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FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT

Thursday, 25 February 2016

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THURSDAY, 25 FEBRUARY 2016



The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

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

PRIVILEGE

Comments by Deputy Premier



Hon. JA TRAD (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade and Investment) (9.31 am): Mr Speaker, I rise on a matter of privilege. In my response to a question without notice asked by the member for Murrumba on 28 October 2015, I largely repeated statements made by the member for Callide in the House the evening before. I did not use the exact phrasing of the member for Callide but instead paraphrased the member. I contend that in the statement I made my paraphrasing used similar wording and did not change the context of the member's statement. Unfortunately, I did not have the opportunity to complete my statement due to the enthusiastic points of order taken by the member for Clayfield and the matter of privilege being raised by the member for Callide. If I had been able to complete my statement, I confirm that I would have gone on to continue paraphrasing the member for Callide so as to complete the remainder of the quote from the member for Callide.

PETITIONS

The Clerk presented the following paper petition, lodged by the honourable member indicated—

Carseldine, Gympie Road and Stay Place, Bus Stop

Ms Davis, from 68 petitioners, requesting the House to retain the bus stop at the junction of Gympie Road and Stay Place, Carseldine [237].

The Clerk presented the following e-petition, sponsored by the Clerk—

Daylight Saving, Referendum

From 21,468 petitioners, requesting the House to recognise the preference of the majority of Queenslanders for daylight saving and to hold another referendum on introducing daylight saving in Queensland [238].

Petitions received.

TABLED PAPERS

MEMBERS' PAPERS

The following members' papers were tabled by the Clerk—

Member for Aspley (Ms Davis)—

[239](#) Nonconforming petition regarding the removal of the bus stop at the junction of Gympie Road and Stay Place, Carseldine

Member for Cairns (Mr Pyne)—

[240](#) Correspondence and other documents, various dates, calling for an inquiry into local government in Queensland

REPORT

Law Reform Commission




Hon. YM D'ATH (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (9.33 am): I have received from the Queensland Law Reform Commission report No. 73 titled *Review of child protection mandatory reporting laws for the early childhood education and care sector*. I table the report.

Tabled paper: Queensland Law Reform Commission report No. 73, Review of child protection mandatory reporting laws for the early childhood education and care sector, December 2015 [241].

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Achievements


 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.33 am): Honourable members are preparing to return to their electorates after the first two sitting weeks of this year. The 89 of us have been sent to this place to make Queensland a better place—a place where there are more opportunities for work, a place where our citizens are safe and a place where we have compassion for one another. What members can tell their constituents they have been a part of over the last fortnight depends on where they sit in this House. Government members have been part of a solid fortnight of delivery.

Government members can tell their constituents that just some of the achievements of the last two weeks include work to support the creation of 71,700 new jobs across Queensland since the election; the release of economic data that showed Queensland's economy growing faster than the rest of the nation; the extension of the Accelerated Works Program to more than \$400 million in projects and more than 900 full-time-equivalent jobs; laws to curb alcohol fuelled violence on our streets; the passing of Australia's strongest restrictions on smoking; our commitment to three new schools—Yarrabilba, Coomera and Caloundra South—and an autism hub to improve the education outcomes for more Queenslanders; our assigning of the Working Queensland cabinet committee to focus on more local projects and local jobs around the state before the budget; the bring forward of the \$70 million second round of the Building Our Regions infrastructure fund; the announcement of funding for the second round of Skilling Queenslanders for Work, our vital job-creating initiative across Queensland; the confirmation of more international flights, bringing more tourism dollars and opportunities for Queenslanders; and our move to restore the rights of landholders to protect their key farm infrastructure from mining and restore the rights of community members to object to projects.

We have worked with the members for Mount Isa and Dalrymple to bring the Working Queensland cabinet committee to their electorates. We will prioritise mental health in the next state budget and we will extend the powers of courts to impose banning orders on persons convicted of drug offences in safe night precincts, subject to consultation with stakeholders. The member for Dalrymple also made the very sensible suggestion about the purchase of fresh milk by government departments and agencies.

It is the members of the opposition who must be wary of returning to their electorates. What can they tell their electorates? The LNP believes that rumour and innuendo is of greater importance than jobs and economic development. The LNP believes that the status quo in terms of alcohol fuelled violence is adequate, despite the evidence, recent deaths and serious injuries. The LNP believes that the admonishment of one of its members by the Speaker for deliberately misleading is a frivolous event, although it has not occurred in this House for 20 years. The LNP believes—at least some do—that the member for Southern Downs should remain their leader, despite at least two senior members wanting to flee to Canberra and others plotting against him. My government has a positive plan for Queensland. We are yet to hear any positive plans from those opposite.

Working Queensland Cabinet Committee

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.37 am): My government is determined to drive employment and economic growth. We are proud of the 71,700 new jobs that have been created in Queensland since the election. We are proud that economic growth in Queensland is forecast at four per cent, which is the highest of any state and, like Malcolm Turnbull, we are proud that business confidence is the highest in Queensland.

My government recognises that employment, economic growth and business confidence have not increased at the same rate across the state. We recognise that there is a need for all levels of government to work together and with the private sector to drive new opportunities, especially in regional Queensland. Following the confirmation—

Mr Boothman interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Albert, I would urge you to consider your comments.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Following the confirmation of redundancies at Queensland Nickel last month, my government initiated an Accelerated Works Program to fast-track projects within my government's \$10.1 billion Capital Works Program. We also convened the Working Queensland cabinet committee in Townsville on 20 January. The committee resolved a five-point plan: rolling out the Accelerated

Works Program; expanding retraining and skills initiatives through Skilling Queenslanders for Work; attracting increased Commonwealth funding; increasing tourism attraction, particularly additional international flights; and facilitating key private sector projects. At the end of January the full cabinet met in Gladstone and considered further projects under the Accelerated Works Program.

Last week I confirmed with the members for Mount Isa and Dalrymple that the Working Queensland cabinet committee would meet in Mount Isa and Charters Towers. I can also confirm that ahead of the budget in June the Working Queensland cabinet committee will meet in Mackay, Cairns, Rockhampton, Maryborough and Toowoomba. The first of these meetings will be in Mackay next week. I thank the members for Mackay and Mirani for their representations ahead of the meeting. The Mackay meeting follows the successful meeting of the biofutures cabinet committee in Sarina this month.


The Working Queensland cabinet committee meetings allow senior ministers and senior public servants to discuss local projects and gain a better insight into local issues. My government is proud of its record driving jobs—

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Kawana, those comments are unnecessary. If you proceed you will be warned under standing order 253 or 252.

Ms PALASZCZUK: My government is proud of its record driving jobs and economic growth. We are determined to build on that record as part of our positive plan for Queenslanders right across our great state.

Queensland Reconstruction Authority

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade and Investment) (9.41 am): Just over 12 months ago, at 8 am on Friday, 20 February, severe Tropical Cyclone Marcia struck just north of Yeppoon and left a trail of destruction as it tracked south. In the wake of Cyclone Marcia almost 2,000 homes were damaged and thousands of people were left without power for more than a week. I saw firsthand the devastation Marcia caused and the major rebuilding effort communities had ahead of them. Standing shoulder to shoulder with these communities was the Queensland Reconstruction Authority to help them rebuild and recover from the impacts of this significant natural disaster.

More recently, the QRA has worked closely with the 26 councils that were affected by the Gulf of Carpentaria monsoon event in late December and early January. There have also been flooding events in Central Queensland and central western Queensland, and the QRA has been on the ground working with impacted councils to determine the size and scale of damage and the assistance required.

The QRA was established by Labor in 2011 and made permanent by Labor in 2015. The QRA is now a vital part of Queensland's resilience and reconstruction landscape. My agency recently commissioned an independent review of the operations of the Queensland Reconstruction Authority. The review, conducted by KPMG, found that the QRA's operations had been effective and that the authority is recognised as a valued contributor to Queensland's disaster management and recovery operations. I table a copy of the review for the benefit of the House.

Tabled paper: Document, dated 31 August 2015, by KPMG, titled 'Queensland Reconstruction Authority operational review—final report' [242].

The review makes 14 recommendations. Government has already implemented a number of these recommendations or is in the process of doing so. I also table for the benefit of the House a report providing a status update for each of these recommendations.


Tabled paper: Document, undated, titled 'Queensland Reconstruction Authority—KPMG review of the operations of the Queensland Reconstruction Authority' providing table showing delivery status of the review's recommendations [243].

The review's recommendations consider the QRA's future role, looking at possibilities including coordinating and supporting mitigation, recovery and resilience activities right across government. These recommendations make sense. The QRA is managing the state's \$13 billion recovery program as a result of communities being hit by consecutive multiple natural disaster events. We need to ensure a collaborative approach to mitigating the impacts of natural disasters and rebuilding critical infrastructure such as roads in order to ensure they are much more resilient for future events. This approach is being considered by government in the context of the broader disaster management framework.

I want to thank the steering committee for their diligence in overseeing the review, professionals who have a detailed understanding of disaster recovery and reconstruction: Major General Mick Slater, Councillor Margaret de Wit and Professor Gerard Fitzgerald. I place on the record the government's appreciation of their work.

With the QRA now a permanent and stronger feature of our state's disaster recovery response, the people of Queensland can have confidence that we are ready for whatever challenges Mother Nature throws at us. I look forward to continuing to work with the QRA to ensure it remains a high-performing and responsive organisation ready to help Queenslanders in their time of need.

National Injury Insurance Scheme

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Minister for Sport) (9.44 am): Our system of compulsory third-party insurance for registered motor vehicles has served us well for many decades. Many of us rarely even think about it, but it is a system that has a gap in cover. CTP is a fault based insurance scheme designed to cover those who are not at fault for a crash should they have the misfortune of being injured in one. Because it is fault based, there is no cover for injured people considered to be at fault in a crash or for situations where there is nobody at fault.

In 2013 the former LNP government, along with all states and territories except Western Australia, agreed to introduce the National Injury Insurance Scheme, NIIS. Part of that was to make sure anyone catastrophically injured in a car accident gets the care and support they need throughout their lifetime. Queensland's Motor Accident Insurance Commission advises me that each week three people sustain catastrophic injuries in road crashes in our state: spinal or brain injuries—principally paraplegia or quadriplegia—loss of limbs, severe burns or blindness.

These are tragedies that have terrible impacts on Queensland families. It could happen to any of us. What many Queenslanders may not realise is that about half of all those injured are not eligible to claim against CTP insurance. To put it simply, when you get behind the wheel you are not half as protected as you may think.


After finally signing Queensland up to the NIIS, the former LNP government could not get it moving during their time in office. The Palaszczuk government has acted. Last November the Minister for Disability Services and I joined the disability sector in confirming that Queensland would be proceeding with the National Injury Insurance Scheme from 1 July 2016. Because of the history of this new scheme, being signed up to by the Newman government in 2013, I would like and expect bipartisan support from the LNP. We will wait to see if that happens or if they take the opportunity to use it for points scoring.

We are committed to consulting with the community prior to introducing this new scheme. That is why today I will be joining with inspirational Queensland Paralympian Marayke Jonkers in launching a public awareness campaign to help people better understand why it is important for all Queenslanders to get the care and support they need when catastrophically injured in a car accident. Marayke herself was injured in such an accident when she was just a baby. She has a powerful story to tell and will be the public face of our awareness campaign.

As honourable members would be aware, a parliamentary committee has been examining the NIIS and considering public submissions. I thank them for their work to date, particularly the members for Pine Rivers and Sunnybank. The committee has received feedback from across the community including from community service providers, insurance bodies, medical and legal professionals as well as individuals. The committee will report next month with suggestions on how to implement the scheme in the most efficient, effective and affordable way.

Catastrophic injury can happen to any of us at any time. Implementing the NIIS and ensuring that every Queenslanders is covered is the right thing to do for those injured and their families. I urge all Queenslanders to find out more by visiting www.qld.gov.au/niis.

Zika Virus

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (9.47 am): This morning Queensland Health authorities in Rockhampton are stepping up the fight against the Zika virus. Yesterday a man tested positive for the disease after recently returning from South America. This is the eighth confirmed Zika case in Queensland this year.


I am advised that the man has spent some time at the Globe Hotel in Depot Hill, and our investigations reveal that the mosquito species that can carry the disease, *Aedes aegypti*, has been present near the hotel. I want to be clear: there is no evidence that Zika virus is in mosquitoes in the area. We want to keep it that way. However, it is possible there may be a small number of mosquitoes present in the area, following the recent case, which may be infected. This is why we are undertaking urgent mosquito control, in conjunction with local government, as it is possible there may be a small number of infected mosquitoes present in the area following the recent case.

Spraying to kill the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito began in the immediate vicinity of the hotel yesterday, and spraying will continue this morning in the yards and homes of businesses within a 200-metre radius of the hotel. This is designed to help contain the mosquito and reduce the likelihood of a local outbreak. The spraying is safe for people including women who may be pregnant. Spraying is usually done with the cooperation of the home and business owner, but we have the option of issuing a public health order which will enable sprayers to enter premises for the purposes of mosquito control if necessary.

We are working closely with the Rockhampton Regional Council—and I thank it for its support and its work—and we will be providing further information to GPs in the area today about the role that they can play. One of our best public health tools is public communication. I want pregnant Queenslanders to know that we are committed to talking to them—empathetically, sensibly and with clear information that is backed by science. I stress that at the moment there is no local outbreak of Zika. I am advised by Queensland Health that the risk of any pregnant woman here contracting Zika virus and having a baby affected by microcephaly to be exceedingly small. If anyone in the affected area is unwell and concerned, they should visit their GP to discuss testing options for the disease, and any pregnant women in the area who may be concerned should also visit their local GP to discuss testing options.

In terms of testing, I want to announce a new measure to bolster our statewide fight against Zika. From Monday every Queenslander who is tested for dengue fever will automatically be tested for Zika virus. Both diseases are carried by the same mosquito, and testing for dengue and Zika at the same time is good health care and smart science. Testing for both diseases at the same time will also potentially give us a head start in identifying any local outbreak of Zika virus in Queensland. On 15 February I wrote to the federal health minister, Sussan Ley, seeking her support for federal funding for additional spraying and vector control at airports. I am advised that there is good cooperation between officials, but I am yet to receive a response from the federal health minister. I hope this will be forthcoming as soon as possible as it is essential that all levels of government do their bit.


Education, Digital Technologies Curriculum

 **Hon. KJ JONES** (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism and Major Events) (9.51 am): As part of our government's positive plan for Queensland, I am pleased to inform the House that Queensland students now have access to a new digital curriculum. We know that coding and robotics are essential skills for our workforce and central to the future of education. The projections tell us that 50 per cent of future jobs will require a high level of digital skills, so we are preparing students now to ensure they are competitive for the jobs of tomorrow. That is why when the Premier and I launched the Advancing Education plan in October last year we committed to fast-track the new digital technologies curriculum in Queensland schools. It is now being taught right across Queensland—from Gympie State High School in the Gympie electorate, at its coding academy, to my own son's school in Ashgrove.

We know that not every student will become a professional coder or computer programmer, but the skills they learn will be crucial to Queensland's future economy. Coding is already essential in cybersecurity, nanotechnology and virtual reality. As we look to the future we know that coding jobs will be required more and more in key areas of health, agriculture, education, law enforcement, engineering, mining and retail. The digital technologies curriculum provides students with the practical opportunities to use coding and robotics to create solutions to real-world problems.

We are supporting teachers to implement the curriculum with a range of new teaching resources. Professional development programs are also available to support teachers to develop their coding skills and curriculum knowledge. This is an exciting new phase in education as we move to support all learners to thrive in a very different workplace and to help build a knowledge based economy, important to creating jobs for Queenslanders into the future.


North West Minerals Province Taskforce

 **Hon. AJ LYNHAM** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (9.53 am): Next Tuesday I will attend the inaugural meeting of the North West Minerals Province Taskforce in Mount Isa. This important task force will be co-chaired by the Queensland Resources Council's CEO, Michael Roche, and James Purtill, Director-General of my Department of Natural Resources and Mines. It will bring together leaders from the Queensland Resources Council, resources companies and associated businesses, economic peak bodies including the Mount Isa to Townsville Economic Development Zone and Townsville Enterprise and the mayors of Mount Isa city, Cloncurry shire and Carpentaria shire.

The north-west is an important part of the mining sector in this state and has been hit hard by the downturn in international commodity markets. However, the Palaszczuk government is determined to act to protect and indeed to deliver on jobs in this region. We began last year by delivering on our election commitment to support amendments to the Environmental Protection Act 1994 to extend the life of the Mount Isa copper smelter. That move has seen Glencore extend the operating life of the copper smelter to the end of 2022. Then we snared the North East Gas Interconnector from the Northern Territory, bringing an important new source of energy to the north-west. Already it has provided the promise of a gas source for the Incitec Pivot fertiliser operation at Phosphate Hill, 160 kilometres from Mount Isa.

Last week I announced the 50 per cent exploration expenditure reduction for mineral miners. This decision means financial relief for explorers and ensures that meaningful exploration that underpins the resource sector's future does not stall here in Queensland. This decision will reduce the obligation on explorers to expend funds to retain their permits. This means mineral explorers have an incentive to continue to hold their tenures and they will explore rather than walk away from their licences. All these developments indicate that there are positives for the region, and the Palaszczuk government is determined to continue to build on these results through the north-west task force to deliver jobs now and jobs into the future.


Crime and Corruption Commission, Issues Paper

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (9.55 am): Since being elected the government has taken significant steps to implement a number of election commitments related to the Crime and Corruption Commission. This has included undertaking recruitment processes for permanent appointments to the CCC. There is also currently a related bill before the House. We are now taking steps to deliver on another important commitment regarding the CCC.

Prior to the election we committed to widening the definition of 'corrupt conduct' in the Crime and Corruption Act 2001. This commitment responds to changes made by the former government where 'official misconduct' became 'corrupt conduct', the intention being that there was a higher threshold for matters captured in the definition. The definition of 'corrupt conduct' helps establish the CCC's jurisdiction in relation to addressing public sector corruption. It is important that we get this definition right so the CCC has the necessary and appropriate jurisdiction to address public sector corruption.

Today I am releasing an issues paper seeking feedback on the definition of 'corrupt conduct'. I will be writing to key stakeholders to seek their feedback on the issues paper. The director-general of the Department of Justice and Attorney-General will also be writing to all departmental heads seeking their feedback. However, all Queenslanders have a stake in ensuring that our public sector watchdog can tackle corruption adequately. This is why the paper will also be available on the Get Involved website. I encourage all Queenslanders to read the paper and let us know what they think. Submissions can be made until 29 March 2016.

Gold Coast Commonwealth Games

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games) (9.57 am): I was proud to be part of a government that won the Commonwealth Games for the Gold Coast and I am determined now as Minister for the Commonwealth Games in the Palaszczuk government to ensure it delivers for Queensland and the Gold Coast. As I said in my public statement on 14 January regarding the games opening and closing ceremonies contract, I was unhappy with the way that aspects of that tender process were handled by Goldoc and I have made my views clear that communication with the bidders was not good enough. This government takes communication and consultation very seriously. The government's priorities are to deliver a successful Commonwealth Games, working collaboratively with partners and stakeholders.

To that end, I wrote to the chair of Goldoc, Mr Nigel Chamier, to provide a statement of expectations identifying key areas of accountability for the organisation over the year ahead, including governance and compliance, games planning and stakeholder engagement. In addition, I believe it is important for Goldoc to be able to demonstrate to the government and the people of Queensland that the organisation meets the highest standards of ethical behaviour and integrity, so I have also requested that Goldoc senior officers seek advice from the Queensland Integrity Commissioner to ensure that no conflict of interest issues exist within the organisation. On 15 February 2015 I received a response to my statement of expectations from Mr Chamier in the form of a statement of intent outlining Goldoc's priorities over the coming 12 months including delivery, performance milestones and continuous improvement processes for the organisation. In the interests of transparency and disclosure, I table both documents for the House.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 5 February 2016, from the Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games, Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe, to the Chair, Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games Corporation, Mr Nigel Chamier, regarding statement of expectations [244].


Tabled paper: Letter, dated 15 February 2016, from the Chair, Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games Corporation, Mr Nigel Chamier, to the Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games, Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe, in response [245].

I welcome this statement of intent and I am satisfied that Goldoc is now on the way to meeting my expectations and will work with government to deliver a great games.

Goldoc is critical to the success of the games, which is why I took this step of issuing a ministerial directive to ensure the highest standards of delivery and integrity. The Commonwealth Games Federation Coordination Commission report on the progress of the games was handed down in December and it delivered a strong endorsement of our progress and preparations and acknowledged Goldoc's key role in that. It is important that we build on that and I look forward to continuing to work together with Goldoc and other key agencies and stakeholders to deliver the best games ever.

My statement of expectations builds on the efforts of the Palaszczuk government and that of my predecessor, Minister Jones, to strengthen games governance and oversight. Just as the people of Queensland rightly expect the highest standards of probity from the government, we should expect the highest standards from Goldoc. Make no mistake, the government takes integrity and accountability very seriously and its approach to the Commonwealth Games is no different.

Energy Industry

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply) (10.00 am): During the parliamentary recess the independent Australian Energy Regulator brought down its *State of the energy market* report for 2015. The report contains a number of findings and predictions in relation to the Queensland and national energy markets and also outlines a range of trends that may impact our state in the future. First of all, it confirmed some very important and welcome news for Queenslanders—that the average retail electricity prices for the typical Queensland customer fell in 2015. This is welcome relief after the 43 per cent price increases that occurred under the previous government. The report also shows that network prices in Queensland are estimated—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr BAILEY: They do not like to hear it. They have a shameful record on electricity. Network prices in Queensland are estimated to fall between \$100 and \$200. The report also confirmed that electricity demand is rising in Queensland, unlike in other states. That is great news and great news for economic growth in our state.

Interestingly, the report predicts that electricity vehicle growth will increase eighty-fold—that is correct—by 2024-25. That will obviously have implications for our electricity system. The report predicts solar PV growth to 2024-25 to be the highest in Queensland—to become one-third of all capacity. The report also predicts that the number of solar installations will triple nationwide by 2024-25. That is consistent with the fact that, in this state, solar PV collectively is effectively the second-largest power supplier in Queensland.


In December 2015 the Australian Energy Market Commission acted to sharpen the national energy market rules around rebidding to keep down prices—something that the Palaszczuk government supported at the Energy Council meeting in December 2015.

State of the energy market also outlined new gas infrastructure decisions in 2015 to increase supply with bidirectional flows, with the tender awarded for the new Northern Territory-Mount Isa pipeline to connect the east coast market with the Northern Territory. I acknowledge the excellent work

of Minister Lynham last year to achieve that. The report also confirmed that, for 2014-15, Queensland had the lowest gas bills in the nation. It also confirmed that, in Queensland, retail prices are predicted to increase less than the rate of inflation over the next three years. That again confirms that price stabilisation is occurring under the Palaszczuk government.

The report also confirmed that, since July last year, greater consumer protections are in place in Queensland after Queensland signed on to the National Energy Retail Law and all of its provisions. This is a very substantial report that confirms that, in terms of electricity and power in Queensland, we are on the right track.

Great Barrier Reef; Climate Change

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef) (10.03 am): Our Great Barrier Reef is one of the greatest natural wonders of the world—a \$6 billion asset supporting almost 70,000 jobs.

Mr Powell: This is my speech.

Dr MILES: In fact, our iconic reef was showcased to the world by legendary filmmaker Sir David Attenborough during the climate summit in Paris. Sir David's groundbreaking new BBC series on the reef, which will air in Queensland this year, is a timely reminder of what is at stake owing to climate change. Climate change was not in the member's speech.

At a panel discussion in Paris, Sir David said that filming the series was only the second time that he had been to the reef—60 years after his first visit. He said—

It made an impression on me that I will never ever forget ... to see the reef this extraordinary jewel like environment crowded with thousands of fish and animals ... it was incredible.


Sir David also delivered an important message on the cost of climate change, saying that the cost of doing nothing was far greater than whatever it takes to save our coral reefs. Seventy per cent of all fish species are dependent on coral reefs at some at that stage in their lives. If we were to lose the coral reef, the biological and ecological disruption to life in the ocean would be catastrophic.

Sir David's series highlights the need for an all-in solution. We are doing our best domestically to improve water quality, to protect the reef and increase its resilience, but that will mean very little if we just go on to cook it with higher global temperatures. Unlike the previous government, which banned all mention of the term 'climate change'—and I say to the member for Glass House that that was not in his speech either—and dramatically cut any initiatives designed to tackle it, we accept the science and so does the rest of the world. From the outset at COP21 in Paris, the parties agreed on the science, with the final outcome being to limit global temperature rise to well below two degrees.

Queensland's communities, economy and ecosystems, just like the Great Barrier Reef, are particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts. But Sir David was not the only well-known person at COP21 talking about our reef. At the screening, he was joined by Sir Richard Branson and the famous marine biologist and explorer, Dr Sylvia Earle, who will be in Brisbane for the World Science Festival very soon. They all agreed that the health of the Great Barrier Reef was an important barometer for the world's marine systems. In front of that international audience Dr Earle hailed Australia's efforts to protect the Great Barrier Reef. She said that our actions are a model for the world, actions that others should emulate in terms of assessing an area under national jurisdiction.

It is important that the international community appreciates that, despite the low target set by the Commonwealth government, the Australian community and many Australian state governments support strong climate policy. The Paris Agreement has the potential to become a catalytic instrument for business innovation and technology development and we hope that it inspires more appropriate targets from our federal government. In the meantime, the Palaszczuk government is determined to capitalise on this global shift and ensure that the clean energy jobs of the future are created here in Queensland for our kids to enjoy.

Small Business

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy and Minister for Small Business) (10.07 am): The Palaszczuk government is committed to growing the state's small business sector. Small businesses are the engine room of the economy, representing 97 per cent of all Queensland businesses and employing almost half of the state's private sector workforce. They play a vital role in generating economic activity and employment in communities across the state.

The Palaszczuk government is delivering on its election commitment to provide funding and support programs to small business. I will be in North Queensland with the member for Thuringowa tomorrow for a small business ideas forum, which is one way that we provide assistance to get new businesses off the ground and more people back into work. We also intend to include small business in our innovation agenda that is being delivered through our Advance Queensland initiative. We have put in place key initiatives to support small business, helping them grow and innovate through collaboration and the leveraging of digital technology.


In July last year the former minister for small business, the member for Ashgrove, launched the \$1 million Entrepreneurs of Tomorrow Home-based Business Grants Program to help stay-at-home parents establish or grow their home based businesses. In just one month almost 1,300 applications were received for the program and 202 of those applications were successful and are currently proceeding.

The Home-based Business Grants Program is already having a positive impact. Of the 87 per cent who have completed stage 1 so far, nearly two-thirds are expecting their revenue to increase substantially over the next 12 months. Further, 68 per cent believe the program has already or will improve their work-life balance.

The Mentoring for Growth program is another program that is making a tangible difference to small businesses in Queensland. In 2015, 160 panels were conducted and 596 growing businesses provided with advice and assistance across the state. Mentors volunteered 2,047 hours to the program at a nominal value of \$614,000. Just last week a team of mentors travelled to Kingaroy in the electorate of Nanango to conduct sessions with local businesses.

Small business has told us that offering advice and providing support to small business were the top two reasons for a favourable opinion of the Queensland government by small to medium sized business in the latest Sensis Business Index survey. The Palaszczuk government's Advance Queensland is made for innovation and we intend to use it and other funding programs to help small business grow and create more jobs for Queenslanders into the future.

Family and Child Connect


 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (10.10 am): This government is committed to promoting the safety and wellbeing of all Queensland children and we know that the best way to keep children safe is to support their families to care for them. Parenting can be stressful and challenging, but some parents face additional challenges like maintaining stable accommodation, coping with poor mental health, struggling with drug or alcohol addiction or living in a home marked by domestic and family violence. We are committed to seeing that these families have access to the services they need when they need them to get help with these problems so that their children can safely stay in their care.

Earlier this month tenders closed for the final rollout of the Family and Child Connect services in North and Far North Queensland. This funding will help non-government organisations to set up new services that will support vulnerable families and their children in the Mackay and Whitsunday region, Cairns, Cape York and Torres Strait. When I was up in Cairns and Cooktown just a couple of weeks ago I spoke with a number of community members who told me how important it was for families to be offered parenting support. Family and Child Connect, and other local service providers, work with families to help them stay together and thrive. Families can contact Family and Child Connect for support and professionals or members of the public who are concerned about a child or a family's wellbeing can refer them directly to the service.

The Family and Child Connect services will be complemented by Intensive Family Support services to work with families who have multiple and complex problems that are impacting on their children's safety and wellbeing. These services also demonstrate the government's commitment to addressing the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system. The Queensland government allocated new funding of \$4.49 million a year for six new Family and Child Connect services in Cairns and surrounds, Cape York and Torres Strait, Brisbane, Mackay, Mount Isa and the gulf in this year's budget. A further \$3.8 million a year recurrent funding was also allocated towards new Intensive Family Support services in Cairns, Brisbane, Mackay, Mount Isa and the gulf. By the end of this year Family and Child Connect services will be set up right across Queensland and nearly 35,000 vulnerable families will benefit from this service. It also helps boost local employment opportunities, creating 650 jobs with around 30 new jobs recently announced in Cairns and Mackay.

MOTION

Referral to the Agriculture and Environment Committee

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.13 am) by leave, without notice: I move—

That the Agriculture and Environment Committee inquire into the Hendra virus (HeV) EquiVacc® vaccine and its use by veterinary surgeons in Queensland, including the potential efficiency and effectiveness of options to mitigate the risk of infection with HeV and its consequences.

In undertaking this inquiry, the committee should consider:

1. the development, trials and approval processes; the incidence and impact of adverse reactions by horses following vaccination and the reporting of adverse reactions and economic impacts of the HeV EquiVacc® vaccine;
2. who bears the risks of HeV infection and who incurs the costs and receives the benefits from each risk mitigation option;
3. whether the guidelines/procedures required for veterinarians attending horses that are not vaccinated against HeV are proportionate to the consequences;
4. impacts on the equine industry and the economy arising from veterinarians applying a policy not to treat unvaccinated horses; and
5. the impact of Workplace Health and Safety actions on the decision by veterinarians not to attend unvaccinated horses and results of previous Workplace Health and Safety HeV investigations where there have been human infections.


That the committee invite public submissions, consult with the community and key stakeholders, including the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority, and report to the Legislative Assembly by 22 August 2016.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

NOTICE OF MOTION


Amendment of Standing Rules and Orders

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (10.13 am): I give notice that I will move—

That the motion listed in the *Notice Paper* in my name be the private member's motion debated this evening.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS


Housing Construction

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (10.14 am): It has been interesting to hear this morning the Premier trying to cobble together some sort of narrative about the last two weeks, let alone other ministers trying to talk about changing all of the settings in the Queensland economy when they refuse to accept some of the things that have been working well for decades. The importance of having an economic plan and identifying policies to stimulate growth can have a great impact on the economy. Unfortunately those opposite do not seem to grasp that. Nowhere is that more obvious in Queensland than in the housing construction sector. I know the Treasurer likes to stand in this place and talk about housing construction, but I would like to remind him of the state of the sector under the previous Labor government.

When the LNP came to office in 2012 Queensland's residential construction sector had been going through a period of weakness. In 2008 annual trend building approvals totalled 37,490. In 2011 this number had dropped to 27,919, a drop of more than 25 per cent. That is the legacy that Labor bequeathed to the LNP. We recognised things needed to change so what did we do when we got into office? We identified policies aimed at growing the property construction sector. One of the first things we did was reinstate the principal place of residence concession which the fellow who sat in that chair, the former treasurer, Andrew Fraser, shamelessly axed to fix a budget black hole. This saved families up to \$7,175 on purchasing their homes. We introduced the \$15,000 Great Start grant, a key measure that not only helped first home buyers purchase a home, but provided a positive signal to the property industry because it was targeted at new or off-the-plan properties—a key measure that has now become a plank of this Labor government's budget. We established a Property and Construction Cabinet Committee, we appointed an industry go-to person, we made sure Queensland retained its mantle as a low-taxing state, we established a State Assessment and Referral Agency and Economic Development Queensland.

The LNP put in place a whole range of policies and these policies had an impact. Annual building approvals increased each and every year under the LNP government. We saw a strong return to growth and confidence. Confidence in the industry increased such that the Queensland government's policies under the LNP were viewed as the best in Australia according to the ANZ/Property Council survey. That is what happens when a government has policies: it can effect a change and boost confidence. That is precisely what is not happening under this do-nothing government. The Treasurer will get up here and talk about growth in one sector or another, completely ignoring the other parts of the economy that are struggling. The Treasurer will pick just one economic survey that promotes his economic agenda, ignoring the myriad of others that indicate that there is a problem with business confidence and investment here in Queensland. It is obvious to people like me who have been here for 12 years and served under premiers Beattie, Bligh and Newman. At least when they came into this place they were across their brief and knew what they were talking about, unlike this Premier. This Premier never knows anything about anything.

Palaszczuk Labour Government, Achievements


 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (10.19 am): I rise to talk about the positive difference that the Palaszczuk Labor government is making in people's lives through the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program and how that is in direct contrast to what the LNP did when it was in government. We just heard the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, who is obviously wearing rose-coloured glasses, talking about what they did over three years in relation to the economy and jobs. He made no mention of the thousands of jobs that were lost through the Public Service. To this day in our communities some of those people are still unemployed and are still struggling. He made no mention whatsoever about the programs that they cut, such as Skilling Queenslanders for Work, and the job losses in our communities as a consequence. I am pleased to talk about this program that the previous government scrapped despite the reports that showed the success it was having and the benefits to the economy, if we want to talk about economic benefits. Firstly, let us talk about the people. In the past year, more than 8,000 participants have been helped through the \$60 million we have invested and I want to mention some of the specific programs that have benefitted.

Under round 1 of funding, the Gidarjil Sea Rangers project was awarded \$168,000 for 10 participants to be paid as Work Skills trainees for 26 weeks. Those participants will work to achieve a certificate 1 in conservation and land management. They will focus on cleaning up and restoring degraded areas and cultural sites and monitoring sites of Aboriginal and cultural significance identified in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. This valuable project involves a collaborative approach, working with local catchment groups and other relevant environmental stakeholders, including the Boyne Valley Catchment Working Group, the Fitzroy Basin Association, the Gladstone Region Environmental Advisory Network, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and the World Wildlife Fund.

We also have wonderful programs in Townsville. The Townsville Intercultural Centre is delivering a project to assist 10 culturally and linguistically diverse people with new skills to enhance their employability in a competitive Australian job market. In Stretton, the Karawatha program has received more than \$194,000 to assist 10 Queenslanders with disabilities to utilise the 'place first then train' model, which focuses on training in a real-life environment. Participants will be employed as trainees with Break Thru People Solutions and will work on special community projects at the Stoddart Manufacturing plant.

I acknowledge all the businesses that are partnering with our training organisations and the reregistered training organisations themselves. TAFE is also playing a very big part. The Redcliffe Youth Space, which has just received funding, is partnering with Redcliffe TAFE. That is what governments do: they step up, they support the most vulnerable and they support jobs in our community.

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (10.21 am): All that work and the unemployment rate has gone up by half a per cent to 6.4 per cent in the last month, despite all the geniuses opposite. We have just heard from the Minister for Training about all that work, and the unemployment rate still goes up. We are six months into their Advance Queensland program, and the unemployment rate still goes up. This morning we heard the Premier deliver a ministerial statement. When I listened to the Premier, I was pushed to reflect on *Hamlet*, act III, scene II 'The lady doth protest too much, methinks'. Honourable members will know why that is. It is a sign of someone who tries to say too much about something of

which the opposite is true. It is a sign that they are defensive and insincere. If ever we have seen someone who was defensive and insincere, it was the Premier this morning. We look at the reports and the figures that are coming out. We know the troops are restless. We know that the Treasurer—

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Thank you, members. That is enough.

Mr NICHOLLS: We know the member for Cairns has been put on the straight and narrow. He has to go up and have a meeting with the member for Springwood. They are falling apart in the left faction. I cannot say what the member for South Brisbane thinks about the member for Cairns. We do know that ABS data shows construction work is down. Let us talk about construction work worth a supposed \$10 billion, which is \$1.4 billion less than in the 2014-15 budget of the LNP government. That is the reality: \$1.4 billion less.

Whether it is on jobs, infrastructure or confidence, the critical part of this government's failure to deliver is the member for Mulgrave. He continues to fail to deliver. Not only is he failing to deliver for all of Queensland, but also he is failing to deliver in North Queensland. There is no better example of that for North Queenslanders, and especially the people of Cairns, than the Aquis resort. The Treasurer's last announcement about Aquis was on 19 September. According to the *Cairns Post*, after Christmas his New Year priority was to get the Aquis resort up and going. Here is a picture of the Treasurer with Mr Fung promoting the resort. This project received environmental impact statement approval from us. The article stated—


An Aquis spokesman said Tony Fung and Justin Fung would not comment on Mr Pitt's advice.

They are not interested in it whatsoever.

Here are three questions the Treasurer might like to answer: has Aquis lodged a detailed proposal document; has Aquis been granted any extensions; and what is the Treasurer doing to get this project going in North Queensland?


Mr SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Sandgate, I urge the Treasurer to be considered in his interjections.

Palaszczuk Labour Government, Achievements

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games) (10.25 am): Having just heard a suggestion that the troops are restless, I think I know where the Shakespearian quote about protesting too much should lie. The Palaszczuk government is creating jobs now and into the future. The trends are clear. More jobs are being created and more people are being encouraged into the workforce. The economic policies of this government are delivering more jobs and higher confidence. Queensland's jobs growth is the strongest in the nation. Jobs are being created on our watch and the watch of the Treasurer. The great work that he and the whole team are doing is guiding our economy. In 12 months, 71,000 new jobs have been added to our economy. That eclipses by a mile what we saw happen under the previous government. We went backwards! People are joining our workforce and joining it with confidence. That strong jobs growth has encouraged even more Queenslanders into the workforce, which is a good thing. In my portfolio of the Commonwealth Games alone, we are supporting some 30,000 jobs. We are rolling out a \$2 billion injection into Queensland over the life of the games project.

This government is getting on with the job. Even when economic headwinds of change are blowing, we remain strong. We are taking things forward for the state. We are providing confidence and support to ensure that we see jobs growth and a reinjection of people into the workforce. Under this government, there is a strong pipeline of investment of almost \$2 billion in recently approved infrastructure projects. In the portfolio of transport, we are preparing for the future after the malaise of the former government. Where Campbell Newman and the LNP fought, we build. They had an absolute deficit in terms of projects. All they could deliver were the projects started under previous governments, except maybe for 1 William Street, which is a vanity project. We are delivering projects such as the Gold Coast Light Rail Stage 2 and duplicating the Helensvale to Coomera heavy rail. Projects to provide next generation trains were started by Labor and are being delivered by Labor. The Palaszczuk government is working hard to deliver cross-river rail to end the political impasse that has gone on for too long. We need to build a public transport culture and great infrastructure needs to be a part of that. The population across Queensland, particularly South-East Queensland, is growing rapidly. We need to respond to that, and we are doing it with a government that is focused on jobs and economic opportunity, not on taking things backwards.

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

 **Mr SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.28 am): We have just seen the first audition for the *Labor's Got Talent* program. The Leader of Government Business actually had them interested for 10 seconds, but he lost them after that. I think he has tried to be like Paul Keating. Years and years ago, before he went into question time, Paul Keating used to stand in front of the mirror, brush back his hair until it was just right, practice his gesticulations, turn left and right, and those sorts of things. There is still a bit of work to do—

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I rise to a point of order, Mr Speaker. Anyone who has seen my hair knows I never brush it.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: We have had enough. I realise it is Thursday, but we have a few more hours to go.

Ms Jones interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister for Education.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I do think I saw someone on the Labor Party back bench glance up, but it might have been a mistake. The rest of them put their heads down. Regardless of all of that, what we have seen today, what we have seen during the week, what we saw last week and what we saw last year is a do-nothing government with a do-nothing Premier doing nothing. Nothing has changed in the parliament today.

As we know, the achievements of this government over the last year have been absolutely nothing. Indeed, it must have been a scary thing for the schoolchildren to have the Premier read the Labor Party manifesto to them. We had a situation where she scared those children because she basically turned up and said, 'Bad news: I am in charge.'

The people of Queensland know all of that. There is another thing which is critically important. In the last two weeks there have been two major policy ideas that have come through this parliament—two pieces of legislation—that they could not even think of themselves. A 500-page mental health bill was introduced to this parliament by the member for Caloundra. Because they had bill envy they went and rewrote it and introduced it themselves. The only difference was five pages. Is that a good use of the parliament's time? The same sort of thing happened with regard to the smoking legislation. They had more bill envy. There are other issues before this parliament. This government has no ideas of its own. It is wallowing around in a sea of hopelessness. It is wallowing around absolutely directionless.

The poor old tourism minister had four goes at getting her tourism investment strategy right. In December last year she gave up. So there is no tourism investment strategy. Maybe this might explain it. On the ministerial profiles yesterday it said this about Minister Jones—


Prior to 8 December 2015, the Hon. Kate Jones MP was the Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism.

That would have to be the shortest duration as Deputy Premier I have ever seen.

Mr SPEAKER: Question time will conclude at 11.32 am.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Office of the Premier

 **Mr SPRINGBORG** (10.32 am): My question without notice is to the Premier. I refer to the Premier's economic plan, which she did not know about. I refer to the Premier's chief of staff receiving confidential material about former police minister Jo-Ann Miller, which she did not know about. I refer to the Premier's office being notified about the conduct of the member for Cook, which she did not know about. I refer to jailed criminals being authorised—

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I rise to a point of order, Mr Speaker. The Leader of the Opposition's extensive preamble seems to be entirely made up of imputations. I ask you to consider the standing orders.

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, I will rule that the question you have started to put to the Premier does contain imputations. I will give you an opportunity to rephrase it or to put your second question.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Those matters are issues that the Premier has previously admitted not knowing about. I will come to the nub of my question. Is it true the Premier has structured her \$6.3 million office to ensure she always knows nothing?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Once again, here we have the Leader of the Opposition not talking about any policy matters to do with the people of Queensland. Frankly, Queenslanders are sick of this opposition.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members of the opposition and all members, the Leader of the Opposition has asked a question. The Premier is entitled to answer it so that we all hear her answer without unnecessary interjections.

Ms PALASZCZUK: What I am very pleased to talk about is my government delivering for the people of Queensland. What we saw under the three years of the former LNP government were cuts to public servants. That is what they thought of our public servants.

Ms Jones: Nurses.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Nurses sacked, teachers gone, and they wound the economy back. We saw the highest unemployment rates we have seen in decades under the former government. Do members know what was fundamental to this? They did not care about people. They still do not care about people.

What we have seen from the Leader of the Opposition over the last week is absolutely disgraceful. We know what their backbench is saying. I know what their backbench is saying. They are not happy with the personal attacks that the Leader of the Opposition has been waging. We know he has form. We know the Leader of the Opposition has form. Who leaked the former member for Stafford's Health payroll details? Who did that?

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, I know you would be keen to talk about that topic, but that is not the crux of the question that was put by the Leader of the Opposition.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I do not know what the crux of the question was because it was just innuendo. Those opposite should be embarrassed by the personal attacks that have been led by the Leader of the Opposition this week. They should be ashamed.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Lockyer, you are now warned. Member for Callide, you are now warned under standing order 253A for your interjections which are disorderly and unparliamentary. If you persist you will be taken to the next stage.

Ms PALASZCZUK: My government is delivering for the people of Queensland. Some 70,000 jobs have been created in one year. What we saw was tens of thousands of workers sacked under the former government. That is the contrast. We have a firm focus on service delivery. We have a firm focus on restoring front-line services that were savagely attacked. We made a commitment to stop the asset sales. What did those opposite do? They want to bring it back. That is the legacy of the member for Clayfield.

What we have seen over the last week is complete division. The member for Buderim was behind the member for Everton. The member for Chatsworth has been slung to the back bench. This Leader of the Opposition does not have the full support of the backbench—not at all. We will continue to govern for Queenslanders. We will continue to listen to Queenslanders.

Mr HART: I rise to a point of order, Mr Speaker. This is question time. The Premier has already admitted that she does not know. She is just wasting time.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Burleigh, resume your seat. Premier, do you have anything further you wish to add?

Ms PALASZCZUK: What I know is that there is division among those opposite. We know that they are a divided rabble and Queensland deserves better than what we have seen from this mob over the last couple of weeks. They stand for absolutely nothing.

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, just a moment. I allowed the Leader of the Opposition to put his question, which I earlier ruled contained imputations. I have given the Leader of the Opposition significant latitude. I have allowed the Premier latitude in relation to her answer. I will now call the Leader of the Opposition to ask his second question. I put you on notice that I will not continue to give you that sort of latitude because of your experience in this chamber.

Office of the Premier

Mr SPRINGBORG: My second question without notice is also to the Premier. I refer to Ethics Committee report No. 162, which specifically identifies the fact that the Premier's generic and electorate office email addresses were emailed information regarding the deliberations of the PCCC, and I ask: can the Premier rule out that the emails relating to the former police minister were not leaked by her office to bring down the member for Bundamba?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. That is clearly an imputation. The suggestion is made in the form of a question that is implying actions of the Premier and her office.

Mr STEVENS: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. It is a clear question to the Premier that can be simply answered by ruling it out or ruling it in. It is not an imputation about the Premier or about other matters. It is a question that can be answered under the standing orders.

Mr SPEAKER: Members, there are degrees of appropriateness of questions. This goes close to the edge. I will allow the Leader of the Opposition to put the question, but I put all members on notice that I am no longer going to allow members the opportunity to rephrase questions. If I find that there are errors with those questions, they will in the future be ruled out. I call the Premier if you wish to answer the question.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I have addressed this issue at length during the week.

Mr Springborg: No, you haven't.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Yes, I have. What I will say on the public record is that not one person from my office is named in this report—not one person has been named. But who is named? Queenslanders are absolutely sick of these grubby attacks. It is an all-party—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members, we are not going to have a shouting match. Member for Albert and I think the member for Moggill, I do not believe your interjections had any relevance. You are on notice. If you proceed you will be warned under standing order 253A. Before I call the Premier, grubby unparliamentary comments are not appropriate. I ask them to be withdrawn by whoever used those words. Premier, I ask you to withdraw.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I withdraw.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The Premier is not answering the nub of the question. My question was simply—

Mr SPEAKER: I am aware of your question, Leader of the Opposition.

Mr SPRINGBORG: My question was: has she satisfied herself that these emails which her office had received—

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, you have had a pretty good go this morning. Her answer is relevant and I am allowing the Premier to answer the question. Resume your seat. I call the Premier if you have anything further you wish to add.

Ms PALASZCZUK: As I have said, I have addressed this issue at length. When we look at the Ethics Committee report, there is not one person from my office named in this report. But there are two LNP people named in this report—the member for Warrego, who has been admonished in this House as part of this report, and who else is named in this report? The chief of staff to the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Springborg: They found nothing.

Ms PALASZCZUK: The chief of staff to the Leader of the Opposition is named in this report—named in this report.

Mr Springborg: Read it out—read what it says.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Yes. Let us put it on the public record. Conclusion 4 states—

On the information before the committee, it finds that the Member for Warrego—

Mr STEVENS: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. That document has been tabled in the House. The public are aware of the document.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am answering the question.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I suggest that if we are going to come to a situation where any such documents that have been tabled in this House cannot be quoted we would have a great deal of difficulty in having some sensible debates. I think the Leader of Opposition Business has gone on a flight of fancy on that one and you could rule it out of order.

Mr Elmes interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Noosa. There is no rule that if a document has been tabled in the House a member cannot quote from that document at a future time.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Conclusion 4 states—

On the information before the committee, it finds that the Member for Warrego made an unauthorised disclosure of committee proceedings of the PCCC by involving Mr Jake Smith in the preparation of the email to the PCCC of 12 July 2015—

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

Ms PALASZCZUK: They do not want hear it.

Mr STEVENS: Mr Speaker, I ask you to rule on relevance about matters being read to the House now in relation to the answer to the question which is about the Premier's office.

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

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Mermaid Beach, that is a frivolous point of order. Leader of the House, what was your point of order?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: Mr Speaker, I was going to draw to your attention that it was quite a frivolous point of order.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, I do not need your assistance. I call the Premier. You still have time on the clock if you wish to continue.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Conclusion 4 continues—

... which constituted an improper interference with the authority and functions of the PCCC.

Conclusion 5 states—

On the information before the committee, it finds that the Member for Warrego deliberately misled the PCCC in her response to the Acting Chair of the PCCC—

Mr SPRINGBORG: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. In regard to the standing rules and orders around relevance, my question was: could the Premier rule something out? Neither today nor any other day has she actually ruled out the fundamental proposition that was in my question. I simply ask, Mr Speaker, that you rule along those lines. She has skirted around it.

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

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, Leader of the Opposition. Before I make a ruling, I will listen to the comments of the Leader of the House.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: The Leader of the Opposition has risen in a timed manner in order to further disrupt the answer of the Premier. The continual points of order in order to disrupt the answer that the Premier is seeking to give are abusing the standing rules and orders of the parliament. I suggest, Mr Speaker, that you keep a weather eye on this clear tactic.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, Leader of the House. Leader of the Opposition, I am going to rule that the Premier's answer is relevant. She may not be answering the question the way you want her to answer, but my ruling is that the answer is relevant. I call the Premier. You have time on the clock if you wish to continue.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I will repeat conclusion 5, which states—

On the information before the committee, it finds that the Member for Warrego deliberately misled the PCCC in her response to the Acting Chair of the PCCC of 12 August 2015—

Mr Watts interjected.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr Elmes interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Noosa, you are warned under standing order 253A. Member for Toowoomba North and member for Nanango, you are so warned. I call the Premier if you wish to continue.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I do. Conclusion 5 continues—

... by not disclosing the assistance provided by Mr Jake Smith, Chief of Staff to the Leader of the Opposition, in the preparation of the email sent to the PCCC members, secretariat and the Premier's generic email addresses on 12 July 2015.

I have answered the question. The unanimous report of the Ethics Committee was handed down—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr FURNER: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. My point of order is on the conduct of those opposite. You have ruled on the member—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr FURNER: I respectfully ask you to exercise the powers at your liberty to bring the House to order.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Ferny Grove.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I have answered this question at length. The question now is: what is the Leader of the Opposition doing about his chief of staff? That is the question that needs to be answered. It is a question of leadership and a question of standards.

Townsville Stadium

Mr HARPER: My question is to the Premier. Will the Premier please outline any recent support for the Townsville stadium?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Thuringowa for the very important question about what is needed in the Townsville region—and we know that is jobs and we know that the Townsville community want that stadium in Townsville to go ahead. A recent survey today in the *Townsville Bulletin* asked, 'Would you support or oppose a new stadium and entertainment centre being built in the Townsville CBD if it was fully funded by the state and federal governments? Support, 67 per cent; opposed, 25 per cent; unsure, eight per cent. What we do know very clearly is that the Queensland government's money is on the table to build this new stadium in Townsville—\$100 million is on the table for that.

I refer to an article in today's *Townsville Bulletin*. It appears there is now another supporter of the Townsville stadium. We know that the local members support it. The member for Mundingburra supports it, the member for Townsville supports it and the member for Thuringowa supports it, but now it appears that the member for Herbert, Ewen Jones, has come out in support of the stadium. He says—

"If there has ever been a time that Townsville needs government investment into infrastructure, it is now.

What he needs to do is ring up Malcolm Turnbull and say, 'Match the funds that the state government has provided.' We have sent the business case to the federal government. It is time for the federal government to assess that business case and tick it off to get jobs moving in Townsville. My government is committed to growing jobs. We are committed to the Townsville region. The office of the Premier in the north is there which is administered by the minister, Coralee O'Rourke. We have two local members who are working really hard with the local community. We are committed to growing the Townsville community. We are committed to growing that region. Wouldn't it be lovely to see the federal government come on board with this stadium? The time is right.

My question to those opposite is: do you support the Townsville stadium—yes or no? I am yet to see anyone from the opposition come out publicly in support of the stadium. We do not know how they are going to pay for it, because one minute they are for asset sales, then they are against asset sales and now they are back in support of asset sales. We are not quite sure what their position is. We are not quite sure what the position on their leader is. One minute it is Lawrence Springborg—

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before I call the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I am informed that we have students from the Brisbane Central State School in the electorate of Brisbane Central in our gallery at the moment.

Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply

Mr LANGBROEK: My question without notice is to the Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply. The Maurice Blackburn website says the firm offers legal services in areas including asbestos diseases, consumer protection, institutional abuse, medical negligence, road accident injuries, social justice, will disputes and class actions. Which one of these categories was discussed in his meeting with Maurice Blackburn on 21 September last year?

Mr BAILEY: I thank the honourable member for his question. As I answered yesterday, the matter for discussion at that meeting was infrastructure. I answered that question yesterday. The answer is the same today. Let me say this: I have been very clear about my actions in this regard. I consulted fully the Integrity Commissioner. I consulted The Clerk of the Parliament. I consulted my director-general. I have removed myself absolutely and exceeded the ministerial code of conduct to separate myself absolutely from the issue of the class action against the government. I have acted appropriately, I have acted promptly in this regard, and I have exceeded the ministerial code of conduct. I answered this question yesterday and fully.

Palm Island, Water Supply

Mr STEWART: My question is to the Deputy Premier. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on what measures the Palaszczuk government is doing to ensure that Palm Island residents have a safe and reliable water supply?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for Townsville for that very important question about policy and the government looking after the people of Queensland rather than delving into the gutter as those opposite seem wont to do. I want to particularly thank the member for Townsville for all of his work in this space. He has spoken to me on a number of occasions about it, and I know that he has visited Palm Island to look firsthand at the water security situation on Palm Island and to report back to me. I thank the member for Townsville very much for all of his work in this space.

My department has been working very closely with the Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council to find a solid, long-term solution to the water security issue on Palm Island. Unfortunately, this is not the first time Palm Island has experienced water security issues. The last time that happened there were quite devastating consequences to the small community. We want to avoid any shortage of water supply on the island.

I am very pleased to inform the House that the Palaszczuk Labor government has recently announced a \$7 million allocation for some temporary measures to get a desalination plant to the island to ensure that there is water supply and some other measures on the island in order to improve water supply leading into the next wet season which is a year away.

I can advise the House that Palm Island currently has sufficient water until about June. By that stage the desalination plant should be up and running. We will be calling for tenders this week to construct the pipeline to get the desalination plant connected when it arrives. I want to take this opportunity to thank the people of Palm Island and the Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council for their work in trying to reduce the amount of water that people consume. Residents of Brisbane will know when we faced a drought it was people's changed behaviour that saw a drop in water consumption, and the people of Palm Island have done the same and reduced their water consumption. I would like to table for the benefit of the House the Protecting Palm Island's Water Supply fact sheet, which has been distributed to all residents on Palm Island.

Tabled paper: Queensland government: Protecting Palm Island's water supply, undated [\[246\]](#).

I look forward to continuing to work with the member for Townsville and the Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council to find a long-term solution to their water supply security issues.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before I call the member for Everton, I remind members that I do not have prior notice of questions that members may wish to ask during question time, so it is important for me to have silence so that I can hear the question.

Holland Park State School, Asbestos

Mr MANDER: My question is to the Minister for Education. With 570 entries in the asbestos register for Holland Park State School and disturbing reports at least one of their students was recently found to have asbestos on her school uniform, I ask: will Holland Park State School be closed until an assurance can be given to parents that their children will no longer be exposed to potential asbestos contamination?

Ms JONES: First of all, I acknowledge that the honourable member is out of the sin bin for the week and is able to ask a question. This is a very serious issue and I will get to—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Minister, I ask you to make sure your answer is relevant.

Ms JONES: It is a very serious issue and I will get to the member for Everton's behaviour on this serious issue after I address the facts.

Let me start with the facts which I think every parent deserves to hear. Firstly, we take asbestos management in our schools extremely seriously. In this year's budget we will be committing \$11 million for asbestos removal. In regard to Holland Park State School, I can confirm that the area that has been found to be contaminated has been secured, and parents have been assured of that. There have been meetings with parents to advise them of that.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the honourable member for Greenslopes, who has spoken to me many times about this issue and who has been talking to parents about it. From the moment the school became aware, I am advised that within one hour Building and Asset Services was on the scene securing the site. These are the workers that you used to be the minister for.

Mr Mander: Your system broke down.

Ms JONES: No. We know that we have aged stock in the department of education. Everyone knows that. Many buildings in Queensland were built when the view at the time was that asbestos material was safe. That is why we have a rigorous process in place. The same process that is in place today was in place when you were the minister for public works, so you know better. You know better. I want to say to the community of Holland Park State School and all school communities that we take asbestos management seriously. We are putting—

Mr SPEAKER: One moment, Minister. I ask you to address your comments through the chair. Using the word 'you' is not appropriate.

Ms JONES: Thank you, Mr Speaker. What I would like to assure all parents at this school and all schools is that we take asbestos management seriously and all appropriate measures have been put in place and the site is secure. I want to thank the member for Greenslopes for acting in a responsible way on behalf of his local community. What I find very concerning is that, after the week the member for Everton has had, he is using asbestos scaremongering to try to score political points. He knows full well. In his own words in our local community a year ago, he said, 'These issues can be very concerning. They can make people very concerned,' yet he is deliberately choosing to scaremonger. He went out there saying there are 500 entries. If he—

An opposition member interjected.

Ms JONES: I am responding to comments that the member for Everton has made publicly—

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Kawana, I would urge you to consider your interjections.

Ms JONES: If he had bothered to check the facts, he would know that the register included 470 entries dating back to 2009. What the member for Everton did not say on radio was that more than 230 reports of suspected asbestos registered at the Holland Park State School were investigated and found not to contain asbestos.

(Time expired)

Pacific Patrol Boat Replacement

Mr PYNE: My question is directed to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer please update the House on how the Palaszczuk government's efforts to secure the Pacific patrol boat replacement contract in Far North Queensland are proceeding?

Mr PITT: I thank the honourable member for Cairns for his question. He, along with the member for Barron River, me, the Premier and all members of this government have been very strong advocates to ensure that we can get the Pacific patrol boat replacement tender secured for Cairns. We are committed to working with the Commonwealth for the benefit socially and economically of all of Northern Australia, but clearly we have a bias towards making sure that it happens in North Queensland. We want to see the Pacific patrol boat replacement contract as a key component of the Northern Australia policy, and there is a chance for the Turnbull government to make that a key part of their Northern Australia commitments.

Just last week I spoke personally with the Minister for Northern Australia, Josh Frydenberg, to restate to him that I am committed to working in partnership, in a bipartisan way, and I expressed to him the importance of this particular contract and what it would mean for Cairns and Far North Queensland. We know that the Turnbull government will be releasing its defence white paper today

and apparently it will be pushing through all of the things that were committed by Tony Abbott. There is no word yet on the Pacific patrol boat tender. What we need from Canberra is action on this particular commitment. This is a very important commitment—one that will do great things, as I said, for that region. Now that Malcolm Turnbull's tax reform plan is dead in the water, they have to set sail and get right behind this particular initiative. They are the self-anointed innovative, agile and bold government—that is what we were promised from them—so this is now an opportunity for them to see that through and put this issue to bed by giving these great skills and opportunities to Cairns and Far North Queensland.

Awarding this contract to Queensland would recognise both the strategic geographic advantage that Cairns holds and the existing skilled workforce that is in Far North Queensland. That has been recognised not just across Australia but also globally. This project represents a significant investment in Australia's defence industry, with the patrol boats worth almost half a billion dollars themselves—but that is not the important component. The important component is sustainment over the life of the project and the personnel costs, which are estimated to be valued at more than \$1.3 billion over the next 30 years.

This is a critical thing for the Cairns community. We know we have strong support for that, and I acknowledge the strong support from Warren Entsch, the member for Leichhardt. I have stood shoulder to shoulder with him trying to get the federal government to come through with this contract. We do not want just the maintenance part of the contract; we want the whole contract. We want to impress on them that this sort of thing has to come to Cairns. The community will rely on it. It is absolutely important that we get this project. We do not want to see this done by outsourcing any work overseas. We have the capabilities right here in Queensland. We want to win this for Queensland. We have those capabilities in Cairns.

Robina Hospital, Mental Health Patient

Ms BATES: My question without notice is to the Minister for Health. I refer the minister to the fact that a sexual predator at Robina Hospital who was accused of sexually assaulting an intellectually disabled inpatient in the mental health unit has absconded three times from the psychiatric intensive care unit and is currently at large in the community. What is the minister doing to protect people from this sexual predator? Does the minister think a patient like this should be housed just 800 metres away from a school?

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call the minister, Member, can you assure me that this is not the subject of criminal proceedings?

Ms BATES: Yes, Mr Speaker, there have been no criminal proceedings in relation to this—current criminal proceedings.

Mr SPEAKER: And it does comply with our standing orders?

Ms BATES: Yes, it does comply with sub judice.

Mr SPEAKER: I call the minister.

Mr DICK: I certainly hope the question does not identify any individual who may be being treated in a forensic mental health facility in Queensland. I certainly hope the question does not identify any patient. I understand the person is subject to a forensic order. Is that correct, member for Mudgeeraba?

An opposition member: You're answering the question.

Mr DICK: Perhaps the member for Mudgeeraba does not know or does not want to reveal. Of course there are people in our mental health system who have committed serious criminal offences, and this was touched on earlier today. On a bipartisan basis last week, this parliament passed new legislation to strengthen the law in relation to the criminal justice process in relation to people who suffer from a mental illness. That was done on a bipartisan basis.

Obviously, we take very seriously our responsibility in Queensland Health to comply with orders made by the Mental Health Court or the mental health tribunal. We take our responsibility very seriously—not only to treat patients so they can recover and return to the community but also to protect those individuals from themselves, because we know that people suffering from mental illness overwhelmingly harm themselves, first and foremost, before they harm others.

We also take very seriously our responsibility of protecting the community. We work in conjunction with law enforcement agencies, like the Queensland Police Service and other law enforcement agencies, to keep the community protected. There are 16 hospital and health services throughout Queensland, including the Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service, which the member for

Mudgeeraba knows. I know she has been running a campaign on the Gold Coast, whipping up community concern and whipping up fear in the community about people who are mentally ill. That is her choice, and that speaks for itself and the way she wishes to conduct herself as a member of parliament.

Mr Springborg: You've been smearing her.

Mr DICK: I am not smearing anyone, Leader of the Opposition. You would know about smearing people, Leader of the Opposition.

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

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Mudgeeraba for a point of order, Minister, I would urge you to direct your comments through the chair. Member for Mudgeeraba, what is your point of order?

Ms BATES: I asked a very specific question about what the minister is going to do to protect the schoolchildren who live 800 metres across the road.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, I am aware of your question. I call the minister to make sure your answer is relevant.

Mr DICK: Mr Speaker, I have confidence in the Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service, which is responsible for running the hospitals on the Gold Coast, including their security, not me. The hospital and health service is responsible, and the member for Mudgeeraba knows that. I have confidence in Ian Langdon as the chair to deliver the appropriate services and protection for patients and the community.

Mental Health Services

Mr PEGG: My question is of the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services. Will the minister update the House on mental health services in Queensland and any challenges to the provision of high-quality services?

Mr DICK: I am delighted to answer a question on mental health because it is a policy issue in the health space that affects every Queenslanders, and I know that the member for Stretton is passionate about that. I am committed to rebuilding mental health services in Queensland following the savage cuts implemented by the LNP. We know the Leader of the Opposition did not meet a health worker he did not want to sack—on average four each and every day that he was health minister; four staff members went out of the Health system in Queensland every day.

But members should not listen to Labor and the government; they should listen to the independent Productivity Commission. What did the 2016 Productivity Commission report say? The Report on Government Services released on 2 February showed that under the member for Southern Downs Queensland's spending on mental health fell to the lowest amount in Australia on a per capita basis. Queensland's expenditure for 2013-14 was \$209.62 per person, which was below the national average. In 2013-14 Queensland had the lowest number of full-time-equivalent staff employed in a specialist mental health service per 100,000 population, and this was not the first time.

What did the 2015 Report on Government Services say? The 2015 Productivity Commission Report on Government Services showed that expenditure on mental health services fell by \$45.4 million in 2012-13. That was the Leader of the Opposition's first full year as the minister for health. I am advised in nominal terms this cut by the Leader of the Opposition was the single largest cut to mental health expenditure ever recorded by any state or territory in the Commonwealth. I am further advised it was the first time that Queensland had ever recorded a reduction in expenditure on mental health services in both nominal and inflation adjusted terms.

Earlier today we heard the Leader of the Opposition going on about mental health, but he has not explained this legacy. There is another legacy from the Leader of the Opposition, and that relates to the Barrett Adolescent Centre. That was opened in 1983 and for 30 years it provided extended mental health service treatment for young people. As a result of that closure, 15 beds were lost to Queensland in mental health, but that was not all that was lost to Queensland. We all know the consequences of that.

The Leader of the Opposition has significant questions to answer about his role in the cutting of that service. Lawrence Springborg has serious questions to answer about what he did and why he left young Queenslanders unprotected. We will not. We will rebuild mental health services for young people in Queensland because the young people of our state and their families deserve nothing less.

Criminal Organisation Act 2009, Review

Mr WALKER: My question is to the Attorney-General. Can the Attorney-General advise whether she has received the Wilson task force review of the Criminal Organisation Act 2009, due by 15 December 2015? If so, will the Attorney commit to release it to the public without delay?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. Yes, I can advise that, as the Attorney-General, I have received that report and I am currently giving that report due consideration. Of course, that report into that piece of legislation forms part of a broader review and an election commitment made by this government and that was to conduct a commission of inquiry into organised crime. We instituted that inquiry under Michael Byrne QC, and it gave some very significant insight into major organised crime in this state. It identified that when we talk about organised crime in this state, it goes far beyond just outlaw motorcycle gangs and that we need to be looking at money laundering and child exploitation specifically as major issues in this state that we have a responsibility to tackle. We have a responsibility to tackle those. I thank the Premier, who identified the funding that we saved from that commission of inquiry into organised crime and immediately allocated it to the police minister. Some of that funding has also gone to the Crime and Corruption Commission to tackle child exploitation. That is a serious crime about which every single person in this House should be concerned.

Of course, it also forms part of our broader review into the VLAD legislation. We committed to the people of Queensland that we would conduct a proper investigation of these laws and establish a task force. We are doing that currently. We are undertaking that, and that task force is working on all of the pieces of legislation that were rammed through this chamber late at night in a matter of hours without proper consultation.

Opposition members interjected.

Mrs D'ATH: If they want to talk about transparency and accountability, then let us talk about what they did with that piece of legislation and why this review is occurring in the first place.

Mr Nicholls interjected.

Mrs D'ATH: Why are we conducting this task force? Because that legislation was rammed through without any proper consultation and without any thought whatsoever.

Mr Nicholls interjected.

Mrs D'ATH: It did not go through a proper parliamentary committee process. We will get this right. We have conducted the review of the legislation. We have the task force and we have the commission of inquiry ongoing. We will look at all of these documents together to ensure that Queensland has the best laws in the country to tackle organised crime. We will not just use it as a political tool and a scare campaign to try to win votes. We will do it right. That is what we were elected to do. I am very pleased that we will continue to do what we promised the people of Queensland.

I am considering the report that was delivered in December and I will release it in due course along with the task force report and in line with the commission of inquiry on organised crime recommendations.

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Nudgee, member for Clayfield, it appeared to me you were talking over the Attorney-General, who was trying to answer the question. I put you on notice that if you persist you will be warned, maybe under standing order 253 or 252.

Queensland Women's Week

Ms LINARD: My question is of the Minister for Women. Will the minister please update the House on how the Palaszczuk government will promote gender equality through the inaugural Queensland Women's Week to be held from 7 to 14 March?

Ms FENTIMAN: I thank the member for Nudgee for her question. She is a true champion of gender equality and is always working towards a brighter future for women and girls in her community of Nudgee. The Queensland government is committed to gender equality in all aspects of our society so that we can promote and protect women's rights, interests, health and wellbeing, and economic participation across Queensland.

I am absolutely delighted that from 7 to 14 March we will celebrate the inaugural Queensland Women's Week, a week-long, statewide series of events and activities including, of course, International Women's Day celebrations. The theme for Queensland Women's Week 2016 is, 'Good for her. Great for us. When women achieve, Queensland succeeds.'

The week is about not just celebrating Queensland women's achievements but also acknowledging the proven benefits that when women play an equal role in business, leadership and government we absolutely all benefit. There is a whole range of events, a series of wonderful activities, taking place right across Queensland communities. I would urge all members of this House to take part.

In the lead-up to International Women's Day we are all wondering where the LNP will hold its International Women's Day event. Of course, who could forget that last year the LNP held their International Women's Day event at the Tatts Club—that bastion of progressiveness and equality that is the Tatts Club! I would be happy to talk to my counterpart, the shadow minister for women, about a more appropriate venue, but of course they do not have a shadow minister for women. They still do not have a shadow minister for women.

Mr Cripps interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call the minister, member for Hinchinbrook, your interjections had no relevance to the topic whatsoever. I note that you are next on the list to put a question so I would urge you to consider your interjections.

Ms FENTIMAN: Importantly, our inaugural Queensland Women's Week is also a chance to start a conversation across Queensland about what we can do together to achieve gender equality. The gender pay gap is higher than it was 20 years ago. More women are facing poverty in retirement. One in four women experience violence. We clearly still have much more work to do.

Distressingly, as we have just heard this morning, the topic that Minister Dick spoke about, mental health, is certainly an important issue for Queensland women and girls, with women in Queensland 28 per cent more likely than men to have experienced mental and behavioural health problems. As we have heard, tomorrow the Leader of the Opposition will give evidence at the commission of inquiry into the Barrett centre closure. He has serious questions to answer about his role as the Minister for Health surrounding the closure in 2014. He has serious questions to answer. Hopefully, tomorrow those families who have been waiting a long time will finally get some answers about that closure and the tragedies that occurred following that closure.

Electricity Prices

Mr CRIPPS: My question without notice is to the Minister for Energy. Will the minister instruct the Queensland Competition Authority to immediately release the draft Ergon electricity prices for the forthcoming financial year?

Mr BAILEY: I thank the member for Hinchinbrook for his question. I will consider that matter. What we do know in terms of electricity prices in Queensland is that they have stabilised for the first time in many, many years. There were 43 per cent increases under the opposition. As I said in my ministerial statement, the Australian Energy Regulator confirms that stabilisation has occurred under the Palaszczuk government. They confirm that average prices fell last year after a 43 per cent increase over three years under the government of which the member for Hinchinbrook was a member, and most of those former members are still here. They gave us such an appalling record on electricity prices and yet—

Mr CRIPPS: I rise to a point of order on relevance. The minister has indicated that he will consider the request in my question and he is subsequently moving on with a political diatribe. I ask you to rule whether his contribution is relevant.

Mr POWER: I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, we continue to see a pattern of disruptive, frivolous, argumentative and repetitive points of order. The point of order that I am making is very relevant to the process of the House and I ask you—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Members, I cannot even hear the point of order. What is your point of order, member for Logan?

Mr POWER: Mr Speaker, we continue to see a pattern of frivolous points of order that interrupt the answering of questions. I ask that you look at the disruptive and argumentative nature of these points of order. There is clearly a pattern that the opposition is pursuing.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Logan. I think both sides may need to consider those comments. In relation to the point of order by the member for Hinchinbrook, I would urge the minister not to debate the subject. Do you have anything further to add?

Mr BAILEY: Yes. I would say that in terms of the member's question there are reports and ample evidence out there in terms of electricity pricing. It is a transparent process, as he knows. That is confirmed in reports from the regulator, from the Australian Energy Market Commission and from the Queensland Competition Authority. There is no secrecy around electricity prices. Electricity prices are reported widely and price stabilisation is confirmed. I will consider his question, but there is ample evidence and ample information out there about electricity pricing across the state.

Tourism Industry

Mr CRAWFORD: My question is for the Minister for Tourism and Major Events. How did Queensland tourism destinations perform during the summer holidays?

Ms JONES: I thank the honourable member for the question. I can say to everyone here that Queensland had a bumper summer when it comes to tourism. At Cairns, Gold Coast, Brisbane and Sunshine Coast international airports we saw that more and more visitors are choosing to come to Queensland. That is because our government has said from day one that we are going to grow tourism and tourism jobs, and that is exactly what we are doing. We know this will only go from strength to strength with our government's commitment of \$10 million for the Aviation Attraction Investment Fund, which will see more visitors coming from China, Hong Kong, New Zealand and Canada.

Over the summer we had a bumper season. Brisbane recorded a six per cent increase in visitor numbers internationally and a three per cent increase in visitors domestically. The Gold Coast recorded a more than five per cent increase in tourists coming through the airport. I am sure that the member for Mulgrave, the member for Cairns and the member for Barron River will all be very pleased to hear that Cairns recorded more visitors coming through their airport in December than ever before. More than 400,000 visitors came through the Cairns airport to come and see all that Queensland has to offer, including, as the honourable Minister for the Environment said in his comments this morning, the Great Barrier Reef. We know that this is one of our major tourism drawcards to Queensland, which is why our government is committing \$100 million to protect it and why we believe in the science of climate change.

I also want to place on record—because there were a lot of interjections earlier and I did not get to make this point—that, with regard to asbestos management, the experts Parsons Brinckerhoff have been at the school since 15 December and are working on a long-term solution. In addition to building and asset services management, being there from day one and securing the site to make sure it is safe, we also have—

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Ms JONES: I take the interjection from the member for Nanango. It is about listening to the scientists. I would like to turn to a comment made by the member for Everton about Gaythorne. When he visited our local community he said, 'Listen to the experts.' I call on him to listen to the experts and not scaremonger on this issue. Respect the community and respect that they deserve to get the information they need from the experts on the ground. That is exactly what this government is doing, in stark contrast to his scaremongering.

Medicinal Cannabis, Trial

Mr KNUTH: My question without notice is to the Premier. On 24 February 2016 the federal government passed the Narcotic Drugs Amendment Bill 2016 in relation to medical cannabis. Will the Premier update the House regarding how the Queensland government is negotiating with the federal government for production and research licences and how rural agricultural areas like the Atherton Tablelands in Far North Queensland will be able to make application for licences?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Once again I thank the member for Dalrymple for raising a very important issue in this House. I go back to conversations that the Premier of New South Wales, Mike Baird, the Premier of Victoria, Daniel Andrews, and I had about how important it is for us to be part of a trial for medical cannabis. As we know, the health minister is administering this particular component—

An opposition member interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Buderim, if you have an interjection please make sure it is relevant to the topic.

Ms PALASZCZUK: In relation to the clinical trials, we said that Queensland would be looking at children with epilepsy in the first instance, whereas in New South Wales they would be concentrating particularly on children with epilepsy and also people experiencing a terminal illness. In Queensland we are continuing to work with New South Wales to develop clinical trials for children. We are currently

awaiting further advice from New South Wales with respect to the clinical trial protocols, and once again can I reaffirm to the House that this is an issue that is being led by New South Wales. Queensland is a signatory to being part of the process, as is Victoria, but we are not the lead. It is a New South Wales initiative.

These clinical trials are important. They will focus on a small number of patients with one condition: epilepsy. There are also many people with a range of other conditions, as the health minister has explained in the past, such as MS or symptoms arising from terminal cancer and other serious conditions, who may benefit from medical cannabis as part of their treatment plan. We are treating this extremely seriously. A number of people have made representations to my office and the health minister's office. We have also seen the parents who are struggling to cope with children who are experiencing the effects of epilepsy, and we know that medical cannabis can contribute. My government is very much focused on doing everything we can. We are going to be part of the trial. We want the trial to start as quickly as possible.

Mr Dickson: When?

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is going to depend on the federal government in terms of when the regulations are changed. Can I also say that the Commonwealth is proposing amendments to the Narcotic Drugs Act 1967. It is important that Australia has its own supply of these products to enable certainty of supply and decrease the dependence on an overly bureaucratic and time-consuming overseas importation system. There are issues that need to be addressed at the national level as well as the international level. I thank the member for Dalrymple for raising this important issue, and I will continue to update members and the House. It is an important issue and Queensland is proud to be part of this trial.

Brisbane City, Proposed Development

Ms FARMER: My question is of the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef, and I ask: how is the government responding to community concerns about the impact on the Customs House heritage values of the proposed development at 443 Queen Street?

Dr MILES: I thank the member for Bulimba for her question. She represents an electorate with many character and heritage houses. I know that the member for Brisbane Central is also very concerned about this matter. The government is listening very closely to the Queensland community on heritage and development matters and is taking their concerns very seriously—unlike the Quirk LNP city council.

The community is concerned about a massive 47-storey building approved for 443 Queen Street. Not only does this site contain a state heritage place—the Petrie Bight Retaining Wall; it is also beside one of the best known heritage places in Brisbane city, the iconic Customs House. I am worried. The chair of the Queensland Heritage Council is worried. The University of Queensland is before the courts because it is worried. It is clear from all of the concerned citizens across the state contacting me about this matter that the people of Queensland are worried, too. This site is becoming a focal point for the community's concern about the LNP city council's lax approach to overdevelopment and its willingness to accept high-rise developments which go well beyond community expectations and even its own city plan.


I note the particular concern of Professor Peter Coaldrake, the chair of the Queensland Heritage Council. In a public statement Professor Coaldrake said that he has written to advise the LNP Lord Mayor that he is fearful that the proposed tower is out of scale, seriously compromises the dignity of this important heritage building and puts the appropriate conservation of Customs House at risk. The heritage importance of Brisbane Customs House is recognised by its entry in the independent Queensland Heritage Register. It is also recognised as an important building in the Customs House precinct by the city council's own city plan.

This building approval issued by the LNP city council offers no avenue for the Brisbane community to have their say. That is why the University of Queensland has had to resort to the court system to express its concerns. The Quirk city council has a responsibility to protect the heritage of our city. If the Quirk LNP city council continues to develop Brisbane without any regard for its history and heritage, what heritage will be left? The message from these events is clear: only Labor can be trusted to protect Customs House. Only Labor will protect Brisbane's and Queensland's heritage.

Mr SPEAKER: The time for question time has expired. Member for Nanango, you really have almost overstepped the mark. You have had a pretty good run. I would urge you to consider your interjections.

LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Mr FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (11.33 am): I move—

That the House take note of report No. 17, *'Lemon' laws: inquiry into consumer protections and remedies for buyers of new motor vehicles*, of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee.

I rise as chair of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee to commend to the chamber the report titled *'Lemon' laws: inquiry into consumer protections and remedies for buyers of new motor vehicles*. First I thank committee members, the secretariat staff, the submitters and those who appeared before the committee. I single out Mr Greg Thomson for his excellent work on this report.


The committee undertook the inquiry over several months and invited input from consumers of new cars, including some who have experienced particular difficulties with those new cars; motor vehicle manufacturers and dealers; consumer advocates; academics; legal bodies; and motoring organisations. The committee identified key issues raised by those who made submissions and appeared before the committee. They conveyed to us their recommendations as to what issues exist and what improvements could be made. We also considered features of consumer protections offered in other jurisdictions. Members would be surprised to find that some of the other jurisdictions that have provisions protecting consumers in terms of lemon vehicles include Germany, USA and even China.

It was clear to the committee that where a consumer has purchased what they perceive to be a lemon it is of great significance to that individual, with significant health and financial costs. I recognise two of the submitters who appeared before the committee. Mr Ashton Wood found that, after considerable efforts to resolve the matter, the manufacturer offered a trade-in of \$22½ thousand, despite the fact the vehicle was worth \$44,000. He went to QCAT, which dismissed the application as a claim that exceeded \$25,000, which is its jurisdiction limit. That informed one of the committee's recommendations, to consider making improvements in that area. I will come to that in a moment. Ms Connie Cicchini was actually refused a refund or replacement, despite purchasing a vehicle for approximately \$40,000. She also made an application to QCAT for the maximum claim amount of \$25,000. She also went on to pursue QCAT action over two years and won an appeal in relation to that decision as the adjudicator erred at law in that particular matter.

The committee received 25 submissions from consumers and stakeholders in the industry related to the inquiry. The committee, in conjunction with another inquiry, travelled to Mount Isa, Weipa and Cairns. It also conducted a public hearing in Brisbane on 28 October 2015. The committee endeavoured to get as much exposure as possible and to get feedback from people concerned about this issue.

Recommendation 7 of the report refers to the issues I raised earlier in relation to QCAT. As a result of the evidence provided to the committee, government members decided to recommend the removal of the \$25,000 cap for matters brought to QCAT. Non-government members considered it appropriate to only increase the cap to \$40,000. In many cases these days, this is below the average price of a vehicle.

The committee also made a number of findings. Despite the fact that only slight evidence was provided to the committee, we were able to make a finding that lemons represent a prevalent issue in our society. It was very clear that where a consumer purchases what they perceive to be a lemon it is of great significance to them, with significant health and financial costs. As explained by witnesses, there is a burden placed on them in terms of having to remedy the problem, continuing to try to get to work, continuing to try to take their children to school. Not only are financial costs put on them; they also experience stress, pain and anxiety as a result of trying to have repaired vehicles they consider to be lemons.

 **Mr WALKER** (Mansfield—LNP) (11.39 am): I rise to address the committee's report, which is certainly a well-prepared and informative report for the House to take note of. The issue of motor vehicle lemons is an important one. As we know, most Queenslanders would have their house as the asset in which they have invested most of their money and their motor vehicle would probably come second, so it is an important issue which addresses the minds of most Queenslanders and an important one for the House to look at. However, I think it is important to put in perspective the issues that are involved, the extent of those issues and the potential for overreacting to the issue at hand. Page 68 of the report

lists the submissions which the committee received. There were 25 submissions, many of them from organisations and a number indeed from affected individuals. However, one would have to say that there was not an overwhelming response from the people of Queensland who found themselves affected by a lemon vehicle and felt the need to speak out about the manner in which they had been dealt with or the inadequacy of the existing laws to deal with their situation. Having said that, I would submit that it is clear that what we have here is one of those difficult issues where there are not a large number of people who are affected by lemon motor vehicles but if you happen to be one of the unlucky ones it is a very significant effect. That is the balance, I think, that the House will have to strike when it looks at the recommendations that the committee has made.

Mr Bleijie: I bought a Jeep, Ian.

Mr WALKER: I note that the shadow minister for police bought a Jeep—an appropriately rugged vehicle for him to be seen in and I am sure that any problem with that vehicle could be fixed with his own hands. He is a very handy person when it comes to mechanical matters.

The important reservation to draw to the House's attention is the non-government members' comments at the bottom of page xvii. Non-government members point out a very important thing—

The non-government members of the committee are mindful of the importance of consumer protection measures, however—and this is the important bit—

this should be balanced with the extent of the issue, the importance of a national approach to the issue and not setting up additional regulation and bureaucracy that isn't necessary.


Looking at the extent of the issue, I have already drawn members' attention to the relatively low number of submissions that were made, but I balance that again by saying that those who are affected are affected badly so we do need to take that into account. But it is not an issue that affects a huge number of people.

A national approach to the issue is important. I am sure the non-government members of the committee will speak about that later in the debate, but it is not an issue that Queensland can solve on its own. People buy vehicles in different states; they drive from state to state. The ability of Queensland alone to solve the problem needs to be looked at seriously, and I appreciate that the non-government members of the committee have drawn our attention to that issue.

The other important factor is that the government not react by setting up additional regulation and bureaucracy that is not necessary. We know that that is not its natural mindset. I know from bitter experience only last week with the liquor red-tape-reduction bill where we had some measures to reduce red tape on campdrafting to get rid of a whole lot of useless legislation that had fallen into abeyance and in respect of churches but the government did not support us on that. I know it is the government's natural mindset to regulate if it sees something moving, and that is the issue that I would want to—

Mr Nicholls: And then tax it.

Mr WALKER: And then tax it as well. That is a very good point made by the member for Clayfield—regulate it first and tax it second, and that is what we do not want to happen with this. It needs a firm touch but it needs a light touch. The opposition is appreciative of the comments made by the non-government members in exactly that area and I am sure that, when we assess any measure that the government intends to take with respect to the committee's report, foremost in our mind will be to ensure that there is not an overreaction to this problem and that it is dealt with with an appropriate balance and perspective.

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (11.44 am): Today I rise to commend the lemon laws inquiry into consumer protections and remedies for buyers of new motor vehicles. Growing up, I looked forward to many things, and I am sure that these aspirations would be the same for most of us: travelling, buying a new car or owning a house. I remember fondly my first car—a lovely yellow 1985 Ford Laser. I loved that car and I was fortunate that it was reliable and lasted me and my family for close to 20 years.

For most people, myself included, the purchase of a new car can be one of the first of large-cost items that we purchase. We work hard and possibly take out a loan for a car that meets our needs and those of our families. Mostly for Queenslanders who purchase new vehicles it is a great experience, giving us independence, the ability to do our job or keep up with family commitments. Sadly, however, for some Queenslanders this is not the case. Sometimes Queensland consumers purchase a new motor vehicle with numerous and severe defects that reoccur despite multiple repair attempts and defects have caused a new motor vehicle to be out of service for a prolonged period of time. Those Queenslanders who have unfortunately purchased a lemon need protections and remedies.


Many countries already have lemon laws in place. The United States of America, China and Germany have had these laws in place for several decades and the most common form of protection provides consumer remedies for a vehicle where the manufacturer is incapable, within a reasonable period, of correcting any defects that substantially impair the use, value or safety of the vehicle and rules about how long constitutes a reasonable period and what remedies are available.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics shows that during 2014 on average there were approximately 93,700 new vehicle sales per month in Australia. During the same period and on average in Queensland, there were approximately 18,600 new motor vehicle sales. This accounts for 20 per cent of all car sales in Australia. Some 48 per cent of these were passenger vehicles, 32 per cent sports utility vehicles and 20 per cent other vehicles. Queensland new vehicle buyers have become the victims of lemon vehicles and some have been so incensed that they have run high-profile campaigns to raise community awareness about their experiences, and many people in the House today would be aware of these campaigns.

'Lemon' laws: inquiry into consumer protections and remedies for buyers of new vehicles proposes a number of recommendations. These recommendations include that the government amend existing Queensland legislation to ensure effective implementation of its recommendations and to do so as part of a national approach to lemon laws. The report also recommends the incorporation of clear and practical definitions and provisions into any nationally consistent laws about new lemon motor vehicles, including mandatory time and repair limits and clarity as to when a supplier or manufacturer must repair, refund or replace the motor vehicle. There also needs to be an adequate definition of what constitutes a lemon motor vehicle, including acceptable quality and fit for purpose, clarity between major and minor defects and also a distinction between a lemon and generic design or safety defects.

Further recommendations include a review of cooling-off periods for new motor vehicles with consideration as to whether such a period should be unable to be waived by the purchaser and also whether disadvantaged persons should receive the benefit of a longer period. Another recommendation was that the state and Commonwealth governments implement business and consumer awareness programs with the intention of educating industry and consumers on the intent of the Australian Consumer Law.

Importantly, the committee recommended that the government change the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal jurisdiction limit. Currently, it is set to \$25,000 for matters involving new motor vehicles with major defects. Government members of the committee recommend that the limit be removed to protect Queenslanders who purchase a vehicle for an amount in excess of the current cap. I am proud to be part of the Palaszczuk government, which is ensuring that Queensland consumers get a fair go and that their concerns are listened to.


 **Mr KRAUSE** (Beaudesert—LNP) (11.49 am): I am pleased to make some comment about the lemon laws inquiry that the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee undertook last year. I agree with the comments made by the member for Ferny Grove about the excellent work that was carried out by the committee secretariat in relation to this inquiry, particularly, as the chairman pointed out, by Greg Thomson. A lot of research has gone into formulating this report, in particular in relation to the definition of 'lemon' and the framework for warranties and the replacement of lemon vehicles in other jurisdictions, particularly in the United States, where there seems to be quite a well-developed legislative framework for this issue.

The inquiry took place over a number of months and it must be said that there was not a huge groundswell of concern about this issue in Queensland. But we need to recognise that for those people who have had issues with lemons—and we use that term generically for a vehicle that just does not cut the mustard—it is a very serious issue. There should be a reasonable expectation for all consumers that when they buy a brand-new vehicle it will function properly for a reasonable length of time. The committee heard evidence about vehicles that did not function properly almost from the time they left the car yard, and that is not good enough. When people buy a brand-new vehicle, there should be remedies if that occurs.

The committee very reasonably recommended that there be a national approach to this issue. I hope that this inquiry will contribute to any national law reform on the matter. The committee recommended that the limit at QCAT for claims for defective motor vehicles or issues with motor vehicles be raised above the present \$25,000. Many motor vehicles cost more than \$25,000. It should also be said that, today, a lot of people do not purchase their own home and, for them, buying a motor vehicle could be the single largest purchase that they would make in their lifetime. I think we need to recognise that when it comes to avenues for redress and remedy in QCAT.

As I have mentioned, there was widespread evidence of approaches to this issue in other jurisdictions, such as mandatory time limits for the replacement or repair of vehicles. There is much in the report that we can draw upon. In many jurisdictions in the United States, definitions are set out for what will trigger a replacement obligation on a manufacturer and also time limits are set out for when that obligation will apply. It might be two years, or a certain mileage that applies to those vehicles. That framework should be considered in any national approach.

Another recommendation was for consideration to be given to the appointment of independent assessors to determine whether, on the facts of a particular case in relation to a particular motor vehicle, that motor vehicle could be considered to be a lemon—that is, beyond serviceable repair or exhibiting such a number of faults or nature of faults that the vehicle should be replaced or a refund offered to the consumer. That would be seen as an alternative mechanism to taking the matter to QCAT where, obviously, it becomes a dispute resolution matter. Perhaps that is an alternative that would be better suited to the particular circumstances of the case. I commend the committee's report. I thank the committee secretariat and all of the members of the committee at that time for their constructive approach in addressing this issue.

 **Mr BROWN** (Capalaba—ALP) (11.54 am): I rise to speak in support of the motion in regard to the report titled '*Lemon' laws: inquiry into consumer protections and remedies for buyers of new motor vehicles*. As a new member of this committee, when I first picked up the report I thought it was a report in relation to electoral reform and cleaning out some of the duds who are in this place. However, I went on to read the fine work that this committee has done in putting together this report. I notice that, on 15 July 2015, the Legislative Assembly directed the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee to inquire into consumer protections and remedies for buyers of new motor vehicles. I echo the comments of the member for Beaudesert and congratulate the secretariat on the report as a lot of research has gone into it.

I note that considerable input has gone into this inquiry from a broad range of interests in this field—members of the community, including those who have had problems with vehicles that they have purchased, motor vehicle manufacturers, dealers, consumer advocates, academics, legal bodies and motoring organisations. The committee conducted public hearings across this great state, visiting places such as Mount Isa, Weipa and Cairns. People even jumped in their cars and drove to Brisbane for a public hearing. That showed the commitment that this House has to ensure that we protect consumers.

The terms of reference for the inquiry included an undertaking that the inquiry look into the experiences of Queensland consumers who have purchased lemons, including the community expectation of what constitutes a lemon; consumer protections and remedies that are available under existing legislation; how the legislation, protections and remedies might be improved; and any legislation and other protections in other jurisdictions that assist consumers who have purchased lemons.


The obvious place to start is to ask: what is a lemon? Obviously, 'lemon' is an emotionally charged and subjective term. We know that the purchase of these vehicles comes at a huge cost to the budgets of families and businesses and cause great stress to those who have purchased them. The committee heard stories from witnesses whose cars had breakdown after breakdown and of dealers refusing to refund the purchase of their car. Other witnesses had their cars in and out of workshops and some were parents who were unable to pick up their kids. There were those who could not get time off work to take their car in to get fixed every time it broke down and others feared for their safety if the car broke down again, so much so that they would not take their children in the car.

I appreciate the committee's recommendation to incorporate a clear and practical definition and provisions into nationally consistent laws; mandatory time and repair limits, such as imposing limits on the number of times a supplier or manufacturer can attempt to repair a defect in a motor vehicle and the number of days the vehicle can be off the road before a buyer must be offered a refund or replacement; clarity as to when a supplier or manufacturer must repair, refund or replace a motor vehicle; an adequate definition of what constitutes a 'lemon' motor vehicle, such as adequate definitions of 'acceptable quality' and 'fit for purpose'; and clarity as to the distinction between major and minor defects and clarity as to the distinction between a lemon and generic design manufacturing defects requiring general recall or serious design safety defects that require urgent attention. That is obviously a starting point and much needed clarification in consumer law that I am sure the ABC's 'Fact Check' would approve of.

I note that one of the recommendations of the report suggests a reform to QCAT regarding the jurisdictional limit of \$25,000 for matters involving a new vehicle with major defects. The recommendation that this cap be raised or removed entirely is meritorious as QCAT has demonstrated a capacity to resolve disputes at a low cost for members of the community.

The committee's recommendation that cooling-off periods should be reviewed with consideration as to whether such periods should be unable to be waived by the purchaser is also an obvious consumer protection. I am confident that these recommendations are not unreasonable and will ensure greater consumer protection—

(Time expired)

 **Mrs SMITH** (Mount Ommaney—LNP) (12.00 pm): I rise today as a member of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee to make a few comments on the report that has been tabled. I concur with the member for Beaudesert in relation to the great work of the secretariat that has gone into this report. The committee attended public hearings across the state. I agree with the member for Beaudesert that there was not a lot of groundswell from the public in relation to this matter. The member for Capalaba commented on the fact that no-one turned up to give information at the public hearings at Mount Isa and Weipa so clearly it did not arouse a lot of interest. I do need to put that into context. In Cairns one gentleman turned up on behalf of his father in relation to a vehicle that was purchased in 2000. As the member for Beaudesert said, while the number of people impacted may be small they certainly were affected by their vehicles being what is known as a lemon and we saw the distress that it did cause people.


The Australian Consumer Law came into effect in 2011 and this is why the non-government members came to our members' comment, which I will raise very shortly. As members can see from the report, there were nine recommendations made that involved tidying up a few minor issues that could give consumers better protection. There needs to be a national approach and hopefully this will be the starting point of Queensland's contribution.

As the member for Mansfield said, the non-government members of the committee made this comment—

The non-government members of the committee are mindful of the importance of consumer protection measures, however this should be balanced with the extent of the issue, the importance of a national approach to the issue and not setting up additional regulation and bureaucracy that isn't necessary.

Why did we come to that conclusion? If members go to pages 70, 71 and 72, out of the 11 people who submitted in regard to vehicle issues that they had, only five fell into the category of after 2011 once the consumer laws had come into place. Out of those five, two people were still pursuing action. Because of this, on balance we did not see the need to have regulations and bureaucracies set up. We considered the impact on people of additional regulation and bureaucracy. We very much supported the idea that where people are taking action through QCAT maybe the limit should be increased to compensate for any out-of-pocket expenses that people incur.


At the end of the day the report is very well balanced. We need to balance the need with the consumers issue and how much that comes to light. I again very much thank the secretariat for the research and work they did to provide us with a better understanding of this issue. Whilst the number of people impacted is small, the issue does have an impact on people's lives.

 **Mr MADDEN** (Ipswich West—ALP) (12.03 pm): I rise in support of the report titled '*Lemon' laws: inquiry into consumer protections and remedies for buyers of new motor vehicles*'. I would like to begin by echoing the comments of the previous speakers and thanking my fellow committee members of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee. As well, I would like to thank the secretariat staff and the technical scrutiny secretariat. The committee conducted public hearings at Mount Isa, Weipa, Cairns and Brisbane. I thank those people who attended those hearings to make submissions and those who made written submissions.

We all know that the purchase of a motor vehicle is a major purchase for families and individuals. Where it turns out to be a lemon it can cause significant distress for all concerned. We know how frustrating it can be for those who spend money or who take out a loan to buy a new car through what is supposed to be a reputable dealer only to see endless problems. For many families and individuals the purchase of a new car is the second most significant purchase they will make behind only their family home. Australia does not currently have lemon laws—that is, a law that aims to protect new car

buyers by spelling out when a car manufacturer or supplier must repair, replace or refund a consumer's car. Currently purchasers of new motor vehicles that prove to be lemons must rely on state and federal consumer laws. Some countries do have lemon laws; each is different but the law generally sets out limits on the number of faults a new car may suffer, unsuccessful repair attempts on the same problem and days a new car can be off the road for repairs. Where these limits are exceeded, the lemon law requires the manufacturer or supplier to give the consumer a replacement or full refund. Relying on existing state and federal laws when a consumer finds they have purchased a lemon is problematic because, as the report points out, there is a lack of clarity within the existing Australian Consumer Law as to what constitutes a lemon; demarcation issues exist, particularly where the consumer attempts to achieve redress initially with a dealer; adjudicators are not technical experts and the tribunal and courts have no investigatory functions themselves; seeking legal redress is costly to consumers financially or they bear the evidentiary burden—consumers can be impacted by difficulty in diagnosis, costs of expertise, interpretation of the ACL, technical knowledge of adjudicator and compulsory mediation processes and these matters can affect the timeliness of the redress process; as well as direct costs like the costs of repairs, there are indirect costs associated with the car being off the road, such as the ability to travel to work, which may have implications for ongoing employment; and, finally, seeking redress is also costly to consumers emotionally and mentally.

While it was clear from the submitters that one form of redress for purchasers of lemons is for the dealer to provide a replacement vehicle, the issue then arises as to whether the dealer may simply resell the lemon to another unsuspecting consumer. As detailed in the report, a common theme raised with the committee related to the potential onselling of defective new cars. If there are serious defects in new cars—and recent recalls and media involving a number of manufacturers suggest that is a very real possibility—there is an obvious risk of unsafe vehicles being passed on to unsuspecting consumers as the original purchaser attempts to recoup some of their expense or the dealer, unable to obtain satisfaction from the manufacturer, resells the returned vehicle. To this end some submitters suggested a lemon register be established in order to monitor problem motor vehicles and inform potential buyers prior to any purchase. I commend the report to the House. I support all the recommendations contained in the report and I also support the amendments.

 **Mr PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (12.08 pm): I rise to speak on the report titled *'Lemon' laws: inquiry into consumer protections and remedies for buyers of new motor vehicles*. We thrive and operate in an economy where markets and trading every day are at the heart of what makes it function. Part of making it successful is the ability to purchase items which are a true and honest reflection of what is advertised or presented: that we get what we pay for and that there are no hidden surprises. Purchasers have a right to feel that they are not duped or taken for a mug whenever they purchase a new item. Unfortunately, within the car market there are numerous concerns regarding the purchase of new or onselling of new car lemons which are unable to be repaired nor repaired before onselling.

This raises significant safety and consumer protection issues that are a direct effect of the issues regarding new cars. It was evident to members of the committee that when consumers have purchased what they perceive to be a lemon, that has significant health, financial and emotional costs for those people.

This issue is not purely a Queensland issue; it crosses our state borders. Among the many recommendations from the committee's extensive report is the committee's acknowledgement that this is an issue for all of Australia. Recommendation 3 states—

The committee recommends that the government appropriately amend existing Queensland legislation to ensure effective implementation of the committee's recommendations included in this report, but do so as part of any national approach to 'lemon' laws for new motor vehicles in Australia.

It extends this in recommendation 4, which states—

The committee recommends that the appropriate mechanism to ensure a national approach to changes in existing 'lemon' motor vehicle laws, is to amend the Australian Consumer Law, such that it specifically sets out nationally consistent laws applicable to new 'lemon' motor vehicles.

Sellers of lemons should not be able to hide behind state borders.

The LNP members of the committee are mindful of the importance of consumer protection measures. However, this should be balanced with the extent of the issue, the importance of a national approach to the issue and not setting up additional regulation and bureaucracy that is not necessary. Unfortunately, it is difficult to determine the extent of this issue. There are no available detailed statistics


on the numbers of lemon motor vehicle complaints in Queensland and the outcome of those complaints. At the committee's Brisbane public hearing, QUT Professor of Law Professor Corones illustrated the extent of the difficulty applicants encounter in satisfying the onus of proof in legal proceedings and the impact this has had on the outcome of cases. He stated—

Since the Australian Consumer Law took effect on 1 January 2011, consumers have failed to satisfy the onus of proof in the majority of cases involving motor vehicles. In Queensland there have only been four reported cases involving defective motor vehicles, three of which were dismissed for failure to satisfy the onus of proof. In New South Wales there have been about 20 reported cases involving defective motor vehicles, 14 of which have been dismissed for failure to satisfy the onus of proof.

In response to committee questioning as to whether four reported cases indicated a widespread problem, Professor Corones elaborated. He stated—

It is very difficult to gain access to the relevant statistics from the regulators. They will not provide you with details of the number of complaints that have been made in relation to motor vehicles. It is very difficult to get access to QCAT records. You do not know the number of disputes that have been mediated or settled through some sort of conciliation process, which is mandatory in relation to QCAT proceedings. I would have thought that those numbers do not provide a reliable guide as to the seriousness of the problem. If you look at comparable jurisdictions—if you look at New Zealand, if you look at Canada—there are roughly 200 to 300 cases a year that are being arbitrated in those jurisdictions. I think that is a more reliable guide as to the seriousness of the problem here.


Whenever governments change legislation or regulation, there is the potential to create a new problem. We need to be vigilant that issues are thoroughly investigated and that changes are evidence based. In this case, it is important that, in implementing or prosecuting for changes to laws, we do not create unnecessary red tape. We need to be vigilant that, while protecting consumers, Queensland businesses are not further burdened with unnecessary red tape.

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (12.13 pm): I rise to support the motion that the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee report No. 17 on the inquiry into consumer protections and remedies for buyers of new motor vehicles be adopted. I commend the committee for its deliberations into these new laws. I understand that they have had extensive community and industry consultation over many months. The report presented to this parliament is comprehensive and shows the dedication of the members of the committee to ensuring all views were canvassed. In particular, I note the committee's observations about what should happen to a lemon when it is replaced. The report rightly suggests that there is a risk that those cars could be sold on to unsuspecting buyers by the original buyer attempting to recover some costs or the dealer if they have not been able to get recourse from the manufacturer. If a serious defect is found, this onselling places the second buyer and the other road users in significant danger. The committee has also identified that, while the prevalence of lemons in the community is difficult to quantify, there are inadequacies in existing state and federal legislation to protect consumers. Notably, the committee found there was a lack of clarity within the existing Australian Consumer Law as to what constituted a lemon. Understandably, demarcation exists between the manufacturers and sellers when a consumer attempts to achieve redress with the dealer. In those instances, the consumer is left to fight out the problems because the state and federal adjudicators are not technical experts.

Naturally, these problems are not acceptable in our car market, which is competitive at the best of times. If a consumer purchases a lemon, they are left to fight the battle at significant personal, emotional and financial cost. In fact, the purchase of a family car is quite often the most expensive purchase, apart from a home or a unit, that we make and if things go wrong the fallout from that can set back a family for many years. Like the member for Lytton, I have very clear and very fond memories of my first car. I am pleased to hear from the member for Lytton that her first car was not a lemon, despite the fact that, being a yellow Ford Laser, it very likely resembled one.

In my own electorate of Ipswich there are many excellent car dealerships. Without singling out one over another, I want to touch on a local success story, the Llewellyn family's business. Llewellyn Motors is a multifranchise car dealership that has been operating in Ipswich since 1991. After working for car dealerships for over 30 years, Ross Llewellyn returned home to Ipswich to start his own business. That business has since grown to be one of the most successful businesses in my electorate. Ross's son Wade is now the dealer principal and continues to build on the family's tradition of delivering high-quality service in the new and used car market. Like all reputable businesses, I am sure the Llewellyn Motors business would be disappointed to sell a lemon to its loyal customers. However, sometimes it happens, often through no fault of the dealer or the manufacturer. And because it happens, as legislators we have to ensure that the rights of consumers are protected and that if a lemon is purchased in good faith the consumer will have options for disposing of the car with minimal fuss and no financial impact.

I was pleased to read the committee report's commentary on improvements to how Queensland deals with motor vehicle lemons. I was also pleased that the committee did not just consider legislative improvements but in fact focused much of its attention on consumer remedies, the appeals process, dispute resolution, testing standards and independent assessors. Improvements to the tribunal and court system through QCAT were also considered. One suggestion is the appointment of independent assessors to support decision making in the tribunals, based on technical advice rather than on the opinions or views of the parties involved in the dispute. The suggestion I am particularly impressed by is the consideration of reversing the onus of proof so that the consumer is not required to bear the expensive burden of establishing that the dealer or manufacturer breached consumer laws. In a just society we hope that, if a person has been sold a lemon, the dealer or manufacturer would honour its commitment of sale and agree to replace or repair at no cost to the consumer. I am confident that this does occur in the vast majority of cases. I commend the report to the House.


 **Mr WILLIAMS** (Pumicestone—ALP) (12.18 pm): I rise to speak in support of the report titled *'Lemon' laws: inquiry into consumer protections and remedies for buyers of new motor vehicles*. I wish to speak about a family in Brisbane. Mrs Young of Browns Plains purchased a brand-new car from Holden. Might I say that this is not particular to Holden; it is a widespread problem that we have.

This is the plight of an ordinary family not a wealthy family. It was distressing to them. They purchased a new Holden CX 2.2 diesel car. The family excitement soon turned to tears. Not too many kilometres down the road the vehicle needed a starter motor. Then they found the brakes were leaking. Then they found it needed a new master cylinder. There was an engine oil leak. Then it needed a new air-conditioning condenser. That was all fixed.

Some 426 kilometres later there was another brake problem. The cruise control then stopped working. The air-conditioning condenser needed another replacement. Then there was an engine intake air leak and the vehicle was broken down on the side of the road. It needed a new gearbox some months later. Another 500 kilometres later it needed another new gearbox. This dealership refused to replace the vehicle or reimburse this not-so-well-to-do family for the erroneous costs associated with being without a vehicle. They are not alone. There are many stories like this across our communities.

These reforms are so necessary. Those opposite had the opportunity to do something about this over their term in office and yet they sat on their hands. They only looked after their mates. They were not concerned about real people with real problems. So many people in our communities have scrimped and scraped to buy a car. They do not have the means to commence litigation against dealerships. They call the Office of Fair Trading and the Office of Fair Trading is often unable to help them.

Many of these people need these vehicles to take their kids to school, earn an income and seek medical assistance. It is unconscionable for us not to do something about this. Clear definitions need to be in place so the discretion as to what is a lemon vehicle is not left to the dealership. They will turn a blind eye if we do that. The only time these dealerships do something is when they are faced with public exposure. We need to do more. I have great pleasure in supporting this report and recommending it to the House.

 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (12.21 pm): I rise today to commend the committee report titled *'Lemon' laws: inquiry into consumer protections and remedies for buyers of new motor vehicles* to the House. Queensland currently does not have specific lemon laws—laws that aim to protect new car buyers by spelling out when a car manufacturer or supplier must repair, replace or refund the cost of a consumer's car that is proven to have serious issues.

Some countries do have lemon laws. Each is different but the laws generally set the limits on the number of faults a new car can suffer, the number of unsuccessful repair attempts there can be on the same problem and the number of days a new car can be off the road for these repairs. Where these limits are exceeded, the lemon law requires the manufacturer or supplier to give the consumer a replacement or a refund on the vehicle. I commend the committee for their work in investigating the issue of lemon vehicles and the recommendations to help fix these issues.

I have had a lemon car. I acknowledge the frustration and angst involved with trying to get our family's only vehicle back on the road. We had scrimped and saved for many years to buy our dream car—an SS Commodore—from a local trader in Gladstone. After a few months of owning it, it started blowing smoke and leaking oil. It was with total dismay that the business that sold us the vehicle denied the manufacturing fault and continued to say that it was just a running-in issue. The car's warranty was only months from running out. After many years of suffering and many visits to the workshop and at times verbal disagreements with the dealer, I was of the belief that they were trying to bluff their way along until the warrantee had expired.

I was one of the lucky ones in the end. With my persistence I had my issues resolved under warrantee before the warrantee ran out. Unfortunately, there are many people out there who are not as successful. Many other Queensland vehicle owners have tried but only a few have succeeded, usually after long, expensive battles against car company lawyers in various courts.


Even after getting the issue repaired, I and my young family were without a vehicle for many weeks. The battles that I had at that time to get another car to help my family get around to school and to sporting events, to tell members the truth, was quite embarrassing for them and for me.

As well as significant direct costs to the consumer, like the cost of repairs, there are also indirect costs associated with the car being off the road. The ongoing impact of not having one's vehicle can be detrimental for individuals and families—there are school runs to do and jobs to get to. Attempting to have one's lemon sorted also takes a toll emotionally and mentally.

Improvements to provide better protection could address the definitional issues in the existing Australian Consumer Law by providing more clarity around what constitutes acceptable quality or fit for purpose; defining what a reasonable number of and reasonable time for repairs to be completed; and setting out a reasonable time frame within which a car is considered being new.

The committee's report, which I commend to the House, suggests consideration be given to improving the tribunal and court system for motor vehicle claims, particularly for lemons, including: appointing an independent assessor with decisions supported by technical evidence; establishing a specialist motor vehicle dispute tribunal with an appropriate financial limit; increasing the QCAT limit to \$40,000 in respect of motor vehicle claims; and reversing the burden of proof so that the consumer does not bear the expensive onus of establishing that the dealer or manufacturer has actually breached the law.

While hopefully few Queenslanders have to go through the experience of purchasing a lemon, like I have, those who do deserve the full protection offered to them and a process for redress that does not further compound their anguish or suffering by burdening them with significant costs, time or emotional toll. I commend the report to the House.

 **Mr RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (12.26 pm): It is with great pleasure that I rise to support the motion that the House note report No. 17 of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee entitled, *'Lemon' laws: inquiry into consumer protections and remedies for buyers of new motor vehicles*. It was my great pleasure to be on the committee that produced this report, to participate in the public hearings and to hear from Queenslanders about their experiences in respect of motor vehicle purchases and the effects of purchasing a lemon and trying to seek redress.

It is in that spirit that I would like to thank the committee members. They are: the member for Ferny Grove, the chair of the committee; the member for Mount Ommaney, the deputy chair; the member for Beaudesert; the member for Gympie; and the member for Ipswich West. We went all over Queensland to hear from Queenslanders in respect of our inquiry. We did hear some very sad stories about people who have been affected by a lemon purchase.

It is important from the outset to note the terms of reference for this inquiry. The terms of reference were—

That the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee inquire into and report on whether there is a need to improve the consumer protections and remedies for buyers of new motor vehicles with numerous, severe defects that reoccur despite multiple repair attempts or where defects have caused a new motor vehicle to be out of service for a prolonged period of time ...


We have heard from a few speakers today that there were not an overwhelming number of submissions to this inquiry. Nonetheless, there were about 25 direct submissions received by the committee. They were complemented by the submissions that the department received last year in respect of some work that they had done. The department had received almost 120 submissions from people who may have been adversely affected by a lemon purchase. The department kindly, with the permission of those people, made those submissions available to us as well which helped inform the committee in its consideration of this particular matter.

The submissions that we received in respect of those people who were affected by lemon purchases—the heartbreak that those people went through, the financial expense that those people went through and the sheer stress that those people went through to try to seek redress for the circumstances that they were in—were heartbreaking. It was very sad to see. A lot of people fought tooth and nail to get some acknowledgement that their car was a lemon and then of course had to fight tooth and nail to get some sort of redress.

It is not an easy process for people to pursue at the moment in respect of seeking redress for a lemon purchase. What is more, it is not an easy process for car retailers and manufacturers to properly deal with these situations. A lot of them are in the position where their hands are tied by manufacturers or their hands are tied by other processes. There is a definite need for us to provide a national framework which will provide proper processes for people to seek redress and to be able to properly identify lemon vehicles so that people have certainty and clarity around this particular matter.

I want to acknowledge the Attorney-General. The reason is that the Attorney-General from the beginning has led the charge for national reform. She has been doing great work. I note that the Attorney-General will be leading discussions at the Ministerial Council on Consumer Affairs in respect of this particular issue.

The note that I want to finish on is in respect of the resale of lemon vehicles. Committee members did hear about the concerns that people had about the resale of lemon vehicles and making sure that the purchasers of those second-hand lemon vehicles were aware that they were lemon vehicles in the first place. But I wanted to take it one step further—and it is a little beyond the scope of this report—and that is the need for this House to look at restoring the statutory warranty for cars which are sold by used car salesmen to three months instead of the one month which it was cut to under the LNP. There are people who are vulnerable out there who are buying second-hand cars who are now not afforded the opportunity of a three-month statutory warranty and they are suffering loss because of that. It was a callous thing that the other side did in respect of that—all under the guise of cutting red tape.

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (12.31 pm): It is my pleasure to rise to speak to the report that has been tabled by the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee. I thank all of the members of the committee who undertook this inquiry. When I stood in this House back in June last year and stated that I was referring this inquiry to the committee, it was because of the personal stories that I had been told. We knew that there was not a huge number of complaints out there, but that should never stand in the way of us looking at how we provide consumer protection for individuals out there because of the significant impact that lemon vehicles have. We have heard about that from members on both sides of the parliament in this.

It is not about the volume of complaints; it is about the impact that these problems have. Yes, it is financial. It can cost people thousands of dollars, never to see the problem rectified. It is the inconvenience of not having their vehicle for days, weeks and sometimes months as it goes off the road each time—often not being given a replacement vehicle by the dealer while that occurs. It is also the stress of trying to recoup their money or get a replacement vehicle. It is also the stress of driving around a vehicle that they believe is faulty. I have heard stories firsthand about how stressed people feel to the point that they will not let their own children who are learning to drive drive that vehicle because they are concerned about safety and whether the car is going to break down in the middle of nowhere and their 18-year-old daughter or son is going to be stuck on the side of a highway or somewhere else because of the faulty vehicle.

The reason for referring this inquiry to the committee was not to create more bureaucracy or regulation; it was to investigate whether more clarity is needed around what are major defects and when a dealer or manufacturer should have to replace that vehicle or give a full refund. I know that there are difficulties between the dealer and the manufacturer. I have heard that directly as well, where the person goes, as you would expect, to the dealer and seeks a replacement vehicle but the dealer goes back to the manufacturer and says, 'This is a manufacturing problem,' and the manufacturer says, 'I am not giving a replacement vehicle,' and there is this tussle between the dealer and the manufacturer as to who should be responsible. Understandably, the dealer just says, 'We will look at it. We will look at it. We will look at it,' and time and time again people are put through this cycle of having their vehicle in the workshop but not really getting the problem fixed.

I want to pick up the member for Morayfield's issue about my concern about how many of these vehicles are being onsold. I think there is an underlying problem there. It is not just those who persevere or eventually get their vehicle fixed or replaced; it is all those people who say—and there are many stories in submissions to the department and to the parliamentary committee—that they have just sold it. They are complaining that they sold it at a loss, so it has cost them. My concern is that they have onsold a vehicle that they know is faulty, so that problem just continues for the next person and the next person. Of course, they are not being told they are being sold a dud, so that is a real problem as well.

As I say, I am very grateful to the committee for undertaking this inquiry. I will be formally tabling a government response soon. I am grateful because part of the reason for this is not just to look at ways that we can improve our consumer protection, education awareness about their rights and how to get

some remedies at a state level but that I have already raised this at a federal level. I already have this on the federal agenda of the consumer affairs forum, and the Commonwealth and state and territory ministers have all agreed that this will form part of the review that starts this year. I am very grateful that they have agreed to put this on the agenda and that this will be part of the review. So the work of the parliamentary committee is very important because I will be taking this parliamentary committee report to the meeting this year so that they can be aware of the issues that have arisen including the complaints and comments that have been brought to the department.

I reiterate that I know the volume is not huge. But, when we know the impact is significant and that simple changes can be made to protect consumers' rights and to redefine what are major defects, we should stand up for those rights and we do so.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.


Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Crawford): The time for debate of committee reports has expired.

FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING (TRAINING OMBUDSMAN) AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 24 February (see p. 510), on motion of Mrs D'Ath—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (12.36 pm): I rise to add to the debate in favour of the Further Education and Training (Training Ombudsman) and Another Act Amendment Bill 2015. The vocational education and training, VET, sector is a vital part of the training and education sector in Queensland and, in fact, for the whole of Australia. The member for Ipswich last night reminded us of her fond memories of TAFE. I also have fond memories of TAFE when I completed my senior secondary school certificate at TAFE before attending university.

The VET sector trains a huge number of our workforce. The VET sector nationally brings in \$52 million of overseas revenue to the Australian economy. Education in Australia is one of the four top economic drivers, and in 2013 education was the fourth largest export. Employees seeking work in 2015 with a certificate III qualification were 86.6 per cent successful. This is a great rate. Our training sector is an economic driver for the economy and a path that many of our workforce take to gain employment. The sector must be protected from shonky providers. The quality and reputation of the industry must be protected.

Vocational skills are the cornerstone of our regional economies. These are the skills that drive the construction, engineering, hospitality, and health and community service sectors. They nurture our artists, our hairdressers and our childcare workers. These are the skills that keep our region strong and allow them to grow. The government has been proud to support our TAFE network because this network changes people's lives—from young people who are looking for their first opportunity to enter the workforce, to women re-entering the workforce and to those people using TAFE to transition into higher education, as I did.

Over 85 per cent of TAFE graduates are employed at the completion of their studies. Because this sector is vital to us, we are proud to reintroduce the Training Ombudsman. It will be their role to ensure the many training providers who operate in this state provide a quality service. We want to make sure they offer enough training to allow students to learn the skills they need. We want to make sure they explain the full costs of their training that Queenslanders are signing up to. We want to make sure that all skills training is of a high quality because, if they do not, they will not be operating in our state.

The establishment of an independent Training Ombudsman will not only preserve but also reinvigorate the VET sector in Queensland. During my time as an organiser with the Queensland Teachers' Union, I spent time with TAFE teachers and students listening to stories of fly-by-night providers who promise a qualification without delivering the training required to develop skills to perform in the workplace. There was one provider waiting outside Centrelink offering IT courses to be delivered in a couple of days compared with a TAFE course taking 10 weeks. Students with their government training funds signed up for the course. They signed up for the course because they told me they wanted to get into the workforce faster. At the end of the course, they found that they had a certificate and no skills. Their government payment for training was wasted. The only time the students got near a computer was when they printed out their own certificate of completion.

Another provider in Queensland was offering a cheap rate on a welding course—a course that would get workers straight into the workforce on building sites, in factories and engineering workshops. Welding is a skilled profession and it can be a dangerous line of work if you are not adequately trained. The training company used cardboard welding irons and rods for the students to practise on. They did not get to go near any heat at all. The danger students entering a workplace with this type of training place on other workers and themselves is unimaginable.


When TAFE Queensland trains students they use quality, well-trained and qualified teachers. They use appropriate training tools and resources to ensure that students are work ready, can undertake the role they are employed to undertake with confidence, and not be a safety risk to themselves or others. This is the standard that all registered training organisations, or RTOs, should be providing. They have an obligation to provide quality training.

When talking to hospitality teachers about the cost of a TAFE course and the amount of time it took to complete the TAFE course compared to another RTO, they had a simple explanation. When TAFE teachers teach students to fillet a fish, each student has their own fish to practise on. A rival RTO has one fish, the teacher fillets the fish, the students watch and they get ticked off as being able to fillet fish.

Students need to have an avenue where they can take complaints if their VET RTO is not delivering. Under this bill the Training Ombudsman can receive complaints about the provision of quality of VET by RTOs, supervising RTOs and employers employing an apprentice or trainee; matters relating to apprenticeships and traineeships in Queensland including decisions of the chief executive regarding training contracts and declaration of, and normal term for, an apprenticeship or traineeship; compliance with the FET Act by apprentices, trainees, employers and supporting RTOs on compliance matters; matters relating to RTOs that have a prequalified supplier agreement with the Department of Education and Training; and prescribed decisions, for example, certain decisions made by the chief executive of DET under the FET Act such as decisions to register a training contract and the decision to issue a completion certificate for an apprenticeship or traineeship.

The VET sector is an important economic driver to the Queensland economy. It is also important for our state to have a well-trained workforce that will continue to support our economy. RTOs taking money unjustly from students by not delivering the promised skills and training need to be ousted. The Training Ombudsman will be a one-stop shop to which students, parents, providers and others can turn to navigate the varied and complex VET system, make complaints and be assisted to resolve disputes.


In closing, I would like to thank all of our hardworking VET teachers in TAFE and in private RTOs who are doing the right thing by our students. I congratulate Jo Pyne, a passionate TAFE manager in North Queensland. I would like to thank all of these people for their service in vocational education. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr CRAMP** (Gaven—LNP) (12.45 pm): I rise today to speak to the Further Education and Training (Training Ombudsman) and Another Act Amendment Bill 2015. Vocational education and training, or VET for short, allows for the facilitation of workplace specific training across many industries. Having previously been a qualified VET trainer involved in workplace training and education, I do understand that the VET system can be complex.

This bill seeks to establish the Training Ombudsman as an independent statutory position. The Training Ombudsman is intended to ensure that Queensland's VET students, employers and other significant stakeholders have a clear pathway for complaints and that systemic problems can be readily identified. As a member of the Education, Tourism and Small Business Committee that undertook the review of this bill, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow committee members for their professional approach to ensuring the best possible outcome to our activities. I also thank Sue Cawcutt and the secretariat for their continued hard work in keeping our committee on schedule and productive. I take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank the former deputy chair, the member for Toowoomba South, for his guidance and input during his time on the committee. I also thank the member for Lytton for her input on the committee.

Through this legislation Labor has, in essence, written a very large cheque for another level of bureaucracy that would be best placed in the federal arena. This position is also backed by the Consumer Action Law Centre, which in its submission to the committee considers a single national ombudsman is the preferred model for dispute resolution. Again we see this government committing an excessive amount of taxpayer dollars to a position without any detail or transparency as to how this money will be spent. It is another perfectly round figure that has seemingly been plucked out of thin air—this time \$5 million over three years—to establish the Training Ombudsman and the allocation of another half a million dollars a year on an ongoing basis.

Labor's failure to explain how they have come to this figure is nothing more than taking Queenslanders for a ride. With the Australian Bureau of Statistics' figures showing Queensland's unemployment rate has jumped to 6.5 per cent in a negative sign for the state's economy, and the Minister for Employment's now infamous statement that not much can be done to change crippling youth unemployment figures, despite it being her job to find a solution, perhaps the \$5 million allotted for a Training Ombudsman may have been better spent on some training and education to provide unemployed Queenslanders with improved skills to enhance their education and employment prospects.

 **Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (12.48 pm): I rise to speak on the Further Education and Training (Training Ombudsman) and Another Act Amendment Bill 2015. Firstly, I commend the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills for this reform and for introducing this bill. This bill extends on a theme of reforms that upholds standards, and it creates effective systems in this state that support employment.

My own department, the Department of Housing and Public Works, is also committed to furthering the skills, education and training of Queenslanders. Over the last 12 months, my department has taken major steps to ensure that we have a fairer and better system for everybody we work with—whether that be for the homeless, for tenants in the houses we provide or for those employed in the building and construction industry in Queensland. In fact the entire Palaszczuk government is committed to improving systems that ensure equity, fairness and opportunity. I note in her introductory speech the minister said—

One of the key functions of the Training Ombudsman will be to receive complaints about the provision and quality of VET by registered training organisations and assist complainants to have their issues addressed by the most appropriate agency.

We are seeing the creation of a fairer system through the Training Ombudsman. We are also supporting many trainees, apprentices and organisations through that process. As I mentioned, the Department of Housing and Public Works plays a role in that and that is why we are interested in this bill. Those of us on this side of the House know that the best way to deliver opportunity for Queenslanders is through a good education. This bill is designed to reinvigorate VET as part of our Working Queensland plan. In the Department of Housing and Public Works, we are looking at hiring trainees and apprentices directly, and we are working on empowering the private sector, social enterprises and not-for-profit organisations to recruit those who want to learn a trade. I go back to the minister's introductory speech, where she said—

The VET sector does a great job and the sector wants someone to advocate for them. The Training Ombudsman will promote and carry out educational activities relating to VET in Queensland. The Training Ombudsman will improve consumer and stakeholder awareness and strengthen the quality of VET in Queensland.

As of January this year, Building and Asset Services had 279 trade staff and about 30 apprentices who were still completing their trade qualification. Those numbers might seem reasonable to some, but let me inform the House how we arrived at just 30 apprentices being currently employed in Building and Asset Services. QBuild had one of Queensland's best programs for trainees and apprentices, allowing those people to learn the necessary skills to work in trades around the construction industry in particular. QBuild directly supported the training and education of thousands upon thousands of Queenslanders. Apprentices and trainees were offered trades in areas like carpentry, plumbing, stonemasonry et cetera. These apprentices and trainees are now employed in Queensland as electricians, painters or horticulturalists. We had a system whereby year 11 and year 12 high school students could spend a day a week learning a trade through QBuild while finishing their final years of high school. At its peak, QBuild had approximately 350 apprentices on its books at any one time—and this was in combination with an intake of roughly 100 apprentices per annum. Those apprentices were not just located in Brisbane, or the south-east corner of the state for that matter; they were spread right across Queensland. QBuild was providing opportunities for people to learn a trade and gain valuable employment outcomes.

One thing the LNP focused on in their term of government was cutting services, cutting programs and axing jobs. They gutted QBuild and Project Services, turning them into a significantly smaller unit. They might be a smaller unit but I remain proud of the contribution they make to building Queensland. The LNP also gutted subsidiary programs like QBuild Industries, which was a manufacturing offshoot of QBuild. These decisions by the previous government resulted in significant downsizing and the outsourcing of the majority of work to the private sector. This undermined the capacity of the private sector to engage with VET opportunities. The former government initiated cessation of the apprenticeship program, which resulted, as I mentioned, in just 30 apprentices remaining which is down from a peak of 350.

What does the opposition really think about apprentices and trainees? In 2012 BAS had approximately 3,383 staff, but just four years later only 1,108 full-time employees are left working in Building and Asset Services—after we saw an axe taken to one of Queensland's leading employers of apprentices. It is no wonder the Australian Industry Group made a submission to the committee inquiring into this bill relating to their concerns about the state of apprenticeships and traineeships in Queensland. They said—

Ai Group and its members have been deeply concerned at both a national and state level at the low levels of apprenticeship commencements and completions ...

They continued—

Industry leadership in the training system has been eroded and the crucial compact between public investment in training and the delivery of economic and productivity improvements has been damaged.

This bill demonstrates that the Palaszczuk government is committed to restoring that confidence, supporting apprenticeship programs across the state and ensuring young people get opportunities that were not there under the former LNP government. As I mentioned, this will create opportunities for apprentices and trainees right across the state as we build a better and more rigorous VET system.

We know, through the employment of our own apprentices, that apprentices move between regions of the state to enhance their skills and the acquisition of trade competencies. This bill will give the ombudsman the capability to consider complaints into the effectiveness of systems that facilitate that movement around the state. I note that the ombudsman will identify and report to the minister on systemic issues related to the provision and quality of VET in Queensland. The ombudsman will also work on ways to improve systems, policies and processes, and it will advise on strategies to improve the quality of VET in Queensland.

Historically, apprenticeship opportunities have been available to school students, school leavers and mature age apprentices and existing employees looking to enhance their skills through the Department of Housing and Public Works. More recently, the department has reached out to the Torres Strait Islander Regional Council to employ six apprentices covering carpentry, plumbing, painting and the electrical trade. This work provides apprentices who are drawn from local communities with an opportunity to work on the council to build houses under the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing. The Palaszczuk government is making a positive difference to the communities by supporting local Torres Strait Islanders to achieve full trade qualifications. We are ensuring that trainees, apprentices and employees have more secure incomes as well as more secure futures.


Let us contrast that and this bill—which is designed to systematically improve the VET system—with the former government's approach, which was rather unsophisticated and was primarily predicated on a strategy to sell off publicly owned VET assets. This government is committed to improving the opportunities for anyone who wants to further their skills and education with an apprenticeship or traineeship. It is, therefore, important that the House endorses this bill as it enables ongoing improvement in VET. This is part of our suite of measures as part of our rescuing TAFE commitments. It will support the government's aim of raising the average level of education obtained by Queenslanders and it will put people on the path to employment to add to the growth in employment of over 70,000 this year. I commend the bill.

Debate, on motion of Mr de Brenni, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.30 pm.

SPEAKER'S RULING

Time Limits for Speeches


 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, with changes to committee membership and increasing substitutions under standing order 202, the issue of which member is a member of a committee for the purposes of the time limits has been raised. Standing and sessional orders are silent on this issue. In the absence of anything in the sessional orders, I have instructed the Deputy Speakers and the Clerks at the table that the members listed in the committee's report for the relevant bill are to be the members considered to be members of the committee for extended speaking times in sessional orders. Substituted members are not considered committee members for the purpose of the report.

Mr STEVENS: Mr Speaker, I have a point of clarification on your ruling. I understand exactly and agree entirely with what you have just enunciated for the House. However, the situation arises on occasions that there are members who are involved in the reports and there is a change of membership of that committee. Is it your intention that that would apply to the members who are on the committee when the report is done or the committee members at this current moment?

Mr SPEAKER: It is my intention that the committee members will be the committee members who are on the committee when the report is adopted by the committee and their names will appear on the committee report.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

CFMEU, Smyth, Mr S


 **Mr CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (2.32 pm): Last week the Minister for Mines avoided answering a question I asked him with respect to the findings of the Fair Work Commission on 30 October 2015 that senior officers of the Queensland branch of the CFMEU, in particular its president, Stephen Smyth, had committed serious breaches of the Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act and indeed the internal rules of the union itself. I asked the minister if he considered Mr Smyth to be a fit and proper person to be a member of the Coal Mining Safety and Health Advisory Committee and if he did not, what action would he take?

The minister's answer was telling. First, he tried to change the subject. He wanted to talk about the cases of coalminer's black lung disease recently identified in Queensland. That is certainly a serious issue, but not the issue about which I had posed a question to the minister. Then the minister said something that I think will stay with him for the duration of his time in the Mines portfolio. He described Stephen Smyth, the President of the Queensland branch of the CFMEU, as a man of integrity—a bold statement and some may even say, in the parlance of the *Yes Minister* series, a courageous statement, especially in the wake of the Fair Work Commission's findings. Lastly, the minister said he understood the question I had asked, agreed that there were serious issues involved, but decided that he would leave it to others to do something about it despite my question specifically asking what he would do with respect to the Coal Mining Safety and Health Advisory Committee. This is not good enough from the Minister for Mines. In fact, it is a cop-out.

This minister is responsible for mine safety in Queensland. The Coal Mining Safety and Health Advisory Committee involves representatives of the CFMEU supposedly as representatives of coalmine workers. What the findings of the Fair Work Commission on 30 October 2015 mean is that one of those representatives, namely Stephen Smyth, is responsible for serious breaches of federal legislation and even the rules of the CFMEU itself. Despite this, the minister appears to be completely indifferent to what are legitimate questions about the fitness of senior CFMEU officials in Queensland, in particular Stephen Smyth, to be representatives of coalmine workers with respect to mine safety. This is something that this minister is responsible for and that he can and should do something about immediately.

The minister might have taken evasive action last week to avoid answering my question, but if he continues to do nothing he will be responsible for ignoring and, in effect, condoning the unlawful behaviour of senior CFMEU officials in Queensland which the Fair Work Commission has found stretches back to at least 1996. The stench of covering up for the unions is increasingly hanging around the Palaszczuk Labor government. The Minister for Mines will become an apologist and an enabler for the unlawful conduct of the CFMEU at the risk of his own reputation and his own integrity.

Hendra Virus

 **Mr PEARCE** (Mirani—ALP) (2.35 pm): There have been no human infections from the Hendra virus since 2009. This includes the three-year period between 2009 and 2012 when there was no vaccine available. Vets treated all horses for all conditions without any questions. There have been hundreds of people in contact and exposed to horses infected with Hendra virus and they have never caught the disease. The likelihood of a horse being Hendra infected is less than one per cent as there have been in excess of 3,550 exclusion tests and over 8,300 blood tests for Hendra performed since 1994.

A 2015 Department of Agriculture and Fisheries document states, 'The matter of whether an owner chooses to vaccinate their horse for the Hendra virus is an issue for them to take into account when making decisions around the biosecurity and health and safety considerations of animals, persons, and property.' What they are saying here is that best practice biosecurity reduces the risk of Hendra infection in horses and humans.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr PEARCE: Just leave me alone. No-one wearing appropriate personal protective equipment—PPE—has ever contracted Hendra virus.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr PEARCE: People like the member opposite have turned their back on horse owners so he should not start on me.


A total of 77 horses have died of Hendra virus infection in Queensland and New South Wales between 1994 and 2015. In 21 years that is an average of three cases per year. There was only one case in Queensland in 2015. In the majority of these cases, horses were paddock grazing under flowering trees where there was flying fox activity. On only two occasions, at Hendra and at Redlands, were there multiple horses involved—18 horses at that time died from Hendra. The reason for the multiple infection and fatality rates was attributed to human interaction and cross-infection through the lack of hygiene.

Despite the fears of Hendra virus exposure, human infection from the Hendra virus is very rare. In fact, the government's Department of Agriculture and Fisheries biosecurity web page states that most people exposed to a Hendra virus infected horse stay well and do not contract the infection. There have been only seven confirmed human cases, with the most recent being back in 2009. Unfortunately, four of these people died. In all of these seven instances, the people contracted the Hendra virus after high-level exposure to horse body fluids from an infected animal including: being extensively sprayed with respiratory secretions when not wearing appropriate personal protective equipment and doing a post-mortem on a horse without wearing appropriate PPE. In 2004 a vet in Cairns did a post-mortem on a horse without wearing PPE and afterwards tested positive to Hendra but he stayed well.

The facts are that the Hendra virus is rare and extremely hard to be exposed to or contract.

(Time expired)

Gold Coast Community Legal Centre & Advice Bureau; Robina Community Legal Centre

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (2.38 pm): I rise today to draw attention to the great work undertaken by the Gold Coast Community Legal Centre & Advice Bureau and also the work undertaken by the Robina Community Legal Centre. It was a great privilege to have a delegation from both of those organisations here at parliament today to hear about some of the challenges they face and the work that they do. I bring to the attention of the House the fact that the Gold Coast Community Legal Centre has actually picked up an extra 3½ thousand clients in the past 12 months and some 900 of those clients indicated that there were issues of domestic violence in their circumstances. We still have a lot of work to do in terms of the way that we address and deal with the challenges of domestic violence.


Also with us today was Penny Carr, the statewide coordinator for Tenants Queensland, who gave something of an overview of how things are going in the housing sector. Which brings me to a few things that I wanted to raise with respect to Horizon Housing. Horizon Housing was created back in 2006 as a joint initiative of the government of the day and the Gold Coast City Council. They started off with \$2 million in capital, but in their latest report I note that they now have a balance sheet with \$94 million in assets and 2,500 long-term viable housing solutions and properties across the state. I am very proud of the work that Horizon Housing do on the Gold Coast. In the last year they have assisted 3,660 tenants; they have capital maintenance expenditure of over \$1 million; they handle some 68,000 phone calls a year; and they are certainly doing a great job in filling some of the accommodation gap that we see across the state between affordable public housing and a broader range of social housing needs.

I am looking forward to hearing from the minister for housing about where we are with community consultation in relation to the Logan initiative. That project was delayed some 12 months and put off the construction of 2,000 new dwellings in South-East Queensland. The flow-on effect from that which

particularly concerns me is the holdup that that has had in terms of the proposals that were under consideration for Horizon Housing, who undertake significant community renewal and revitalisation of housing stocks and old public housing areas on the Gold Coast. I am looking forward to that review.

The challenge that we have had since the change of government is that, as we have heard this morning, we have a do-nothing government that is undertaking more reviews and community consultation while thousands of people remain on waiting lists and more people are waiting for urgent housing to be supplied to meet their personal needs.


Australian Unity Centre, Slacks Creek Mosque

 **Mr RUSSO** (Sunnybank—ALP) (2.40 pm): With the passing of the Multicultural Recognition Bill in this House during the last sitting week, I feel that it is fitting to speak in this House about supporting our multicultural communities and building a collective sense of community. In October 2015 I had the honour of representing the Hon. Shannon Fentiman, the minister for multicultural affairs as she then was, at the opening of the Australian Unity Centre, Slacks Creek Mosque. I was there with the three branches of government: federal, state and local. The opening was well attended by Muslims from all over Queensland as well as many from the local Muslim community, who no doubt will attend the mosque for prayers on Fridays as well as education and support programs that the centre will run for the youth of the area.

I strongly urge members of the 55th Parliament to visit the centre to see the great work and thought that has gone into its establishment. Naming the centre the Australian Unity Centre, Slacks Creek Mosque is significant in itself. It connotes the extension of the hand of friendship to the broader community and invites us all to embrace our community as one. I was there with the honourable Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services, who gave a great speech about a particular street in his electorate which is the home to churches from many different regions. He spoke of the mosaic of culture and spirituality and the collective sense of community in his electorate of Woodridge.

I am honoured to be a friend of the Muslim community. My first significant involvement with the community came about in approximately 2007 when I had the opportunity to represent Dr Mohammed Haneef, who found himself wrongly detained and charged with a terrorism offence. Many of you know that the charge was ultimately dropped, but not before he had spent many days and nights in the Brisbane watch house. I remember at the time how there was a real disconnect between the person I represented and some of our community's understanding of what it meant to be a young Muslim man working here in Australia. It was during my time representing Dr Haneef that I first had the opportunity to meet many members of the Muslim community in Queensland and to engage with them. This was at a time when they felt isolated and confused by the negativity that was being promulgated by the press at the time.

Community Legal Centres


 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (2.43 pm): We are all very busy when we are in the House and we all have many functions that we attend throughout the day. I would like to follow on from the member for Southport and talk about the legal centres in our communities. From a quick count from this *Providing access to justice* brochure that was handed to me a short while ago from QAILS, the organisation that oversees 32 community centres in the state, it is obvious that there is a massive need for support for people who are falling on hard times in a legal sense. For example, QAILS tells us that they are providing support for people who need access to justice in relation to domestic and family violence, and of course we always have an ear to the ground listening for domestic and family violence. We heard today from community legal centres down on the Gold Coast that there has been a massive increase in the number of reports of family and domestic violence, and I think that tells us that we are doing our job well. We are getting the message out there that it is not good enough and therefore supporting people suffering from family and domestic violence to be brave enough to complain to someone who can give them that support.

Vulnerable young people, people with mental health issues and intellectual disability are all supported by legal centres right around the state. There are two on the Gold Coast, one of which is the Robina Community Legal Centre. It is unfunded at the moment, and they are looking forward to the next round of funding which I think is July next year. They saw 850 people last year on a shoestring budget of just \$10,000. Many hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of free legal advice is provided by professionals, and it aids young people who are in the legal profession to learn their trade in their volunteer work as well.

The member for Southport mentioned the other organisation that we saw here today, the Gold Coast Community Legal Centre: 3,256 clients over the last 12 months; 60 per cent have weekly incomes under \$500; 23 per cent are living in a sole parent family with dependent children; 42 per cent of clients are female; 34 per cent are not living in a family but living as a boarder or living alone et cetera. These people need our support. We all need—

(Time expired)

Sisters in Mining Program

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (2.46 pm): Twelve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in Mackay are now on track to successful careers in mining after graduating recently from the first stage of training in the Sisters in Mining program. A partnership between Thiess, state and federal governments and the Juwarki Bungoo Aboriginal Corporation, the program aims to deliver real and sustainable long-term employment opportunities and careers in the mining sector for Indigenous women in Queensland.

I was honoured to be in attendance at the Sisters in Mining program graduation to witness firsthand the pride and joy of the graduates and their families and friends on their wonderful achievements. The success that these women have achieved demonstrates the significant opportunities that can be realised when different sectors work together. The Labor Palaszczuk government is proud to be a supporter of this program, delivering real jobs now and for the future.

In 2015 Thiess partnered with the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships to capitalise on their expertise in candidate recruitment and provide on-the-ground support for the Juwarki Bungoo Aboriginal Corporation, who secured state and federal government funding to deliver community information sessions in Gladstone, Rockhampton, Blackwater, Mackay, Townsville and the Central Queensland Aboriginal community of Woorabinda.


This is the first time in Central Queensland that the state and federal governments have partnered with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander not-for-profit organisation and major industry to increase the economic participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

From November 2015 to November 2016, this program aims to establish 31 positions across Thiess's Queensland mining operations. Candidates will undertake a three-week pre-employment training program as trainee haul truck operators as well as an 18-month traineeship that will contribute to a certificate III in surface extraction mine operations. They will then have an opportunity for permanent employment in Thiess's Burton, Dawson South, Jellinbah Resources and QCoal Northern Hub projects.

This program not only firmly positions graduates on the path to a successful career in one of the state's biggest industries; it also provides important life skills training in areas such as goal setting—

(Time expired)

Regional Queensland, Economy; Wild Dog Fence

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (2.50 pm): A number of reports this month demonstrate that regional Queensland continues to punch way above its weight in the Queensland economy. Despite the double whammy of drought and the resources downturn, Central Queensland is the engine room of prosperity. Highlighting record coal exports in January 2016, Queensland Resources Council CEO Michael Roche said 'regional Queensland continues to do the heavy lifting for the state's coffers'.

The January coal export record follows an annual increase in 2015 of \$23.7 billion. The Treasurer proudly announced this one himself in a media release this month. He should be proud. The Palaszczuk government will be paid royalties on every tonne exported, and the bulk of coal comes from Central Queensland. In the same media release the Treasurer excitedly announced an 18.6 per cent rise in meat sales and exports despite drought conditions, while exports from crops have reached \$1.7 billion despite the drought conditions. Much of this is the wealth of Central Queensland and the hard work of Central Queenslanders.

Money talks. While the Treasurer is excited by the money Central Queensland contributes, he is not so keen on rewarding the worker. One of the first things the Treasurer did was cut the Royalties for the Regions program, which had done so much for the mining communities in my region. He replaced it with a very light version called Building Our Regions. The new program leaves many Central Queensland communities with less funding, be they remote shires in the central west or shires like Isaac and Central Highlands with numerous mines, broadacre and irrigation farming and beef production.


The Treasurer is starving Central Queensland of the rewards of our labour. When Clive Palmer threatens 250 jobs in Townsville it is treated like a state emergency. While I have every sympathy for QNI employees and their families, I simply point out that the resources industry alone in my area of Central Queensland has shed up to 20,000 jobs in the past two years, yet there is no response from this government. In fact, Labor's own budget papers show that it slashed capital spending in the Mackay region by \$150 million. The same budget saw very little in capital expenditure for Gregory's state schools.

The central west is faring no better. The latest Bureau of Statistics figures show that the outback Queensland unemployment rate has increased from 4.9 per cent to six per cent. Government funding should be maintaining the resilience of the central west until these iconic communities can recover from the drought.

At the end of January I made a personal representation to the Premier about the importance of wild dog fencing. I also wrote to her to emphasise the need. Wild dog fencing has the capacity to bring the wool industry back to the central west and bring prosperity with it because the wool industry is a big employer. Once western Gregory was the home of multiple shearing teams. Then wild dogs ate the wool industry out. I know that central western mayors have also begged the Premier to properly fund this fence initiative so that we are ready post drought. What do we get? We get reannouncement after reannouncement—the same \$5 million over and over again. I had one constituent say, 'There must be \$20 million.' I had to say, 'No, mate. It is the same \$5 million again.'

(Time expired)

Construction Industry, Nonconforming Products

 **Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (2.53 pm): Australia has arguably some of the best building standards in the world. Nowhere is that more apparent than right here in Queensland—be it in the Brisbane CBD, on the Gold Coast, in Cairns or in my own electorate of Springwood. My ministerial responsibility is to set the standards for the construction industry to operate within. This state's strong building safety records have been forged through a rigorous, statewide and consistent building certification process that goes from one local government area to the next, operated by those local governments. This process provides Queensland a building-by-building ongoing audit mechanism. That is how we have identified a very small number of problem cases in terms of building materials. They are currently being investigated and/or rectified.

At the recent building ministers forum on the Gold Coast, the Commonwealth, state and territory ministers agreed to work cooperatively to implement a suite of measures that will address safety issues associated with high-risk building products. Nonconforming products, as they are known, are present when products are used in a way that is not fit for their purpose, making them high risk. Recently we have seen issues involving new types of cheap imported building cladding in particular. In almost all cases the problem is found at the point of building certification; however, it is creating unnecessary cost and some uncertainty for building developers. The Victorian building minister conducted a sample audit of a small number of buildings in his state. This audit found that nonconforming product use is widespread but in almost every case it is identified at the certification stage and rectified.

I want to make sure that we have a confident building industry, so the action taken at the Commonwealth building ministers forum on the Gold Coast on 19 February is about making sure that developers, builders, certifiers and councils know exactly what is expected of them. States, territories and the Commonwealth decided to progress a suite of nationally significant reforms which will benefit the Australian building industry and the wider Australian community. For the first time we have a united national approach to nonconforming building products.


I can inform the House that we now have a landmark national commitment to border controls, information sharing and enhanced powers for state regulators. I table a communique outlining that commitment for the benefit of the House and all Queenslanders.

Tabled paper: Document titled 'Building Ministers' Forum, 19 February 2016, Communique' [\[247\]](#).

The Victorian building authority sample audit of a small number of buildings informed the national decisions moving forward. I have also written to local councils to remind them of their important role in the certification process. Private certifiers are also aware of their responsibilities.

Finally, I urge builders to safeguard their projects by using Australian-made products that meet Australian standards. A report on new strategies to prevent nonconforming products moving freely into the country will be delivered to ministers within eight weeks. I look forward to updating the House.

Robina Hospital, Mental Health Unit

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (2.56 pm): This morning in the House I raised a very serious matter about the suitability of certain inpatients at the Robina mental health unit. Staff tell me that there are numerous patients in the psychiatric intensive care unit, PICU, about whom they hold grave fears—for their own safety, the safety of other patients and the safety of the general public.


Staff have told me of a number of incidents in their own words which I will relate. A nurse who was sexually assaulted by a patient was told when reporting the incident, 'Stop complaining. You should have a think about your career.' There are concerns that an intellectually disabled patient was not believed when they complained about an alleged sexual assault by another patient as they were considered delusional, even though when questioned later they could detail the date, time, room number and the patient who had perpetrated the alleged assault.

Extra staff were put on in the PICU to 'special' a female patient, not because the female patient required it but to keep her safe from a male patient. Staff have told me that this patient has escaped from the PICU multiple times, often assisted in their escape by other patients in the unit. Staff have informed me that this patient has a history of sexual assaults and that they are constantly AWOL for days or weeks at a time and return sometimes quite unwell of their own accord and at other times with the Queensland Police Service. Staff tell me that the patient's predatory behaviour towards several staff members has been getting gradually worse and that this patient can be very intimidating and aggressive. I have been told that a staff member was trapped in the staff room late at night but managed to escape from this patient and that these incidents are getting progressively worse.

This same patient was transferred from the adult unit, at which the recent fire occurred, to PICU after being caught in the act of an alleged sexual assault on another patient. This patient has passed through the service and is now in the rehab part of the Robina Hospital mental health service, where they have tested positive on more than one occasion to use of the drug ice. Staff believe the incidents are becoming progressively worse, that patients such as this stretch several services and resources and that they and other patients are placed at unnecessary risk and not enough is being done. These were their words. It seems to them that it is just part of their job.

The minister, the CEO and the Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service need to thoroughly investigate the concerns of their own staff and begin a review of the practices at Robina Hospital mental health unit as a matter of urgency. Of great concern is patients either going AWOL or on approved day leave without supervision when they potentially pose a very real threat to public safety including commuters using Robina train station; staff, students and families at Robina State High School; and shoppers at Robina Town Centre. This facility is not an appropriate facility to house these types of patients, and the minister needs to act urgently on the matter.

Renewable Energy

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply) (2.59 pm): The Palaszczuk government is committed to renewable energy and to transitioning our economy to a cleaner energy economy, to act on climate change, to grow our jobs and to grow our state economy. We are turning the Sunshine State into the solar state. With the second coming of the Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, many in the renewable energy industry had great hope that we would turn the corner after the Stone Age policies of Tony Abbott. Many thought that Malcolm Turnbull would be a supporter of renewable energy. In 2010 as coalition leader he launched the Beyond Zero Emissions plan for a rapid transition to 100 per cent renewable energy in Australia. He spoke often of the moral and economic importance of acting decisively on climate change. When Tony Abbott took the leadership, Malcolm Turnbull called direct action 'irresponsible' and a 'fig leaf' for a climate policy. Six months after his election we can safely say that nothing has changed with the federal government. In fact, it has gotten worse than it was under Tony Abbott.

Tony Abbott's fig leaf of a policy in terms of direct action remains our climate policy for this country under Malcolm Turnbull. The legislation to repeal the Climate Change Authority, to scrap the Australian Renewable Energy Agency and the CEFC has not been withdrawn. Hundreds of climate scientists are being sacked by the CSIRO and the board of ARENA, the key partner in renewable energy in this state, is vacant. He is doing the same thing as Tony Abbott did: defer, delay and stall to stop renewable energy happening in this country—exactly the same position. The board of ARENA needs to be dealt

with by the Prime Minister if he is to be taken seriously on renewable energy, but we are getting the same Tony Abbott tactics, the same hostility, the same nobbling of jobs, the same stopping of action on climate change.

Not one large project has been financed on renewable energy since the election of Malcolm Turnbull. The lack of renewable energy projects is not because of a lack of projects; there are projects right across Queensland waiting to go and we are committed to them as the Palaszczuk government under our Solar 60 project and under our Ergon expressions of interest. We have been overwhelmed by the interest from the private sector, but we need the federal government to start walking the walk, not just talking the talk. There are 17 projects with 1,000 megawatts of energy ready to go in Queensland and we need the federal government to come on board. We need wind driving our turbines, not debate. That is what we need in Queensland. We need the Prime Minister to start standing up for his values, whether it is on renewable energy, whether it is on marriage equality or whether it is on the republic. Who is this Prime Minister? Is he going to actually stand up for what he says he believes in or is he just going to continue Tony Abbott's policies of wrecking renewable energy across this country and wrecking renewable investment and jobs right across this country, including in Queensland?


Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! The time for private members' statements has expired.

FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING (TRAINING OMBUDSMAN) AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 595, on motion of Mrs D'Ath—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr MADDEN** (Ipswich West—ALP) (3.02 pm): Today I rise in support of the Further Education and Training (Training Ombudsman) and Another Act Amendment Bill 2015. The position of Training Ombudsman was axed under the Campbell Newman government's cost cutting, robbing over 100,000 apprentices and trainees of a service to hear their complaints. The Queensland government then went on to refer the power to the Australian government to regulate registered training organisations, RTOs. Although the Queensland government no longer regulates RTOs, quality within the vocational education and training, VET, sector is a key focus for the government. That is why the government will restore the position of Training Ombudsman so that it can receive complaints about the provision and quality of VET training by registered training organisations and to assist complainants to have their issues addressed by the most appropriate agency.

The role of Training Ombudsman will be central to handling disputes affecting potentially vulnerable young Queenslanders. It is part of the government's plan to reinvigorate the VET sector in Queensland under Working Queensland, Labor's jobs plan, with the aim of increasing employment. Queensland apprentices and trainees will benefit by this bill which is designed to strengthen the vocational education and training sector. One of the key responsibilities of the ombudsman will be helping apprentices, trainees, supervising RTOs and employers find the right training solutions to enable them to secure skilled jobs. It is expected that the type of problems the ombudsman will deal with will include problems with work, training, facilities and supervision. The legislation will also provide important dispute resolution services.

One of the submitters to the committee, Consumer Action Law Centre, welcomed the bill and viewed the establishment of state based ombudsman schemes as an important acknowledgement that a significant problem exists in Queensland with vocational education and training and the dispute resolution processes. The Training Ombudsman will ensure Queensland VET apprentices, students, trainees and employers have a clear pathway for complaints and that systematic problems can be readily identified. Another of the ombudsman's key responsibilities is mediation, with any unresolved issues referred to relevant agencies for further assistance. It will also be tasked with monitoring the status of complaints to see whether or not a satisfactory outcome has been achieved. The ombudsman will also undertake relevant research, identify systemic issues and develop strategies to improve VET policies and processes in Queensland.


The full scope of the duties of the Training Ombudsman will be to help people in making complaints to a referral entity; refer complaints to a referral entity or otherwise deal with the complaints under the act; give information or advice to a complainant about the complainant's complaint; monitor

the outcome of complaints; make recommendations to the chief executive about apprenticeships and traineeships, including the declaration of, and nominal term for, an apprenticeship or traineeship; make recommendations to the minister about ways to improve departmental systems, matters relating to apprenticeships and traineeships, and strategies to improve the quality of vocational education and training in Queensland; carry out promotional and educational activities relating to vocational education and training in Queensland; undertake or promote reviews of or research into matters relating to the Training Ombudsman's functions, including reviews or research requested by the minister; and, finally, conduct other functions conferred on them under this act or another act. The Training Ombudsman has been created to provide a free, confidential, independent service to review and resolve inquiries and complaints about the VET system. The ombudsman will either refer the complaint to an appropriate agency or mediate between the parties involved to reach a solution.

Another submitter, the Australian Industry Group, welcomes the proactive approach to strengthening the quality of VET outcomes by the reintroduction of the Training Ombudsman. The Australian Industry Group stated that it and its members have been deeply concerned at both a national and state level at the low levels of apprenticeship commencements and completions and the ongoing reputation damage to the VET system as a result of the VET Fee-Help crisis and the inconsistent application of contestable funding models. It is also concerned that confidence in the training system by both students and employers has been seriously eroded by a steady flow of stories of poor performance, rorts and injudicious spending. It is also concerned that industry leadership in the training system has been eroded and the crucial contract between public investment in training and the delivery of economic and productive improvements has been damaged.

An interim Training Ombudsman is already in place and was established in December 2015. The service is available online and over the phone. The service is free and individuals can make a complaint by filling in and submitting a form. The ombudsman also accepts anonymous complaints. The permanent Training Ombudsman will come into effect once the amendment bill is passed in accordance with the provisions of the legislation. The interim Training Ombudsman provides free and impartial advice about rights and responsibilities. The Further Education and Training (Training Ombudsman) and Another Act Amendment Bill is yet another example of this government's commitment to boosting the VET sector's performance in Queensland.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Education, Tourism and Small Business Committee, the committee secretariat and the submitters to this bill. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate those student apprentices and trainees who will be graduating on Saturday at the TAFE Queensland South West awards ceremony to be held in the city of Ipswich. In 2015, I was honoured to be able to participate in this ceremony and I am very much looking forward to this year's ceremony. I wish all the graduates all the best and a bright future.

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (3.09 pm): I rise to speak to the Further Education and Training (Training Ombudsman) and Another Act Amendment Bill 2015. This bill seeks to establish a Training Ombudsman as an independent statutory position to ensure that Queensland VET students, employers and other significant stakeholders have a clear pathway for complaints and that systemic problems can be easily identified. But as mentioned by the member for Gaven earlier, in essence, with this legislation Labor has written a very large cheque for another level of bureaucracy that would be best placed in the federal arena. That position is also backed up by the Consumer Action Law Centre, which, in its submission to the committee, considered a single national Training Ombudsman to be its preferred model for dispute resolution. Again, we see a huge amount of taxpayer dollars being spent on a position without any detail or transparency as to how this money will be spent—\$5 million over three years to establish the Training Ombudsman and the allocation of half a million dollars on an ongoing basis. There is no explanation as to how the government came up with that figure.

That is a lot of money that could be spent in a better way, especially for the people in my electorate of Gregory who rely heavily on continued funding and support for training. The electorate of Gregory is the home of the Longreach Pastoral College and the Emerald Agricultural College. I am very proud to represent those two fine institutions in my electorate and I will do everything to advocate on their behalf. Longreach Pastoral College was founded in 1967 in direct response to the needs of the agricultural industry for staff skilled in semi-arid beef and wool production. Since that time, the college has continued to deliver industry endorsed and recognised training in wool and beef production, horse breeding, shearing and wool handling.

The Emerald Agricultural College officially opened its doors in 1968 under the chairmanship of Brian Hughes. In the early years, the training college concentrated on beef cattle production, but, as many members may know, as the township of Emerald developed an irrigation system from the

Fairbairn Dam the college added irrigation and cotton and cropping training as part of its curriculum. I would have to say that the farm at the Emerald Agricultural College is considered to be one of the best farms in the region.

Although both colleges come under the responsibility of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, both campuses are an RTO through the Queensland Agricultural Training Colleges. So when I hear that the Labor government is going to spend \$5 million to set up a Training Ombudsman's office with running costs of half a million dollars and we have experts in the field suggesting that this position should be a national responsibility, it simply beggars belief. That money could be spent on these two colleges. The \$5 million that has been allotted for the Training Ombudsman may have been better spent on some actual training and education for the unemployed in Queensland to improve their skills and enhance their employment prospects.


When the LNP came into government in 2012 after 20 years of Labor government in this state, it found that the once pinnacle of agricultural training in Queensland had been left to go to rack and ruin. The Labor government had sold the Dalby agricultural college, abandoned the Burdekin agricultural college and had left the Emerald Agricultural College and the Longreach Pastoral College debt ridden and falling apart. In fact, the Emerald Agricultural College had some major health and safety issues in relation to its kitchen and its sewerage system was certainly not up to standard. Back then, the Labor Party had forgotten those agricultural colleges and was prepared to let them go. It had no interest in investing in agricultural training, no interest in investing in tomorrow's agricultural leaders; that was simply off the radar for the Labor Party. It was not until the LNP came into power in 2012 and under the stewardship of the then minister for agriculture, John McVeigh, that we started to turn things around. I remember the member for Toowoomba South saying to me, 'When you do a company director's course, the one thing that gets drilled into you at these courses is that there are three things that can get you into a lot of trouble: bad finances, bad health and safety and neglecting your responsibility regarding the environment.' Guess what? Back then, I think the Labor Party left these agricultural colleges in a state that they ticked all three boxes.

The member for Toowoomba South quickly put together an action plan and set about getting what was left of these agricultural colleges back on track. The first job was to take control of the debt, fix up the building defects and the sewerage system. Then it was to give local control back to those colleges by setting up local boards and giving them a better say on the future of these colleges. I thank the member for Toowoomba South for his leadership and stewardship of these colleges. I think that it should be recognised in this House that, if it were not for him, I do not know what would have happened to those colleges. Maybe they would not exist today.

Vocational education and training is a vital strand of education in the electorate of Gregory. Although the intent of changes to the vocational education and training landscape has been to improve outcomes and completion rates, there is no doubt that those changes have left the vocational education and training landscape more cluttered and difficult to negotiate for students, parents and employers. It is clear to me that we are in a transitional phase for vocational education and training.

Years ago, every mine in the Bowen Basin had its master of apprentices overseeing the training of apprentices on site. Alternatively, apprentices would work directly under the supervision of a master, be that a diesel fitter, a boilermaker, an electrician—the list goes on. The theory work was done at TAFE. I would absolutely like to see that happen again in Central Queensland. In my area, many year 10 students have an opportunity to work in these mines as apprentices. If we are to take advantage of the ever-increasing opportunities in South-East Asia and the export dollars, we need more diesel fitters, we need more electricians and we need more boilermakers. These mining companies provide fantastic opportunities for us to have a great training base for tomorrow's electricians, tomorrow's boilermakers and tomorrow's diesel fitters. Most apprentices were school leavers having left high school at the end of year 10. Today, year 12 completion is becoming the norm and the largest and growing segment of the apprentice population is adult students aged 25 years and over.

But the mining downturn has seen a dramatic drop in these opportunities, which is a shame. The money being used to set up the Training Ombudsman's office—the \$5 million and the ongoing costs of half a million dollars—would be better spent on giving incentives for local businesses to take on these apprentices. We do not need more bureaucracy, we do not need more red tape and we do not need a lavish office in Brisbane; we need money for training, money for incentives for local businesses to take on young apprentices while we weather the downturn. Let us keep our people employed. We should spend and spread that money as far as we can. We need to create jobs, invest in our economy and spread the wealth across Queensland, especially regional Queensland.

 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (3.16 pm): I would be interested to see if the member speaks against the private member's bill for the Health Ombudsman. I rise to speak in support of the Further Education and Training (Training Ombudsman) and Another Act Amendment Bill 2015. As many in this House are aware, my electorate of Gladstone is renowned as the industrial powerhouse of the state. Gladstone is a proud industrial town with a workforce that seeks to be properly trained by reputable and reliable training organisations. That is not an unreasonable expectation. It follows that, with that industrial reputation, there is a need for specialised training in skills that are vital to maintain a healthy, safe and experienced workforce. It is the right of every worker to have confidence that the training they have received has given them the proper skills to take into their workplace.

I am a qualified maintenance fitter and turner and I have held positions including a maintenance supervisor and a maintenance superintendent on a large industrial site. I understand fully the importance of having skilled, well-trained, competent workers on the job. That is no more so than in heavy industry, particularly in Gladstone, where the end result of individuals without appropriate training can result in tragedy.

During my 25 years of working in industry, I have seen a wide range of training providers and trainees come and go. I have also seen many hardworking, honest people get caught up with these dodgy training providers whose care for proper training is secondary to fattening their own bank balance. These unscrupulous operators have little regard for proper skilled training or the trainee out in the workforce.

In February this year in my electorate of Gladstone almost 300 trainees received a letter in the mail informing them that some of their qualifications were not valid. Tradesmen with high-risk licences, including forklift truck operation and advanced rigging, dogging and scaffolding, had their current licences revoked after Workplace Health and Safety Queensland inspectors found evidence that an accredited assessor had failed to comply with conditions around issuing these licences. Letters were sent from the Department of Justice and Attorney-General to 290 tradesmen in my electorate who had been issued with qualifications to operate nine different types of equipment, including managing large crane loads, stating that their competencies were not recognised and needed to be re-assessed.

The letter stated that evidence obtained by Workplace Health and Safety Queensland inspectors showed these tradesmen may not be competent to carry out that class of work. That would be an absolute tragedy waiting to happen out in the large industrial workforce. They were told if they did not obtain reassessment and supply the required evidence, their licences may be cancelled altogether.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr BUTCHER: That was in the past. I am unsure of the case you are talking about. I will take your interjection. I can't talk about that today.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr BUTCHER: It may have been some of your LNP mates too, you wouldn't know. That is probably where they come from. That is probably where they learned their skills.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! I ask the member for Lockyer to cease interjecting. The member seems happy to interject regardless of which side of the chamber the speaker is coming from. I ask the member to allow the other members to speak.

Mr BUTCHER: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. It gets a little bit hard on my ears when it comes from that way. These hardworking tradesmen who in good faith had been trained felt that they had been conned and were faced with no avenue to have their issues heard.

The Queensland government has committed to establishing an independent Training Ombudsman as part of its plan for reinvigorating the vocational education and training sector under Working Queensland, Labor's jobs plan. I welcome this initiative to give tradies, trainees, students and apprentices the opportunity to have serious issues heard in relation to training. The Training Ombudsman will provide a free confidential and independent service to review and resolve inquiries and complaints from apprentices, trainees, students, employers and other stakeholders about the VET system. The ombudsman can help navigate the complex VET sector and find the best way to address concerns as well as provide free and impartial advice about rights and responsibilities within the VET sector. The Training Ombudsman will look at the circumstances and assist to resolve issues appropriately by reviewing the issue and recommending the most appropriate action to take; referring the complaint to another agency if they are best suited to assist; and mediating between parties to come to a mutually beneficial solution. The Training Ombudsman also plays an advocacy role for the VET sector by reporting on systemic issues and advising the state government on ways to improve the VET system.

The establishment of an independent Training Ombudsman is part of the Palaszczuk government's commitment to rescuing TAFE and reinvigorating vocational education and training. The establishment of an independent ombudsman for training is an important part of our government's commitment to return TAFE assets to government, employing 100 extra teachers and supporting staff and spending \$34 million to restore TAFE's status as Queensland's premier public provider of vocational education and training.

As stated earlier, I am proud of the government for reintroducing this vital role in the training field to give those tradies, trainees, students and apprentices the support that they need to seek assistance when training providers do the wrong thing by them. This initiative is fair and just and I know it will be welcomed as a safeguard by many seeking to gain qualifications through this avenue. I commend this bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Butcher, adjourned.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

Committee of the Legislative Assembly

 **Mr SPEAKER:** I table report No. 17 of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly titled *Review of the parliamentary committee system*.

Tabled paper: Committee of the Legislative Assembly: Report No. 17—Review of the parliamentary committee system [248].


I commend the report to the House.

FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING (TRAINING OMBUDSMAN) AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed, on motion of Ms D'Ath—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (3.24 pm): This bill delivers on the Palaszczuk government's election commitment to rescue TAFE and reinvigorate vocational education and training. Queensland's proud TAFE sector suffered under three years of attack by the LNP government. The Palaszczuk government acted swiftly to repeal the Queensland Training Assets Management Authority and return TAFE assets to the government, employ 100 extra teachers and support staff and invest \$34 million to restore TAFE's status as Queensland's premier public provider of vocational education and training. That is because we believe in the power of these assets to change lives, to teach vulnerable adults literacy skills, to give young people an opportunity for a career and to educate and train the skilled workforce of the future.

It goes beyond the power of these institutions to change the lives of the participants. Our great TAFE facilities change the communities in which they are located. As one of the members lucky enough to represent the great and diverse community of Logan, I see every day the positive influence of the Loganlea TAFE at Meadowbrook. It is a place that offers opportunity and builds hope in our community and I could not have been prouder to stand in this place to return these assets to state control. Loganlea TAFE is located in my electorate of Waterford. It is located in a hub which includes Griffith University, Logan Hospital, Loganlea State High School and, of course, the TAFE. It is part of an exciting triangle of learning, training and research.

Loganlea TAFE is a busy and exciting facility giving young people in Logan the opportunity to equip themselves with first-class skills and training. An array of courses and certificates are offered to Logan residents from aged care to hairdressing, media, community services, hospitality, horticulture and business. This facility is an essential part of my electorate and, more widely, Logan City. It has educated thousands of residents and has instilled in them skills and confidence which in turn has allowed them to move on to bigger and greater things.


In my first speech to this House I spoke of the value people in my community place on accessing TAFE when I mentioned Daniel, who had to wait for Labor's reinvestment in TAFE to bring fees back to an affordable level so that it was within his reach. These reforms in this bill go even further. The re-establishment of an independent Training Ombudsman was an important part of Labor's election

commitment because it creates a dedicated complaints mechanism for participants in the training sector. The Training Ombudsman will be a one-stop shop to which students, parents, providers and others can turn to navigate the vocational education and training system, make complaints and be assisted to resolve disputes. As a statutory body, the Office of the Training Ombudsman will provide free impartial and independent advice and, where possible, resolve complaints from trainees, apprentices, employers and other interested people about the apprenticeship and traineeship system.

The Training Ombudsman will identify systemic issues about the provision and quality of vocational education and training in Queensland which may be identified by complaints and report to the Minister for Training and Skills on strategies to resolve these issues. For example, in 2010 the then Training Ombudsman undertook a review of school based apprenticeships and traineeships as part of the Queensland Skills Plan in 2008. The Training Ombudsman report made a number of recommendations about how the government can improve outcomes for SATs by improving transitions from school to industry. With more than 5,000 young people combining school with vocational training through school based apprenticeships in Queensland, it is important we provide them the opportunity to raise concerns and have them listened to by an independent person.

While TAFE has incredibly high satisfaction rates of over 85 per cent among both students and the employers who engage them, a clear mechanism with authority for raising complaints or concerns can only strengthen its future. Since 2012 there has been a decline in the number of students in government funded vocational education training programs. According to the Report on Government Services 2016, in 2014 there were 63,500 15- to 19-year-olds in government funded VET courses, compared with 73,800 in 2012. Our commitment to invest in vocational education and training support services, increase the number of courses available through vocational education and training in schools, create new vocational education teaching positions and establish a fully independent Training Ombudsman are all aimed at increasing VET participation and ensuring we have an accessible and equitable training system in Queensland.

Young apprentices and trainees are some of the state's most vulnerable workers. By re-establishing the Training Ombudsman, the Palaszczuk government is standing up for the rights of those young workers and is ensuring that they get a quality education and on-the-job training. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr PEGG** (Stretton—ALP) (3.29 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Further Education and Training (Training Ombudsman) and Another Act Amendment Bill. This bill is part of the Palaszczuk government's commitment to rescuing TAFE and supporting the very important VET sector. In the lead-up to the 2015 election, the Palaszczuk government committed to rescuing TAFE and reinvigorating vocational education and training. This bill represents another step in the commitment of the Palaszczuk government to ensuring Queenslanders have the skills of the future. So far, the Palaszczuk government has reintroduced Skilling Queenslanders for Work, repealed the Queensland Training Assets Management Authority Act and set up Jobs Queensland. These are all very important steps in providing Queenslanders with the skills of the future, rescuing TAFE and supporting the VET sector.

I have read report No. 10 from the former Education, Tourism and Small Business Committee. I commend all members of the committee for the work that they did on that report, particularly the chair, the member for Townsville. I was very interested to read that all members of the committee supported the passage of this bill. Since the report was tabled and the non-government members of the committee have spoken in this House against the bill that they recommended be passed, I have been trying to work out what caused the change of opinion. What has caused the change in their views? I note that the member for Townsville mentioned that it could be a factional matter. The member for Townsville could be right about that, but who knows? Maybe those non-government committee members took some advice from some other members in this place. Maybe they took advice from their leader, the member for Southern Downs. However, his credibility has really been shot to pieces this week, so we can probably put a big cross against his name. I do not think it was the member for Southern Downs. Could it be the member for Clayfield? Given his failed economic policies, I really do not think the non-government members of the committee would be listening to his views. Could it be the member for Everton who persuaded them to change their minds?

Mr WATTS: Madam Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I would like to get home tonight. Could you bring him back to the bill, please?

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): There is no point of order.

Mr PEGG: I can only speculate as to who persuaded them. We are not going to get to the bottom of it today. Then I thought, let's think about the arguments that the non-government committee members made for voting against the bill. I listened to the member for Albert. Earlier today I listened to the very short contribution of the member for Gaven. Essentially, it boils down to two arguments. The first is that the federal government can take care of it; the Turnbull government can take care of it. I have to tell those guys that the VET sector is so important that I would not be trusting the Turnbull government to ensure that people in that sector are protected. I would not be putting it in the hands of the Turnbull government, particularly as a couple of members of the opposition backbench are looking to join the Prime Minister in Canberra. I am sorry, but I do not accept the argument. The Turnbull government cannot be trusted on such an important issue. The second argument was that unemployment is a real challenge, which is true.

Mr BOOTHMAN: It has gone up.

Mr PEGG: I take the interjection from the member for Albert. It skyrocketed between 2012 and October 2014. It skyrocketed from 5.7 per cent in early 2012 to 7.1 per cent in seasonally adjusted terms in October 2014. It was unacceptably high under the previous LNP government.

These are all very important steps in providing Queenslanders with the skills of the future. Last year, along with the member for Greenslopes, I was privileged to attend a TAFE graduation ceremony. It was great to see so many smiling graduating students and their proud families and friends on such an important day, which I am sure they will remember for the rest of their lives. As the son of a university academic, I attended university graduations from a very young age. They are always great occasions. However, I have to say that the TAFE graduation I attended was very exciting. There was a magician, pop music, dancing and fantastic audience interaction. Certainly it was not what I was expecting. A bit like the member for Albert's speech, it was not what I was expecting, but unlike the speech of the member for Albert it was certainly a very pleasant surprise. Unfortunately, I cannot say the same about the member for Albert's contribution on this bill yesterday in the House.

Previously in this House I have spoken about the fact that my electorate of Stretton has the highest number of people born overseas of any electorate in the state. My electorate also has the highest number of people speaking a language other than English of any electorate in the state. As well as my electorate being very multicultural, it also has high participation rates in tertiary and technical education. My electorate has higher participation rates in both university and technical education compared to the state and national averages. Given those statistics, the introduction of a training ombudsman is particularly important for my electorate. Of course, we know that there are many young people who undertake vocational education and training. There are also many people who access vocational education and training who have English as a second language. For that reason, it is important that there is a training ombudsman to provide complete wrap-around support for students, apprentices and trainees, to assist them to address issues for the VET services they are seeking.

The establishment of an independent Training Ombudsman will complement the government's commitment to return TAFE assets to the government, employ 100 extra teachers and support staff, and spend \$34 million to restore TAFE's status as Queensland's premier public provider of VET. The Training Ombudsman will be a one-stop shop to which students, parents, providers and others can turn to in order to navigate the varied and complex VET system, make complaints and be assisted to resolve disputes. The Training Ombudsman will have an important role in receiving complaints in relation to the quality and provision of VET by registered training organisations. Those able to make a complaint are not limited just to apprentices and trainees, but include other stakeholders such as trainers and employers.

The Training Ombudsman will help to achieve real outcomes and, where complaint resolution is unable to be reached, the Training Ombudsman will be able to help complainants pursue their grievance with the relevant agency. In this regard, one of the important functions of the Training Ombudsman will be the monitoring of the outcome of complaints, including those complaints that have been referred to the appropriate agency, including DET and ASQA. The Training Ombudsman will identify systemic issues about the provision and quality of VET in Queensland that may be identified via complaints, and report to the Minister for Training and Skills on strategies to resolve those issues.

In conclusion, the VET sector does a fantastic job. It is vitally important to have an independent Training Ombudsman to protect everyone in the sector. I commend the committee's report to the House. I commend the bill to the House. To those non-government committee members who recommended that this bill be passed, I say: it is not too late to have a think about the issues. I know they consider this bill—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr PEGG: I take all those interjections from the non-government members of the committee. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr KRAUSE (Beaudesert—LNP) (3.37 pm): I rise to speak against the bill. We all know that vocational education and training is a very important part of our economy and is very important to enable people to obtain the skills that they need to get into the workforce. Last year when a previous bill in relation to the vocational education and training sector came into the House, I was a member of the committee that examined that bill, which showed that, under the reforms implemented by the last government, in the first year of operation the number of people in training in Queensland actually increased significantly. The reforms were working to get more people into training and that is a great thing. We had a very good plan, which was driven by the industry and driven by skilling people up to get jobs in areas where there were job shortages.

This bill is flawed. It seeks to achieve a purpose that is redundant because it duplicates a function already carried out by other agencies. In Queensland we already have an Ombudsman capable of dealing with complaints that arise from the public sector. More to the point, we have a federal regulator in relation to registered training organisations. This bill is winding back the clock to the days where Queensland and the Commonwealth duplicated functions. It is like having a Queensland regulator for general practitioners in the medical sphere when we also have a Commonwealth regulator. It is a complete waste of money.

I have heard in this debate that it will cost \$5 million. I assume that is \$5 million per annum to run this organisation. That is \$5 million that could be better deployed in other areas of training and other areas of government. That is \$5 million that could be deployed to offer some TAFE courses or other educational training subsidies in my electorate of Beaudesert. At this point in time we do not have any vocational training centres established. We could benefit from having centres established to enable people to get skills locally.

It is \$5 million that could also be deployed to increase the subsidies for courses that are offered by TAFE Queensland. In that respect, I recently had a constituent who has been looking into this issue of subsidies and course fees for TAFE Queensland as compared to course fees for TAFE in New South Wales approach me. I refer in particular to two courses—a certificate III in accounts administration and a certificate IV in accounting.

The information I have to hand from TAFE Queensland is that the cost for a certificate III in accounts administration is \$3,489 compared to in New South Wales \$4,920. However, in Queensland the subsidy paid is \$1,278 per student, leaving a student fee of \$2,200. In New South Wales the subsidy paid is \$3,350, leaving a student fee of \$1,570. So even though the course fee in New South Wales is significantly higher, they are able to pay a higher subsidy per student for the same course, resulting in a more affordable outcome for a student undertaking that course.

Five million dollars is a significant amount of money. If we put that money into more training and higher subsidies we would get more people into training rather than establishing a bureaucracy or organisation that does not need to be in existence and will be duplicating functions carried out by other organisations between here in Queensland and federally as well.

When we look at the other qualification that I mentioned, the certificate IV in accounting, we find that TAFE Queensland's price is \$5,600 compared to the New South Wales price of around \$6,100. In Queensland the subsidy paid is \$1,600, leaving a student fee of \$4,000. In New South Wales the subsidy paid is \$3,850, leaving a student fee of \$2,290. It is \$1,700 cheaper in New South Wales than in Queensland to do the same course.

This \$5 million that is being deployed to an organisation set up under this act could be better used to actually get more people into training rather than set up a bureaucracy, another redundant organisation that is duplicating functions undertaken elsewhere. What people want us to do in this place is actually put money towards useful and relevant organisations and not fund organisations that have been established by this bill. I urge all members to reject the proposal put forward in this bill today.

Mr RUSSO (Sunnybank—ALP) (3.43 pm): I speak in support of the Further Education and Training (Training Ombudsman) and Another Act Amendment Bill and recommend the passing of the bill to the House. Our government has sent a clear message to the people of Queensland since being elected to office that we will fully support our TAFEs and other training providers to reach their world-class potential and to help young people get trained up and into fruitful employment as well as people who require retraining.

This bill is an important plank in this government's initiative. The Training Ombudsman provides Queenslanders with a one-stop shop, where students, parents, providers and others will be able to go to get help to navigate the vocational education and training system. This includes a mechanism for making complaints and dispute resolution. Supporting students is an essential part of an effective education system. The Training Ombudsman will provide complete wraparound support for students, apprentices and trainees.

The bill seeks to improve Queensland's vocational education and training sector in two key ways. Firstly, it establishes an ombudsman to whom stakeholders can make complaints and from whom they can seek advice about their training program. The Training Ombudsman will increase transparency and accountability and allow students to easily access help and reliable information. It will also provide an avenue for students to make suggestions as to where the system can be improved, and this information will have a direct path to the minister. This simplified and central oversight body will provide users with reliable and timely information and will help restore a high level of accountability to training providers.

Secondly, the ombudsman's office will act as a monitoring body. It will be focused on identifying trends and devising ways to combat systemic issues in the VET system. By tracking complaints and quality concerns and reporting directly to the minister, this body will help improve the overall quality of our training providers.

It is this ability to identify and report on systemic issues to the Minister for Training and Skills about the provision and quality of vocational education and training in Queensland which is a critical tool in advancing Queensland and creating jobs for the youth of Queensland and those Queenslanders who are undertaking retraining because of redundancies. It will mean that we have a real launch pad for improving the delivery of vocational education and training services to Queenslanders, including Queenslanders in the regions.

The previous state government did everything they could to gut our public TAFE system, and the industry is still struggling to recover. That particular policy direction was hugely unpopular in my Sunnybank electorate, and understandably so. On the campaign trail I spoke to a number of young people, their parents and their teachers at TAFE who were anxious about their future studies at the Acacia Ridge SkillsTech TAFE. Our community would not stand for the accelerated deterioration of such an important public asset, especially with the rates of youth unemployment so high, and neither should they.

During the last government, industry and customer confidence in our state's training institutions had waned. Both students and employers rightly began to question the value and quality of the programs offered and the effect of that on opportunities available to graduates. Our government promised Queenslanders that we would reverse the cuts to TAFE and that we would invest resources into skilling people for work.

The Palaszczuk government is committed to rescuing and restoring TAFE and reinvigorating vocational education and training. This bill is one of the planks in helping restore TAFE to its rightful place as a leading educational institute, helping young Queenslanders to find the gainful employment they so necessarily need.

In last year's budget, the Palaszczuk government committed \$34.5 million to rescuing our TAFEs, and \$240 million to other programs to boost the skills of Queensland's workforce. These commitments mean at least 100 extra teachers and support staff for students at our TAFEs. Already our TAFEs are starting to pick up in terms of enrolments. The Queensland government has recently awarded thousands of dollars worth of grants to skills providers in my electorate alone. Our government's funding commitments have gone a long way to restoring this confidence, but this bill will take it a step further.


I had the pleasure of visiting the Acacia Ridge TAFE on their open day last year and I was impressed by the hard work that is being done there and by the diverse range of industry skills on offer. I had the opportunity to watch the bricklayers making a wood-fired oven. I also had the opportunity to watch the panelbeaters spray-painting semitrailers and prime movers.

The Acacia Ridge campus is one of four SkillsTech TAFE institutions across Brisbane. It specialises in mechanics, building and construction, manufacturing and engineering, sustainable and renewable energy, water management and electrotechnology. At its open day I had the opportunity of seeing hundreds of high school students flood the campus, eager to try out the different stalls and ask questions about the different apprenticeships and training on offer. I was proud to visit the Acacia Ridge TAFE to see and feel the energy of an invigorated campus. I am proud to be part of the Queensland government—a government which is once again supporting these institutions and the students who depend on them to kickstart their career.

This bill will increase transparency and accountability. It gives students a real voice. It restores vocational education and training protection by restoring an independent watchdog for Queensland's vocational education and training sector.

When introducing this legislation to the House, the training and skills minister, the Hon. Yvette D'Ath, advised the House that this legislation will be fulfilling a key component of the government's Working Queensland agenda to create jobs and lower unemployment. The minister advised that establishing the Training Ombudsman will ensure that students, employers and other stakeholders have a clear pathway for complaint.

This bill provides Queensland students with improved consumer protection and provides Queensland with a means to identify solutions and develop properly informed systemic change. I am proud to be part of a government which introduces such an important initiative for current and future generations of Queenslanders. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Dr McVEIGH** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (3.52 pm): It is a pleasure to make a contribution to this debate in relation to the Further Education and Training (Training Ombudsman) and Another Act Amendment Bill 2015. At the outset I thank the then Education, Tourism and Small Business Committee for their efforts in considering this bill—a committee that I was a member of prior to the recent restructure of committees in this House.

I think it is very important to understand firstly the chronology of developments leading up to this bill being discussed in the House today. We know that a Training Ombudsman to resolve complaints regarding apprenticeships and traineeships had been established under the Training and Employment Act 2000 by a former Labor government. We know that in 2009 Labor's Weller review—that is Labor's own review—recommended its abolishment as it was considered unnecessary red tape and regulation. However, Labor decided to retain the role, despite committing to a review of its efficiencies.


We know that at a federal level also in 2009 COAG agreed to reform of the vocational education and training sector including a process for the regulation of registered training organisations under the Australian Skills Quality Authority. Consistent with that reform, Queensland was transitioned to a national regulatory system for the VET sector in 2012, with the Training Ombudsman's role ceasing its operations in that same year, given that such services were being covered through other means including the Office of Fair Trading, the Queensland Ombudsman, the Overseas Student Ombudsman, the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission, Fair Work Australia, QCAT and Workplace Health and Safety Queensland.

As the minister herself said at the beginning of this debate, many in the House would be aware of recent and strong public concern in relation to the operation of some, not all, RTOs with the federal government therefore moving new laws to address those concerns. With all of this in mind, I believe it is very important for the House to seriously consider the establishment of an interim Training Ombudsman late last year here in Queensland and, secondly, the subsequent presentation of this bill to the House. Through such consideration I contend that we must be concerned about a return to red tape and regulation—issues that the former LNP government was so eager to eliminate in line with community concerns so as to avoid such duplication, such red tape, such overbearing regulation right across the breadth and depth of all government services.

Whilst this bill's proposal to reintroduce an ombudsman is based on the understandable aims of considering complaints about the VET sector, providing assistance to those who wish to make complaints and providing them with advice at the same time, monitoring the outcomes of complaints, conducting reviews and research, and making recommendations to the minister about the VET sector, we should consider the fact that these issues can be addressed through other existing avenues and agencies such as those that I referred to a little earlier in this presentation. As well as concerns about unnecessary duplication, the real concern should be that the ombudsman under this bill will have very little power or role—in fact, effectively none at all—to make binding decisions. That office can only attempt to informally resolve issues and then simply refer them to another existing agency if they cannot.

To do all of this, the ombudsman is estimated to cost some \$5 million over the next three years. As the member for Gregory outlined earlier, that is money that could be used in the front line of vocational education and training services right across the state. He quite rightly referred to Labor's sad history that he and I in our former roles saw in relation to the agricultural colleges in this great state—agricultural colleges that were left, after Labor abandoned this very significant training sector in our community and in our economy, in an absolute mess in terms of finances, environmental stewardship and workplace health and safety administration in those colleges such that it was a priority for the incoming LNP government to address in 2012.

Queenslanders can rightly ask the question as to why such an amount is being invested in what risks being simply a toothless tiger in the face of existing operating agencies that achieve the same outcomes and more. We should keep in mind in relation to the review by the committee that, whilst the Consumer Action Law Centre acknowledged the Training Ombudsman's roll outlined in this bill, they consider a single national ombudsman is the preferred model for dispute resolution or, if you like, a far more streamlined and efficient approach. In the end, I suggest strongly that the House should ask the simple question: is this not simply a costly return to red tape, regulation and bureaucracy that was gradually removed in line with reviews and reforms by both sides of politics at both a state and federal level?

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (3.58 pm): This afternoon I rise to speak in support of the Further Education and Training (Training Ombudsman) and Another Act Amendment Bill. Like all my Labor government colleagues, I am an avid supporter of any initiative which bolsters and enhances our TAFE system, our education system and our training system in favour of those who are its main beneficiaries—the future generation of workers.

Strengthening education and training has long been a core pillar underpinning the mission of the Australian Labor Party. The Palaszczuk government, in line with that Labor tradition, recognises that more can be done in this state to support our next wave of workers to thrive in their training and education environments. Happy learners go on to become happy workers, and happy workers lead to strong employment rates, thriving communities and healthy economies.

In my electorate of Woodridge I have relished watching Labor's investment in employment and education pay dividends. As a government, we have reinstated the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative, and the positive impact this has had in Woodridge is palpable. In the electorate of Woodridge the first round of this great initiative saw no fewer than 18 projects given the green light and brought to life. These projects are being delivered through eight organisations which received funding to the tune of \$2.6 million.

The second round has been announced recently, and I am proud to say that Woodridge has again emerged a winner. As part of the latest round, a total of 10 community organisations in my electorate have received \$1.6 million to undertake training programs. Combined, these initiatives are expected to generate around 970 training positions in our local region. The great organisations benefiting from this initiative include Access Community Services, YFS, MultiLink Community Services, the Logan Samoa Advisory Council, BoysTown, Karingal and Life Without Barriers. These groups are hard at work training local people in areas such as youth justice, mental health, disability support work, aged care, hospitality, retail and construction.

This initiative epitomises what Labor is all about: ensuring our communities are skilled up with the right skills to land them the right jobs—jobs which our government is creating and making readily available to such people. This brilliant scheme piloted by the Attorney-General and Minister for Training partners communities with government to grow local employment opportunities, encourage greater social inclusion and assist people who need extra support to enter the workforce.

Throughout Woodridge I am proud to say there have already been some graduations from the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program, and these participants are already transitioning into work. That is more young people from Woodridge entering Queensland's job market with the right skills to ensure they can do the job and do it well. These young workers add to the scores of others across Queensland who have also participated in the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program. They will benefit from participating not just in the program but also in the Queensland economy.


What is equally important for this government as bolstering education and training for the next generation is upholding promises. The bill I have risen to support today represents our government keeping yet another one of our promises. In the lead-up to the 2015 election, the Palaszczuk government committed to rescuing TAFE and reinvigorating vocational education and training. Reintroducing the successful Skilling Queenslanders for Work program was just part of this commitment.

Another key component of this promise was the establishment of an independent Training Ombudsman to complement the return of TAFE assets to the government. It also equally complements our government's employment of 100 extra teachers and support staff in TAFE and our expenditure of \$34 million to restore TAFE's status as Queensland's premier public provider of vocational education and training.

The Training Ombudsman will act as a one-stop shop to which students, parents, providers and others can turn to navigate the varied and complex VET system. The position will also act as a point for which these parties can make complaints and be assisted to resolve disputes. As the Minister for Training and Skills has noted in this House before, importantly, in this case complainants are not just limited to being trainees and apprentices. They are also employers, trainers and other significant stakeholders—groups in our community which play crucial roles in ensuring job creation and sustainable employment for our state now and into the future.

The role of these groups in Queensland only further strengthens the argument for ensuring any disputes they have are dutifully and respectfully resolved—an action which the Training Ombudsman would help to see achieved. The Training Ombudsman will also identify systemic issues about the provision and quality of vocational education and training in Queensland which may be identified by complaints, and reports to the Minister for Training and Skills on strategies to resolve these issues. Importantly, the Training Ombudsman will provide complete wraparound support for students, apprentices and trainees to assist them to address issues for the VET services they are being provided.

The value of such a position for those in our communities seeking the best training and education for themselves in a bid to earn employment that is the best fit for them cannot be underestimated. Ensuring the regulation and provision of superior services in our training sector is of crucial importance, because the domino effect impacts us all. Tight and thorough service delivery in the training sector will result in the development of a confident cohort of students, apprentices and trainees who will emerge from their training programs assured they have received a fair education. This group will, in turn, carry that confidence and assurance with them as they transition into Queensland's workforce, and our employment figures and economy will reap the benefits. For these reasons, I compliment the minister on this important legislative reform and I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr ELMES** (Noosa—LNP) (4.05 pm): I could not let the opportunity pass by this afternoon to talk about TAFE and its importance in our educational system. I am very pleased the minister is here to listen to what I intend to say. She would know that I have made two very interesting offers to her this week—


Government members interjected.

Mr ELMES: They are not quite as exciting as one might think. One involved a nice bottle of red and the other involved a very strange membership that I offered to undertake. I did want to make mention of TAFE and its position in my community. There was a magnificent TAFE college set up in I think 2004 as an arts based facility, and it did that very well. There was very little about that TAFE college that actually delivered training and jobs. To give the House an example, in the area of hospitality there was a number of different modules, half of which you could do at the Noosa TAFE and for the rest you had to go to Mooloolaba. Over a period of time the number of people attending that TAFE college became fewer and fewer to the point a couple of years ago when I think the final number was about 250, and I know that 44 of those were high school students who were doing TAFE courses but who did not attend the campus itself.

TAFE decided that it wanted out of that facility. They are still providing a very valuable service at a different place in town called The J. What we have now is a magnificent facility that is sitting there slowly crumbling away. My plea to the minister is that my community, through Noosa council, has made an offer. We think it is a fair offer. We also know that, unless the fairy godmother comes along, it is probably the only offer that is on the books to buy that facility from the government so that we can create a local job-training facility. Everyone in my community is looking forward to being able to do that.

I wanted to take this time to make a plea to the minister about this facility which is sitting there, not being used. There have already been a couple of attempts of vandalism at the site. The amount of money that the government inevitably will get for it will decrease as the facility continues to degrade. I am all for TAFE. I am all for a reinvigorated TAFE. I am all for the education that TAFE provides, and I hope that TAFE in my part of the world at The J continues to do what it does, because it does it very well.

My plea to the minister is let us provide you with some money to help pay down the debt and do whatever Curtis Pitt would like to do with it. Allow my community the opportunity to set up this facility to train young people and give them a start in life but for it to be done in a way that suits our particular needs in my part of the world. With that, I might withdraw the second offer and get your comments on it.

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (4.09 pm), in reply: I particularly thank the member for Noosa for putting that out there and not actually clarifying what his offer was. I can say that swapping my Noosa TAFE for a bottle of red is not quite going to get him there. In light of the fact he withdrew his second offer, I will not divulge what that particularly was.

I thank all members for their contributions on this debate and for the consideration that was given to the bill by the Education, Tourism and Small Business Committee. This bill is part of the Palaszczuk government's broader plan to make Queensland's vocational education and training sector the strongest and most productive in Australia. As noted in the report of the Education, Tourism and Small Business Committee, all submitters supported the establishment of the Training Ombudsman and they were generally supportive of its functions.

Currently, Queensland consumers of VET do not have access to a sector specific independent complaints mechanism for VET matters. Given the broad and diverse range of stakeholders within the sector, it can be challenging for VET consumers to identify the most appropriate avenue for lodging concerns, as there is no clear pathway to raise concerns about systemic issues in the VET sector. The committee specifically went to all the different bodies that a dispute in the training space could potentially overlap with. I take the point that there should be a federal ombudsman in relation to this, but it also has to be acknowledged that the federal body—the body that registers and oversees registered training organisations and that actually approves the training curriculum that is delivered in this country—is the Australian Skills Quality Authority, and the Australian Skills Quality Authority have endorsed our establishment of the Training Ombudsman. They actually think it is a good idea and they had been part of our consultation. So if this is just an overlap of what they already do and the responsibility of the federal government, you have to wonder why ASQA have given their full support and endorsement to the establishment of a Queensland Training Ombudsman.

I now wish to address some of the matters that have been raised by honourable members during this debate. I will start with the member for Noosa. I know he is extremely passionate about TAFE and his local community, and I congratulate him for that and I congratulate all of the members who have talked about TAFE. I am certainly a strong supporter of TAFE but this bill is more than just TAFE. This is about training generally. Whether it is a private training provider or a public training provider in this state, we need to make sure that we have the highest standards in the delivery of that training. We know that stories get out in the media about dodgy training providers and certificates being given with no skills behind them so they are seen as completely worthless by those businesses who want to employ people. We then have vulnerable people being signed up to courses but they do not have the underlying skill set to actually undertake those courses. They need foundation skills and they need to start at those lower courses and build themselves up, but instead they end up dropping out of these courses with significant debt and thousands of dollars hanging over their heads. We have to do something. We have a responsibility to have a body that can identify these problems and, importantly, investigate and identify systemic problems in certain industries.

Various bodies in different industries and private training organisations across the state have already come to me at different community cabinets saying, 'We've got a real concern in this particular industry. We're getting back to the bad old days when you could go down and basically get a ticket and not have to actually do any training, so it is worthless.' More serious than that, it means they are not going to get jobs and, if they do, they are short-lived because the employer realises they do not have the skills. They also potentially put people at risk because when they are in jobs—whether it is tickets for plant operation, the mining sector, electrical or whatever else—and they are running around with a ticket that is worthless and they do not have the proper training for it. They are not just putting their own life at risk; they are putting other people's lives at risk.

I have heard the comments from those opposite that this is just red tape. Their idea of red tape is my idea of proper oversight for training. There has been too much reduction as far as oversight is concerned. We have the department—and I have to say that the Department of Education and Training does a fantastic job—and we have ASQA but there is nothing in between. So when someone believes that their training contract has been cancelled incorrectly or improperly, there really is no mechanism to review the department's decision to cancel those training contracts—the way that it was changed by removing the VET act and the new Further Education and Training Act to put in place that these contracts can be cancelled automatically. So there needs to be oversight. I have no objection to there being oversight and the ability to review decisions of the Department of Education and Training,

because sometimes people get it wrong. At the end of the day, we want to make sure we are looking after students, apprentices and employers and we are upholding the best standards of quality training in this great state.

I want to go to the member for Everton and his contribution last night. I have to say I was pretty astonished to see the shadow minister come in here saying that they were going to be opposing this bill. Why? Because I picked up the parliamentary committee report and the report said that the committee unanimously supported the passing of the bill. I had intended to stand up here at the end of this debate and congratulate the opposition members for looking at this on its merits, listening to the submissions and basing their decision on the facts and not playing politics with it. Instead, we have seen the shadow minister come in here and say, 'We oppose it,' ignoring that his own people had supported this.

I really wanted to acknowledge and praise those opposition members who had reached that conclusion. The problem is that I then sat here and listened to their speeches, and every single one of them who signed off on the recommendation that this bill be passed—the member for Albert, the member for Gaven and the member for Toowoomba South—stood up here and said that this was a waste of money and we should not support it, yet not one of them even tried to explain the position they took in the committee. They did not even acknowledge that they supported it in committee. It is like it never happened. They went in the committee and they supported it, but when they walked out they thought, 'That didn't happen. I'll just stand up here and say the complete opposite and no-one will notice the hypocrisy of it. No-one will notice that I've just done the complete opposite to what I did in the committee.'

Future parties will come and give submissions to that committee and they will reasonably question whether their evidence will be taken into account by these members and whether what members say in the committee report is what they actually stand by. It is unbelievable to think these members walked in here and said the complete opposite and did not even try to justify why they changed their position or even acknowledge that they had changed their position. It was like it never happened.

The member for Everton did not really give a detailed speech to justify their objection to this, but he did make one statement that did catch my attention—that he is no mathematician. I think we all heard that one. There has never been a truer word spoken—noting that the LNP backbenchers actually supported this bill, so he did not figure out those numbers initially, and we know what happened last week and those numbers.

I do want to pick up on the cheap political pointscore from the member for Everton. Last night he pointed to the information provided by the interim Training Ombudsman to the parliamentary committee that between 14 September—being the establishment of the interim Training Ombudsman's office—and early December there had only been 25 complaints. He then extrapolated that out to the funding that is being allocated to establish this over the next three years and how much that means per individual complaint. That is just cheap political pointscore, because with any organisation like this it will obviously take time for awareness of the body to be established and for people to become aware that they can contact it and send in their complaints.

Let me show members what happened as time passed. The evidence that was given showed that between 14 September and early December there were 25 complaints, but by 31 December those complaints had risen to 51. So they had more than doubled in the three weeks after that. What does that show? It shows that awareness is lifting out in the community and people are starting to realise that they have the ability to contact the Training Ombudsman and utilise this great office that we are establishing to help them with their complaints. As I said early on in this debate, those complaints are not just coming from apprentices and trainees; employers and RTOs are also bringing these issues to the Training Ombudsman's attention, which is very important.

I have already stated that many, many bodies have come out supporting the establishment of this, including ASQA; ACPET, the Australian Council for Private Education and Training; many private RTOs to whom I have spoken around the state; the Office of Fair Trading; Apprenticeships Queensland—there are many organisations; Energy Skills Queensland; and the Queensland Ombudsman. They support the establishment of this office. So when the opposition member comes in here and actually says they will not be supporting this, I have to question whether the shadow minister for training has actually had any consultation with anyone out there in the community, with any stakeholders about this. There is not a stakeholder out there who does not think this is a worthy initiative of this government that will support and lift up the recognition of vocational education and training in

Queensland, help promote it, talk about the positives in this community and lift us up above other states and territories and, importantly, internationally because international education is the largest service export for Australia. The largest service export for Australia is international education. So we need to be doing more. Queensland is not at the top of that list when it comes to international education and we should be. So we have a lot more work to do in that space. I believe the Queensland Training Ombudsman will help us get there by ensuring that we have the highest standards being upheld in this state.

The independence of the Training Ombudsman from government control is enshrined in the bill. The bill ensures that the Training Ombudsman is not subject to direction from anyone, including the government, around the performance of its functions. The bill ensures that the Training Ombudsman and no-one else controls the performance of the staff of the office. The bill allows me to set expectations for the entity through a statement of expectations. This will include regular reporting requirements so I can be informed as to the number and nature of complaints. The bill also allows me to refer particular matters relevant to the Training Ombudsman's functions to review or research the matter and give me a written report including any advice or recommendations about the matter.

The Training Ombudsman will also be responsible for monitoring the outcome of complaints, identifying systemic issues arising from complaints and reporting to me on strategies to resolve these issues. The Training Ombudsman can make recommendations to me about ways to improve the department's systems, policies and processes relating to prequalified suppliers and supervising registered training organisations, matters relating to apprenticeships and traineeships in Queensland and strategies to improve the quality of vocational education and training in Queensland.

In conclusion, establishing the Queensland Training Ombudsman is one of our key election commitments to establish an independent entity to provide a dedicated, independent, one-stop shop for VET sector related issues with a high level of individual support to VET stakeholders. I commend the bill to the House.

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

AYES, 44:

ALP, 42—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Byrne, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Donaldson, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Hinchliffe, Howard, Jones, Kelly, King, Linard, Lynham, Madden, Miles, Miller, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pease, Pegg, Pitt, Power, Pyne, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Stewart, Trad, Whiting, Williams.

KAP, 2—Katter, Knuth.

NOES, 41:

LNP, 41—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, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Walker, Watts, Weir.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 4, as read, agreed to.

Clause 5—



Mrs D'ATH (4.29 pm): I move the following amendments—

1 Clause 5 (Insertion of new ch 4A)

Page 10, lines 23 and 24—

omit, insert—

activities relating to the role of the training ombudsman, particularly in relation to the provision and quality of vocational education and training in Queensland;

2 Clause 5 (Insertion of new ch 4A)

Page 10, line 31, '(3)'—

omit, insert—

(2)

I table the explanatory notes to my amendments.

Tabled paper: Further Education and Training (Training Ombudsman) and Another Act Amendment Bill 2015, explanatory notes to Hon. Yvette D'Ath's amendments [249].

Amendment No. 1 is an amendment to clause 5. This amendment is being made as a result of recommendation 2 of the parliamentary report on the bill by the Education, Tourism and Small Business Committee. The government has agreed to the committee's recommendation to amend section 112D of the bill to include a function for the Training Ombudsman of promotion and education about the Training Ombudsman role. As it is currently drafted, the section 112D(1)(i) enables the Training Ombudsman to carry out promotional and educational activities relating to vocational education and training in Queensland. The committee noted that this section did not specifically include the promotion of the role of the Training Ombudsman and the section could be understood to mean only to promote and educate about the vocational education and training sector. The proposed amendment clarifies that the function of the Training Ombudsman is to carry out promotional and educational activities relating to the Training Ombudsman's role, particularly in relation to the provision and quality of vocational education and training in Queensland.

The second amendment is being made as a result of recommendation 3 of the report on the bill by the Education, Tourism and Small Business Committee. The government has accepted the committee's recommendation that section 112D be amended to correct a numbering error. The proposed amendment renumbers subsection (3) to be subsection (2).

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 5, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 6 to 11, as read, agreed to.

Third 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, as amended, be now read a third time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Long Title

Hon. YM D'ATH (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (4.32 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.

HEALTH LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 12 November 2015 (see p. 2888).

Second Reading

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (4.32 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I thank the former Health and Ambulance Services Committee—now the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee—for its detailed consideration of the bill and its recommendation. I thank the member for Nudgee in particular in her capacity as the chair of the committee. I table the government's response to the committee's report.

Tabled paper: Health and Ambulance Services Committee: Report No. 11, 55th Parliament—Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2015, government response [\[250\]](#).

The committee made two recommendations, both of which the government has accepted. The committee recommended that I outline to the House the education strategy proposed by the department to support implementation of the food menu-labelling scheme. I have attached details of this strategy to the government's response.

The second recommendation is that the amendments to the Health Ombudsman Act 2013 be included to require notification by way of gazette notice of temporary appointments to the public panel of assessors and the professional panels of assessors as soon as practicable after appointment. The government supports this amendment, which will enhance transparency of temporary appointments made under the Health Ombudsman Act. I will be introducing amendments to this effect during consideration in detail.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the committee reported that it could not reach agreement on whether the bill should be passed. The committee supports the proposed amendments to the Food Act 2006, the Pest Management Act 2001, the Public Health Act 2005 and the Transplantation and Anatomy Act 1979; however, non-government members do not support amendments to the Health Ombudsman Act 2013 and the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011. The committee report stated that non-government members are concerned that these new powers will be open to abuse.

The bill does not amend the process for suspending or removing a board member from office. It does not amend the process by which the Governor in Council can dismiss all members of the board and appoint an administrator to administer the service; nor does the bill change the fact that it is the principal registrar of QCAT, not the minister, who determines which assessors will sit on a particular hearing under the Health Ombudsman Act.

The temporary appointment amendments are administrative in nature. They are intended to overcome the unexpected departure of board members, which is a situation that the Department of Health has experienced in the past. Advertising for and selecting new board members or panel members takes time, as does obtaining Governor in Council approval of new members. This is time we may not have should the sole clinician on a hospital and health board suddenly need to take unexpected leave or resign, bearing in mind that the Hospital and Health Boards Act requires that at least one board member be a clinician. It is time that will delay a practitioner's hearing before QCAT if we do not have the right number or gender of public panel members to properly compose a hearing. I was pleased to see the committee acknowledge the importance of ensuring hospital and health boards are able to function effectively with full membership. These amendments will help to ensure this is possible at all times.

I wanted to refer to page 29 of the committee report, which goes to the heart of the concerns of the LNP, who are the non-government members on the parliamentary committee. On page 29 of the report the concerns of the member for Mudgeeraba are set out, and all members can read the extract of the transcript in full. The member for Mudgeeraba stated—

My other concern is: Is this part of the current government's union participation policy?

So there is some allegation made by the opposition that this is some way for the government to appoint people to the board. I will refer to the response by the independent public servant responsible for drafting the legislation. I will make it very clear what Mr Harmer, a very experienced long-term independent public servant from the department, said. The legislation is very clear about how board members are removed, and there are strict requirements for board members to be removed. Why? Because hospital and health service boards have independence. They are statutory entities independent of central government and are the central department that have authority and accountability on the administration of health services. It is important that they have tenure that is secure. Mr Harmer said—

I think what I would say here is that this particular proposal was an initiative of the department.

That is the evidence before the committee. It is not from the government. It is not some ruse or some shadow mechanism to appoint union representatives to boards. Mr Harmer's evidence was clear—

I think what I would say here is that this particular proposal was an initiative of the department. It recommended to the minister—
'it' being the department—

that there was a need for this capacity to make temporary appointments following its experience during the caretaker period at the last election where there was no mechanism to fill vacancies in the period during the caretaker period and immediately following it as the new parliament took form.

There was a need to have temporary appointments and that could not be done. Mr Harmer went on in his evidence to say—

This is an initiative which the department has recommended to the minister—

again reaffirming the fact that the department recommended it to the minister—

principally for reasons of ensuring that boards can operate and perform their governance roles at all times.

It is a very sensible proposal. I did not ask for the department to prepare this proposal; it came to me as it should. As all public servants should do when they see a gap in the law and they see a problem, they should make proper recommendations to ministers and, through the minister, to the cabinet and executive government so that the problem can be fixed. I can assure all members that this is the journey that this amendment took to come into the House today, and of course this amendment is worthy of support.

To address the non-government members' concerns, I am willing to put even more transparency in the process. I will also move a further amendment in consideration in detail to require that temporary appointments to hospital and health boards be notified by gazette notice as soon as practicable after appointment so that the whole world can be notified of that appointment and who has been appointed. I certainly hope that will allay the concerns of the opposition. These foreshadowed amendments mirror the proposed amendments to the Health Ombudsman Act. I am very confident that that will allay any concerns the opposition may have.

Those amendments in relation to the Hospital and Health Boards Act go to the operation of the boards which run hospital and health services. It goes to the heart of how those entities properly administer health services in Queensland. How our hospital and health services run is a very important thing. Communities need to have confidence in hospital and health services doing the right thing in the delivery of health services and doing the right thing in the operation of hospitals throughout Queensland.

Today a member of parliament came into this place and made a range of allegations about a number of sexual assaults that are alleged to have occurred at a Queensland hospital. These are very serious matters. Any person with knowledge of matters such as those outlined by the member for Mudgeeraba is under an obligation to report them to the police. If the member for Mudgeeraba has any evidence to support these claims, I ask that she provide it to me in writing and I will refer it to the police for appropriate investigation. I also refer to the member's allegations in relation to certain patients being absent without leave. I table a statement from the Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service in relation to this matter.

Tabled paper: Media release, dated 25 February 2016, from Gold Coast Health, regarding mental health patients with a history of sexual offending [251].

The bill contains a number of amendments to six Health portfolio acts. Some of the most significant amending provisions in the bill before the parliament are the amendments to the Food Act. The bill will amend the Food Act to implement a statewide fast-food menu-labelling scheme, an election commitment being delivered by our government. This scheme and the supporting consumer awareness campaign will deliver on our government's election commitment to introduce kilojoule menu labelling to help Queenslanders make healthy choices when eating fast food.

Population-wide weight gain causes significant health problems for individual Queenslanders, their families, their employers and the community. It is also a burden on our health system. In 2015 we had around 2.3 million overweight or obese Queensland adults. I regret to say that, in 2010 alone, I am advised, an estimated 3,200 Queenslanders died as a direct or indirect result of being overweight or obese. It is regrettable to say that it is unlikely that number, on an annual basis, has decreased in the intervening six years.

People are busy and increasingly relying on fast-food options for more of their weekly diet. The array of fast food available seems to be constantly increasing, and identifying the healthiest option is not always easy. The menu-labelling scheme will help Queenslanders make healthier fast-food choices by ensuring they have access to easily understood nutritional information at the time they go to make a purchase. Similar schemes are already in place in New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory and South Australia. I can assure members that the department will work closely with businesses to ensure they understand their obligations under the menu-labelling scheme before the scheme comes into effect.

The bill also amends the Food Act to allow the chief executive of the Department of Health to authorise the disclosure of confidential information. This power can only be exercised where the chief executive has a reasonable belief that the disclosure is necessary to prevent, reduce or mitigate a serious danger to public health. Confidential information may include, for example, the name of a food business associated with a food risk. This will enable the department to inform at-risk consumers about serious health risks associated with particular foods in circumstances where existing emergency food recall powers may be ineffective. The legislation includes safeguards. In particular, the chief executive's power to authorise disclosure can only be delegated to the Chief Health Officer.

As I have already discussed, the bill amends the Health Ombudsman Act and the Hospital and Health Boards Act to allow the minister to make temporary appointments to the public panel of assessors and to hospital and health boards respectively.


The bill amends the Pest Management Act 2001 to allow the chief executive of the Department of Health to delegate his or her powers under the act to an appropriate qualified employee of a hospital and health service. This amendment facilitates transfer of operational responsibility for functions under the act from the department to hospital and health services.

The bill also amends the Public Health Act 2005 to streamline the process for enabling registered midwives who are not also registered nurses to access the Queensland Pap Smear Register. This technical amendment will remove unnecessary red tape.

Finally, the bill makes an important amendment to the Transplantation and Anatomy Act. That amendment will clarify that the act's definition of 'blood products' does not include cord blood. Cord blood is blood obtained from the placenta via the umbilical cord following childbirth for the main purpose of extracting stem cells. Stem cells obtained from cord blood are used to treat a range of conditions including leukaemia, lymphoma and anaemia as well as immune and metabolic disorders. The Australian Bone Marrow Donor Registry is a non-profit organisation that undertakes searches for matching cord blood units. The registry is funded by the Commonwealth, state and territory governments. This amendment is technical in nature and will ensure the registry is exempted from the act's general prohibitions on trading human tissue for the purposes of its work trading in stem cells contained in cord blood.

These amendments will significantly enhance the operation of the relevant acts. This bill also delivers on a key election commitment aimed at improving the health of Queenslanders. The causes of obesity are complex, but it is clear that the widespread availability and consumption of unhealthy food is a key factor. This new menu-labelling scheme will help Queenslanders make healthier fast-food choices, benefiting individuals, families and our community. I hope that I have satisfied the concerns of the non-government members through the amendments I have foreshadowed I will move when the bill is considered in detail.

Again I take this opportunity to thank those stakeholders who took the time to make very thoughtful submissions to the committee. I thank them for their interest in and overwhelming support for the bill, particularly when it comes to food labelling. I also again commend the committee for its work in considering the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (4.45 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Health Legislation Amendment Bill. I thank the health committee for the great work they did in relation to the bill. These bills are never easy. They are complicated. People have different points of view. At the end of the day, the committee has brought down a report that is, shall we say, thought-provoking at least in relation to the contents of the bill.

I say at the outset that we will not be supporting the changes to the Hospital and Health Boards Act or the Health Ombudsman Act 2013. The bill amends a number of acts: the Food Act 2006 to require fast-food chains, snack food and drink chains, bakery chains, cafe chains and supermarkets to display nutritional information and to authorise disclosure of information for limited public health and public safety concerns; the Health Ombudsman Act 2013 to give power to the minister to temporarily appoint persons to the public panel of assessors; the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011 to give power to the minister to temporarily appoint persons to the hospital and health boards; the Pest Management Act 2001 to enable the chief executive to delegate the chief executive's powers; the Public Health Act 2005 to streamline the process to enable any registered midwife to access the Queensland Pap Smear Register; and the Transplantation and Anatomy Act 1979 to make clear the definition of 'blood products' under section 42AB.

The Food Act 2006 amendments will require fast-food chains, snack food and drink chains, bakery chains, cafe chains and supermarkets to display nutritional information. This will be achieved by establishing a statewide menu-labelling scheme at the point of sale, whether that be in a queue in store, at home ordering over the phone or internet or when on the go and ordering via a mobile application. This is important, as foods eaten away from home also tend to contain more kilojoules per serve and are usually of a larger portion size than meals prepared at home. Therefore, the objectives of these amendments include the creation of a standardised nutrition information system at fast-food chains, providing consumers with clear, consistent energy information about fast food sold at these outlets.

More broadly, the legislation supports population health activities that are working to minimise and prevent people being overweight, developing obesity and chronic disease in Queensland consumers. Around 2.5 million Queensland adults and children are overweight or obese. In 2008, the estimated financial impact of obesity on Queensland's economy was \$11.6 billion in health system cost, lost productivity and lost wellbeing. This equates to \$4,644 for each overweight or obese person in this state.

The food menu-labelling scheme will help Queenslanders make healthier fast-food choices by providing easily understood nutritional information at the point of sale, when purchasing decisions are made. We do maintain, however, that people do have their own obligation or a personal obligation to inform themselves of a proper eating healthy lifestyle and also in relation to exercise. We know that we are facing an ever-increasing tide of chronic disease and conditions—be it diabetes, heart disease, kidney disease or obesity, just to name a few. At the very heart of these diseases is the question of exercise and a diet that is balanced—providing what we need to meet our daily energy levels and thus to provide for a healthy body. We have now for years been debating in this chamber and indeed chambers like it across the globe the necessity for greater awareness of what we eat. Sadly, obesity and chronic disease appear to be gaining ground with every passing day, with the number of people falling into the either overweight or obese category continuing to grow.

I had the library pull some figures relating to ABS statistics of the Australian Health Survey which said that in 2011-12 almost two in three Australians were overweight. Some 10 per cent more adults are overweight or obese now than in 1995 and one in four Australian children are overweight or obese. Those are startling figures, particularly in relation to children. One in four in Australia are overweight or obese. That is the next generation following us into the EDs, the surgeries, the GPs, the ICUs and the rehab units. Those are startling figures and are of great concern. In October 2015 PricewaterhouseCoopers produced a document titled *Weighing the cost of obesity: a case for action*. It determined that in 2011-12 on 2014-15 dollars the cost to our economy was \$8.6 billion. Of that, Australia-wide medical costs were \$3.809 billion and indirect costs were \$4.792 billion. Those figures alone are startling, but more importantly they extrapolate the expected growth in obesity until 2025. Unless we take strong action to deal with people who are obese, the number of people who will be obese by 2025 will reach 7,246,450 people. In addition, the health cost increase between 2015-16 and 2024-25 will be \$87.7 billion per annum, and those figures are indeed very worrying.

Sadly, 15 per cent more people living in outer and regional areas of this state and this nation are overweight or obese than those living in major cities, and those who have a high body mass index are in the second highest cohort for developing long-term chronic disease. The sad reality is that people who do reside either in outer or regional areas have less access to GPs, less access to medical services and less access to hospitals. Therefore, their chances of getting treatment on time and consistently is reduced, whereas if you live in the major metropolitan areas you are more likely to be able to access what is required to treat your condition or to get advice. What we can do to assist the community in understanding the nutritional value or otherwise of the food we are eating is of course part of the answer and is one of the many components required to tackle this incredibly difficult and apparently life-changing issue. Any attempt to reduce the intake of fatty and starchy foods needs to be applauded. We must however remember that this is only one step on a very long journey and we have against us significant players.

It is still common even today—in fact, very common—to see advertisements for a hamburger, chips and Coke or others of the like that fly in the face of what this bill is trying to do, and companies pour millions of dollars every year into advertising. In fact, I can guarantee that if you watch any of the major channels tonight you will find advertising exactly along those lines. I raise the point: does it come down to the question that though these companies appear to pay lip-service to this and other chambers to take action, but is that action driven by the fact that we are passing a bill in the House and that they are not really intent on making a difference? I have real doubts about the veracity of a lot of these company statements that they are attempting to turn the issue around when quite clearly their actions outside of this are, at the very least, noncompliance with the spirit of this legislation. I am one of the many MPs in this House who attend a food chain one day every year to urge people to donate to a very good cause. Even though we have had major money spent on advertising via TV, radio and the like and our GPs, who are the front-line providers of health services, are heavily involved in putting out the message, I still see the cars driving through and I still see the feet walking through the door.

I do not for one moment doubt that what we will do here in this chamber, irrespective of who is in government at the relevant time, will be of benefit, but I do have real doubts that the multinationals actually seriously take on board the risks associated with their products and how they impact upon the people of Queensland—not just to the young but the longer term effect as we age. It is without doubt that our eating habits at a young age become ingrained and they can clearly develop into major medical complications as we get older. In fact, the impact of long-term habits of eating bad food or poor choices in food, poor exercise and other activities such as smoking can be crippling. Everybody in this chamber knows of people who suffer from diabetes, obesity or are overweight. Everybody in this chamber knows constituents who have lost a leg through diabetes or whose vision has been impaired because of diabetes. Yes, we can pass this bill and, yes, I have no doubt it will have an impact. But, at the end of the day, I really do not believe that the major food chains that continually push fast food that is, to say the least, suspect as to nutritional value pay much more than lip-service to what is needed to deal with this matter.

Of course, we are all entitled to a reward. We get that. We try to do the best we can and we all fall off the wagon, so to speak, every now and then. I do not mind a reward myself—a pizza every now and then or a cold beer or two. I do not think you would be human without maybe indulging just once or twice every now and then. When you walk around the food stalls of many of the food courts in our major shopping complexes, you have to wonder about the nutritional value of many items—the cream buns, the cakes, the biscuits, the lollies. Stop salivating over there! These foods are indeed the target of this particular bill in relation to the nutritional labelling of the items. As I said, everybody needs and deserves a reward every now and then. However, the concern that I have is that there are too many people who think that a reward should occur all of the time and there are people who really have a belief that the only way to achieve the outcome they are seeking is via fast food or at least food that is not nutritious. Naturally the campaign here requires a major education program, and I note that the government is to spend \$7.5 million over three years. The Heart Foundation on page 2 of its submission dated 13 October 2015 questions that, saying it is a 'low budget' and asks that it be increased 'significantly'.

The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating 2013 published a document that gives us an idea of what we should be eating every day and what we should be doing by way of exercise, and I wonder if members can relate to this. In relation to food each day it says that there should be two serves of fruit, and one apple is a serve; five to six serves of veggies a day, and a half a cup of cooked veggies or a half a cup of salad is a serve; three to six serves a day of grains, and a slice of bread or a half a cup of pasta is a serve; two to three serves a day of lean meats, poultry and tofu—which I cannot stand, I have to admit—and that is a palm sized serve of meat or two eggs as a serve; and 2.5 to four serves a day of milk, yoghurt, cheese or alternatives. Who here complies with that every day or a combination thereof? I ask members to put their hands up. The lack of hands is exactly what I mean, so we have a lot of work to do ourselves even within the chamber.

Dr Rowan interjected.

Mr McARDLE: The doctor puts his hand up. I doubt that very much. I have seen your room, Doctor! I will not comment upon the contents of the bag you were eating from this week!

In addition, the *Guide to healthy eating* indicates that adults should be doing 150 to 300 minutes a week of moderate to intense exercise, or 75 to 150 minutes of vigorous exercise, or a combination thereof. I try to exercise as much as I possibly can. I do not get to do that much exercise all of the time, but if we have the goal in mind of trying to achieve that outcome, that will go a long way to keeping ourselves as healthy as possible.

In regard to nutrition and the role of exercise, I want to refer to the critical role that our GPs play in giving us advice in relation to diet and exercise and ensuring that we get the best advice from them for ourselves and our families. When I was living in Geebung in Brisbane for many years I had the same GP. That man knew my medical history back to front. If you can have a long-term relationship with your GP, that is the best relationship you can have, because your GP understands very clearly your background from when you were a child, into your teenage years, early adulthood and then further on. That GP has an innate ability to understand the condition of your health. I am lucky to have had a GP on the Sunshine Coast for many years and he and I have a similar relationship. In terms of nutrition, diet and exercise, the role of the GP is greatly undervalued. It is not spoken of enough. I think that the AMAQ has a very important role—and undertakes a very important role—in relation to our health and that of our families and we should look to our GPs more often.

I refer to a publication called *Better outcomes for people with chronic and complex health conditions through primary health care* by the Primary Health Care Advisory Group, which was published last year. The chair of the Primary Health Care Advisory Group, Dr Steve Hambleton, the former president of the AMA, wrote the forward. It states—

35% of Australians, or around 7 million people, have a chronic condition;

- many people experience multiple chronic conditions.

It states further—

In 2013-14, 48% (285,000) of potentially avoidable hospitalisations were for chronic conditions and

- nearly a quarter (23%) of people who visited an emergency department in 2012-13 felt their care could have been provided by a general practitioner.

Those figures emphasise the role that GPs play in our society in assisting people such as us and our families to get the treatment that we deserve.

The LNP is prepared to agree to the amendments that the bill makes to the Food Act, but I repeat that I am concerned that fast-food chains and others that are identified in the bill are paying lip-service and are not taking definitive action for themselves. The burden of disease in this state—and indeed this nation—is growing. That is why in part the Health budgets are getting bigger and bigger every year. It is a sad reality that in times to come—and I do not think that it is very far away—Health budgets will simply be unsustainable at the current rate of growth and more dramatic steps will need to be taken to ensure that people's health is protected. This parliament can pass this bill, but it comes down to individual choice and individual responsibility to ensure the best health outcomes that we possibly can for ourselves and our families. On the figures that I have seen, that is not taking place. The consequences are being seen today in our EDs, in our operating theatres, in our ICUs, in our recovery wards and in our rehabilitation units.

I turn to the amendments in the bill that relate to the hospital and health boards. I refer to clause 17 and, more particularly, clause 18. Clause 18 gives the minister the right to appoint a person to be a member of an HHS board when he believes that it is urgent to do so, and three circumstances are given. Further, the bill states that that person may not be appointed initially for more than six months and that that period may be renewed for a further period of six months. The basic problem with this provision is that it rests solely with the minister to make the appointment. It is solely at the minister's discretion.

This government has made it very clear that it intends to centralise power back in George Street and, I claim, at the expense of the HHSs. One would have to ask: what is the role that this government sees for the HHS and Queensland Health in Charlotte Street? Labor's election policy document made its intention very clear. Page 48 of the *Queensland Labor state policy platform 2014* states—

Labor will give priority to reinstating the central co-ordination and capacity-building role of Queensland Health to ... co-ordinate the relationships among Hospital and Health Services, Medicare Locals, Ambulance, NGOs ...

Within that text are the words 'reinstating the central co-ordination and capacity-building role of Queensland Health' which is the genesis of the role that this minister sees for Queensland Health going forward and the degradation of the power of the HHSs. One would have to ask why this government is not prepared to maintain control with local people. I can recall when Paul Lucas was the health minister and he sat in this House where the Minister for Education is sitting now. At that time Kevin Rudd had put out a document looking at rejuvenating the health system in this nation. He said that he wanted to have more power given to local doctors. At that time we had been arguing strongly that we wanted to put back in place local hospital boards. The Labor Party had opposed that tooth and nail. In fact, under Wayne Goss, it had closed them down. However, Kevin Rudd rejuvenated the idea. At that time I can recall the look on Paul Lucas's face. It was one of utter dismay and disbelief that local hospital boards were a policy initiative of the federal Labor government at the time.

The ALP has never, ever wanted to have local hospital boards or give local control. In fact, it did so only at the insistence—

Mr Hinchliffe interjected.

Mr McARDLE: Steady, calm down.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hart): Order! Member for Caloundra, just take your seat for a second. Leader of the House, your interjections are not being taken.

Mr Hinchliffe: They were. He responded.

Mr McARDLE: I am concerned for the member's welfare.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am not going to enter into a debate here. Your interjections are not being taken. The member from Caloundra has the call.

Mr McARDLE: Mr Deputy Speaker, thank you.

Ms Jones interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister for Tourism, I do not need your help either, thank you.

Mr McARDLE: Mr Deputy Speaker, thank you. As I said, the Labor Party has always opposed local hospital boards. It did not like it back when Kevin Rudd made the announcement about them, it did not like it when it put out its election platform in 2014 and it does not like it now.

I fast forward to 2015 and the Hunter review, which is a marvellous document that came out by way of a final report in June 2015 titled *Review of the Department of Health's structure, governance arrangements and high level organisational capability*. This report was prepared for the minister, at the direction of the minister, to, in essence, undo anything that the LNP had done and, in particular, looking at the issue of the health and hospital boards or systems.

On page 61 are the governance arrangements. On this page there is the following comment—

Governance structures for the health system need to reflect the role of the Department in establishing overall responsibility for the system, with opportunity for input from constituent parts. Within the Department, governance needs to ensure that the relevant functional areas with responsibility and accountability for specific outcomes are clearly aligned, and that the processes requiring distributed leadership are sufficiently robust to allow for that approach to occur.

The important words here are 'need to reflect the role of the department in establishing overall responsibility for the system'. It then says that they are going to put in place what is called a system leadership executive. What is that body? It is comprised of the following people: the director-general, the DDGs for: clinical excellence; purchasing and performance; prevention; business services; and strategy, policy and planning; the chief technology officer, the chief executive officer of health support Queensland and the Queensland Ambulance Commissioner. What it then says is this: 'The Chair of the Hospital and Health Board Chairs' Forum would be an ex-officio member of the System Leadership Executive.' So here we have the body that is going to put in place a structure that reflects the department having overall responsibility for the system but input from constituent parts, but the body that is going to do this has only one person who comes from an HHS. All those other people come from Brisbane. If the HHS rep is from metro south, metro north, the Sunshine Coast or the Gold Coast the HHSs in Far North Queensland, Central Queensland and the like have no input into the determination of that body.

It then goes on to say this: as an ex-officio member, the Chair of the Board Chairs' Forum will have full rights of discussion and debate but cannot vote. So a body to reflect the division of obligations between Queensland Health and Charlotte Street and the HHSs that provide the services right across the state, the person from the HHSs can sit and talk but cannot vote, and it is only one person. That is the attitude of this government to the HHSs.

More importantly, at page 63 of the document there are a series of recommendations. Recommendation No. 2 states—

Develop a 'Charter of Responsibility' to be agreed between the Department of Health and Hospital and Health Services setting out agreed roles and responsibilities for each, based on—

and it goes on. The phrase 'charter of responsibility' appears only once in that document and it is there. Not only that, the body to put in place what that charter consists of is not identified. The only body identified in the whole document is the system leadership executive, which is comprised of everybody but HHS executives. There is no doubt that this government is hell-bent on ensuring the HHSs are denuded of real power and centralisation of power falls back within the terms of Charlotte Street. That is something that the LNP will not tolerate and will not support. The clauses in the bill are a step down that path. Under no circumstances will we be supporting that portion of the bill.

Page 15 of the Hunter report deals with roles and responsibilities across the health system. It quotes the then health minister, Geoff Wilson, to bolster their claim that the central body, the central power, the central force should, in fact, be Queensland Health. The then minister made this comment—

To achieve this goal we need: a system that, in every single instance, puts the needs of the patients first; a system that values the local knowledge of our skilled and hardworking front-line staff; a system that gives each and every local community a say in their local health services; and a system that ensures that every taxpayer dollar spent is spent wisely and well.

That is well and good. The explanatory notes of the 2011 bill makes the comment at page 2 that the bill will have major benefits for Queenslanders including—

... more opportunities for local clinicians, health consumers and communities to be involved in service planning, design and priority setting for local services.

The bill in 2011 clearly placed the opportunity to grow the health services to engage and to be involved in planning, design and setting local services with the local population, not with Queensland Health. Queensland Health clearly has a role, but Queensland Health does not have a role to the exclusion that they are seeking by way of taking away the power that exists in the current local health and hospital boards and the LNP will not support that process being put in place by this government in clauses 17 and 18.

Subsequent to the release of the Hunter review, a document entitled *Decision on business case for change* was issued in July 2015. That is a document that flows on from the Hunter review. I looked very carefully through that document—if I am wrong I am certain the minister will let me know—but there is nothing in it that elaborates on what is the charter of responsibility, nor does it define who is going to put in place what that charter is, nor does it deal with the system leadership executive. That may be a procedural document, but I would have thought that by now we would have had some information as to what that body is, what the charter looks like and who is involved in the implementation thereof.


Moving on to the Health Ombudsman Act 2013 and again clauses 12 and 13. The act put in place the Office of the Health Ombudsman as an independent body to manage the health service complaints management system in Queensland. I acknowledge the work undertaken by the prior health minister Lawrence Springborg in putting in place the OHO. The act provides that when conducting the hearing of a proceeding relating to a registered health practitioner QCAT must be assisted by one assessor from the public panel and two assessors from the relevant professional panel. Currently no provision is made in the act for the temporary appointment of an assessor to the public panel. Clause 13 of the bill proposes to insert a new section 118A into the HO Act that will enable the minister to temporarily appoint an individual to the public panel of assessors for a period of not more than six months. We have grave concerns about sections of this amendment. The independence of the office is at stake here. Undue interference and influence by the Minister for Health threatens this independence. In their submission AMA Queensland also reserved judgement of the amendment and stated as follows—

AMA Queensland acknowledges the importance of the public panel of assessors, and the need to prevent delays by ensuring the panel is appropriately staffed. However, we have concerns that the provision, as currently drafted, would allow the minister, where no other assessor is available, to appoint a specific individual to assess a specific matter.

AMA Queensland strongly believes the independence of the medical regulatory system is one of its most important features. Allowing the Health Minister to select a specific assessor would contravene this principle and undermine the independence required by the community and profession. Such drafting could open the provision to abuse in highly political matters and should be avoided.

As I said before, we are prepared to consent to the amendments to the Food Act, the Pest Management Act, the Public Health Act and Transplantation and Anatomy Act, but we are not prepared to consent to the amendments to the act that give the minister unfettered right to appoint members to the health boards or to become an assessor under the Health Ombudsman Act 2013. Therefore, we will be dividing on those clauses in consideration in detail. The comments made by the minister and the proposed amendments in no way deal with the issues that we see ingrained in the DNA of the ALP in centralising control back within George Street and taking away from local people their right to control their local health boards.

Importantly, we know that when you go from the Torres Strait to the Gold Coast, from Cunnamulla and Mount Isa, people on the ground know what is happening in their health areas; people on the ground with the knowledge understand what is happening with the people who they live and work with. We also know that the closer you work to the ground the more information you gather and as a result are able to move quickly to adapt to changes and the need to take on board new situations and to work out the consequences that will flow. As I said before, we will not support those series of clauses. Otherwise we will support the provisions contained in the bill.

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (5.18 pm): I rise to add my contribution as a committee member and to give my support to the government's Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. The bill looks at a number of issues from fast-food labelling and tackling obesity to amending the Health Ombudsman Act. I wish to follow up on comments made by the member for Caloundra in regard to the HHSs and temporary board positions. It is always a pleasure to follow the member for Caloundra, who certainly has a good awareness of the health setup in Queensland.

I think that the HHSs were a good initiative of the former government. It sounds like decentralising was the way to go. Labor did that many years ago and it is not a bad thing. In relation to the initiative regarding the boards, the member mentioned the Hunter review. The idea of having temporary appointments was that (a) you need someone on the board to undertake a clinical role; and (b)

vacancies come up from time to time. Boards cannot operate without the positions being filled. Therefore, this is a practical amendment that came from the department, not the minister. It is necessary so that temporary appointments due to vacancies can be filled. It is not, as the member for Mudgeeraba mentioned, to encourage union participation. I cannot see how that comes close to the functioning of a HSS. We need the boards that are in step with what is going on in the community.

I turn to some of the other amendments in the Health Legislation Amendment Bill. Queensland has a problem. We are aware that a staggering 65 per cent of Queenslanders are considered overweight. That means approximately 2.3 million adult Queenslanders are overweight or obese. There is no doubt that this is a very serious issue and one that I am pleased to see that our government is addressing. We know that being overweight or obese leads to chronic health concerns such as diabetes, coronary heart disease, stroke and a range of other health issues. The cost to our health system is enormous. Being overweight or obese causes not only economic damage but also physical and social damage. Economically, obesity costs us from increased absenteeism or lost days from work and often expensive and ongoing medical costs. Social impacts include a lower quality of life, discrimination and lower wages. Of particular concern is the increased likelihood of children being bullied. I am encouraged to see that evidence suggests that rates of obesity have slowed. Notwithstanding that, we must continue to make changes to address the issue. That is why this bill is important.

This bill will establish a menu-labelling scheme to assist consumers to make better informed and healthier choices when purchasing fast food. The amendments will require food businesses licensed under the Food Act to display for consumers the average energy content of each standard food item. The average daily energy intake is 8,700 kilojoules. Armed with that information, I am confident that consumers will begin to make healthier life choices when purchasing fast food.

I am pleased to see that our key health organisations are backing the scheme, with support from the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons and Diabetes Queensland. I want to mention what an outstanding organisation Diabetes Queensland is. Last year on Walk to Work Day, the member for Greenslopes and I walked to its headquarters across the river. I was in my Cowboys gear and we went via Suncorp Stadium. I wish we had a stadium like that in Townsville. Diabetes Queensland is a fantastic organisation. The staff shared with us stories of not only what they deal with involving previously diagnosed patients but also the alarming numbers of newly diagnosed diabetics.


I also say 'well done' to the Heart Foundation Queensland. They do an outstanding job in educating our community about the associated increased risks of heart disease. They too are rightly concerned about the growing number of overweight individuals in Queensland. In its submission to the former Health and Ambulance Services Committee's inquiry into this bill, the Heart Foundation Queensland noted that, in a recent Queensland survey, more than 90 per cent of surveyed participants supported the introduction of a kilojoule menu-labelling system in fast food and snack chains. This bill will give Queenslanders the information they need to make those correct choices.

Of course, a conversation about being overweight leads to the important need for us to support a menu-labelling system. The evidence is in: we all know that unhealthy eating is a leading cause of excess weight and chronic diseases and we know that more than half of Queensland's population is obese or overweight. We know that takeaway food and eating out often means bigger portions and more calorie-dense foods that are high in fat and sugar. In 2014, 30 per cent of Queensland adults consumed takeaway food at least once a week. A large portion of those Queenslanders were young people aged 18 to 24. Unfortunately, fast food options are not always healthy food choices, putting people at a greater risk of a range of health issues including type 2 diabetes and heart disease, as I have said. Assisting consumers to make better and informed healthier choices when purchasing is essential to combatting those problems.

The bill will require chains that sell ready-to-eat food to provide that nutritional information at the point of sale. This includes fast-food chains, snack food and drinks chains, bakery chains, cafe chains and supermarkets. The display requirements will have to apply to food businesses required to be licensed under the Food Act that have more than 20 outlets in Queensland or 50 outlets in Australia, ensuring that small businesses are not unduly impacted. For consistency and to prevent confusion, food outlets that are not captured by the scheme but voluntarily display nutritional information will be required to comply with the display requirements. Businesses must clearly display the average energy content in kilojoules for each standard food item. As I have said, to give context to that, businesses will also be required to display a statement that 8,700 kilojoules is the average adult daily energy intake.

The bill gives food businesses plenty of time to ensure they are meeting these requirements, with the provisions applying only 12 months after the bill comes into force. I have been pleased to see some businesses already voluntarily displaying this information. Applying the scheme across Queensland will help to ensure that consumers receive consistent messages about the nutritional content of fast food. A 12-month transitional period will also allow time for the Queensland government's community education campaign to take effect. This campaign is designed to help Queenslanders better understand and correctly use nutritional information on menus. The labelling scheme will allow consumers to consider the complete picture and take into account their own daily energy requirements before they buy.

I will speak briefly about the amendment to the temporary appointments, which I mentioned in reference to the speech of the member for Caloundra. The panel plays an important role in disciplinary proceedings relating to registered health practitioners. Assessors from the public and professional panels provide assistance to the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal during those disciplinary hearings. Professional panel members provide technical assistance to QCAT, while public panel members represent the community's values and the expectations of health professionals. That is why it is important to ensure that we have enough assessors at any given time to meet demand. Currently, the act allows for the temporary appointment of an assessor to the professional panel. However, there is no equivalent provision for the public panel. The amendments maintain appropriate safeguards. The minister can make a temporary appointment only on advice from the principal registrar of QCAT. The minister will not be able to direct that a particular assessor be involved in a disciplinary matter. The principal registrar will remain in control of determining which assessors sit on particular panels. These amendments will help to ensure that there are sufficient assessors on the public panel at any given time to deal with disciplinary matters fairly and promptly. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (5.28 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Health Legislation Amendment Bill. This bill amends a number of acts within the Health portfolio to make a series of changes. In a 19-page bill, the Food Act 2006, the Health Ombudsman Act 2013, the Pest Management Act 2001, the Public Health Act 2005 and the Transplantation and Anatomy Act 1979 are amended for reasons ranging from nutritional information labelling to hospital executive delegation and the Queensland Pap Smear Register.

In our three-month consideration of this bill, the former Health and Ambulance Services Committee compiled a report three times the size of the bill itself. As a result of serious concerns and reservations expressed by non-government members of the committee, there was no recommendation made that certain sections of the bill be passed.

What became apparent during our consideration of this seemingly uncontroversial bill and the consequences of its amendments to a number of acts was that the Minister for Health has attempted to implement a sneaky power grab for himself at the expense of openness, accountability and transparency. Buried in pages 13 to 15 of the bill are amendments to the Health Ombudsman Act 2013 which give the minister the apparently unfettered and unscrutinised ability to appoint members of the public panel.

Of equal concern are further amendments to the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011 which will give the minister the ability to hire and fire members of hospital and health boards when he does not consider the members of the board to have the skills, knowledge or experience to perform the board's functions effectively or efficiently. This bill also allows the minister to hand-pick whomever he may like to replace them for a period up to six months. This should be a real concern for all Queenslanders, particularly those who rely on our public health system.

The Minister for Health, without any degree of oversight, without any degree of transparency and without any degree of accountability, will now have the ability to pick and choose, as he sees fit, who serves on the independent boards of our hospitals. There can be no doubt that this is a throwback to the bad old days of Labor maladministration in Health. It is a throwback to the days of centralised power in George and Charlotte streets, with no say for the experts in our local hospitals and no regard for their local experience.

These were the days that gave us the \$1.2 billion Health payroll debacle, fake Tahitian princes and a health system that, in the words of former Labor premier Anna Bligh, was a 'basket case'. Now, in a 19 page bill, another Labor government is attempting to give the Minister for Health unmitigated powers to sack and appoint members of our local hospital and health boards. In fact, the minister can feasibly sack every hospital and health board and appoint any new members based on politics or personal leanings, whenever he chooses.

Mr Costigan: Stack the team with reds.

Ms BATES: Absolutely. This betrays accepted practice for any appointments of this nature to any board, whether they are hospital and health boards or otherwise, which would ordinarily require an expression of interest process, a thorough review process and an eventual submission to and approval by cabinet. Under these changes, the minister does not require cabinet approval or any expressions of interest process for any of his appointments, paving the way for potential political misuse of these powers and a captain's call with no transparency in the appointment process.

With the Labor government having already introduced a union encouragement policy across the Queensland public sector, we have also received no reassurance that new appointments will not be union mates. My concern is that this could ultimately be an underlying attempt to take administrative power from our hospital and health boards and restore central control of our hospitals back to Charlotte Street and with the Minister for Health and Labor's union mates, and the QNU—do not forget the QNU.

The opposition, accordingly, has deep reservations about this bill. The committee could not reach an agreement on the proposed amendments to either the Health Ombudsman Act 2013 or the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011. The non-government members remain unconvinced that the process for appointing members of the public panel and sacking and temporarily appointing members of hospital and health boards will not be open to abuse. I table the *Hansard* from our hearing where I actually raise these concerns.

Tabled paper: Extract, dated 2 December 2015, from Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 public briefing, pp. 7-8 [252].

As a result of our concerns, the committee recommended that amendments be included to require the relevant minister to provide notification, by way of *Gazette* notice, of temporary appointments to the public panel of assessors and the professional panel of assessors as soon as practicable after appointment in an effort to provide some transparency around the appointment process.

Throughout the committee process, non-government members were not the only ones to express serious concern over such wideranging powers for the Minister for Health. The Australian Medical Association of Queensland said they had concerns about these provisions, as currently drafted, and suggested that they would allow the minister to appoint a specific individual to the public panel to assess a specific matter. In their own words, the AMAQ said they—

... strongly believe the independence of the medical regulatory system is one of its most important features.

They went on to say—

Allowing the Health Minister to select a specific assessor would contravene this principle and undermine the independence required by the community and the profession.


Such drafting could open the provision to abuse in highly political matters and should be avoided.

In turn, this is a bill which, despite its length, has large scale and far-reaching implications for our hospital and health system. It has real consequences for principles of accountability and transparency in this state, and signals a return to the bad old days of centralised control of our hospitals from George and Charlotte streets.

It is for these reasons that we will be supporting certain aspects of the bill but cannot support the proposed amendments to the Health Ombudsman Act 2013 and the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011. I note the minister in his speech in the second reading debate took the opportunity to table a media statement from the Gold Coast Hospital. I table that statement again.

Tabled paper: Media release, dated 25 February 2016, from Gold Coast Health, regarding mental health patients with a history of sexual offending [253].

What the statement does not confirm is whether this is the same patient who was AWOL three weeks ago and found in the grounds of the Robina State High School. The statement does not confirm that the patient was AWOL on Saturday and Sunday evenings of last weekend and was returned by the QPS on Monday. The statement does not confirm that the patient was again AWOL as late as yesterday morning at 11 am. The minister needs to go down to Robina Hospital and talk to his own staff and let them tell him what is really happening.

 **Ms LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (5.35 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. The bill amends six Health portfolio acts to support policy initiatives of the government, specifically: the Food Act to require fast-food chains, snack food and drinks chains, bakery chains, cafe chains and supermarkets to display nutritional information, and to authorise disclosure of confidential information for limited public health and safety reasons; the Health Ombudsman Act and

the Hospital and Health Boards Act to enable the minister to temporarily appoint persons to the public panel of assessors and hospital and health boards respectively; the Pest Management Act to enable the chief executive to delegate the chief executive's powers to appropriately qualified employees of the hospital and health services; the Public Health Act to streamline the process for enabling registered midwives to access the Queensland Pap Smear Register; and the Transplantation and Anatomy Act to make clear that the definition of blood products under section 42AB does not include cord blood—that is, blood obtained from the placenta via the umbilical cord for the collection of stem cells.

The committee was able to reach agreement on the proposed provisions relating to the Food Act, the Pest Management Act, the Public Health Act and the Transplantation and Anatomy Act, but could not reach agreement on the provisions relating to the Health Ombudsman Act and the Hospital and Health Boards Act.

Unhealthy eating and obesity are among the leading preventable causes of death and disease in Queensland. Queensland has the highest rate of obesity in Australia, with research showing that 65 per cent of Queenslanders are overweight or obese. In the fifth report of the Chief Health Officer, Dr Jeanette Young called obesity arguably the most confronting public health issue of this century; a global pandemic of a different kind; the by-product of prosperous times, technological advances, convenience and poor lifestyle choices. On current trends, about three million Queenslanders will be overweight or obese by 2020. Queensland's obesity rates are now approaching those of the US.

During the public hearing, Dr Young, the Chief Health Officer, advised the committee that unhealthy eating and obesity is having a particularly profound effect on children and young people, as almost half of the daily energy intake of 16- to 17-year-olds is from fast food. During the election, the government made a commitment to introducing legislation requiring fast-food chains to display the kilojoule content of their food and drinks, and to undertake a community and industry awareness campaign to help Queenslanders use the kilojoule menu-labelling information to make healthier choices.

The Australian Nutrition Foundation, in their submission to the committee, commented—

While we know food choices are ultimately a personal responsibility, because of the social determinants of health, not all Queenslanders are equally empowered in their understanding of better food choices. If Governments put in place legislation, such as the proposed amendment to the Health Legislation Bill which supports a healthier food supply and makes it easier for individuals to make the better food choices then this can go a long way to supporting better health outcomes for the community and diminishing the health burden for Queensland.

The Australian Medical Association of Queensland provided strong support for the amendments, commending and endorsing the comments made by the Minister for Health in his introductory speech in which he said—

Population-wide weight gain causes significant health problems for individual Queenslanders, their families, their employers and the community. Around 2.5 million Queensland adults and children are overweight or obese. In 2008, the estimated financial impact of obesity on the Queensland economy was \$11.6 billion in health system costs, lost productivity and lost wellbeing.

We simply cannot afford not to find new and additional ways to encourage and assist consumers to make better informed and healthier choices. The rationale for the amendments to the Food Act as outlined by the Minister for Health go straight to this point. The food menu-labelling scheme will help Queenslanders make healthier fast-food choices by providing easily understood nutritional information at the point of sale where purchasing decisions are made. The menu-labelling scheme will mandate that standard food outlets of prescribed food businesses must display on their menus the average energy content, in kilojoules, for each standard food item and a statement that the adult daily energy intake is 8,700 kilojoules.

The mandatory display requirements will apply only to food businesses that are required to be licensed under the Food Act and that have more than 20 outlets in Queensland or 50 outlets Australia-wide. This will include fast-food chains, snack food and drinks chains, bakery chains, cafe chains and supermarkets. Exemptions are provided for non-profit organisations, health service facilities, cinemas, convenience stores, service stations, dine-in-only food businesses, catering businesses and mobile food businesses. Standard food outlets that are not captured by the scheme but that voluntarily display nutritional information will be required to comply with the requirements in the act.

In response to questions asked during the committee hearing regarding how food outlets will provide a standardised and valid measure of average energy content, the Chief Health Officer advised that there is an online nutrition panel calculator developed by Food Standards Australia, in addition to nutritional analysis software, and food composition tables and databases that are available. Outlets can also use laboratory analysis to identify and provide a standardised and valid measure of average energy content that consumers can have confidence in. The display of such information will not stop people

from eating fast food. This is not the intention of the bill. But it will support the ability of consumers to make more informed food choices. The Department of Health advised the committee that there are approximately six food businesses in Queensland that will be caught by the legislation and that they will work with those businesses during a transitional period of 12 months to ensure compliance with the menu-labelling requirements.

The bill also contains amendments to allow the chief executive to authorise the disclosure of confidential information where there are reasonable grounds to believe disclosure is necessary to prevent or reduce the possibility of a serious danger to public health or to mitigate the adverse consequences of a serious danger to public health. Reference was made by Queensland Health to a current inability to effectively warn the public to not consume certain brands of foods during an outbreak of salmonella or the like. The amendment before the House will overcome this limitation and mean that the department is able to warn consumers effectively, providing specific advice about how best to avoid health risks. I know that I would want this information to limit the exposure of my family to such health risks, and I commend the minister on bringing this amendment to serve the public interest. Importantly, the proposed provision includes safeguards to ensure that an appropriate balance is struck between the need to protect and promote health and protecting the rights of businesses and individuals affected.

The bill also makes a minor but important amendment to the Public Health Act 2005 to enable registered midwives who are not also registered nurses to access the Queensland Pap Smear Register. Currently, a registered midwife who is not also a registered nurse cannot access the register without first being designated a health practitioner by the chief executive of the department. This is an unnecessary step.

During the hearing, the Australian College of Midwives advised the committee that, since the introduction of a separate professional register for nurses and midwives, access to the pap smear database has been limited to only those midwives who have a nursing registration in addition to their midwifery. The Pap Smear Register ensures women with an abnormal pap smear result are advised about appropriate medical investigation and interventions. Pap smears are not the highlight of any woman's social calendar, but they are vital and in some cases lifesaving. Importantly, the College of Midwives advised the committee that evidence shows that women are more likely to act on health advice during pregnancy and childbirth, placing midwives in an ideal position to influence women's health and access to such essential screening services.

The bill also makes a clarifying amendment to the Transplantation and Anatomy Act 1979, an act which provides for the removal of human tissues for transplantation, for post-mortem examinations and related purposes. The amendments before the House seek to make clear that the definition of 'blood products' does not include cord blood. Part 7 of the bill prohibits the buying, advertising to buy and selling of human tissue. Cord blood is captured by the definition of 'tissue' under the act and is therefore subject to trading conditions. Cord blood is a rich source of stem cells used to treat leukaemia and lymphoma, as well as immune and metabolic disorders. So it is important that the relevant provisions of the act are clear.

Amendments made in 2014 were intended to allow the registry to be prescribed as an entity exempt from the trading restrictions both for the purposes of trading in bone marrow and stem cells in cord blood. However, the amendments were not sufficiently clear that cord blood is not a blood product for the purposes of the act. As a consequence, the registry is not clearly eligible for an exemption. The effect of this amendment is that the Australian Bone Marrow Donor Registry—a non-profit organisation that conducts searches for matching cord blood units—is able to be exempted from the act's human tissue trading restrictions, consistent with the original intention, which might otherwise prevent it from trading stem cells contained in cord blood.

As indicated earlier, the committee was able to reach agreement on the proposed provisions relating to the Food Act 2006, the Pest Management Act 2001, the Public Health Act 2005 and the Transplantation and Anatomy Act 1979, some of which I have outlined in my preceding comments. The committee disagreed, however, on provisions relating to the Health Ombudsman Act 2013 and the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011.

The bill amends the Health Ombudsman Act 2013 to allow the minister to temporarily appoint persons for a period of up to six months to the public panel of assessors where the minister reasonably believes it is necessary to urgently appoint an individual. Such urgency arises where the principal registrar of the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal has advised the minister that none of the existing public panel members will be available for a hearing, or a panel member of a particular gender is required and either none of the existing panel members are of that gender or none of the panel members of that gender will be available to hear the matter.

The Health Ombudsman Act provides for the appointment of a public panel of assessors and 16 professional panels of assessors to provide expert advice to a judicial member of QCAT during disciplinary proceedings relating to registered health professionals. The act currently allows for the temporary appointment of an assessor to a professional panel but does not currently contain provision for the temporary appointment of an assessor to the public panel. The act prescribes the process for recommendations of appointment to both the public and professional panels which includes the calling of nominations for appropriately qualified nominees and appointment by the Governor in Council, for up to five years, following a recommendation from the minister.

This requirement to advertise and invite nominations will not apply to temporary appointments as proposed under the bill as the minister is making the appointment in emergent circumstances, where the minister 'reasonably believes it is necessary to urgently appoint' an individual, on the advice of QCAT, where the panel is unable to effectively operate for the reasons cited earlier. The temporary appointments can be for up to six months, mirroring what is already in place for professional panels of assessors.

The bill will also enable the minister to temporarily appoint an individual to a hospital and health board for a period of up to six months if the minister reasonably believes that it is necessary to urgently appoint a board member because the board does not have the number of members required by the act; the minister considers the members of the board to do not have the requisite skills, knowledge or experience required to perform their functions effectively; or the board does not have a clinician member as required by the act.

The proposed amendment is designed to deal with a situation where there are unforeseen or unexpected vacancies on a board—for example, current board members unexpectedly resign or take unplanned leave. During the committee's hearing, Dr Jeannette Young, Chief Health Officer, advised the committee that the proposed amendment is designed to give the minister discretion to appoint people for a temporary period of time in order to ensure that the board is properly comprised and can exercise its functions. It is not designed as a substitute for the existing open and transparent appointment process already administered under the act.

Under the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011 each hospital and health service is controlled by a board. Boards must consist of a minimum of five members, one of whom must be a clinician. Members are appointed to the board by the Governor in Council for not more than four years, following a recommendation from the minister. This process is not proposed to be changed.

The amendment before the House applies where there is a vacancy that cannot be met by the existing appointment processes for the reasons outlined earlier. The bill contemplates an appointment being made for a maximum of six months, with the discretion for the minister to extend that person for a further six months, providing for a maximum temporary appointment of 12 months. In response to questions from opposition members during the hearing as to the motive behind the proposed amendments, the Department of Health responded—

... this particular proposal was an initiative of the department. It recommended to the minister that there was a need for this capacity to make temporary appointments following its experience during the caretaker period at the last election where there was no mechanism to fill vacancies in the period during the caretaker period and immediately following it as the new parliament took form. This is an initiative which the department has recommended to the minister principally for reasons of ensuring that boards can operate and perform their governance roles at all times.


The Australian Medical Association Queensland commented—

The vitality of the 16 Hospital and Health Services is heavily reliant on the strength and skills mix of their individual boards. We are strongly in favour of the amendment to ensure that HHSs are not compromised by the departure of board members. We are pleased that the Queensland Government has recognised the importance of clinicians in the amendment.

The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons similarly supported the amendments.

This bill delivers on a key election commitment aimed at improving the health of Queenslanders. New menu-labelling requirements will help Queenslanders make healthier fast-food choices, benefiting individuals, families and the community. The bill also contains important measures to support health policy initiatives of the Palaszczuk government.

In closing, I would like to thank my fellow committee members for their constructive approach to considering the bills. I would like to thank those who have taken the time to make valuable written submissions and/or appear before the committee to provide evidence at public hearings. I thank the Department of Health, which briefed the committee, and the committee secretariat for their assistance and support. Finally, I thank the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services for bringing this bill into the House in the interests of all Queenslanders. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr DICKSON** (Buderim—LNP) (5.50 pm): I rise to speak to the Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. Through this bill the government intends to amend six acts within the Health portfolio, and I will briefly touch on each of those separately. Firstly, the proposed amendments to the Food Act 2006 will require fast-food chains, snack food and drink chains, bakery chains, cafe chains and supermarkets to display nutritional information, and authorises disclosure of confidential information for limited public health and safety reasons.

The rationale for these changes is very straightforward. I have spoken in this House repeatedly about the obesity crisis facing Queensland and how important it is to tackle this issue. It was one of the key drivers behind the LNP government's highly successful Get in the Game program. Displayed nutritional information will help people make better choices, as a variety of studies have shown that people greatly underestimate the amount of energy, saturated fat, sugar and salt contained in unhealthy foods. If more information is available in fast-food settings, people are more likely to make healthier choices because without food nutrition information it is difficult to compare options and make informed decisions.

The Heart Foundation Queensland made two important observations relating to the proposed amendments. Firstly, Queenslanders will now be able to make informed and healthier choices when ordering foods and drinks in outlets that are covered by this legislation. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, food outlets and businesses will now be incentivised to reformulate their menu items to offer healthier and less kilojoule dense options. Whilst these amendments seem sensible, it is important that the Minister for Health and the Minister for Ambulance Services outline to the House the education strategy proposed by the department, as recommended by this committee.

The second set of amendments relates to the Health Ombudsman Act 2013 and the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011, and would enable the minister to temporarily appoint persons to the public panel of assessors and hospital and health boards respectively. The committee could not agree on the proposed amendments to the Health Ombudsman Act. Although the proposed provisions allow for a six-month appointment only, I am not convinced that the process will not be open to abuse. I note that the AMAQ advised of its concern that the proposed provisions, as currently drafted, would allow the minister where no other assessor is available to appoint a specific individual to assess a specific matter.

AMA Queensland strongly believes the independence of the medical regulatory system is one of its most important features. Allowing the Health Minister to select a specific assessor would contravene this principle and undermine the independence required by the community and the profession. Such drafting could open the provision to abuse in highly political matters and should be avoided.

With regard to hospital and health boards, I am concerned that, whilst permanent appointments are required to go through a formal process including expressions of interest, this process would not be required for temporary appointments. As such, there is no transparency in this process and the minister can appoint anybody he likes. Furthermore, these so-called temporary appointments would be for a period of up to 12 months—that is, six months plus an extension of six months. It is an absolute farce.

Thirdly, amendments to the Pest Management Act 2001 will enable the chief executive to delegate the chief executive's powers to appropriately qualified employees of the hospital and health services. These proposed amendments are an appropriate, common-sense measure to ensure that the chief executive is able to delegate powers under the Pest Management Act to employees of the hospital and health services who have become employers in their own right.

The fourth set of amendments relate to the Public Health Act 2005, streamlining the process for enabling registered midwives to access the Queensland Pap Smear Register. This appears to be another appropriate, common-sense, practical proposal, with the Australian College of Midwives advising that women are more likely to act on health advice during pregnancy and childbirth.

The last act to be amended under this bill is the Transplantation and Anatomy Act 1979. This act provides for the removal of human tissues for transplantation for post-mortem examinations, for the definition of death, for the regulation of schools of anatomy and for related purposes. The proposed amendments will make it clear that the definition of blood products under section 42AB does not include cord blood—that is, blood obtained from the placenta via the umbilical cord for the collection of stem cells. In short, the amendment is to exclude core blood from the definition of blood products to ensure that the Australian Bone Marrow Donor Registry, the ABMDR, a non-profit organisation that conducts searches for matching blood cord units, is exempt under this provision for the purposes of trading in cord blood.


The committee was unable to reach agreement on whether the bill be passed. The committee was in agreement on the proposed provisions relating to the Food Act 2006, the Pest Management Act 2001, the Public Health Act 2005 and the Transplantation and Anatomy Act 1979. However, the committee could not reach agreement on the provisions relating to the Health Ombudsman Act 2013 and the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011. The committee has included two recommendations in the report relating to the education strategy for the changes to the Food Act and relating to notification of temporary appointments under the Health Ombudsman Act and the Hospital and Health Boards Act.

I would like to thank the committee for all the work they have done, with the lead of the chairperson, and the staff who assisted with all of the paperwork. Our committee is absolutely overloaded with so many of these bills coming before us. I hope that the committee staff are getting as much support as they can from the parliament because they are doing a fantastic job.

Debate, on motion of Mr Dickson, adjourned.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Holland Park State School, Asbestos

 **Hon. KJ JONES** (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism and Major Events) (5.57 pm), by leave: I would like to advise the House that late this afternoon I received advice that COHLABS, an occupational health and safety laboratory, has completed testing of the Holland Park State School student's clothing on behalf of Building and Asset Services. I am advised that the tests found no trace of asbestos fibres on the clothing. It is important to correct the record to ensure that we are not unnecessarily stirring community anxiety about asbestos in schools. The member for Everton this morning incorrectly claimed that a student at Holland Park State School was found to have asbestos fibres on their uniform with no evidence or information to support this. As a mother and as the Minister for Education, the safety and wellbeing of students will always be my first priority.

Mr DICKSON: I rise to a point of order, Mr Speaker. I read, like everybody else did, on the front page of the paper today about clothes that were found with asbestos—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! It is not an opportunity for debate, member for Buderim. What is your point of order?

Mr DICKSON: I think the minister is misleading the House.


Mr SPEAKER: Order! That is not a point of order.

Ms JONES: I congratulate the staff of Holland Park State School for managing this issue in the interests of student safety and for communicating with parents. I acknowledge the great work of the member for Greenslopes, who has been working with his local community on this issue.

Our schools need to be supported to respond to these significant issues. I will always rely on the advice of the experts in responding to the management of asbestos in schools. Every Queensland school has an asbestos management plan in place to ensure safe and appropriate procedures regarding asbestos. I am pleased with the results of the testing this afternoon.

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Reporting Date

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (5.58 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That the date for the Agriculture and Environment Committee to report to the Legislative Assembly on the Racing Integrity Bill be extended from 1 March 2016 to 15 March 2016.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

SPEAKER'S RULING

Questions on Notice to Chair of Committee

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, standing order 111(2) provides that—

A member may ask a question on notice of the Chairperson of a committee relating to the activities of that committee in lieu of a question to a Minister in accordance with SO 114.

This morning, five questions on notice to the Chair of the Ethics Committee were submitted by opposition members asking certain matters relating to the preparation of Ethics Committee report No. 162 which was tabled on 17 February 2016—not 18 February 2015, as incorrectly stated in each of the submitted questions. I stress that the questions are seeking information about the committee's proceedings that have not been reported.

Questions on notice under this standing order are not common. Prior to today there have only been 16 occasions since 1996—10 of those being in 2015. *House of Representatives Practice* provides that it has been the practice to allow a question without notice of a strictly limited nature to be addressed to a member in their capacity as chair of a committee. I also refer to a ruling by Speaker Fouras on 7 June 1990 concerning a question on notice to the Chairman of the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee where Speaker Fouras referred to the *House of Representatives Practice* and stressed that questions of this nature are very limited in their application. For example, questions may be asked about when a committee's report might be tabled or whether or not the committee would inquire into a certain matter. Speaker Fouras ruled that it was out of order to seek information from a committee chairman that proceeds beyond those bounds. Further, McGee's *Parliamentary Practice in New Zealand* provides at page 560—

Questions cannot probe about matters not before the committee or no longer before the committee.

References to proceedings in committees not open to the public are not permitted until such committees have reported to the House. After reporting to the House, the chairperson of the committee cannot be further questioned, because questions to non-Ministers can only be on a matter of which the member has charge, and once the committee has reported the matter is in the hands of the House. The chairperson is no longer answerable for it.

The responsibility of the chairperson of a select committee is only to chair the committee. In this capacity the chairperson can be asked questions about the process or procedure to be followed by the committee in respect of a matter that is currently before it ...

Where the Ethics Committee has reported on a matter, if the House requires more information about the committee's inquiry, it is within the powers of this House to require the committee to table further information. It is not appropriate that this information be sought by way of questions from members. Accordingly, I have ruled that the questions submitted by the members for Surfers Paradise, Mansfield, Nanango, Toowoomba South and Hervey Bay are out of order.

MOTION

Amendment of Standing Rules and Orders



Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (6.03 pm): I move—

That the Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly be amended immediately by inserting the following new standing order 87A—

'87A. Substantially the Same Bill

- (1) A Bill that is substantially the same as any other Bill that has already been introduced and read a first time shall not be introduced.
- (2) If the Speaker is of the opinion that a Bill that contravenes (1) has been introduced and read a first time, the Speaker shall at the earliest opportunity order the discharge of the Bill from the Notice Paper and from any committee to which it has been referred.'

From the outset, let me make it abundantly clear: this motion is not about any bill before the House and it is not about any previous bills discussed in the House. It is solely about improving the fairness and appropriateness of procedures in the House for the future that will bring about better outcomes, a reduction in repetition and sensibility to the necessary delivery of legislation in this House for the overall benefit of Queenslanders.


We have seen examples over the last 10 years from both major parties in this House where an appropriate piece of legislation has been introduced to the House as a private member's bill which has been immediately or subsequently poached, hijacked or recycled by the weight of government numbers in the House to be rebadged as a government bill for the political gain of the government of the day. This activity does this House a great disservice in terms of the poor utilisation of precious House sitting time, reprosecuting an issue which has already been raised as a valuable step forward on behalf of all Queenslanders, and it simply entrenches the publicly held perception that politicians are more interested in themselves and their party organisations than achieving a better outcome for Queenslanders.

Whether it is an Independent member of the House—and I notice we have an Independent member of the House here this evening, the member for Cook, and I am pleased that he has recovered well from his apparent illness—a minor party of the House or a diligent opposition bringing forward a piece of legislation to the House that requires debate, possible amendment or rejection by the House, it makes absolutely no sense that the particular piece of legislation be rebadged as a government bill purely for the base political opportunistic purpose of the government of the day claiming credit for legislation invented, refined and brought forward to the House by a non-government member of the House. That obviously includes the Independents and minor parties as well as the official opposition.

This motion is a golden opportunity for the House to make a positive change to the standing orders of the House to improve the fairness, equity and propriety of the House not only for the 55th Parliament but for all other parliaments to follow. Future governments shall be bound by this standing order, and goodness knows we in the LNP hope to be the government in the 56th Parliament.

It is obvious that a major benefit of this change to the standing orders succeeding is that the by-product will be a greater effort by individuals in this House of private members' bills that will improve the lifestyles of Queenslanders—and that also includes opportunities for individual members of the government of the day to prosecute their own private member's bill. It will remove the fear of individual members that if they introduce a bill that is good legislation to the House it will be hijacked by the government of the day for their own self-aggrandisement and political pointscoring. I am not going to quote examples of the political gamesmanship in the past, as that serves nobody any benefit for the future and will only serve to entrench bad political habits that could be avoided by the adoption of this motion.

Historically, where private members' bills dealt only with a minor issue, the minor issue was more often than not incorporated into a government bill of greater magnitude and treated as a small part of a larger piece of legislation. More recently, we have seen private members' bills with only minor changes to the original bill that could have easily been accommodated by amendments in the consideration in detail. This is unacceptable plagiarism at its worst. Under the proposed 87A amendment, unless a bill is substantively different from the private member's bill initially introduced into the House, the private member's bill initially introduced into the House would prevail as the legislation for debate. I call on all 89 private members of this House to entrench their right to introduce a private member's bill to the House that will be to the overall benefit of Queenslanders by supporting this motion to introduce standing order 87A.

 **Ms LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (6.08 pm): Here we are again speaking on a procedural matter rather than the big issues.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms LINARD: I wrote it myself, thank you. It will come as no great surprise to everyone in the House that I rise to speak against the motion moved by the member for Mermaid Beach. This matter could have been discussed at the CLA, but instead we are once again using the precious time of this House to debate another procedural motion. Just last week we debated the motion from my committee colleague—

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Nanango, your interjections are not appropriate. I am having difficulty hearing the member for Nudgee's contribution. We listened in silence to the contribution of the member for Mermaid Beach. I would urge members to provide the same courtesy to other speakers.

Ms LINARD: Just last week we debated the motion moved by my committee colleague the member for Mudgeeraba about the amount of time committee members have to read draft reports. Today we have a motion that seeks to reduce the ability of committees and the House to consider all the potential policy options. As members on both sides of this House know, the committee system is one of the most important institutions of this parliament. It is fundamentally a system of review, enhancing the ability of this parliament and its members to provide vital input on bills and legislation before it.

Just last week the member for Mudgeeraba, who I know does respect the committee process, stood up in this House during debate on the motion and stated—

Circumventing or truncating the committee process does not provide for effective or efficient analysis of committee reports and in fact puts at risk an essential institution of our democracy.

I could not agree more. What we have before us is a motion to limit the deliberative processes of this House. The unintended consequence or, more likely, intended consequence of this motion is that a superior bill may not be able to succeed. A superior policy deserves to be given effect by a superior bill and the community deserves the very best outcomes. This motion is not in the public interest, so it is not in the interests of this House.

What is the opposition afraid of? Being outshone? Public policy should be driven by analysis of all available options. Proposals and evidence should be open to rigorous debate and, similarly, the community should be able to have the benefit of considering and commenting on the full spectrum of proposed approaches or solutions to an issue. This motion has the potential to limit that consideration. A practical example of this occurred recently in the former Health and Ambulance Services Committee when we considered two bills dealing with tobacco. Two bills were introduced. There were proposals in common, but there were also significant additional provisions supported unanimously by the committee that we would not have had the benefit of considering under this motion nor, should I say, would Queenslanders have had the benefit of these additional significant provisions—as they now will—if this motion is to be successful. The committee's view with regard to those bills was that the alternate bill contained superior outcomes.

What I want to know—and I am having a moment of *deja vu* from last week—is why we are having this discussion here tonight. Why are we talking about matters of a procedural nature? Is the opposition out of ideas? Is it because they have no plan? Is that why those opposite have suddenly become so preoccupied with procedure in this House? They certainly did not pay such attention to it last term. We on this side of the House want to talk about the big issues, the ones that affect Queenslanders on a daily basis. Just as a suggestion, we could talk about jobs. There is a lot to talk about jobs because there have been 71,700 new jobs across Queensland since we were elected. We could talk about economic data that shows Queensland's economy growing faster than the rest—


Mr STEVENS: Mr Speaker, I hate to interrupt the member, but I have a point of order. This motion has nothing to do with jobs in Queensland or anywhere else. That has no relevance to the matter at all. Please keep the member to the debate, which is about the motion.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Mermaid Beach and thank you, member for Nanango.

Ms LINARD: We could talk about the economy. Even Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull is happy to acknowledge in federal parliament that business confidence is highest in Queensland. I say well done to our colleague the Treasurer.

We have all been sent here to make Queensland a better place. What we on this side of the House can say to our electorates when we return tomorrow is that we have spent the last two days in this place working on their behalf to make our communities safer and healthier; we have acted to curb alcohol fuelled violence and protect our kids from passive smoking. What will the opposition tell their constituents? They acted to increase the time parliamentary committees have to consider draft reports and acted to reduce the quantity and quality of bills on which they can deliberate. It is not a record I would want. This motion is not in the public interest. Queenslanders deserve better.

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (6.14 pm): The member for Nudgee talks about procedural matters and she says that we should be dealing with the big issues. To me the procedure of the institution of this House is what we are here for, and that is pretty big. The actual essence of the motion talks about bills before this House, the laws that we enact in this place for the benefit or, in the case of the other side, the detriment of Queenslanders on many occasions.

I wish to talk now to the comments of the member for Nudgee when she said, 'Let us deal with the big issues.' Let's have a little historical lesson, and I only have to go back over the last 12 months. If I go onto the parliamentary website I see the bills register for the 55th Parliament. Let us go through a few of these. First there is the Fire and Emergency Services (Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill, which is currently before the House. Of course, the Labor Party also introduced a bill after I introduced that private member's bill. Then we have the Liquor and Fair Trading Legislation (Red Tape Reduction) Amendment Bill introduced by the member for Mansfield. That also got truncated due to the Labor Party's liquor laws. Then we have the Mental Health (Recovery Model) Bill, which was introduced by the member for Caloundra. It was also trumped by a Labor Party bill.

Then the member for Clayfield introduced three types of planning bills: the Planning and Development (Planning Court) Bill, the Planning and Development (Planning for Prosperity) Bill and the Planning and Development (Planning for Prosperity—Consequential Amendments) and Other

Legislation Amendment Bill—all trumped by the Labor Party; they copied the good work that the former deputy premier, the member for Callide, and the member for Clayfield did. Then we had the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products (Extension of Smoking Bans) Amendment Bill, introduced again by the member for Caloundra, but then the Labor Party introduced its own bill.

Then we had the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation (Protecting Firefighters) Amendment Bill, introduced by me, the member for Kawana. Then the Labor Party introduced its bill. On eight occasions in only the first year of this 55th Parliament—in the last 12 months—we have introduced private member's bills and then the government has introduced its own bills that have been virtually the same; it has copied our bills. This is the hardest working opposition doing the government's work that I have ever seen because they are copying us.

Mr Speaker, as the Independent member for Nicklin, you entered into an agreement with Peter Beattie in 1998 when you gave support to his government. You indicated in that letter, which was agreed to by Peter Beattie in a return letter dated 25 June 1998, that there should be more private members' bills and more debates on private members' bills. Now, Mr Speaker, you would be satisfied no doubt that in this parliament each day we can introduce private members' bills.


Little did anyone know back then when that agreement was entered into that the more that private members' bills are introduced for healthy debate in our democracy, the more the government would introduce their own bills, as is their right, that copy ours because it is such good legislation. The private member's bill never gets voted on because it is all now cognated. The government bill gets debated first and because of the same question ruling, the private member's bill never gets voted on.

What we are saying and what the Leader of Opposition Business has said is that in government the LNP will retain the standing order because, if a government is sitting on its hands not doing anything, Independent members, the official opposition and the crossbenchers should be able to introduce legislation. As I said, all these private member's bills go through the committee system. The member for Nudgee says that this is somehow abusing the committee system. However, the private member's bills go through the committee system. The government is fully resourced to make submissions to a committee.

Mr Cripps: More than most.

Mr BLEIJIE: Yes. They have departments at their disposal to write submissions, such as, 'Member for Kawana, we like your legislation, but we suggest X, Y, Z amendments.' That can go through the committee system. To truly achieve what the member for Nicklin was trying to achieve back in 1998, we should have more private member's bills; we should have more debate in this House on private member's bills. No-one would have envisaged back then that the government would trump all the bills and we never get to vote on the private member's bills.

This is a good amendment to the standing orders. It is about making sure that Independents, crossbenchers and opposition members can introduce bills in this place, we can debate them, they can be amended and in a bipartisan way we can go forth and be happy in this place in the knowledge that we are serving Queenslanders, as a good group of fine men and women should do and ought to do on all occasions.

 **Mr WHITING** (Murrumba—ALP) (6.19 pm): I rise to oppose this motion. This motion flies in the face of good governance. Under this motion the opposition could simply put in any old bill based on half-baked policy. Such a bill could contain a number of errors and unintended consequences. But if this motion is successful, such a flawed bill becomes a primary bill. The star bill. The one around which all must revolve. If a bill is introduced after it—no matter how well it is constructed—if it resembles the first bill it does not make the grade. If it is argued that it is substantially the same bill, it does not make the grade no matter how good it is. Who interprets what that means?

An honourable member: The Speaker.

Mr WHITING: The member is exactly right; under this motion it looks like the Speaker gets to decide it. But that would open up a whole host of problems. There would be endless arguments and perhaps endless consultation and negotiation, but that does not lead to good government. This motion does not lead to good government because it gives the opposition members the right to insert their bills and exercise the prerogatives of government even though they have been specifically rejected as the government of Queensland.


This motion reeks of one thing, and that is their born-to-rule mentality. The LNP members just cannot grasp that they are not the government. They cannot grapple with the fact that they do not get to run the legislative agenda, but that attitude is just typical of the LNP ideology. What does the LNP

actually believe in? What is their ideological framework? Everything they think and do comes down to just two bedrock beliefs, but I will deal with only one today. The LNP members believe they are there to rule and only they should rule. I would remind them that ruling is different from governing. Ruling means the exercise of authority and the issuing of orders. A ruler hands down directives from above and we must obey. To disagree or resist is a direct affront to the rulers, and that cannot be tolerated. Does that sound familiar? The LNP does not believe in governing. To govern means to reach consensus and gain consent. You must get the consent of the people and exercise it on behalf of the people, and that consent can be withdrawn if it is not done on behalf of the people. The LNP have moved this motion because they believe they are here to rule and they are born to rule.

They are complaining. Perhaps I have been a bit harsh. Let us try a more generous assessment. This try-hard motion, this limp stunt of a motion, is typical of the sad demise and short-lived history of the LNP. They had to trash two good political brands, National and Liberal, to create their new brand. The old political brands had some real value and trust. The Nats looked after the bush; they had a measure of trust. They were good old agrarian socialists who fought hard to get what they could for the bush. Then you had the Liberals, who were a town based party representing the mercantile class. They were genuinely liberal. But what does their new brand mean? This is what the LNP brand means: when you say 'LNP', people say job cuts and job losses.

Their new brand, in which they have invested everything, has become toxic. They killed two perfectly acceptable brands to create one that repels people. They cannot go back. The old Nats and the Libs brands are dead; they have killed them off. They have put all their political capital in a brand that will not be trusted by the people of Queensland. What a sad demise for those two Queensland political parties and what a sad subsequent demise for the LNP. It does remind me that they have won just one general election since Joh Bjelke-Petersen was premier—just one! They are not very good at winning elections and if this motion is the best that they can do, I think that they are going to be hard-pressed to win another one.

Mr SPEAKER: For the benefit of the member for Murrumba and new members, to date I have allowed reasonable latitude in relation to the issue of relevance on these private member motion debates between six o'clock and 6.30. I would urge members to try to ensure that their contribution is relevant. Do not put me in the position where I am going to have to rule matters out of order during this debate. I have allowed the member that latitude, but I would urge new members to be careful in the future. I call the member for Caloundra.

 **Mr McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (6.24 pm): Mr Speaker, it is odd: when we put a bill before the House and they put a bill before the House, we debate the bill and if they win that is called 'bipartisanship'. I rushed to a dictionary because I was confused as to what that word actually meant. It really means opposing political parties finding common ground through compromise. I have been 'bipartisaned' twice by the ALP and it has not been a pleasant experience. I came very close to calling my colleague the member for Moggill for assistance and help. How do I stand before this House today in the wretched position of being 'bipartisaned' twice by the ALP?

Let me take members on a trip way back to May last year. I put before the House the mental health bill, which was 567 pages of good, hard work. It was well-done and well-planned. It compromised with regard to the people involved, looking for consultation and looking to the community. I thought, 'Here we go, fellas; we're on a winner!' On 17 September here comes the minister and over the top goes the government's bill, which is a parallel bill to ours. So I say to a little birdie mate of mine, 'This minister, he's a good bloke.' And he says, 'This bloke's a good bloke? You're dreaming.' I said, 'No. This minister has a good heart and the milk of human kindness flows through his veins.' I said, 'I'm going to write to this chap.' I rushed to my desk, pulled out my quill and ink and I fired off a missive. I used words such as 'harmonisation' and 'bipartisanship', knowing that he would come to the party. I went back to my desk with a 20-watt light bulb glowing above me, and I looked at my iPad waiting for a reply to my missive. When it came back I was devastated.


Honourable members interjected.

Mr McARDLE: I am sorry, I was devastated. My heart was set on getting a bipartisan approach and all I got was, 'Take a long walk off a short pier, fella. No way in the world.' But that did not stop me.

I put before the House a smoking bill. I thought, 'Here we have a bill that is going to satisfy all sides of the chamber.' Not only that, but I got a report back from a bipartisan committee dated 14 September that said, 'This is right. We're on a winner here.' Then over the top came the health minister again with another bill which took up the work that we had done on this side of the House and he coupled that into his own bill.

It is clear that this side of the House is doing the heavy lifting. It is clear that it is this side of the House which is putting in the hard yards; putting the shoulder to the wheel; the nose to the grindstone. That side over there is bereft of ideas. We have heard the word 'bipartisan' being used, but they do not know what the word means. 'Bipartisan' to them means they rule. They think that they are born to rule and we simply have to follow through. This side of the House is putting more yards every day into running the health system, into running Treasury, into running agriculture, into running disabilities. Do members know why? Because we know the heart and soul of this state and we work with the people of this state.

This motion is all about one thing: letting us put in place bills that we know are good for the government and the people of this state, as opposed to what is happening now. This motion is about us working harder to make certain we get the outcomes we need. It is all about the notion that if you have the idea, you have the right to run with it. It is all about the notion that private members' bills are bills that should be taken notice of and they should not be gazumped by governments having a cognate debate and using the word 'bipartisan'. Those opposite do not know what it means. To them it means 'winner takes all'. To us it means good government and working together. I commend the motion to the House.

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (6.30 pm): I rise to oppose the motion moved by the member for Mermaid Beach. In doing so, I accept that I am opposing another plank in the 'Lawrence Springborg for Premier' election pitch that we heard start last week. Last week we had the election-winning policy of draft parliamentary committee reports being provided to committee members two days prior to any meeting. This week those opposite have come up with a genius idea about changing standing orders to prevent bills being introduced to this House if they appear similar to another bill. It is a double jeopardy rule for a leader in jeopardy.

As I suggested to the House last week when we considered the motion moved by the member for Mudgeeraba, we have a process to consider changes to the standing orders—that is, a reference to the Committee of the Legislative Assembly. That is the body of this parliament that is charged with considering, properly and appropriately, changes to standing orders.

Mr Rickuss: Yes, but this is the final arbiter.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: Of course it is the final arbiter, but we have a good process that involves committees considering matters—to test legislation and iron out any challenges or difficulties that might exist.

I do not think anyone has thought this through. This motion is completely ridiculous. What would stop an opposition member from coming into this place and tabling a frivolous, half-baked bill and then using this standing order to block a government bill that they knew was coming?

Usually we look at practice in other places to understand why we have the standing orders we have, that provide the process to ensure good governance for the state. I am not aware of any other Westminster parliament that has a prohibition like this. In fact, Erskine May, *House of Representatives Practice* and McGee all make it clear that such sterilising of a bill should not happen until after a second reading. That is the opportunity to debate the merits of bills, particularly after, in our process, they have had the chance to be ventilated and considered via the committee process. Bills need to be available for the parliament to consider. This is a standing order that denies this House the ability to consider bills before it.

Unintended consequences would flow from this change. As I suggested earlier, an opposition or indeed a deliberately destructive or deliberately mischievous Independent—I would say a Messenger-like Independent—could go so far as to introduce an almost facsimile of the previous year's budget bills and sabotage the ability of the government of the day to introduce an appropriation bill. That could be the consequence of a half-baked, misunderstood concept such as this, without a proper process of assessing whether it is appropriate or not.

This proposed standing order would potentially lead to chaos. That is not what we need in this state right now. What we need is firm leadership. That is what the Palaszczuk government is providing—not with the assistance of those opposite, I might add. Those opposite are seeking to undermine the consultative opportunities that are presented by alternative, competing bills. They talk about them as alternative and competing as if that is a bad thing. I thought those opposite were all for competition! Why can we not let alternatives be considered in the forum of public opinion, in the committee process and in this House? That is what the standing orders allow for today. That is what we have seen in this 55th Parliament and in previous parliaments. I urge the House to oppose this short-sighted and ill-thought-out proposal.

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

AYES, 43:

LNP, 41—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, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Walker, Watts, Weir.

KAP, 2—Katter, Knuth.

NOES, 43:

ALP, 42—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Byrne, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Donaldson, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Hinchliffe, Howard, Jones, Kelly, King, 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.

Mr SPEAKER: The reason I have cast my vote with the noes is that I have listened to the debate by members during the last half hour. I believe that this is a matter that should have been referred to the Committee of the Legislative Assembly, which is the leadership team of this parliament with members from the government, the opposition and the crossbenches. I listened to the contribution of the Leader of the House to the effect that there is no precedent for this sort of standing order, and I believe that this matter should be referred to the Committee of the Legislative Assembly for further consideration.

Resolved in the negative.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (6.41 pm): I move—

That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 9.30 am on Tuesday, 15 March 2016.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.


Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (6.41 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.


Kahler, Mr B; Toowoomba North Electorate, Schools

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (6.41 pm): Tonight I want to give the House an update on some of the schools in my electorate and some of the activities that are going on, but before I do that I want to pay tribute to a member of the party and someone who was the chairman of a branch for over 30 years in my area—Bevan Joseph Kahler, who passed away on 3 January this year. He left behind his widow, Bev, and his children and grandchildren. Bevan was a great person who did an awful lot of work for, originally, the National Party and then later the LNP in our region. He was a councillor for Crows Nest council and he loved life on the Darling Downs, he loved farming, he loved fishing and, more than anything, he loved his family. He was a great person. It was a pleasure to know him. He always treated my children like they were his own grandchildren. He will be sadly missed by everybody who knew him, but he leaves this world better for having been here.

I want to give the House a quick update on some of the education issues going on in my electorate. The Wilsonton and Mount Lofty campuses have been given permission to separate. I think this is a good thing and I look forward to the community being empowered to make the decision as to whether these two campuses should go forward with their own identities. I want to be clear that that is not dependent on getting a hall at Wilsonton. I think that each of these campuses should be able to forge their own identity. They both have over 800 students now and therefore I think it is a good thing that that permission has been given. With regard to the Wilsonton hall, I urge the minister to ensure that in this year's budget the money is allocated for an arts, performance and sports hall to be built at the campus. Something that government members might be interested in is that the Newtown State School's fete is coming up and I will be in the dunking machine. I invite members to put some money in the P&C and come and throw balls at me and make sure I get very wet. I am hoping it is a warm day, but I would encourage everybody to come along and invest their money. Tomorrow morning I will have


the pleasure of going to Fairview Heights and inducting the leaders of the school, and I appreciate the school giving me the invitation to do that. With regard to Highfields stage 2 of the high school, the tenders have gone out. That was a great project that was brought to fruition by the LNP. It is obviously a staged growth as students move into year 10 to ensure that those facilities are available. That will give jobs to people in Highfields and in the surrounding areas in Toowoomba and obviously provide a great educational opportunity for the children of Highfields.

Local Government, Corruption Prevention

 **Mr PYNE** (Cairns—ALP) (6.44 pm): I was going to rise, as best I can, to speak about Small Business Week, but my heart is heavy. My heart is heavy reflecting on the state of local government in this fine state of Queensland. During the break between the two sitting weeks I took the opportunity to travel to the University of the Sunshine Coast where I met with Professor Timothy Prenzler. Professor Prenzler is the head of the faculty of criminology and justice at the University of the Sunshine Coast. Professor Prenzler introduced me to the concept of grey corruption. It is a term I have not heard of before. Grey corruption is a term that describes actions that are immoral, unethical and may in some other states be illegal but are not in the state of Queensland. Professor Prenzler spoke of the large amount of grey corruption in the state of Queensland and so I asked him what the answer was and he said quite simply to lift the bar—to lift the bar, and I was very pleased to hear the Attorney-General speak earlier today. He said that we have to lift the bar so that much of what is now categorised as grey corruption becomes official corruption.

Certain ways we can raise the bar in this manner in this state include obviously legislative change. One such way is to ban donations to political campaigns from property developers, as occurs in New South Wales. That is one very obvious way because it would prevent what I have seen happen on many occasions, and that is developers donating to council campaigns and then that elected council voting in favour of developments from that very donor without declaring a conflict of interest. I have seen that happen on a number of occasions. Another way the bar could be lifted is by real-time donations. People are going to see very many political advertisements over the coming weeks and they are not going to know who paid for them. I think the people of Queensland have a right to know who paid for those ads. But the biggest reform that needs to be made is to remove the amendments made under Minister Crisafulli under the Newman government which enhanced—greatly enhanced—the powers of mayors throughout Queensland. In the old days we had a respected position of town clerk or shire clerk. Elected councillors and mayors did not instruct and bully staff. That was not allowed. What I am calling for is Westminster principles in local governments so that mayors, sometimes in concert with CEOs, cannot bully staff to breach statutory guidelines for their own self-serving interests.


Grummitt, Councillor M

 **Miss BARTON** (Broadwater—LNP) (6.47 pm): On 19 March Queenslanders will have an opportunity to make a decision about who leads their cities and who leads their communities right across this state. On 19 March Margaret Grummitt, the councillor for Division 4 in my electorate, will be hanging up the boots, so to speak, and will be retiring from the Gold Coast City Council after 12 distinguished years serving the Labrador community. Tonight I want to take the opportunity to pay tribute to her, thank her for her service and wish her all of the very best for her retirement. As all members of the parliament from the Gold Coast would know, Margaret is a very strong advocate for her community. She has served, as I said, on the Gold Coast City Council for 12 years and Margaret is so passionate about community service that she even stood as the National Party candidate for the seat that I hold in the 2004 state election. In addition to her service on the Gold Coast City Council of 12 years Margaret also served the people of Queensland as a Queensland police officer for 30 years, and I think that that kind of service particularly also deserves recognition.

During her time as a QPS officer Margaret not only had a particular focus on schoolies in the 1990s but also spent a lot of time working with and helping victims of domestic violence through her work at the Southport Courthouse. Margaret has also spent a lot of time supporting community organisations such as the Rotary club, the University of the Third Age and the Men's Shed Labrador. I know that, although Margaret's time in public life comes to an end on 19 March, she will very much continue to be a strong advocate for and servant of the community. I know that Margaret has a great number of projects that she intends to focus on over the next few years and I know that she will continue to be an incredibly strong advocate. One of the things that Margaret will be doing over the next few years is serving the Filipino community in Queensland as Queensland's Honorary Consul. I know that that is a role that Margaret is particularly enthusiastic about and is looking forward to serving in.

As I said, Margaret has been a servant of the community for 12 years. I know that Noel, her husband, is very much looking forward to having Margaret back at home on the weekends. I also acknowledge Noel and the work that he has done in supporting Margaret and her work in the community. Whomever succeeds Margaret Grummitt in division 4 on 19 March has incredibly big shoes to fill as they continue to be a servant of and an advocate for the Labrador community. I pay tribute to Margaret, thank her for her service and wish her all the very best in what I think is termed her retirement but probably will not be. I wish Margaret, Noel, their children and their grandchildren all the best as she enjoys a few quieter years to come.

Ipswich West Electorate, Award Recipients

 **Mr MADDEN** (Ipswich West—ALP) (6.50 pm): I rise to congratulate Joyce Rieck, a Rosewood resident, on her award of an Order of Australia Medal in the Australia Day Honours List. Joyce has previously been recognised by Ipswich City Council as the 2013 Rosewood Citizen of the Year. She was also a recipient of a Moderators Community Service Medal from the Uniting Church in Australia in 2011. Joyce was awarded an OAM for her contribution to the community, particularly for her voluntary work with Cabanda Care, an aged-care facility in Rosewood for the elderly and disabled. From being a committee member in 1987 to being a current board member, Joyce was instrumental in establishing Cabanda Care, which was formerly called the Rosewood Aged People's Home Committee Inc. and which was established in 1980 with funding from the federal Labor government. Cabanda Care is a wonderful asset for the Rosewood community and it employs 103 people.


Joyce was born and raised on a dairy farm at Rosewood and still calls the town her home. She is also a lay preacher for the Rosewood Uniting Church and is heavily involved with Meals on Wheels in Rosewood. Joyce credits her Order of Australia Medal to her husband, Arnold. After receiving her award she said—

I couldn't have done the things that I have done for the community without my husband's full support.

Another Rosewood resident who recently received an Order of Australia Medal is Isabelle Kearstey. Isabelle received her award in the 2015 Queen's Birthday Honours List for service to the Rosewood community. Isabelle is an active member of the Rosewood branch of the Queensland Country Women's Association. She is also a charter member of Rosewood Toastmasters. As a former teacher and principal, Isabelle was the first honorary visiting teacher at the Mount Gravatt College of Advanced Education, where she lectured in how to help gifted and talented students. During her teaching career the schools that Isabelle taught at included Advancetown and Rosewood state schools.

Two other residents of the electorate of Ipswich West who were awarded Order of Australia Medals in the 2015 Queen's Birthday Honours List were Judith Schmidt of Fernvale and John Dredge of North Ipswich. Judith served in Vietnam as a nurse and has been heavily involved with the Lowood RSL. John Dredge received his OAM in recognition of his service to veterans and their families through the Returned and Services League and the Anzac Centenary Commemorations Committee as well as for service to the Ipswich community and the Glamorgan Vale Cemetery Trust. It is great to see such wonderful citizens of the electorate of Ipswich West having their hard work recognised. An Order of Australia Medal is a very appropriate way in which to do so.

Gympie, 10th Annual Mayoral Prayer Breakfast

 **Mr PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (6.53 pm): As breakfast goes, it was as big as they can get. Last Friday, Gympie hosted more than 650 people to breakfast. It was the 10th Annual Mayoral Prayer Breakfast. The guest speaker, one of Australia's most sought after voices on issues of social justice, leadership and ethics, the Reverend Tim Costello, was an irresistibly popular drawcard. He said it was extraordinary to see so many people at a prayer breakfast.

Tim drew on his knowledge and experiences from a variety of skills and roles to address the audience on the challenges of today's increasingly complex world. The hats he wears include not only the CEO of World Vision but also an ordained Baptist minister. Tim is a passionate advocate for social justice and ethical issues and he has a fierce intellect. Tim is the brother of former federal treasurer Peter Costello and an advocate who was once referred to by former Victorian premier Jeff Kennett as 'that leftist cleric'. Tim is also a former mayor of St Kilda, a casualty of council amalgamations and a National Trust National Living Treasure.

Tim put the spotlight on global poverty. He shared his experiences of extreme poverty and neglect from his trips to Africa where people had drawn 'the last ticket in the lottery of life'. Tim described the joy, the hope and the transformation of people in dire circumstances, concluding that poverty has


more to do with attitude than circumstances. Tim expressed concern that Australians have lost their lives in a world increasingly focused on the individual, that hyper individuality was creeping into the Australian soul and that the 'all about me' way of thinking has become endemic in society. Tim said that perspective was important and that it was important to compare up and never compare down—to give a hand up and not a hand out—and to empathise and stand in solidarity to say, 'It's not all about me.'

The prayer breakfast is a joyful and enjoyable coming together of the local community. The organising committee of Kasey Webb, Michele Perrett, Angela Dunkley, Tony Kishawai and Helen Eyre have helped to ensure that the breakfast is a significant event on the Gympie region's calendar. Together with the many volunteers, the catering team, including students from Victory College who provided the waiters, car parking attendants and ushers, it was a wonderful and uplifting occasion.

I would also like to commend the organisers for securing the services of opera singer Andrew Pryor, who entertained the crowd. I also acknowledge the supportive role of emcee, Ben Ellingsen, and prayer readers Ashley Coleman, Karen Brus, Senior Sergeant Mick Symes and Johannes Solymosi.

The inaugural breakfast was held under the auspices of the old Cooloola shire council. The Gympie region is grateful that, after council amalgamations, the former mayor of Gympie, the late Ron Dyne, continued to support the breakfast tradition to ensure that we have had and will continue to have many more inspirational events.


Bayside Initiatives Group Inc.; SOS Fast

 **Mr BROWN** (Capalaba—ALP) (6.56 pm): Members in this place would be well aware of my passion and interest in mental health policy. It is an issue that I take very seriously. Every Australian will be affected by mental illness at some time in their life, either directly or through a friend or family member. This is an issue that I carry over into my community work and in this place I want to single out two community groups for very special mention. One is a new group, which is formally being launched this weekend, and the other group has been around for over 15 years.

In my electorate I am the patron of the Bayside Initiatives Group Inc., also known as BIG. BIG is a membership based peer support service that caters for people who are living with a mental illness. BIG is located in a warehouse in my electorate. I first visited BIG last year and got to spend a morning with clients and volunteers of BIG and I was impressed. BIG endeavours to inspire and invigorate its members so that together they can move forward as partners in the recovery journey. BIG encourages participation in social networks and community events and, most importantly, provides a welcome sanctuary where members can feel safe and included. BIG is an independent, community based, non-government organisation that is run by a board of governance of whom at least 51 per cent have experienced mental illness themselves. The core philosophy of BIG is as a support service run for people who are living with mental illness by people who are living with mental illness.

My second special mention in the field of mental health is SOS Fast, which is an organisation that describes its mission as fighting against the suicide toll. SOS Fast has been driven by local Alexandra Hills mum, Kerrie Keepa. Mental health in the Redlands came under scrutiny when Kerrie came to visit me after her son was turned away from Redland Hospital and later took his own life. Kerrie presented me with a petition with 67,000 signatures requesting urgent action for additional training for all accident and emergency staff to assess the suicide risk of vulnerable patients. The health minister met with me and Kerrie and, as a direct result of her lobbying, the minister announced funding for the development of a training package to be implemented across the state, including at Redland Hospital. As part of the new training package, emergency department nurses, doctors and allied health staff received training to recognise, assess and manage people at risk of suicide. Emergency department staff do a great job in difficult circumstances. I am looking forward to opening SOS Fast this weekend.

Burdekin Electorate, Overseas Workers


 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (7.00 pm): The Bowen Gumlu fruit and vegetable industry in the Burdekin electorate has produced around \$412 million worth of produce a year for the past five years. Each year growers rely on an influx of backpackers to provide the labour they need to harvest these crops. The federal government's proposed tax changes for working holidaymakers, which was announced as part of its 2015-16 budget, will undoubtedly deter backpackers from working on our region's farms and without sufficient labour to harvest crops our farmers are going to suffer, and if our farmers suffer then so do our rural economies as a whole.

Currently these working holidaymakers are eligible for the same tax-free threshold as Australian workers—that is, they can earn up to \$18,200 without paying tax. But that is set to change on 1 July when they will be taxed from the first dollar they earn at a rate of 32.5 per cent. Local growers, some of whom have been in business for decades, are worried they will lose two-thirds of their workforce because of the impending changes to taxation rates. Whilst they would ideally prefer to employ Australians instead of foreign workers, they have found that backpackers reliably perform these labour-intensive tasks. Finding pickers, planters, packers and farm workers has been an ongoing issue and it is going to get even tougher with the proposed taxation changes.

News of this tax change is spreading fast. Some farmers are even struggling to source backpacker labour for the current preparatory work for the upcoming season. Any increased costs will ultimately be passed on to consumers. Undoubtedly, the cost of fruit and vegetables will rise and this will be another cost to add to the already tight household budgets of Queenslanders. As I have previously informed members in this House, we have a thriving industry in the Burdekin and we have major expansion plans, including the construction of a food-processing facility or cannery which will be a major economic development and job creation project for our struggling region. Our tourism industry, backpacker hostels and local businesses that heavily rely on the backpacker trade during picking seasons will also suffer and this will likely result in job losses and have an overall detrimental effect on local economies. I am referring to my neighbouring electorate of Whitsunday and in areas such as Hinchinbrook with the backpackers at Mission Beach.

Federal member for Dawson, George Christensen, is supporting the Bowen Gumlu growers' calls for a 15 per cent flat rate of tax for their backpacker workers. Another option is to return superannuation contributions to backpackers at the conclusion of their stay in Australia as an incentive for them to continue working in this sector. Peak farming bodies like Growcom and the Australian Farmers' Federation share the Bowen Gumlu growers' concerns and there is no doubt that the 'backpacker tax' as it is known will be a major threat to North Queensland's farming and tourism industries. The farming sector is already suffering financial hardship due to rising on-farm costs and impacts of drought and I implore the federal government to take into account the dramatic impact this tax will have on rural economies like the Burdekin.

Bulimba Electorate, Centenary Celebrations


 **Ms FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (7.02 pm): In the last month in my electorate we have been celebrating some very special people and very special places. Stemming from the arrival in Queensland 100 years ago by the Sisters of the Good Samaritan of the Order of St Benedict—or the Good Sams as everyone calls them—we are now celebrating the centenary of these wonderful women transforming our local community. They did so in so many ways: through the establishment of Saints Peter and Pauls parish and church, a source of inspiration and solace to local residents over all its 100 years and a church which is shining after its recent \$1 million restoration and renewal; through the establishment of Saints Peter and Pauls primary school, now a vibrant and much admired school for our local kids; through the establishment of Lourdes Hill College, a most beautiful school—and I mean beautiful in an abundance of ways—a school for secondary students which aspires for the young women attending to be the best that they can be and by spreading throughout our community their generosity and goodwill, and as Sister Mary Randle says, by continuing to reach out without fear or favour or no matter who the person is. While we are talking about Sister Mary Randle, it was the greatest pleasure to be at the service several weeks ago to also share her significant anniversary when she renewed her vows after 50 years of service. She is one of my absolutely favourite people and is quite simply one of the kindest, most gentle and loving people I know. It was a great credit to her that she allowed us all to celebrate who she is when it goes so against her grain to take any acknowledgement.

There will be many opportunities throughout this year to celebrate all of these anniversaries but I have absolutely loved the opportunities we have already had to do so, as I know have the many others who have been part of the parish or friends of the parish over the years up to this point. I must specially acknowledge parish priest Father Tom Erich for his enormous efforts in working with the parish to celebrate and to build the church to be the place that it is today.

To attend mass on 31 January to celebrate the arrival of the Good Sams and Sister Mary's renewal of vows, to attend again on 7 February with many, many others, including past principals, many of the sisters who were part of the parish over the years, present and past students—and I have a great photo of the prep students of 1951 alongside another one of the very excited year 6 leaders who were commissioned on the day; to be part of the centenary celebrations of Lourdes Hill College on Lourdes Day 11 February which took many forms but included a special mass with 4,000 of their closest friends,

including one of their star old girls, the Deputy Premier—and the Deputy Premier and I had a great time singing along to the school hymn beside each other. It was a stunning event. These are significant people and significant places in our lives in the Bulimba electorate. They have an indelible impact on our local community and I thank them for all that they have been and all that they will be giving to our local community.

Mermaid Beach, VLAD Laws

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (7.05 pm): Prior to the introduction of the VLAD laws I had risen in this House on no less than 10 occasions to highlight the proliferation of criminal bikie gang rogue elements on the Gold Coast. It was with considerable relief I rose on 15 October 2013 to support the introduction of the VLAD laws with the belief that they would have a successful outcome, ridding the streets of these criminal networks and organised criminal activity of bikie gangs once and for all. Those Newman government laws worked, to the great delight of my Gold Coast community. It was with dismayed disbelief I heard the now Premier Palaszczuk promise the winding back of these successful laws during the 2015 election campaign.

What is the genesis of getting rid of the successful criminal bikie gang laws? Was it the CFMEU and their militant protection rackets in the building industry or was it bikie gang money syphoned through the union movement to support the Labor campaign? These laws that are supported unanimously by our hardworking police force—it has stated publicly that the statistics and crime busts show the effect this legislation is having—is now being further handicapped by the reduction in the Rapid Action Police Patrol, or RAPP squad. First it was the removal of the experienced Superintendent Jim Keogh and Deputy Commissioner Brett Pointing, whose actions directly benefited the Gold Coast through RAPP—the main drivers enforcing the VLAD legislation. Now it is the removal of Inspector Shane Holmes and the downsizing by reassignment of duties of the Gold Coast RAPP that is a further example of how little the Palaszczuk Labor government cares for the safety of the Mermaid Beach and Gold Coast constituents and, indeed, the safety of all Queenslanders in the face of this scourge.


By quickly launching a review into the organised crime legislation, Premier Palaszczuk and a clueless team threw open the gates to welcome the low-lying scum that are criminal bikie gangs back into Queensland. The Labor Party themselves certainly voted for the introduction of the VLAD legislation in this parliament when originally introduced and now because of political expediency and pressure from their union masters they are prepared to destroy good law-making—particularly effective on the Gold Coast—to sooth their faceless, puppetmaster associates to the detriment of all Queenslanders.

Many will recall under the failed stewardship of the Beattie-Bligh Labor government, whose focus was everywhere but the Gold Coast, the bikie gang problem was excused with spin, bodgied-up crime figures and sloppy legislation giving lawbreakers a smack on the wrist and releasing them back into the community to reoffend and reoffend, exemplified by the bikie brawl at Broadbeach which had men, women and children covering in the dining and entertainment precinct of one of the most popular family destinations in Australia. The Palaszczuk government is certainly following in their footsteps by pandering to the outcast, criminal fraternity.

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call the minister and member for Waterford, member for Mermaid Beach, the words you used were 'low-lying scum'. You have the ability to come up with better words that are parliamentary. I ask you to withdraw those words.

Mr STEVENS: I withdraw.

Waterford Electorate, Seniors

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (7.09 pm): I rise to inform the House of initiatives in my electorate to link seniors with the community and ensure their voices are heard. While campaigning in Waterford, I heard from senior citizens that public transport in Logan had been neglected for too long and that their concerns were falling on deaf ears. This lack of investment or even cutbacks during the LNP era was of grave concern to my community, as many fear social isolation.

Investment in public transport and inclusion of the elderly in our community are two areas that go hand in hand. That is why recently I was proud to advise residents of Bethania that later this year an emergency vehicle crossing will be built at Bethania Railway Station. This crossing will mean that residents in Bethania can rest assured that in the event they need an emergency vehicle while the boom gates are down for an extended period due to an incident, emergency vehicles will be able to

reach them. This is a huge relief to the residents in Bethania, a suburb that includes a high number of retirement and aged care villages. I am very glad I was successful in obtaining this crossing. I know from the calls and emails I have received that the elderly in my community are, as well.

In addition to fighting for better public transport for our seniors, I have also hosted other events to make sure that they feel included and connected. Late last year I hosted a seniors morning tea, also in Bethania. Besides the opportunity to chat and enjoy cakes and tea, my office arranged talks from the Office for Seniors and the local Logan police on how to feel safe in our community and not feel isolated. This Saturday, I will be hosting a manufactured homes act forum with Minister de Brenni. Many of the retirement and aged care villages in Waterford fall under the act. I have heard constantly from residents in those villages that they do not feel listened to by those who manage the villages. The forum will give seniors in our area the opportunity to talk directly to the minister responsible and, again, allow them to feel included and supported in our community. They will feel that their voices and opinions matter, because they do. I am looking forward to the forum on Saturday with the member for Springwood and for another chance to sit down and talk to the wonderful, passionate and inspiring seniors who call Waterford home.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 7.11 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, 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, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Trad, Walker, Watts, Weir, Wellington, Whiting, Williams