, or is to be manufactured, from the cane supplied, or to be supplied, under the existing cane supply contract; and

(b) that was in force immediately before the commencement.

Non-government amendment (Mr Knuth) agreed to.

Clause 9, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 10—

Mr KNUTH (10.54 pm): I move the following amendment—

7 **Clause 10 (Amendment of schedule (Dictionary))**

Page 8, line 28, 'definition'—

omit, insert—

definitions *grower* and

Non-government amendment (Mr Knuth) agreed to.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I move the following amendments—

15 **Clause 10 (Amendment of schedule (Dictionary))**

Page 9, line 3, '33B(2) (d)'—

omit, insert—

33B(2) (d) (i)

16 **Clause 10 (Amendment of schedule (Dictionary))**

Page 9, after line 3—

insert—

GEI sugar marketing term see section 33B(2) (d) (i).

Non-government amendments (Mrs Frecklington) agreed to.

Mr KNUTH: I move the following amendment—

8 Clause 10 (Amendment of schedule (Dictionary))

Page 9, before line 4—

insert—

grower—

(a) generally, means a person who supplies cane to a mill; and

(b) may, if the context permits, include a person who proposes to supply cane to a mill.

Non-government amendment (Mr Knuth) agreed to.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I move the following amendments—

17 Clause 10 (Amendment of schedule (Dictionary))

Page 9, after line 7—

insert—

related body corporate see the Corporations Act, section 50.

18 Clause 10 (Amendment of schedule (Dictionary))

Page 9, line 17, '33A(6)'—

omit, insert—

33A(10)

Non-government amendments (Mrs Frecklington) agreed to.

Clause 10, as amended, agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr KNUTH (Dalrymple—KAP) (10.56 pm): I move—

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

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

In division—

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

Mr SPEAKER: Wait until the bells have finished ringing. Close the bars. Leader of the House, did you have a point of order you wish to raise?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I do. I just want to draw to your attention that the member for Dalrymple called divide after he voted 'aye' and you had called the vote in favour of the ayes. I just wanted to clarify whether that raises any concerns under standing order 109 in relation to the validity of his vote.

Mr STEVENS: I rise on the point of order. My understanding is that the member for Dalrymple definitely called 'aye'. There is no dispute about that particular matter. There was a divide called by the government on the matter and then the member for Dalrymple thought he would join in on the divide as well which had no effect on the call for a division which is a check of the Speaker's call.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Thank you, members. I realise it is just after 11 pm. I refer members to standing order 109 on rules relating to divisions and voting. Section 109(3) states—

A member having given voice with the 'Ayes' or 'Noes' shall not, on a division being taken, vote with the opposite side.

No vote has happened yet. If a member contravenes that, the Speaker, on being informed, shall order the tellers' lists to be corrected. My understanding on the advice that I have received is that calling 'divide' does not preclude a member from voting and we are about to now vote. I will check the *Hansard* records later this evening or tomorrow morning. If I need to make a further ruling in relation to this matter, I will do so in the future.

AYES, 45:

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.

KAP, 2—Katter, Knuth.

INDEPENDENT, 1—Gordon.

NOES, 43:

ALP, 43—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Byrne, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Donaldson, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, 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.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Bill, as amended, read a third time.

Long Title

Mr KNUTH (Dalrymple—KAP) (11.04 pm): I move—

That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

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

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (11.04 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Medicinal Cannabis

Mr DICKSON (Buderim—LNP) (11.04 pm): I again want to turn the attention of the House to the issue of medicinal whole plant cannabis oil. As I detailed in a letter to every member of the House two weeks ago, medically prescribed doses of whole plant cannabis oil can help ease the conditions of the terminally ill suffering pain, nausea and vomiting. Whole plant cannabis oil can also help children with drug-resistant epilepsy and help patients fighting cancer who have to deal with nausea and vomiting from chemotherapy. It is important to note that the whole plant medicinal cannabis oil differs from recreational strains of the drug, which would remain illegal. I want Queenslanders to have access to safe, reliable and legally available plant medicinal cannabis oil prescribed by a doctor and available through a pharmacy. As I stated, it is simply not good enough that in 2015 people have to turn to black market options to find relief from a range of debilitating and life-threatening conditions while the Queensland government cannot give a clear answer as to whether or not these people are likely to face prosecution. Today we learned that the Turnbull government will introduce a national scheme to legalise medicinal cannabis by licensing growers next year which could pave the way for a local industry. With the Australian government and several other state governments reviewing options for the legalisation of medicinal use of cannabis and with several clinical trials underway, we need to do something in the interim to ensure that patients and their families have access to this medicine without fear of prosecution in Queensland.

Over 12,000 people have signed a petition I sponsored requesting an amnesty for the medicinal use of cannabis. This is an issue that needs support from all political parties and all members in this House. I urge the Queensland government to work together with colleagues interstate and at a national level to get the best outcome for those Queenslanders who so desperately need our help—help for those Queenslanders who currently live in fear of a knock on the door because they are trying to do the right thing for their patients and for their loved ones and help kids like Jai Whitelaw and his courageous mum, Michelle. Jai went from 500 seizures a day to four seizures in the last 11 months by using whole plant medicinal cannabis oil. Let us make it possible for kids like Jai to return to school and have fulfilling lives because we took action to make it possible for him to access medication that is safe and legally available to Queenslanders. We owe it to Jai and kids like Jai and their families and we owe it to the doctors and nurses who work so closely with these kids. I intend to keep fighting for Jai Whitelaw and all Queenslanders to ensure that they have safe and legal access to whole medicinal cannabis oil in Queensland. We need decisive action from the Queensland government on this issue. We need real leadership on this issue—leadership like that of Mike Baird in New South Wales who intends to make a difference for kids like Jai Whitelaw. Now is the time.

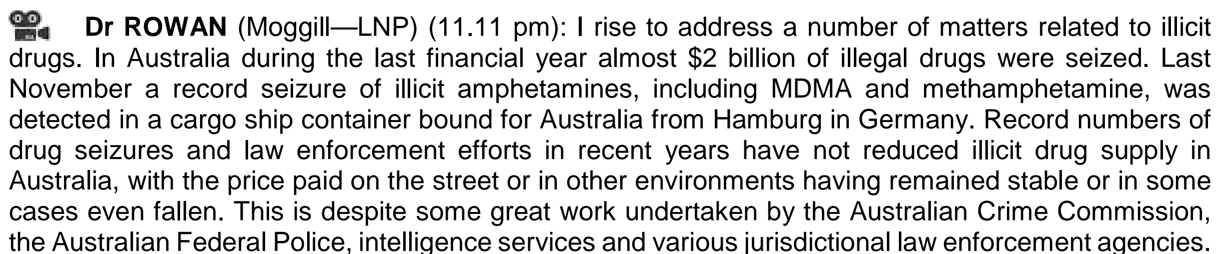
Advance Queensland Education Forum

Mrs GILBERT (Mackay—ALP) (11.08 pm): In today's fast paced and ever-changing world, supporting students to be successful learners has become more important than ever before. That is why I was so honoured to be part of the Advance Queensland education forum held in Mackay on 23 September. Over 40 local educators and students from state and private schools as well as the Central Queensland University attended the forum to discuss how we can expand coding and robotics to support every student to be a successful digital learner. Our young people need to be ready to meet the demands of new industries, changing technologies and global innovation. The forum discussed the Advancing Education plan, highlighting the importance of providing learning opportunities in future focused areas. It also discussed a range of actions to provide students with high-level skills in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. The implementation of the digital technologies curriculum in state schools from 2016 is an exciting development and a significant step in the preparation of our

students to succeed in the workforce in the future. This curriculum will include the establishment of a coding academy and the development of virtual science, technology, engineering and mathematics academies for students in years 5 to 9. Teachers and principals will be supported through professional development, scholarships and mentoring by STEM champions.

Coding and robotics are part of a set of skills we want all Queensland students to possess. Educators in Mackay acknowledge the importance of the Advancing Education initiative, which will give students the opportunity to study languages from prep in state schools, with more students studying Asian languages and culture. Of course, literacy and numeracy are the foundations of learning and remain a critical priority for every child in Queensland. It was gratifying for me to hear feedback and receive input from dedicated educators in my electorate who will play a pivotal role in the implementation of Advancing Education strategies and preparing the young people in our communities to be the workforce and leaders of the future. We want to build expertise across the teaching workforce so our students have access to the most up-to-date skills and knowledge. Key to the success of these strategies is the feedback provided from those who are on the front line of education. I was encouraged to hear from those from Mackay's education community and I know they fully support Advancing Education. As a former teacher I understand from firsthand experience that education is the foundation of a strong economy and a vibrant community.

Illicit Drugs, Workplace Safety and Drug Driving

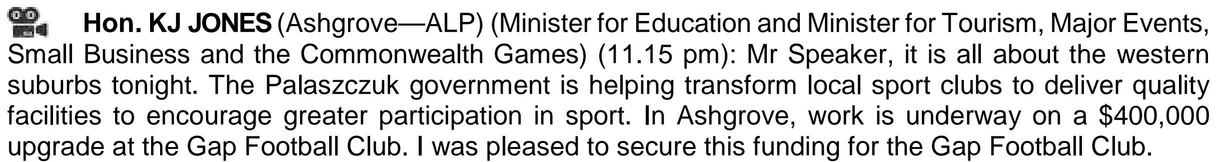


Dr ROWAN (Moggill—LNP) (11.11 pm): I rise to address a number of matters related to illicit drugs. In Australia during the last financial year almost $2 billion of illegal drugs were seized. Last November a record seizure of illicit amphetamines, including MDMA and methamphetamine, was detected in a cargo ship container bound for Australia from Hamburg in Germany. Record numbers of drug seizures and law enforcement efforts in recent years have not reduced illicit drug supply in Australia, with the price paid on the street or in other environments having remained stable or in some cases even fallen. This is despite some great work undertaken by the Australian Crime Commission, the Australian Federal Police, intelligence services and various jurisdictional law enforcement agencies.

In Queensland the construction industry has called on the Queensland government to introduce compulsory drug testing on building sites given workplace health and safety concerns. Some data presented at the National Methamphetamine Symposium in May found that amphetamine use in the construction sector was twice as common as among the general population, with four in 100 building employees admitting going to work whilst under the influence of drugs. Employers such as the Australian Industry Group are reporting that the threatening and abusive behaviours of some employees under the influence of crystalline methamphetamine is creating safety risks for co-workers, managers and customers whilst also damaging productive work sites. While all this is occurring on construction sites, what should be of great concern to Queenslanders is the alleged criminal conduct of organisational representatives of the CFMEU, the potential formal or informal linkages of these individuals to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, the Hon. Jo-Ann Miller, and whether organised crime and criminal gangs are involved in illicit drug supply to construction workers and what potential further linkages may or may not exist between Queensland based criminal gangs and terrorist groups through money laundering, illicit drug production, illegal firearm trafficking and other crime.

As the tangled web of conflicting ideologies and political and criminal agendas among jihadists, insurgents and radicalised western youth grows in Syria and parts of Iraq, how long will it be before the powerful amphetamine tablet captagon possibly becomes an issue in Australia and Queensland and other western democracies? Unfortunately, the recent Queensland organised crime commission lacked credibility due to its lack of open and transparent hearings as well as tested evidence and accountability. It could have provided an enhanced opportunity to examine such matters as well as synthetic drugs, which are becoming more problematic in a number of our communities. There is no doubt Queenslanders should have been given an opportunity to have their say in the report. In recent years criminal gangs, particularly on the Gold Coast, have also been problematic, threatening community safety, tourism and the local Gold Coast economy. The Gold Coast is the worst region in Queensland for drug and alcohol related deaths. Drug driving is a serious road safety issue. Illicit drug use can cause cognitive impairment which in turn affects judgement, memory and reaction times. Drug driving is a contributing factor in seven per cent of road fatalities in Australia. There has been an alarming increase in drivers testing positive to drugs in roadside tests across Queensland. The Queensland government must further review penalties and sanctions while also investing in demand reduction strategies and increasing the access and availability of drug and alcohol services across Queensland. Road safety and eliminating the fatal five is everyone's responsibility, not only at Christmas but also throughout the year.

Gap Football Club



Hon. KJ JONES (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games) (11.15 pm): Mr Speaker, it is all about the western suburbs tonight. The Palaszczuk government is helping transform local sport clubs to deliver quality facilities to encourage greater participation in sport. In Ashgrove, work is underway on a $400,000 upgrade at the Gap Football Club. I was pleased to secure this funding for the Gap Football Club.

Mr Stevens interjected.

Ms JONES: I love the Gold Coast, too, Ray. In recognition of their valuable efforts to encourage more time to get involved in local sports—

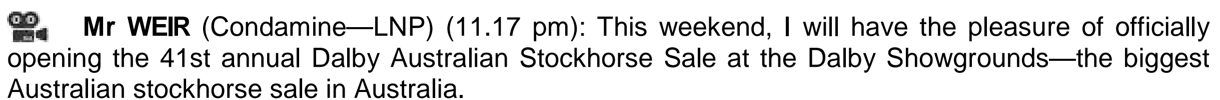
An honourable member interjected.

Ms JONES: That is right. Number 18? This investment will help the club upgrade their water storage and irrigation equipment and improve field lighting, expand clubhouse facilities and install an all-weather turf training area. Improvements to irrigation and a new 135,000-litre water tank will dramatically reduce the club's reliance on town water. Planning is also well underway for a lighting upgrade on the main field that will enable lower lighting for training and a higher quality for games. Both of these improvements are good for the environment and will reduce running costs for the club. Construction of a new equipment storeroom will begin in the next couple of weeks and will be ready when players return next year. The improved facilities will enable one of Queensland's largest football clubs to host more players for training and competition, including people with a disability.

The Gap Football Club has been a valuable part of my local community since it was formed in a meeting on Waterworks Road in 1955. Back then it was known as the Gap Pastime Club. Today, it has more than 800 players across juniors, men's and women's soccer teams and 1,200 club members.

I congratulate the Gap Football Club for its contribution to our community and I look forward to seeing the changes take shape in the months ahead. I am sure that local soccer players and the wider community will benefit from this upgrade now and for many years to come.

Dalby Australian Stockhorse Sale



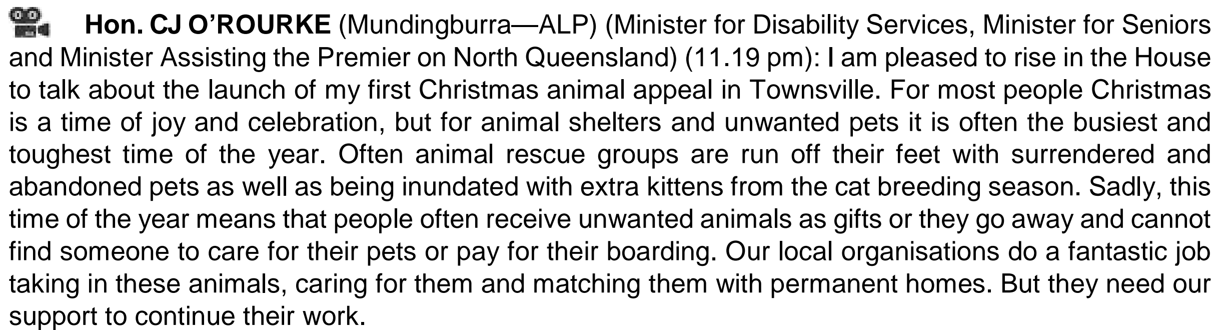
Mr WEIR (Condamine—LNP) (11.17 pm): This weekend, I will have the pleasure of officially opening the 41st annual Dalby Australian Stockhorse Sale at the Dalby Showgrounds—the biggest Australian stockhorse sale in Australia.

The Dalby Stockhorse Sale was established in 1974 by the Darling Downs Branch of the Australian Stockhorse Society. This sale is the pinnacle event for the branch and brings a large crowd to Dalby and the surrounding district for the weekend. The Darling Downs branch of the Australian Stockhorse Society, which coordinates events that promote the versatility of the great Australian stockhorse—the breed for every need—is a not-for-profit member based organisation and this year was awarded the society's prestigious award of Branch of the Year. During the year, the branch sponsors various local shows in the district as well as supporting stockman challenge events, campdrafts and other local community functions.

The first stockhorse sale held in Dalby in 1974 was attended by over 1,000 people, with the top price paid for a mare being $2,100. In comparison, last years attendance surpassed 4,000 and the top price for a mare was $30,000, although over the years the prices and attendances have fluctuated with $70,000 being paid for a mare in 2011. There have been years when rain has threatened to impact the sale and competition. However, these conditions did not dampen the spirit of the organisation and this year the sale is expected to be bigger and better than ever.

The stockhorse sale is one of the success stories for the Dalby region, with people coming from all over the country to attend the three-day sale. The 41st annual sale will commence with a quality line-up of 250 registered Australian stockhorses and will be followed by competitors from all over Queensland, New South Wales and the Northern Territory signing up to compete in the campdraft events. There is a range of entertainment lined up for the weekend, with the world renowned Double Dan Horsemanship show expected to entertain the crowd with their performance. This act has not only been performed all over Australia but also at prestigious international occasions such as the Edinburgh Military Tattoo. Events like the Dalby Stockhorse Sale keep rural regions alive. I am happy to proudly support this iconic event held in the electorate of Condamine.

Animal Welfare



Hon. CJ O'ROURKE (Mundingburra—ALP) (Minister for Disability Services, Minister for Seniors and Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland) (11.19 pm): I am pleased to rise in the House to talk about the launch of my first Christmas animal appeal in Townsville. For most people Christmas is a time of joy and celebration, but for animal shelters and unwanted pets it is often the busiest and toughest time of the year. Often animal rescue groups are run off their feet with surrendered and abandoned pets as well as being inundated with extra kittens from the cat breeding season. Sadly, this time of the year means that people often receive unwanted animals as gifts or they go away and cannot find someone to care for their pets or pay for their boarding. Our local organisations do a fantastic job taking in these animals, caring for them and matching them with permanent homes. But they need our support to continue their work.

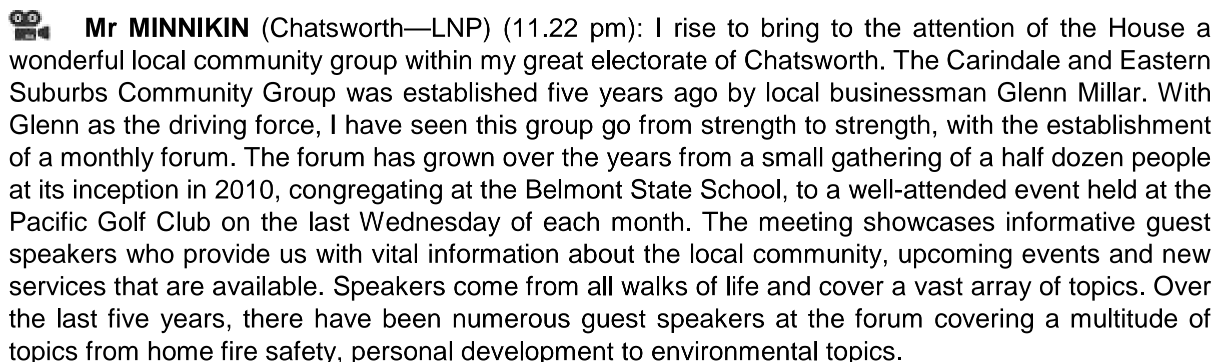
This year, I am asking Townsville residents to spare a thought for our local animal shelters that are struggling to keep up with demand. Townsville locals can help by donating items such as food, towels, blankets, toys, tick and worm treatments, pet store vouchers as well as hay and feed for farm animals. A small gesture at this time of year will go a long way to helping local organisations. Some of these organisations include Angel Paws, which is a rescue and foster animal organisation; Hear No Evil, which trains and fosters deaf dogs; Delta Dogs Society, which take animals into hospitals and nursing homes for sick patients; and Michelle's Ark Animal Rescue, which adopt and rehome wildlife and farm animals. Can I say that Michelle and the volunteers are doing it particularly tough on her farm owing to the drought in Townsville.

All of these organisations rely on food and supplies through donations and these are mostly paid for by the volunteers. In visiting and meeting with volunteers at these organisations, I have seen how much they are committed to giving back to the community and caring for animals. Sadly, a lot of rescue animals do not have the best start in life, which is why the work of animal shelters is so important. At the launch of my Christmas animal appeal, I met Harvey, a purebred Newfoundland, which had been chained to a fence and left to starve to death. When he was rescued, his coat was riddled with maggots and he was underweight and malnourished. Under the care of Angel Paws, Harvey is now a healthy, happy and, in fact, a very large puppy. I was shocked to hear from the President of Angel Paws, Larissa Huxley, that they currently have more than 100 animals in their care—the busiest they have ever been.

Animal organisations not only help our four-legged friends but also the greater community. I am proud to sponsor two Delta dogs. Recently, I had the pleasure of joining a carer and a Delta therapy dog on a visit to Townsville Hospital. It was wonderful to see the faces of patients instantly light up with the visit from their Delta dog and to hear about the great benefits that pet therapy provides.

My Christmas animal appeal will hopefully provide much needed relief to Townsville's animal organisations to continue this good work. I ask the Townsville community to please support this appeal by donating at the various drop-off bins located around our city.

Carindale and Eastern Suburbs Community Group



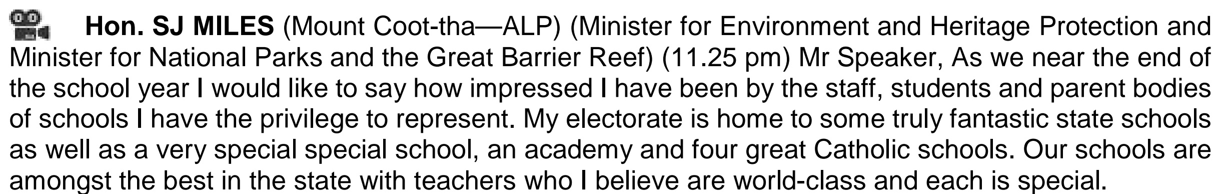
Mr MINNIKIN (Chatsworth—LNP) (11.22 pm): I rise to bring to the attention of the House a wonderful local community group within my great electorate of Chatsworth. The Carindale and Eastern Suburbs Community Group was established five years ago by local businessman Glenn Millar. With Glenn as the driving force, I have seen this group go from strength to strength, with the establishment of a monthly forum. The forum has grown over the years from a small gathering of a half dozen people at its inception in 2010, congregating at the Belmont State School, to a well-attended event held at the Pacific Golf Club on the last Wednesday of each month. The meeting showcases informative guest speakers who provide us with vital information about the local community, upcoming events and new services that are available. Speakers come from all walks of life and cover a vast array of topics. Over the last five years, there have been numerous guest speakers at the forum covering a multitude of topics from home fire safety, personal development to environmental topics.

At the November meeting last week, which I attended, our guest speakers included Stefan Hattingh of the Bulimba Creek Catchment Coordinating Committee, and Lori Marshall, physiotherapist and owner of Ideal Carers. Stefan spoke about the common myna birds and it was interesting to learn more about this problematic bird species and how we as a community can get involved to help mitigate the massive ecological damage that they cause. Meanwhile, Lori spoke about senior care and how families can best assist their loved ones to remain safe at home.

Lori, who has been working with seniors since 2002, started a mobile physiotherapy service to help patients who found it difficult to attend a clinic to receive treatment. That led her to establish Ideal Carers, a service where clients can choose and book their preferred carer to provide the support they need and when they need it. I wish to congratulate her on her hard work in this area.

Whenever I attend this community group meeting I engage in a question and answer forum, as I believe that politicians should always be accessible to the people they represent in this chamber. In addition to this remarkable forum, Glenn Millar supports the Carindale and Eastern Suburbs Community Group by organising a free community newsletter which my office proudly helps to produce. In it he provides details about the upcoming forums, various guest speakers and summarises the topics discussed at the previous meeting. He also includes a comprehensive list of future community events such as the second annual Mannippi five-kilometre park run held last Saturday morning in which I participated. I thoroughly enjoy seeing this newsletter when it reaches my office, as I get to see a snapshot of all the brilliant events in our great local community and what is on offer each month. I would once more like to commend Glenn Millar on his hard work and dedication to the Carindale and Eastern Suburbs Community Group and the local community over the last five years. It is the efforts of outstanding individuals like Glenn which makes me so proud to be the member for Chatsworth.

Mount Coot-tha Electorate, Schools



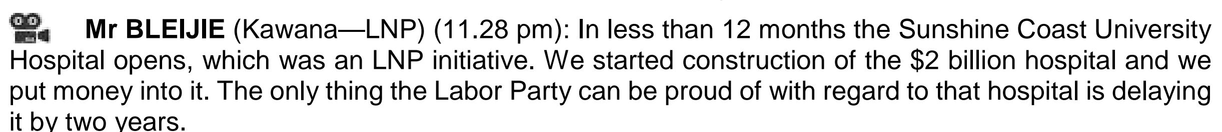
Hon. SJ MILES (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef) (11.25 pm) Mr Speaker, As we near the end of the school year I would like to say how impressed I have been by the staff, students and parent bodies of schools I have the privilege to represent. My electorate is home to some truly fantastic state schools as well as a very special special school, an academy and four great Catholic schools. Our schools are amongst the best in the state with teachers who I believe are world-class and each is special.

Milton State School has a great sustainability program, and that was where I celebrated National Recycling Week with students and staff. Paul and Kylie Lee have led a really great school year. Ithaca Creek has a fantastic art program, and a painting by the year 4-3 class hangs proudly in my ministerial office. Richard Nash is moving on to a head office role, and I wish him all the best. Minister for Education Jones and I enjoyed the Bardon Young Writers' Workshop at Rainworth State School, with students exploring their love of stories with author Narelle Oliver. Adam Mathewson, the principal there, has been promoted to a bigger school and I wish him all the best too. Bardon is where my son Sam studies and he will be joined by Aidan next year in prep. The school is set in the beautiful surrounds of the base of Mt Coot-tha. I know Sandy and the P&C team cannot wait to finish the new oval and car park.

The happy sounds of Petrie Terrace State School kids singing at their leadership assembly made my year, and I cannot wait to see the new aquatic themed mural when it is completed. Principal Eunice Webb is a thought leader and a powerhouse. Toowong State School is famous for its bilingual bicultural program with classes taught in English and Auslan. A new sound system is being installed which will broadcast directly to hearing aids and cochlear implant processors. At the very special Red Hill Special School Pam Stack and her team are truly marvellous. It has been especially fantastic to work with parents like Louise, Alistair and Emma. They are amazing advocates. The budding geniuses of the Queensland Academy of Math, Science and Technology are genuinely impressive. At St Joseph's at Bardon I got my hands dirty digging and planting on National Tree Day. A special shout out to outgoing P&F president Cate Clifford and my friend Anne Fuchs for always welcoming me to the school. At Saint Ambrose's in Newmarket I celebrated World Teachers' Day and with Minister Jones I presented not one, not two, but 160 Premier's Reading Award certificates.

Unfortunately, I could not get to the St Ignatius Goldicott Opera Under the Stars this year, but I am told it was a fantastic night. Set on the hill at Bardon is the captivating Stuartholme. Their amazing principal Helen Sinclair is retiring after 11 years, and I would like to thank her for her service and wish her all the best in her new endeavours. Finally, Paul Flanders, Simon Clowes and the team at the Albert Park Flexi School provide a safe and welcoming place for kids who, for whatever reason, cannot be part of a normally structured school and school week. In closing, Mr Speaker, I would like to pay tribute to the unsung heroes: teacher aides and support staff.

Sunshine Coast University Hospital



Mr BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (11.28 pm): In less than 12 months the Sunshine Coast University Hospital opens, which was an LNP initiative. We started construction of the $2 billion hospital and we put money into it. The only thing the Labor Party can be proud of with regard to that hospital is delaying it by two years.

Government members interjected.

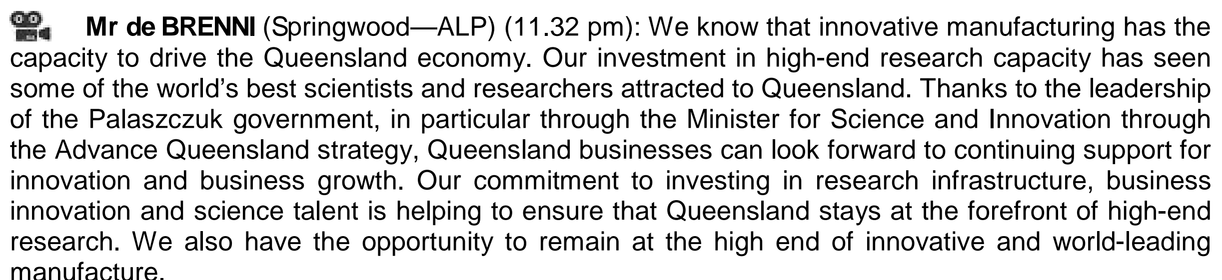
Mr BLEIJIE: I hear all of the interjections from people who have no idea what I am talking about because they were not here in 2009 when it was announced, but the Labor Party delayed it by a couple of years. I congratulate the Kawana Chamber of Commerce, who had a function the other night which was getting the hospital ready. One thing that came through loud and clear from the Chamber of Commerce function was the lack of roads and infrastructure around the hospital in less than 12 months when it opens. I see that the Minister for Main Roads has now adjusted his language. He says, 'We do not support the Mooloolah River interchange that the LNP were going to produce for $440 million, so we are going to have a plan to build that road; we just do not know how we are going to fund it. We have no money for it.'

Another interesting thing I saw is when the health minister came to Kawana the other day. Believe it or not, there is an ALP branch in the Kawana electorate and the health minister turned up. You would think the health minister would be visiting the Sunshine Coast to talk about the hospital and road and rail infrastructure for patients when the $2 billion hospital opens in less than a years time. But no, he was talking about his own job and the lack of the union influence over the Labor Party. If he had walked around Parliament House tonight he would have seen the CFMEU branch of the Labor Party in full swing. There were CFMEU union officials all over the place. I wonder what the health minister thought about the influence of the CFMEU in the Labor Party.

Rather than talk about the $2 billion hospital when the health minister came to Kawana, he talked about his own job. He was trying to convince grassroots Labor members that there is too much union influence in the Labor Party and that is why he should be leader, because he will make direct contact with grassroots Labor Party members. He did not talk about roads. He did not talk about how patients are going to get to the hospital. He did not talk about the fact that a water tank exploded at the hospital site a few weeks ago and closed the road for four days. He did not talk about the loss of business because of the impact on that road. He did not talk about how people from Noosa and Maroochydore and other places north are going to get to the hospital in the future. He did not talk about the road congestion around Woodlands Boulevard at Kawana Forest. These are the things the health minister should have been talking about, but he did not because he is too busy wrapped up in Labor Party politics and internal leadership wrangles.

If the health minister is going to visit the Kawana electorate again, I will tell him exactly what he needs to do and where he needs to invest money. Tell him to bring Mark Bailey, the Minister for Main Roads, and we will tell him what we really need on the Sunshine Coast.

Palaszczuk Government, Technology and Innovation



Mr de BRENNI (Springwood—ALP) (11.32 pm): We know that innovative manufacturing has the capacity to drive the Queensland economy. Our investment in high-end research capacity has seen some of the world's best scientists and researchers attracted to Queensland. Thanks to the leadership of the Palaszczuk government, in particular through the Minister for Science and Innovation through the Advance Queensland strategy, Queensland businesses can look forward to continuing support for innovation and business growth. Our commitment to investing in research infrastructure, business innovation and science talent is helping to ensure that Queensland stays at the forefront of high-end research. We also have the opportunity to remain at the high end of innovative and world-leading manufacture.

In the electorate of Springwood we see a great example of this with a Queensland company, Imaging Solutions, leading the world in the delivery and installation of high-end diagnostic imaging storage, display and software. This is the sort of stuff we see used in hospital radiography and radiation therapy departments. I am pleased to report to the House that this local firm, which has been fitting out Queensland hospitals with market-leading products, will soon embark on the establishment of a fully integrated manufacturing facility, delivering our hospitals with second-to-none equipment. Imaging Solutions, which employs 27 staff currently, will see rapid growth with its local manufacturing facility in Springwood producing products that have traditionally been imported here in Queensland, with significant capacity for export and substantial jobs growth. Imaging Solutions has a simple vision: 'to improve the quality of health care by providing world market-leading and integrated product and service solutions.'

From my discussions with the leadership of Imaging Solutions I can report that it is most welcoming of our Advance Queensland suite. What we are seeing under the Palaszczuk government is a revitalisation in our economy which is supported by confidence-building measures such as funding

QMI Solutions so that its specialist consulting team can continue to help Queensland industry improve by introducing new ideas and business tools to help solve their challenges. Specific measures like our payroll tax rebate initiative for apprentices and trainees has seen 1,748 Queensland employers already using this great budget initiative. It is no wonder that we have created 43,800 jobs in Queensland in the nine months since January, consisting of 9,000 extra full-time jobs. That is 1,000 extra full-time jobs created every month. That is why, according to independent economic analysis, Queenslanders have more confidence in our economy than they have since the last time Labor was in government. Every Queensland business, worker and family is a whole lot better off than they were under those opposite. The loss of 315 full-time jobs each month under the LNP is a terribly unfortunate record. Thank goodness they sit over on that side of this House today.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 11.35 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