



RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT

Thursday, 17 March 2016

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THURSDAY, 17 MARCH 2016

The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.



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

PRIVILEGE

Alleged Misleading of the House by a Minister



Hon. CR DICK (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (9.31 am): On 18 February this year I made a private member's statement in the House in relation to report No. 162 of the Ethics Committee dated 17 February 2016. During the course of that private member's statement I stated that the chief of staff of the Leader of the Opposition was central to the conduct of a conspiracy to mislead. My statement did not make it clear that this was my inference and not a factual conclusion reached by the committee. Mr Speaker, I acknowledge that you have given guidance to members of the House on the need for members to be clear about how and when inferences should be drawn. As someone who has deep respect for your high office and this great institution, I apologise to the committee, the Leader of the Opposition, his chief of staff and the member for Warrego for not clarifying it was my inference and not a finding of the committee.

Alleged Intimidation of a Member



Hon. JA TRAD (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade and Investment) (9.32 am): I rise on a matter of privilege. Yesterday the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in question time asked the Premier about claims that I had behaved inappropriately in my dealings with the member for Cairns. I note that no complaint has been made by the member in question. Even as recently as today the member for Cairns has stated that he has no intention of making such a complaint. The only complaint has been made by a member of the public, Mr Ward, who was not present or a party to the conversations in question. This is confirmed in Mr Ward's own statutory declaration which has been tabled in the House. Mr Ward has previously raised this issue in the media and his complaint was referred to you, Mr Speaker, for consideration.

On 29 January 2016 you advised Mr Ward that you would not pursue the complaint unless it was raised by a member of parliament. Again I note that no complaint has been made by the member in question and the member has stated that he has no intention of making such a complaint. I reject the suggestion by the Leader of the Opposition that I bullied the member for Cairns. Of course, I have had robust conversations with the member for Cairns and, as a passionate advocate for his community, he has been robust in return. Parliament is a robust place and nobody in this House is a shrinking violet.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Callide, those interjections are not necessary.

Ms TRAD: However, it is clear that the opposition intend to continue to attempt to gain advantage through political smear on the basis of tabled documents that contain nothing but hearsay and anonymous allegations and innuendoes against me. That is why today I can advise the House that I have written to you, Mr Speaker, requesting that you refer this matter to the Ethics Committee to be investigated.

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



Mr SPEAKER: On 22 February 2016 the Leader of the Opposition wrote to me alleging that the Deputy Premier deliberately misled the House in her private member's statement when she stated in relation to Ethics Committee report No. 162—

The Ethics Committee report reveals that the Leader of the Opposition's chief of staff clearly played a coordinating role in a predetermined strategy to leak the proceedings of the PCCC for base political advantage.

In this letter to me the Leader of the Opposition contended that the report made no such findings or revelations and that the claim that the report revealed his chief of staff partook in a predetermined strategy to leak the proceedings of the PCCC was false.

I sought further information from the Deputy Premier about the allegations made against her in accordance with 269(5). The Deputy Premier disputed the allegation made against her and stated she did not state that the Ethics Committee had made a finding regarding the Leader of the Opposition's chief of staff but instead used the word 'reveals' to indicate it had uncovered information and that her statement was based on an inference built on the facts presented in the Ethics Committee report.

I am not convinced that there is sufficient evidence to establish a prima facie case that the Deputy Premier has deliberately misled the House. On this basis I have decided that the matter does not warrant the further attention of the House by the Ethics Committee and I will not be referring the matter.


However, I refer to my statement in the House on 23 February where I said a member may make their point in parliament without the need to make allegations that are not and cannot be substantiated. Members should also take particular care when making their own inferences to make sure that they do not misrepresent their inferences as facts in another body's work. If members during a heated debate make incorrect and reckless statements they should correct the record, make a withdrawal and/or apologise at the earliest opportunity.

I would ask that the Deputy Premier take it upon herself to note on the record that her statements on 22 February 2016 were her personal inferences from the committee's report and were not representing any actual findings by the committee. I table the correspondence in relation to this matter.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 22 February 2016, from the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Lawrence Springborg MP, to the Speaker, Hon. Peter Wellington, regarding an alleged misleading of the House by the Deputy Premier, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade and Investment, Hon. Jackie Trad, relating to Ethics Committee Report No. 162 [366].

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 24 February 2016, from the Deputy Premier and Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade and Investment, Hon. Jackie Trad, to the Speaker, Hon. Peter Wellington, regarding an alleged deliberate misleading of the House by Hon. Jackie Trad [367].

Speaker's Ruling, Referral to Ethics Committee

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, this morning I received correspondence from the Deputy Premier in relation to a statutory declaration by Mr Jason Ward tabled by the member for Cairns. The Deputy Premier requested that I refer the allegations of intimidation and improper conduct by her towards the member to the Ethics Committee.

Honourable members, the material tabled by the member for Cairns had been forwarded to me by Mr Ward some time ago. I sought Mr Ward's consent to me raising the matters referred to in his correspondence with the member for Cairns. Mr Ward refused and to date the member for Cairns has not raised any of these matters with me.

I note that there is no procedure for the Speaker to accept and consider complaints about matters of privilege directly from members of the public. Speakers have long held that a complaint must be made by a member of the House. That being said, after reviewing Mr Ward's material I note that most of the serious matters alleged were based on hearsay—that is, Mr Ward was not a party to the relevant conversations, but was restating matters he had allegedly been told, and some of the matters alleged were based on supposition based on his observations. I informed Mr Ward that in all the circumstances I intended to take no further action in relation to the matter.

I stress that if a member of parliament wants to raise any matter with me they are free to approach me directly. I received no such approach. I would normally not refer a matter raised in such an unorthodox manner—that is, the tabling of hearsay allegations. That is, in effect, a complaint of privilege by proxy. However, now that I have been asked by the Deputy Premier to refer the allegations I have decided to refer the matter to the Ethics Committee.

PETITIONS

The Clerk presented the following two paper petitions and one e-petition, sponsored and lodged by the Clerk—

Toondah Harbour Priority Development Area Plan

From 2,156 petitioners, requesting the House to withdraw the Toondah Harbour Priority Development Area plan and start again through a full and proper community consultation process based on community vision and values and focussed on upgrading the ferry terminal facilities [368] [369] [370].

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

Motor Vehicles, Warranty

Mr Katter, from 111 petitioners, requesting the House to reinstate the Queensland Statutory Warranty for vehicles over 10 years old with more than 160,000 km on the odometer for a minimum period of three months or the first 5,000 km [\[371\]](#).

Petitions received.

TABLED PAPERS

MINISTERIAL PAPERS

The following ministerial papers were tabled by the Clerk—

Attorney General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills (Ms D'Ath)—

- [372](#) Response from the Attorney General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills (Ms D'Ath) to a paper petition (2545-16) presented by the Clerk in accordance with Standing Order 119(3), and an ePetition (2473-15) sponsored by the Clerk in accordance with Standing Order 119(4), from 2,516 and 6,259 petitioners respectively, requesting the House to amend Corrective Services Act 2006 to provide that an application for parole may not be processed where a prisoner has been sentenced for murder and no remains of the victim have been found. Under the rule, murderers who refuse to assist police with information regarding the remains of their victim will be denied parole
- [373](#) Response from the Attorney General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills (Ms D'Ath) to an ePetition (2531-16) sponsored by the Clerk in accordance with Standing Order 119(4), from 2,581 petitioners, requesting the House to retain and strengthen existing laws dealing with youth who commit offences
- [374](#) Response from the Attorney General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills (Ms D'Ath) to an ePetition (2507-15) sponsored by the Clerk in accordance with Standing Order 119(4), from 924 petitioners, requesting the House to enact legislative provisions which impose caps on political donations, prohibits property developers from making such donations, and restricts indirect campaign donations

Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply (Mr Bailey)—

- [375](#) Response from the Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply (Mr Bailey) to an ePetition (2443-15) sponsored by Mr Boothman, from 1,446 petitioners, requesting the House to implement upgrades to alleviate congestion at interchange 57 of the M1 motorway
- [376](#) Response from the Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply (Mr Bailey) to a paper petition (2542-16) presented by Mr Millar, from 1,043 petitioners, requesting the House to tar seal the remaining 50km of dirt road from north of the Mistake Creek School to the Belyando River boundary of the Isaac Regional Council
- [377](#) Response from the Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply (Mr Bailey) to a paper petition (2544-16) presented by Mr Madden, from 155 petitioners, requesting the House to reject the proposed haulage route for the Colleyville/Mt Walker Quarry to the Cunningham Highway via Rosewood as it is longer and more costly than a direct route through Colleyville to the Cunningham Highway. We the undersigned are concerned about the impact that the proposed route, which runs through Rosewood, will have on the local community, the environment, safety and road conditions

Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services (Mr Byrne)—

- [378](#) Response from the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services (Mr Byrne) to an ePetition (2501-15) sponsored by the Clerk under Standing Order 119(4), from 102 petitioners, requesting the House to deliver a 24 hour manned Police Beat at the Gold Coast University Hospital precinct
- [379](#) Response from the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services (Mr Byrne) to an ePetition (2502-15) sponsored by Ms Bates, from 134 petitioners, requesting the House to upgrade the current Police Beat at Robina Town Centre to a 24 hour manned Police Beat

MEMBER'S PAPER

The following member's paper was tabled by the Clerk—

Member for Mount Isa (Mr Katter)—

- [380](#) Nonconforming petition relating to the ANZ Branch at Toogoolawah

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

National Close the Gap Day



Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.40 am): Today is National Close the Gap Day. For all of us it is a call to action to improve the health outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. There is some good news to report. The national target to halve the gap in child mortality by 2018 is on track. There have been improvements in the proportion of Indigenous mothers attending antenatal care and reduced rates of smoking during pregnancy.

I am delighted that Brisbane is the first capital city in Australia to close the gap on year 12 attainment. Last year, more than 98 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the Brisbane metropolitan region successfully completed year 12. That compares with 94 per cent of non-Indigenous students. Last year for state high schools across Queensland, 94 per cent of Indigenous students achieved a year 12 certification compared to 95 per cent of non-Indigenous students. That is up from 86 per cent of Indigenous students the year before.

We are also working hard on closing the gap in employment outcomes. The Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative targets Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, while the Youth Employment Program supports Indigenous students who are completing year 12 with career, life and educational advice. We also remain committed to ensuring educational disparities are overcome. We have committed \$41.8 million over four years for children and family centres to provide integrated services to address the health and educational needs of young Indigenous children.

Queensland is a big state. We are fortunate to share this state with so many First Australians, but we have to recognise that there is much work to do when it comes to closing the gap. That work remains a key focus of my government.

Ministerial Trade Missions, Forward Plan



Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.41 am): My government is committed to supporting Queensland business in their efforts to take on the world. We have to promote Queensland as an investment destination of choice or risk being left behind. Our approach is paying real dividends for the Queensland economy with a \$5.3 billion export boost in the value of Queensland's overseas merchandise to more than \$49 billion in 2015. This is the best result since 2011 and a 12 per cent increase on 2014.

Ministerial led trade and investment missions coordinated by the government's global business agency, Trade and Investment Queensland, under the portfolio of the Deputy Premier, are a key part of our strategy for promoting Queensland exporters and attracting investment. On those missions, industry and government work together to facilitate trade and investment, protect existing jobs and create new jobs. In many cases, governments can open doors and access new opportunities that the private sector cannot.

I want to work even harder to help Queensland businesses get the most out of those opportunities. That is why, for the first time, the forward plan of ministerial trade missions will go up on the TIQ website. This will give businesses early notice around what missions are planned, where they are going and when. It will make it easier for business to join the missions and benefit from new trade and investment opportunities, leading to more jobs for Queenslanders.

Inevitably, there will be commentary around trade missions. The reality is that Queensland is an export led economy. We need to strengthen ties with current markets and find new markets if our businesses are to grow. We need to make sure that Queensland does not miss out on emerging opportunities and new markets being opened up by the recent free trade agreements and the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement. When those markets grow, it means more jobs here at home for Queenslanders. I know the importance of that and my ministers know the importance of that, as does the Leader of the Opposition. That is why we will unashamedly chase new opportunities for Queensland's export businesses, as well as new investment from overseas partners.

Markets visited as a priority will include Queensland's top export destinations and sources of investment: China, Japan, South Korea, India, North America, Europe, Indonesia and New Zealand. Emerging markets in the Middle East and Vietnam are also on the agenda and we will work to grow Queensland's opportunities in those markets. Our plan is to be particularly active in Asia so that we can position Queensland to take advantage of the Asian century.

At the Prime Minister's invitation, I will join a delegation of premiers heading to China on a national trade mission. Last financial year, Queensland's two-way trade with China exceeded \$18 billion and the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement allows 95 per cent of Australian exports to enter China duty free, opening up a market of 1.3 billion people. In the past 20 years, China and India have nearly tripled their share of the global economy. By 2025, the Asian region will account for almost half of the world's output. Rising incomes and modernisation across emerging Asian countries are driving a shift in consumption patterns towards a higher share of services and a growing demand for health, education, finance, tourism and professional services.

This is Queensland's big opportunity to provide the services, goods, products and expertise a modern Asia needs. A big part of that is our Advance Queensland agenda. The US and Asia are market leaders in innovation. We want to strengthen ties in that sector, attracting venture capital and finding new markets for Queensland discoveries. Countries in our region value relationship building before embarking on business. The missions will help build those relationships and help strengthen the Queensland economy, by boosting exports and attracting new investment to our great state of Queensland.

Trade and Investment Queensland

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade and Investment) (9.45 am): The Palaszczuk government is strongly committed to helping Queensland companies sell their products and services around the world and to attracting foreign investment to Queensland. Trade means jobs in Queensland—one in five jobs right around the state—and foreign investment has always been necessary to help Queensland develop to its full potential.

Our strategies are working. Last year Queensland's merchandise trade exports reached a four-year high of \$49.7 billion. That is a more than 12 per cent increase in value from 2014 and the best result since 2011, the last time we had a Labor government in this state. Increasing our trade abroad means more jobs for Queenslanders and that is why Trade and Investment Queensland works with Queensland businesses to boost their international reach.


In 2015 Trade and Investment Queensland assisted more than 250 export deals by innovative companies around the state; companies such as family owned Sunshine Coast business Novacorr, which designs specialised medical furniture. TIQ helped Novacorr after a YouTube clip showing the benefits for a patient using an innovative medical bed developed by the company went viral, which prompted a German company to contact Novacorr, keen to do business. According to Novacorr's managing director, Keith Anderson, TIQ's assistance in securing the deal was invaluable and the company would not have been able to export without TIQ's help. It was the biggest order that the company has ever received.

TIQ also helps more traditional companies and industry sectors, such as agriculture. For example, last year from August to November, citrus growers in the Burnett and Emerald regions exported more than \$2 million worth of quality produce to China's largest food company, COFCO, which is a market they entered only three years ago. This success was a dramatic turnaround for producers hit hard by the devastating floods in 2011 and again in 2013. With assistance from TIQ, growers decided that the only way forward was to band together and to focus on their highest opportunity market, China. As a consequence, in the 2015 exporting season 25 additional jobs were created in the Burnett and Emerald regions, supplying COFCO with 40 containers of mandarins sourced from 18 citrus growers.

In terms of investment attraction, TIQ recently attracted the Australian arm of China Telecom to Brisbane and helped it to establish an office here. TIQ has also provided assistance to Caboolture based manufacturer Northern Light Technologies, which now locally manufactures products that it had previously imported from Canada and the United States. In the process, it is creating jobs here in Queensland for Queenslanders.

Those are just a few examples of how the Queensland government is helping grow the Queensland economy by helping our exporters and investors alike. Our forward missions program, released today by the Premier, will continue to provide more opportunities to grow Queensland jobs in the Asian century.

National Close the Gap Day

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Minister for Sport) (9.48 am): This government will not accept the idea that one group of Queenslanders should live shorter, unhealthier or poorer lives than others in our state. Today is National Close the Gap Day, an opportunity to reflect on our success and refocus on the work still to be done to ensure Indigenous Australians do not continue to experience those preventable outcomes.

Progress has been made in closing the gap in a number of areas and further progress is being made, but there is much more to do. The stark truth delivered by the Prime Minister's eighth *Closing the gap* report is that more effort is needed in a range of areas. The 2016 report showed some improvements, but progress has been varied across different indicators.

There was a significant 34 per cent decrease in mortality rates nationally between 1998 and 2014. For year 12 attainment there was an increase from 45.4 per cent in 2008 to 58.5 per cent in 2012-13. We saw the largest improvements in seven of the eight national minimum standards tests from 2008 to 2015 for Queensland Indigenous students. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 to 64 years currently employed fell from 53.8 per cent in 2008 to 47.5 per cent in 2012-13.

To close the gap requires national commitment and resolve and a shared responsibility at all levels of government. The Palaszczuk government allocated more than \$200 million over three years for evidence based initiatives to address the health gap. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander justice strategy under development will leverage existing investment for child protection, domestic and family violence, youth justice and adult detention. The Palaszczuk government will continue to implement school attendance strategies through the National Partnership on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education. The Palaszczuk government is working to close the economic gap through the Working Queensland strategy and economic participation strategy.

We will work with the Federal government, whether it be Nigel Scullion or our federal counterparts Shayne Neumann or Warren Snowden, to continue progress. Cutting funding is not the way to close the gap. The Abbott government made massive cuts to federal Indigenous programs and services. The current Prime Minister must show leadership and reverse these cuts in the federal budget.

A shocking illustration of the work we still must do is provided by the report on youth sexual violence and abuse, known as the Smallbone report, which was recently released in a redacted form by the government. The report, commissioned in 2011 and delivered in 2013, focuses on West Cairns and Aurukun. As Professor Stephen Smallbone said—

The two communities named in our report are not the only communities in which such problems exist.

There are undoubtedly other places in Australia, and in many other parts of the world, where there are serious problems with sexual violence and abuse.

A high level steering committee, led by former Supreme Court judge Stanley Jones, will provide an interim report to government in mid-2016 and a final report by the end of the year. While a range of initiatives have been taken since the report was handed down, the steering committee's priority will be to find ways to stop the abuse across Queensland and make recommendations to government on what further legislative, policy and service changes may be needed. I will update the House on the steering committee's work. This government remains committed to closing the gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, Health



Hon. CR DICK (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (9.51 am): As my parliamentary colleagues have acknowledged, today is National Close the Gap Day. It is well known that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders experience poorer health outcomes than their non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander counterparts. This is not acceptable. Things are beginning to improve.

The average life expectancy for Indigenous men and women is on the rise, increasing over five years by almost two years to 68.7 years and 74.4 years respectively, according to the latest Australian Bureau of Statistics data. More pregnant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are also attending antenatal appointments earlier and more regularly throughout their pregnancy. This is having a positive effect on health outcomes for both mothers and children. It has also contributed to infant mortality among the Indigenous population dropping from 10.9 deaths per thousand in 2004 to 6.1 deaths per thousand in 2014.


This is all good news, but there is so much more than we can do. Closing the gap is a priority for the Palaszczuk Labor government. This is why we are working to strengthen Indigenous health services and programs throughout the state. The work being carried out at a local level plays a fundamental role in our efforts towards improving the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders. We must ensure that at a state level we are prioritising key contributors to the health gap.

The Palaszczuk Labor government has developed an Indigenous health investment strategy that will allocate more than \$200 million over three years to continue efforts towards closing the health gap in Queensland by 2033. The Making Tracks strategy aims to direct funding to services that focus on prevention, improved diagnosis, early intervention and better treatment. We are focused on tackling conditions such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and mental health.

Just recently I also launched the *Deadly kids, deadly futures: Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child ear and hearing health framework 2016-2026*. This framework is the first of its kind in Australia and aims to prevent and manage the high rate of middle ear disease in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

The work being done by the hardworking front-line staff across the state is having a real effect on outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders. By working together, we can continue to improve the system and work towards closing the gap.

Domestic and Family Violence

 **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) (9.54 am): The shocking statistics on domestic and family violence have hit us all hard and sparked a huge momentum for change. Right across Queensland, people from all walks of life are banding together in their local communities to say enough is enough.

Just over a year ago, on 28 February 2015, Dame Quentin Bryce's Special Taskforce of Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland presented its Not Now, Not Ever report to the Premier, which laid out a comprehensive road map for reform. This government has been delivering on its commitment to implement all 140 recommendations.

One of our first actions was to establish two new 72-hour crisis shelters in Brisbane and Townsville. They were open just in time for the Christmas period, which sadly is a time of year we see a rise in incidents of domestic violence. More than \$66 million has been allocated in the budget to fund existing programs and new measures to address domestic and family violence.


We have already fast-tracked a number of legislative amendments, including increasing the maximum penalties for breaches of DVOs, dealing with cross-applications and providing for ouster orders. It has been incredible to experience the bipartisan support for urgent amendments to strengthen the legislative framework to tackle domestic violence.

To help us with the legislative review process, a terms of reference paper and survey on the Domestic Violence Protection Act 2012 were released online to engage Queenslanders in this important conversation about what more we can do to tackle domestic and family violence. In addition to legislation, we are ensuring there is continuous oversight and the government is held to account by establishing the Premier's implementation council, which I am so pleased Dame Quentin Bryce has agreed to chair. We have also set up a new specialist DV court at Southport, and Legal Aid Queensland has expanded its duty lawyer service to help victims navigating the legal system.

Our government is also developing a violence against women prevention plan that will seek to a send clear, decisive message that gendered violence, in all its forms, is not acceptable and must not be normalised or ignored. This plan will complement and support our recently published Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy and explore ways we can prevent and better respond to violence against women more broadly.

We have achieved so much in just one year, but there is still so much more to do on our path to eliminate domestic and family violence. On National Close the Gap Day it is important to acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are more vulnerable and at risk from domestic violence than other groups in our community. The Not Now, Not Ever report acknowledges that it is a major concern for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders and elders. I know that there is a great deal of commitment by leaders and elders to tackle this problem which is hurting their people. We are determined to work with them to do so.

Closing the Gap, Year 12 Attainment


 **Hon. KJ JONES** (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism and Major Events) (9.57 am): On National Close the Gap Day I am pleased to inform the House that more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students successfully completed year 12 in 2015 than ever before. When the Queensland Certificate of Education was introduced in 2008, only 42 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students completed it. Today, Queensland is leading the way when it comes to closing the gap on year 12 attainment.

Across all Queensland state schools, 95 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were awarded either a Queensland Certificate of Education or a Queensland Certificate of Individual Achievement at completion of year 12 in 2015. This is a five point narrowing of the gap in 12

months in our state schools across Queensland. As the Premier said, we have already closed the gap in Brisbane. Almost 100 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander state school students were awarded either a Queensland Certificate of Education or a Queensland Certificate of Individual Achievement at completion of year 12, compared with 98 per cent of non-Indigenous students.

This is the beginning of generational change. Many of these students will be the very first in their family to successfully complete year 12. We know that year 12 attainment improves the likelihood of full-time employment and home ownership and decreases the likelihood of overcrowded living conditions and incarceration. I know that this has happened because of the hard work, dedication and commitment of our teachers, our principals, our staff, students, families and local communities working together—and I want to thank them all today. This is a significant milestone in closing the gap and shows what can be accomplished by schools and their leadership teams working together with our students and communities to close the gap in Queensland.

Mining Industry, Fly-in Fly-out


 **Hon. AJ LYNHAM** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (9.59 am): I am pleased to update the House on the work the Palaszczuk government is doing to promote strong and sustainable resource communities and workers' choice. Prior to the election we committed to reviewing the impacts of fly-in fly-out mining operations in the state. Last October, the report from the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee and the report from the FIFO independent review panel were published. The reviewers travelled widely across Queensland, speaking directly with the community and key stakeholders including unions, local governments, resource companies, health professionals and the resources sector. I thank the members of the parliamentary committee and their chair and also the independent panel for their extensive work in compiling these reports. I now table the government's response to the committee report.

Tabled paper: Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee: Report No. 9—Inquiry into fly-in fly-out and other long distance commuting work practices in regional Queensland, government response [\[381\]](#).

FIFO has been a longstanding contentious issue in Queensland's resource communities. Labor believes in choice for workers. Labor believes that if people want to live in resource communities they should have the opportunity to apply for jobs near resource communities. Later this year we will release a comprehensive legislative and policy package to address this important regional issue. Our new policy framework will ensure no 100 per cent FIFO operations in new mines where nearby regional towns have a capable workforce. Existing operations will need to consider locals for employment. Our new framework will also deliver improved and detailed social impact assessments of large resource projects, with a consistent approach to social impact assessment prescribed in regulation. There will also be greater opportunities for local government contribution to the assessment process.

Resource companies must have workforce plans to maximise the opportunity for local workers to gain employment including the skills development and training required to get a job. My expectation is that where there is community support operational workforces should be accommodated within existing housing or in purpose-built villages close to regional centres. This will build communities, increase opportunities for employment and allow competitive local businesses to get the maximum benefit from the projects. Accommodation will need to be constructed, maintained and operated to provide a safe, clean and healthy environment for workers. Procurement plans are also required to ensure that competitive and capable local businesses are given full, fair and reasonable opportunity to win contracts on these large resource projects. I look forward to releasing the comprehensive policy and legislative framework later this year which will deliver strong and sustainable resource communities for Queenslanders.

Gold Coast Commonwealth Games

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games) (10.02 am): From day one the Palaszczuk government has been committed to delivering the best Commonwealth Games ever. Well, on top of that we are also ensuring that the Gold Coast 2018 games will be the biggest games ever.

On Commonwealth Day on Monday, I was joined by my colleague the Minister for Disability Services, Coralee O'Rourke, in announcing our record-breaking parasport program for the 2018 games. I am very proud of the fact that this will be the biggest parasport program in Commonwealth Games history. We will be setting a new record in Commonwealth Games history in hosting up to 300 parasport athletes and holding 38 medal events across seven sports. That is 45 per cent more parasport athletes and 73 per cent more medals on offer compared to the parasport competition staged at the Glasgow games.

I was also pleased to announce that there will now be an equal number of men's and women's events across all seven parasports consistent with a strong commitment to gender equality.

Ms Fentiman: Hear, hear!

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I acknowledge the acknowledgment by the Minister for Women. It was appropriate that Minister O'Rourke and I made this announcement on international Commonwealth Day as the theme for this year is 'An inclusive Commonwealth'. This is a step in the right direction for the games because we know an inclusive games will be a great games. I wish all the athletes the very best of luck as they gear up for the competition and I know they will do themselves and the nation proud.


This announcement means that parasport at the games will reach its widest audience ever, with an estimated global TV audience of over 1.5 billion people, as the first ever wheelchair marathon at a Commonwealth Games takes to the streets of the Gold Coast as part of the free road events. That will be a real highlight for everyone to enjoy. I do not think there could be any better sight than a great Australian like Paralympic and Commonwealth Games champion Kurt Fearnley powering across the finish line to the roar of the crowd and the amazing backdrop of the Gold Coast.

Having more world-class athletes here competing at the pinnacle of their sport is great for our games, great for spectators and great for the Gold Coast. This announcement means that the swimming and athletics program will double in size from previous games. On top of that, with the inclusion now of beach volleyball, this will be the biggest Commonwealth Games program held since its inception in 1930.

Last week I was excited to announce that beach volleyball will be the 18th sport in the program. This is the first time ever that the sport will be included in the Commonwealth Games, so it is truly an historic occasion. Beach volleyball is a high-energy and exciting sport, and everyone remembers the impact when it was played on Bondi Beach at the Sydney 2000 Olympics. It was terrific to be joined at the announcement by Olympic gold medallist and beach volleyball advocate and a real advocate of including this sport in the Commonwealth Games Natalie Cook and an aspiring member for the team for 2018—and I should note former Craigslea State High School product—Phoebe Bell. Both are very proud Queenslanders.

What better advertisement for Queensland and Australia, and our beach culture, than to have this in the program. The event will showcase the Gold Coast to a worldwide audience, highlighting the spectacular beaches and surrounds. Again, this will contribute to the 2018 games being the biggest and most extensive in the history of the games—and they will be held right here in Queensland, something we can all be proud of. Mr Speaker, we are going for gold, and I can assure you and the people of Queensland that this will be the biggest and the best games ever, jam-packed with exciting sport and a celebration of Queensland and the Gold Coast.

State Infrastructure Plan

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply) (10.06 am): The Palaszczuk government's State Infrastructure Plan shows how we will deliver major infrastructure projects across the state that will grow jobs, productivity and the economy, particularly in regional Queensland. An important future project for North Queensland is the duplication of Riverway Drive, and this government is getting it done.

A three-kilometre section of Riverway Drive will be duplicated between Gollogly and Allambie lanes in the Upper Ross. The project will cost about \$30 million and is expected to provide up to 60 direct jobs for the North Queensland community over the delivery period. That will provide much needed job opportunities for a local community which has taken a batter in recent months due to the nickel refinery mismanagement. This duplication is good news for motorists, for heavy vehicles and the transport industry, and for the wider community in North Queensland. One of the major benefits will be the improved road safety and travel time reliability for the nearly 19,000 motorists using this road every day.

We are currently working on awarding the contract for detailed design to start in late April 2016 which will deliver a value-for-money solution to ease congestion and improve access to local businesses, schools and local residents. It will also support the Port of Townsville's \$1.3 billion port expansion project, which will involve the creation of six berths, channel widening and deepening. The Port of Townsville is a vital trading port for North Queensland, with over 11 million tonnes of trade worth about \$11 billion each year. It is also where the Palaszczuk government is expanding capacity by up to 20 per cent with the \$55 million berth 4 upgrade, turning one of the major berths into a containerisation port.

This is on top of the Palaszczuk government's commitment in Townsville to the Townsville ring-road—the \$200 million jointly funded stage 4; the first three stages were all built by previous Labor governments. It is also on top of the \$6 million in Safer Roads Sooner funding for Hervey Range Road, which will start in the near future, as well as our accelerated works package in North Queensland which includes \$115 million worth of funding for Bruce Highway overtaking lanes, the northern access intersection, the Arnot Creek bridge upgrade and a road train decoupling pad on the port road worth \$1 million. This is a very strong commitment to North Queensland.

I would also like to thank the member for Thuringowa, Aaron Harper, for his strong advocacy not only for this project but for a whole range of projects right across his community. The Riverway Drive duplication is a great example of how the Palaszczuk government through its State Infrastructure Plan is delivering real funding and real infrastructure for all Queenslanders, no matter where they live.

Advance Queensland, Ignite Ideas Fund



Hon. LM ENOCH (Algeria—ALP) (Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy and Minister for Small Business) (10.09 am): The Palaszczuk government's Advance Queensland plan is providing support to start-ups and innovative businesses with high growth potential to create jobs now and the jobs of the future. Labor's Advance Queensland is designed to ignite the entrepreneurial spirit and support the innovative ideas of Queenslanders. We believe there is a huge pool of untapped potential in this state, and it is this potential we want to unlock. To do just that, today I am pleased to launch for the first time the Advance Queensland Ignite Ideas fund. This three-year, \$10 million fund will help start-ups and innovative Queensland businesses bring new products and services to the market that, in turn, will lead to more jobs for Queenslanders. We know that the development of many early stage ideas can be stalled by a lack of funding support and dedicated development focus.

Under this fund, eligible Queensland businesses will be able to apply for support of up to \$250,000. To qualify for support under this program, a business must be able to demonstrate the viability of their proposal with an early stage prototype or model. Like a venture capital investor, we want to see the potential in an idea before we put money into it. Advance Queensland's Ignite Ideas forms part of a suite of initiatives we have co-designed with industry, business and researchers to accelerate the commercialisation of ideas into innovative products and services in Queensland. We are serious about building our economy, strengthening our competitive advantage and creating jobs, which is why we are supporting our innovators by enabling them to develop and prove the feasibility of their great ideas.

International best practice shows us the important role venture capital and funding support plays in transforming innovative ideas into real products and services. The Palaszczuk government is committed to supporting Queensland's growing pool of high potential innovators. The Advance Queensland Ignite Ideas fund, in conjunction with our other Advance Queensland initiatives, will help us support a vibrant innovation ecosystem and translate our best ideas into new or improved products, processes or services. It will help our homegrown innovators reach global markets, and it will improve the productivity and competitiveness of key industries in Queensland and, in turn, grow the knowledge-based jobs of the future. The Advance Queensland Ignite Ideas fund ensures that the great ideas produced in Queensland are developed in Queensland, tested in Queensland and commercialised in Queensland.

St Patrick's Day; Electrical Safety



Hon. G GRACE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (10.12 am): As multicultural minister, I want to wish everyone a very happy St Patrick's Day. Queenslanders love celebrating everything that is Irish and green. Queenslanders also love DIYs and relish the opportunity to renovate our houses into the perfect home, but we should not let our love affair with DIY and renovation lead to unsafe practices in the family home. Home renovations and DIYs should not cost a single life, but the sad reality is that fatalities can and do occur when we are working on our own homes, particularly when entering a roof or ceiling area without turning off the electricity supply. That is why from June the Palaszczuk government will continue with a vital home safety campaign to improve awareness about roof electrical safety, and I acknowledge the bipartisan support for this important safety initiative.

Throughout 2014 the 'Stay safer up there, switch off down here' electrical safety campaign helped to improve electrical safety awareness for thousands of Queenslanders. The campaign successfully highlighted the absolute necessity of turning off all main power switches in a home switchboard before going up into the ceiling space. The campaign was so successful that it led to more than 90 per cent of


tradespeople saying that they are now prepared to turn off or consider turning off the power before entering a ceiling space. Just as importantly, nearly 90 per cent of home owners said that they would also turn the power off or not go up there at all.

It is essential that we continue to get the simple but extremely important message about electrical safety out there into the community. Electrical safety in the home is too important to neglect and no-one can afford to be complacent about it. Whether you are a home owner or a tradie, you should always turn off the main power switches at the switchboard before going up into the ceiling space.

The campaign will also remind Queenslanders that all electrical work is best left to the professionals. We want to give this important campaign the widest possible audience, and I know the member for Kallangur, in particular, has an interest in this issue. That is why we are also running the campaign via hardware stores throughout Queensland. Close to a million brochures with a reminder sticker that can be placed on switchboards across the state will be distributed via Queensland hardware stores. Let us all get behind this important campaign. Let us get our homes safe and make sure we always use a professional when it comes to electrical work. That is the best way to go forward.

HEALTH, COMMUNITIES, DISABILITY SERVICES AND DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION COMMITTEE

Report


 **Ms LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (10.15 am): I lay upon the table of the House report No. 14 of the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee.

Tabled paper: Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee: Report No. 14—Subordinate legislation tabled between 13 October 2015 and 16 February 2016 [382].

This report covers the portfolio subordinate legislation tabled between 13 October 2015 and 16 February 2016 considered by the committee. The committee did not identify any significant issues regarding consistency with fundamental legislative principles or the lawfulness of the subordinate legislation. I commend the report to the House.

ETHICS COMMITTEE

Report


 **Mr BROWN** (Capalaba—ALP) (10.15 am): I lay upon the table of the House Ethics Committee report No. 163 titled *Report on a right of reply No. 29*.

Tabled paper: Ethics Committee: Report No. 163—Report on a right of reply No. 29 [383].

I commend the report and the committee's recommendation to the House.

NOTICES OF MOTION


North Stradbroke Island Protection and Sustainability Legislation

 **Mr CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (10.16 am): I give notice that I will move—

That this House:

1. notes the AWU has publicly been advised by the Finance and Administration Committee chair that the North Stradbroke Island draft workforce transition plans and economic transition plans are 'not part of what is going through parliament';
2. resolves the committee consider the draft workforce and economic transition plans during its consideration of the North Stradbroke Island Protection and Sustainability (Renewal of Mining Leases) Amendment Bill and the North Stradbroke Island Protection and Sustainability and Other Acts Amendment Bill; and
3. accordingly resolves the timeframe for the committee to report on these bills be amended to 1 September 2016.

Weapons Advisory Panel

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (10.17 am): I give notice that I will move—

That this House calls upon the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services to immediately reinstate the Weapons Advisory Panel which existed as a ministerial consultation body under the Beattie, Bligh and Newman governments, with the committee to include representatives from the Police Union, farming community, firearms dealers and the Sporting Shooters' Association.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Dalrymple, I understand that you have already given notice. It will be on the *Notice Paper*, and it is my intention for the debate tonight to be the motion moved by the member for Hinchinbrook.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Regional Youth Unemployment



Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (10.17 am): In a week when the government has been clinging desperately to its jobs mantra, one thing has been glaringly absent: an actual plan to create jobs. We have had an Infrastructure Plan that is full of already opened and incorrectly named projects. Today we have had the Minister for Main Roads desperately trying to placate the people of Townsville, with 'How Labor short-changes Townsville: Great Southern Scam' the front-page article. I table a copy of that for the benefit of the parliament.

Tabled paper: Front page of the *Townsville Bulletin*, dated 17 March 2016, with the headline 'Revealed: How Labor short-changes Townsville—Great Southern Scam' [384].

We have had the member for Barron River, that titan from Far North Queensland, shamelessly label tourist destination Great Keppel Island 'nothing significant'. We have seen the Premier focused more on her hold on power than on delivering jobs for the people of this state. We know that many parts of regional Queensland are struggling with persistently high rates of unemployment, and we particularly know that youth unemployment is a major issue in our regional towns, as highlighted again this week in a report from the Brotherhood of St Laurence. I quote from the report for the benefit of the House—

New analysis identifies four regional areas where youth unemployment rates cluster above 20 per cent.

Three of those four regional areas are in Queensland—Cairns, Wide Bay and the Queensland outback. The report continues—

For the worst performer—in the outback of Queensland, including the mining hub of Mount Isa—the rate reached 28 per cent.

Here is a chart that shows 28.4 youth unemployment, and I table a copy of that.

Tabled paper: Map of Australia, undated, indicating youth unemployment in various regions [385].

Other states such as Tasmania and South Australia, which were never known for great achievements in youth employment, were actually above Mount Isa and outback Queensland. Just 12 months ago, the youth unemployment rate was 17.7 per cent. That is still too high, but it has worsened considerably under this government. This is a government that clearly does not understand the bush. Five Queensland regions rank in the worst 20 regions in Australia for youth unemployment. In the Treasurer's very own patch of Cairns, one in five young people cannot find a job. It is the same problem in Wide Bay, where the youth unemployment rate has jumped 2.7 per cent in 12 months.

Mr Pitt interjected.

Mr LANGBROEK: I take the interjection from the Treasurer because I will come to what he said when we were in government in just a moment. The figures are worse now than when he was in opposition but he criticised us. Townsville's youth unemployment rate has also worsened and now sits at 17.6 per cent. In Mackay it has also worsened dramatically—jumping up from 9.3 per cent to 16 per cent. Here is what the Treasurer said in opposition—'There is no spinning these figures,' and 'Instead of ... accepting that unemployment is a problem ... they just ignore that it is happening.' In the words of the member for Brisbane Central when she was appointed to her ministry: 'Youth unemployment is always difficult to address. I don't know that there's much you can change structurally.'

Ms GRACE: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take offence to those statements. I have explained that they were incorrect and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Mr SPEAKER: Was that a personal reflection?

Mr LANGBROEK: It is a direct quote, Mr Speaker.

Ms GRACE: I take offence to those statements. I have explained that they are incorrect and I request that they be withdrawn.


Mr SPEAKER: The standing procedure is that if the member finds them offensive they are to be withdrawn. Will you withdraw?

Mr LANGBROEK: Mr Speaker, I withdraw. It is a direct quote. I have withdrawn though.

Mr SPEAKER: Unconditional. Thank you. You may continue.

Mr LANGBROEK: With attitudes such as this, is it any wonder that youth unemployment in her very own region of Brisbane city has skyrocketed, with more than 4,000 young people from the region losing their jobs? This is a government frozen at the wheel. We need a plan with some direction.

Newman LNP Government, Performance

 **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) (10.21 am): This week we have seen the LNP carry on and try to score cheap political points with their talk of bullying, but let us have a look at their own actions when they were in government. I have been the Minister for Communities for a little over a year, and in that time I have travelled up and down Queensland meeting with hundreds of community groups—neighbourhood centres, women's refuges, youth centres. I have to say that, even now, a year on from the LNP government, the feedback I get is that these groups have an overwhelming sense of relief—relief that they can now advocate on behalf of their members, relief that they can speak out about the vulnerable Queenslanders they work with.

For three years, these groups were silenced, intimidated and bullied because gag clauses were put in their funding agreements. What a shameful and cruel move to put gag clauses in funding agreements for these hardworking community organisations that work with the most vulnerable Queenslanders. It is not just gag clauses; 362 community organisations had their funding reduced under the LNP. What does that look like on the ground? It affected programs like the Breaking the Cycle program in Rockhampton that worked with women and children experiencing violence. Organisations like Sisters Inside, the Queensland AIDS Council and the Working Women's Service all had their funding cut.

Ms Davis interjected.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Ms FENTIMAN: These organisations were cut each and every day, with some of our most vulnerable Queenslanders affected. Their own election review—

Mr Springborg interjected.

Ms FENTIMAN: I take the interjection. In their own election review, the Borbidge-Sheldon review, it was found that they had alienated almost every section of the community.

Mr Springborg interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Leader of the Opposition, it is not an opportunity to debate. You will have an opportunity to put questions later to the minister if you choose.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Ms FENTIMAN: Their own election review said they were without support from almost every community group in the lead-up to the election. What about their arrogance? They went after the doctors. How did that work out, Leader of the Opposition? They went after the lawyers, the judges and their own public servants. I do not know whether the LNP government were afraid of criticism and had something to hide or whether they simply did not care about the hardworking community organisations that work with some of our most vulnerable Queenslanders. We had gag clauses and funding cuts, and they alienated almost every community group, every section of the community.


Ms Davis interjected.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Ms FENTIMAN: They used bullying tactics to silence those who wanted to criticise them. It was shameful and cruel, particularly when they put gag clauses in funding agreements for these organisations. The sheer hypocrisy we have seen from those opposite this week is absolutely breathtaking.

Mr SPEAKER: I counsel the member for Nanango and her colleague the member for Aspley in relation to their interjections. The interjections I have heard seem to be more about disrupting the speaker and not about raising reasonable interjections.

Nurses, Enterprise Bargaining

 **Mr McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (10.24 am): I rise today to talk about nurses' pay. I am not going to go back into the history—because we could spend all day on that—but I will focus my speech on the more recent events. When the LNP came to power in 2012, the enterprise bargaining agreement

with the nurses had run out. Within 14 days, we had put in place EB8 that gave the nurses a three per cent pay rise each year for three years. We negotiated with the QNU, and no-one can say that the QNU and the LNP are good bed partners. Come 2015, the same QNU poured hundreds of thousands of dollars of their members' money into getting this mob opposite into state parliament. The sad reality is that EB8 finished on 1 July 2015 and this mob over there have still not negotiated a new enterprise bargaining agreement with their soulmates in the QNU. Can members imagine if that had been us on the other side of the chamber doing that? There would have been demonstrations in the streets from the QNU, but their mates across the chamber, who are funded by the nurses, get away with it.

In addition to that, the QNU now have to explain to their membership, after they have spent their own members' money, why the government has not struck a bargain. They have 2.5 per cent each year for three years on the table, and a little birdie has told me that the minister has put \$41 million on the table as well. The same little birdie also told me that there is a hero for the QNU, and that is the Deputy Premier. What happens is that Beth Mohle picks up the telephone and gives the Deputy Premier a tingle. I can just see the Deputy Premier then ringing the Minister for Health saying, 'Cameron, what are you doing to us here, lad?' This little birdie is still very active and very alive. There is a third player here—and that is the member for Brisbane Central.

Ms Grace interjected.

Mr McARDLE: It is the Minister for Industrial Relations, who spent three years working for the QNU. If I am not mistaken, the minister got a fairly hefty pay rise quite recently in December last year. What is she doing to assist the QNU sisterhood get the increase they need to make their ends meet?

Ms Grace interjected.

Mr Hinchliffe interjected.

Mr McARDLE: What we have here is this. We have the QNU, we have the Minister for Health, we have the Deputy Premier and we have the QNU altogether in one cohort. What we have not got is the nurse. We have not got the nurse in Cairns, Bundaberg, Townsville, Mackay, the Gold Coast, Robina and Mount Isa dealing with this matter. They must be wondering to themselves why they are bothering with this mob.

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: I caution the Minister for Industrial Relations for her disruptive interjections, and I also caution the Leader of the House.

Mr Cripps interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I don't need your assistance, member for Hinchinbrook.

Liberal National Party, Performance



Hon. KJ JONES (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism and Major Events) (10.28 am): Mr Speaker, I think she was only responding because she is part of the sisterhood. Someone needs to tell the opposition that today is St Patrick's Day not April Fools' Day. We have come in here today and listened to the former minister for education and training complain about youth unemployment when he cut the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program. We had the former minister for health walk into this place and talk about nursing when he cut more than 1,500 nurse and midwife positions in Queensland. The absolute gall of these blokes to walk in here and say this. Do they never reflect? Speaking of reflection, what we have seen all this week—

Ms Trad: Too busy talking to birds.

Ms JONES: Birds or rats? What we have seen this week once again is a failure of leadership by the Leader of the Opposition. At the start of this week, I was getting a little bit excited. He came in here on Tuesday and the very first speech he made was all about how he was going to deliver jobs. What we have seen all week is the same old LNP getting in the gutter with personal attacks.

That is what we have seen. Instead, what I am calling on the Leader of the Opposition to do is to start looking at the quality of the people in his own team with whom he sits. Going into this week they have sat there happy to fling mud wherever it suits them when a number of failings in his own team have been exposed this week. What we have seen is a disgraced LNP candidate in Tennyson being exposed for the terrible things he has done. He was disgracefully disendorsed and one of his own team knew about it.

Mr Dick: They knew about it.


Ms JONES: They knew about it. They knew about it years ago but they are denying that. We know that this was brought to the attention of the member for Surfers Paradise a couple of years ago. I understand that his position publicly is that he was not aware because he was not part of the LNP preselection, but that did not stop all his colleagues going and campaigning with the candidate. There we have the member for Indooroopilly campaigning with the discredited candidate, the member for Mount Ommaney campaigning with the discredited candidate and the member for Indooroopilly popping up again campaigning with the discredited candidate. They come in here and say that somehow their standards are higher. I know they do not talk to their BCC colleagues, but are we meant to believe that they do not talk amongst themselves? We know that they do not because they are a deeply divided team.

Mr Powell interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Thank you, member for Glass House. I do not need your assistance.

Ms JONES: No-one believes, because there is no credibility to believe, that the Leader of the Opposition has changed at all or has learnt any lessons from the last election. To come in here on the last day of parliament this week and try to take the high moral ground on cutting nurse numbers and midwives when they cut 1½ thousand of them and to come in here and take the high moral ground on youth unemployment when they cut the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program is a disgrace.

Member for Cairns

 **Mr SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.31 am): Yesterday, we had illusion and delusion from the honourable members opposite. Today we have revision. We have revision without any reference to facts whatsoever. We have just heard from the Minister for Tourism in Queensland with regard to the situation in Queensland Health. When we came to government it was in a \$300 million deficit situation. There were 1,500 people losing their jobs as a result of Labor's Health payroll debacle and they did absolutely nothing about it. The true situation is this: when we left office there were 1,000 more nurses than when we came to office; 34,000 nurses compared to 33,000 nurses. When the honourable member talks about standards, this is the Labor Party standard. Mr Michael Haire, an ETU and Labor Party thug who—

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I rise to a point of order. The Leader of the Opposition tabled this document yesterday. I do not think he needs to display it any further.

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, I think we have the message if you would like to put your prop down.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Contained within this secret document is an image of an ETU thug, Mr Michael Haire, standing with the member for Barron River. Mr Michael Haire continues to be a member of the ETU, a member of the Labor Party and an affiliate of the Labor Party, in stark contrast with the standards of the LNP with regard to our Tennyson candidate. My challenge today to the member for Ashgrove is to go out there and say ta-ta to Mr Haire, this bullying thug who has actually intimidated the honourable member for Cairns in the most vile and explicit way. That is the standard, and the standard that you are prepared to condone is the standard that you are prepared to live by. This is the standard that the Premier is prepared to condone. Therefore, it is the standard that the Premier is prepared to live by. In the last week or so we have seen from the member for Barron River, the member for Capalaba and other members the most appalling attacks on the member for Cairns. This is the standard that exists on that side.

Tomorrow is international antibullying day as per the way we commemorate it here in Queensland. I would encourage all of those members opposite to actually pick up one of these wrist bands and wear it as a statement against bullying. It says, 'Bullying? No way.' It says, 'Take a stand together.' The only stand that those opposite are prepared to take together is to accept complicity for bullying and intimidation in Queensland, particularly against one of their own, which has meant that one of their own now sits on the crossbenches. They are like the emperor without any clothes: what they say is not what they live by. What they say is what they do not live by. We have an exhibit over there in the honourable member for Cairns. Tomorrow they will not be able to wear that with any genuine application whatsoever; it will be false. It is about time that this Premier took a stand against bullying and intimidation.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr SPEAKER: Question time will conclude at 11.34 am.

Member for Cairns



Mr SPRINGBORG (10.34 am): My first question without notice is to the Premier. I refer to the culture of union thuggery endemic within the ETU, demonstrated again by ETU and Labor operative Michael Haire, and I ask: as the Premier has a number of ETU members in her government, can she name just one member who has condemned these antics?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I made it very clear yesterday about the standards that the people of Queensland expect from the elected members of parliament. The member is now casting examples of standards—

Mrs Stuckey: Lift your standards.

Ms PALASZCZUK: If the member opposite wants to talk about standards she should look in her own backyard. Honestly, she should look at her own parliamentary standards. The member for Kawana came in here with his little toy and put it on his shoulder. As I have said—and I will say it again—I expect high standards from my cabinet, from my caucus, and the people of Queensland expect high standards from all members of parliament including those opposite.

Member for Cairns

Mr SPRINGBORG: My second question without notice is also to the Premier. As the Premier and leader of government in the state, does the Premier intend to take any action to prevent political parties accepting donations from the ETU until they repudiate bullying and intimidation as a legitimate political tactic?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. I am glad the Leader of the Opposition has raised the issue about political donations because we are still waiting to see where \$100,000 of their secret donations has come from. There was \$100,000 of donations. Where is it? Who has donated to the LNP? So do not come in here—

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, I know you are keen to talk about that topic, but that was not the question that the Leader of the Opposition—

Ms PALASZCZUK: It is. It is about political donations. The question is about political donations. In the Labor Party, on this side of the House, we declare our political donations. It is there in black and white for all to see. However, on that side of the House we do not see the declarations of those opposite because \$100,000 is missing.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I rise to a point of order. Apropos the rules of relevance—and I am happy for the Premier to have peripheral indulgence. Firstly, I draw her attention to my question, which was specifically in relation to accepting donations from the ETU until they repudiate bullying and intimidation as a legitimate political tactic.

Ms PALASZCZUK: As I said very clearly, on this side of the House—in fact, let's go back to the first piece of legislation we introduced in this House. It was about accountability and integrity in government—declaring political donations over \$1,000. Under the former government we saw rules rushed through the House lifting the thresholds so no-one would know who was donating to the LNP. What this government did—one of the first pieces of legislation we introduced into this House was about transparency and accountability.

Mr STEVENS: I rise to a point of order. The Premier has not in her answer mentioned ETU at all, which was the specific point of the question. She is debating the issue. Please bring her back to relevance in terms of the answer.

Mr SPEAKER: I understand the question focused on the ETU and the secondary issue is about donations. I would urge the Premier, if she is able, to focus on the initial part of the question about the ETU, and then if you want to touch on the wider issue that is fine.

Ms PALASZCZUK: As I said, on this side of the House the Labor Party, through the state secretary, declares all political donations over \$1,000, as is required by the law. On that side of the House we have \$100,000 in secret donations that are still missing and that are still being hidden from the people of Queensland.

National Disability Insurance Scheme

Mrs GILBERT: My question is to the Premier, and I ask: will the Premier update the House on the status of the NDIS bilateral agreement?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Mackay for that very important question. Earlier this week the Minister for Disability Services and I signed the NDIS bilateral agreement and sent it down to the Commonwealth government for Malcolm Turnbull, the Prime Minister of Australia, to countersign. I am very pleased to announce to the House that today I have received a copy of the signed bilateral agreement for the National Disability Insurance Scheme, which has been signed by me and the Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull. This is good news for Queensland. This is great news for people with a disability, and my government is proud to have been a cosignatory of this significant landmark agreement that will mean the rollout of the National Disability Insurance Scheme here in Queensland.

What does it mean? It means the early transition for children and young people in Townsville, Charters Towers—which I am quite sure the members would be very happy about—and Palm Island. It also means that the early transition period will commence from 1 January 2016 to 30 January 2016 and the full scheme will commence on 1 July 2019. We know how important this is for the people of Queensland. When I was former minister for disability services, so many people came up to me talking about the importance of having a National Disability Insurance Scheme, not just in Queensland but right across Australia.

What this groundbreaking agreement now means is that more people can access the National Disability Insurance Scheme than ever before. What we saw from those opposite when they were in government was a complete reluctance to have a trial site in Queensland. You should hang your heads in shame. You were the minister responsible, and you were shouted down at a rally because the member did not believe in having a trial site here in Queensland. My government has—

Mr STEVENS: I rise to a point of order. The Premier is pointing across the chamber saying, 'You, you, you.'

Mr SPEAKER: I remind members it is important that we refer to people as 'minister' or 'the member for'.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Families across the state were disappointed in the member for Aspley for her lack of understanding and compassion. In year 1, 15,250 people will be part of the National Disability Insurance Scheme in Queensland; in year 2, 16,200 people will be part of the National Disability Insurance Scheme here in Queensland; and in year 3, 59,800 people will be party to the National Disability Insurance Scheme here in Queensland. That is what my government is doing: we are delivering and we will fight for Queensland.

Criminal Organisations

Mr LANGBROEK: My question without notice is to the Minister for Police, and I ask: following recent reports of Satudarah and the Mongrel Mob entering Queensland, will the minister advise if the Queensland Police Service has recommended the listing of any additional organisations to the Attorney-General for addition as criminal organisations?

Mr BYRNE: I thank the member for the question. It is interesting that that question could have been asked of me at any point in time if the member actually had serious concerns about this matter. This all points toward matters that have been debated in this House over a considerable period of time concerning outlaw motorcycle gangs and bikies. My views are a matter of record, unlike those opposite, who have stood in this House over many years and flipped and flopped. They have gone from arguing for the case for civil liberties for motorcycle gangs in 2009, when the Leader of the Opposition sat down and met with members of outlaw motorcycle gangs, to three years later having a completely reversed position. This government has been consistent in our views about outlaw motorcycle gangs.

I am not going to illuminate the advice that I receive from the Queensland Police Service and other agencies regarding our actions against outlaw motorcycle gangs and organised crime, and nor should I. We have been consistent since being elected. My record on this issue, which predates the LNP's ham-fisted approach to this problem, is consistent. I have maintained a consistent position since day one. In fact, prior to the LNP's legislation on bikies in this House it was only me and the member for Mermaid Beach to my recollection who stood up and talked about the issues on the Gold Coast concerning bikies, when those opposite were out there equating bikie colours to being football jerseys. Do not try and rewrite history here. Do not try and pretend you have some sort of moral position that is justifiable. As an opposition you have flipped and flopped for four years.

We have maintained a consistent approach. Everyone in this House knows that we are getting a task force report by the end of this month that will inform the government's decisions going forward. Up until that point, the efforts of the Queensland Police Service remain focused and attentive to the issues of organised crime. That is the reality. Everyone over there who has the slightest idea of what is going on here knows how determined this government and the Queensland Police Service are to address the issue of organised crime and the subset of outlaw motorcycle gangs. I am very proud of the record that we have displayed consistently over the last four years in putting forward policy to deal with organised crime which is prudent, sensible, measured and informed by evidence. That is where we are at. We are not the yoyos who sit on the other side of the fence, one minute arguing civil liberties and then rolling out draconian legislation. We are consistent and considered, and you should be ashamed that, given your history, you even raise these issues.

Unemployment

Mr FURNER: My question is to the Treasurer. Can the Treasurer please update the House on the unemployment figures in Queensland?

Mr PITT: I thank the honourable member for the question. I have good news for Queensland. Hot off the press, Queensland's trend unemployment rate is 5.9 per cent in February, down from the reported 6.1 per cent and, very importantly, on a trend basis down from 6.6 per cent at the election. If we are going to listen to the member for Clayfield and the member for Surfers Paradise when they refer to seasonally adjusted figures when it suits them and trending the rest of the time, let us look at the seasonally adjusted rate.

This is great news for Queensland. Queensland's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 5.6 per cent in February, which is down from 6.4 per cent in January, and it is only 0.1 per cent higher than the damage they caused before they took office. It was 5.5 per cent when they took office and it is down to 5.6 per cent. In trend terms, this month employment rose by 3,900, which is up 0.2 per cent. In trend terms, since the election, even after a rebasing, 70,100 jobs have been created in Queensland. This consisted of a 34,700 person rise in full-time employment and a 35,400 person rise in part-time employment. That is around 2,670 full-time jobs created per month. The ABS states that trend employment growth in February 2016 was strongest in absolute terms in Victoria and Queensland, up 3,900 persons in each state, but strongest in relative terms in Queensland, up 0.2 per cent.

Those opposite got rid of Skilling Queenslanders for Work. The now shadow Treasurer says that he stands by that. That is a terrible thing, because we know that bringing Skilling Queenslanders for Work back has helped contribute to this result. We have more hard work to do, because we are not going to be happy until we get that unemployment rate down further. We are working hard each and every day—not sacking Queenslanders like those opposite did.

I think the member for Surfers Paradise should put away his *Brideshead Revisited* book and look at *Hansard* to see some of the disgraceful questions asked this week which have nothing to do with jobs. We talk about jobs and we deliver on jobs.

Member for Cairns

Mr POWELL: My question without notice is to the Minister for Energy, and I ask: as a minister whose portfolio's workforce comprises members of the ETU and as a former member of the ETU himself, does the minister condone the antics of his former comrades towards the member for Cairns?

Mr BAILEY: I thank the honourable member for his question—again, a question not about jobs, productivity or the economy. What we see here is the usual political games of the opposition being played. I am not familiar with the reference the honourable member has made. Obviously there will be people who are disappointed in the decision by the member for Cairns. He himself acknowledges that. People who supported the Labor campaign in Cairns are going to be disappointed—people both within the party and within the movement—and they may express that they are not happy. The nature of our democracy is that people will express their point of view. Under the system we have, people have the right to express their point of view. To suggest that people would not be disappointed in that decision is absurd. People will vent their points of view. I am not—

Mr Springborg interjected.

Mr BAILEY: The member should wait for the answer. I am not familiar with those particular words, but it is obvious that people will be disappointed and they will express their point of view. That is the system we live under.

Skilling Queenslanders for Work

Mr WHITING: My question is to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on the Palaszczuk government's Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative?

A government member interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Murrumbidgee very much for the question. I also acknowledge the minister's interjection, because we do have a Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative. I am very proud to say that my government brought back a very effective program that is delivering thousands of jobs for young people and for people right across the state.

I reiterate what the Treasurer just said. The seasonally adjusted unemployment level in this state is now 5.6 per cent. This is great news for Queenslanders. This testifies to everything my government is committed to: driving jobs in this state. The facts speak for themselves. The ABS data shows that the states with the strongest growth rate for jobs and employment in Australia are Victoria and Queensland, and Queensland is the standout. We cannot be clearer: we are passionate about jobs and we believe in jobs—unlike those opposite. Two opposition members want to leave their Queensland jobs and go to Canberra. We will stand up for jobs right across this state.

In relation to the question asked by the member for Murrumbidgee, I am advised that Skilling Queenslanders for Work is delivering 10 projects—over \$1.6 million worth of funding—assisting over 500 people in his electorate alone. The Attorney-General has advised me that as a result of the second funding round of Skilling Queenslanders for Work 183 projects worth around \$30 million will be delivered across Queensland to provide nationally recognised training, skills development and job opportunities to nearly 6,000 unemployed and underemployed Queenslanders, giving them hope and opportunity for long-term employment into the future.

What was the record of those opposite when it comes to jobs and Skilling Queenslanders for Work? The Deputy Leader of the Opposition tore up the contract on Skilling Queenslanders for Work. He axed Skilling Queenslanders for Work. The Deloitte report estimated that, with a program cost of \$53 million per annum, for every dollar invested it was delivering nearly \$8 to the economy. That was the evidence, but those opposite shut the program down.

This program is delivering right across the state. We will continue to stand up for jobs. We will continue to diversify our economy. We know that there are people out there searching for jobs, and I am 100 per cent committed, night and day, to making sure we get jobs in this state.

Carmichael Mine

Mr CRIPPS: My question without notice is to the Minister for State Development and the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines. Given that the minister advised the House yesterday that there were no remaining obstacles and it has now been more than 40 hours since this parliament agreed to the motion to provide all remaining approvals for the Adani Carmichael coalmine project, can the minister advise whether he has signed the mining lease and, if not, when he will do so?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for Hinchinbrook for his question about a very important topic to this government, the development of the Galilee Basin. It is very important for the government and for the people of Central Queensland and Queensland as a whole. A land compensation agreement with the last landowner on the Carmichael mine site was signed by Adani. The mining lease is available for me to peruse. I will be taking this matter very seriously. I do not want to repeat the mistakes made by the federal environment minister, Greg Hunt, when he approved the environmental authority post haste and then was dragged back into court. That is the last thing the people of Queensland need. I intend to take my time to scrutinise these documents very thoroughly indeed.

Mr Springborg interjected.

Ms Palaszczuk interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition and Premier, I would urge you not to have a debate across the chamber. You can go outside if you want to.

Dr LYNHAM: I am very pleased that the member for Hinchinbrook has seen the light and understands due process. Due process must be followed in this case. Previously he had said in Facebook posts that he would have signed the mining lease directly after the environmental authority was approved. That is wrong by law. The compensation agreements would have had to be signed before—

Mr Cripps interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Hinchinbrook, your interjections are simply disruptive.

Dr LYNHAM: I have seen the effect of employment and jobs in Central Queensland. I have visited Bowen. I have met with the traditional owners of Abbot Point, the Juru people. I have spoken to Angie Akee, one of the leaders of the Juru people. I know how precious these jobs will be to the people of Central Queensland. I will be doing the most thorough job to make sure that when these mining leases are approved they are approved with the appropriate scrutiny such that they are secure for the people of Central Queensland and Adani can progress with confidence to develop the Galilee Basin to bring prosperity to Central Queensland and Queensland—jobs now and jobs for the future.

Infrastructure Projects

Ms BOYD: My question is of the Deputy Premier. Will the Deputy Premier inform the House about the expenditure of the state's capital program and why it is important to plan for infrastructure?

Ms TRAD: I thank the honourable member for Pine Rivers for her question. Of course, I am very pleased to talk about the state's capital budget, which this year alone is over \$10 billion and supports 27½ thousand jobs. I add my comments in relation to today's employment figures. They are fantastic. It just demonstrates, that when you have a government that is focused on jobs and infrastructure and planning for the future, you get jobs in Queensland and infrastructure built in Queensland. Our State Infrastructure Plan, which has been well received by third-party stakeholders, has an initial contribution of \$500 million—half a billion dollars—into the new State Infrastructure Fund. We are acting on infrastructure, we are delivering on infrastructure throughout the state and we are accelerating capital works expenditure where necessary.

Yesterday, I listened with interest to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition when he was spruiking the achievements of the LNP whilst in government in relation to its capital expenditure. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition was quite boastful when he said—

... that the total amount that we spent on capital works and capital grants in the three years we were in government was \$41 billion.

Sadly, unlike the old treasurer, the new shadow Treasurer cannot read budget papers. Like so many things the LNP did, it overpromised and underdelivered. Whilst the LNP may have budgeted for \$41 billion, when it was in government it spent a lot less. For the benefit of the House, I would like to table a copy of the budget papers over the three years that the LNP was in government.

Tabled paper: Extracts of Capital Statements from 2012-13 to 2015-16 state budgets [386].

In 2012-13, they budgeted for almost \$15.5 billion, but they spent less than \$13.8 billion. In 2013-14, they budgeted for over \$14 billion, but spent just under \$12 billion—a massive underspend of \$2.6 billion. In 2014-15, they budgeted for almost \$11.5 billion, but the actual expenditure was \$1.7 billion less. So while the LNP budgeted for \$41 billion, it spent \$35.3 billion. That is an underspend of \$5.7 billion.

The LNP members keep talking about how much more their capital budget was than Labor's, but they have not admitted that \$9 billion of that budget was natural disaster relief funding, up to three-quarters of which was Commonwealth funding.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Mount Ommaney, member for Kawana, your injections are simply disruptive and not reasonable. You are now warned under standing order 253A. Member for Nanango, if you persist, you will be as well.

Early Childhood Development Program

Mrs SMITH: My question is to the Minister for Education. Can the minister guarantee whether the fully state funded ECDP, which has been such a success at the Mount Ommaney Special School in my electorate, will continue in its current format after the introduction of the NDIS?

Ms JONES: I thank the honourable member for the question, because this is something that I am very passionate about. I encourage the honourable member for Mount Ommaney—and I am sure that she is acting in the interests of the children at that school—to understand the agreement with the NDIS. With the signing of the NDIS agreement back in 2009, I believe, it was decided that early years support for children with disabilities would be part of the NDIS process.

In Queensland, under the former Labor government—and this continued under the LNP government—we provided state government support through ECDP services. While I am on my feet, I take this opportunity to again thank the wonderful staff who provide these ECDP services right across Queensland. Our government has been resolute in saying that we will continue to provide work for these ECDP workers and that they will continue to stay in Queensland government employment. Unlike when the LNP was in government and we saw 500 fewer teachers in our schools, we have said very clearly that their work will continue. But we know that, as part of the NDIS, there is a transition. I have said publicly that we will work with the federal government to ensure that this transition is as smooth as possible.

Indeed, I have written to the Prime Minister, because I have heard community concern about whether the same level of service will be provided as has been provided by us through our ECDP services. The Premier and I have written to the Prime Minister calling on him to ensure that the funding provided by the federal government for the transition to the NDIS provides the good quality service that Queenslanders have come to expect because of the work that we have done.

When there are key issues like this happening in education, members can understand why I was so angered that they cancelled the national meeting for education last week. We know that there are major issues ahead for us in education. One is this issue that was raised by the LNP member about how we make this transition as smooth as possible for families with children with disabilities.

Why will they not front the cameras and talk about the \$6 billion worth of cuts to education to state schools, independent schools and Catholic schools in our state? Why will they not properly fund child-care regulation in this country? We have seen significant growth in the child-care sector and almost zero growth when it comes to regulating the sector. I think that every parent believes that they deserve to have a safe environment for their children.

Mr Mander: They're still waiting for a phone call.

Ms JONES: I take the interjection from the member for Everton. I have heard nothing from him about distancing himself from the disgraceful comments by the member for Dawson. If the member wants to start talking, he should start saying that the comments of the member for Dawson were disgraceful—linking state schools to paedophilia. If he wants to talk, he should start talking about that.

Townsville, Drug and Alcohol Services

Mr STEWART: My question is to the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services. Will the minister advise the House how the Palaszczuk government is boosting drug and alcohol services in Townsville?

Mr DICK: I thank the honourable member for his question. Mr Speaker, could I ask for your indulgence and say that, although today is St Patrick's Day, it is also a special day for the member for Townsville. It is his birthday. I am proud to have Scottish and Irish heritage. The fighting Irish comes out in me sometimes, but that is only because I am provoked constantly by the opposition. The member's name must come from the 'O'Steewart' family perhaps. It seems like a less than Irish name to me, but I wish the member well on this day and I thank him for the question.

I also thank the member for Townsville for his advocacy in this area. Our government is committed to improving access to Queenslanders and their families facing struggles with drug and alcohol. We are keen to assist those families and individuals by improving access to treatment and support.

Last year, we launched the Queensland Alcohol and Other Drugs Action Plan 2015-17, which includes no fewer than 54 actions to target problems arising out of alcohol and drug related harms in Queensland, including for people living in Townsville. Part of that package was a \$6 million investment to address the use of ice in the community, including \$1 million to roll out a drug and alcohol brief intervention team at the Townsville Hospital emergency department.

More recently, the member for Townsville contacted me with a plea for our government to go one step further to boost drug and alcohol services in Townsville. I know that he was strongly supported in that call for additional services by the member for Thuringowa, Aaron Harper, and also by my ministerial colleague Coralee O'Rourke, the member for Mundingburra.

Townsville Recovery Services is run by the Salvation Army in Townsville. It offers 37 beds to support men, women and young people suffering from drug, alcohol and gambling addiction. The member for Thuringowa learned that the Salvation Army's bid to expand their work by developing a new drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre was progressing and that the Salvation Army wanted to expand its work in Garbutt.

Today, I am pleased to announce that the Palaszczuk Labor government has stepped up to the plate to assist the Salvation Army in Townsville. We will provide a one-off grant of \$1 million to help the Salvation Army fill that last gap in the \$4.5 million that it needs to move that service and increase its size to 52 beds. We are putting in the final \$1 million required to make that expansion a reality. That will create 44 full-time jobs during construction and an additional 15 employment opportunities at the centre once it opens. Of course, that new centre will help people in Townsville with their rehabilitation and it will help re-engage them with employment. That centre will also ease the burden on families, on the health system and on the justice system. I thank the member for Townsville for advocating for his community. He is someone who believes strongly in his community—

(Time expired)

Robina Hospital, Forensic Patients

Ms BATES: My question without notice is to the Minister for Health. Can the minister confirm that forensic patients housed at Robina Hospital, who should be at The Park, are now being reclassified as non-forensic patients in order to deal with the adverse publicity and that, as a consequence, nurses are now being paid less to care for the same patients?

Mr DICK: No, I am not aware of that issue.

Mining Industry, Exploration

Mr WILLIAMS: My question is to the Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines. Can the minister update the House on how the Palaszczuk government is helping the coal exploration sector during these times of low commodity prices?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for Pumicestone for his question, noting his support for Queensland's coal sector. It is time to note also, as we all know, that the resources sector does not just exist in the mines of Central Queensland or the north-west; the resources sector is in every community in this state, as the member for Pumicestone knows. We met with an advanced manufacturing company in his electorate, Northern Light Technologies, an advanced manufacturing company that is doing Queensland proud making equipment for the mining sector not only here in Australia but also for overseas.

Queensland has long benefited from a strong mining and exploration industry. It provides jobs, royalties and obvious economic benefits to this state. The Palaszczuk government recognises the difficulties the global market downturn has on our state. We cannot deny that. Many companies are struggling to undertake exploration and to be financially secure. We on this side of the House recognise why the coal exploration sector needs relief during these difficult times. Today I have announced the approval of the Exploration Industry Expenditure Concession. I have previously announced a concession solely for the mineral exploration sector, however, after more investigation and consultation this concession has been extended to include coal companies and coal exploration. The Palaszczuk government has consulted the Queensland Exploration Council, the Queensland Resources Council and the Association of Mining Exploration Companies and they have all supported the EIEC in how it reflects the current situation for coal and mineral exports.

This concession will allow eligible permit holders to apply for a reduction of up to 50 per cent on the statutory expenditure levels for exploration permits for minerals and coal for the permit milestone anniversary years of 2016 and 2017. Based on the expenditure commitments lodged with my Department of Natural Resources and Mines this will allow for a reduction in condition expenditure of up to \$160 million for the mineral sector and \$114 million for the coal sector. Explorers will still be expected to undertake meaningful exploration on their tenure and meet all their other obligations, including their environmental obligations.

My department will be contacting exploration permit holders, tenure agents and peak industry organisations to ensure all eligible permit holders are aware of this concession and the process required to take advantage of this concession, again demonstrating the Palaszczuk government is extending a handout to those people in need in the exploration sector.

Rural and Remote Schools, Teachers

Mr KATTER: My question without notice is to the Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism and Major Events. The introduction of the Independent Public Schools Program reduces the opportunities for teachers to relocate after doing their time in the bush and therefore removes the incentive to attract new teachers, and I ask: how is the Palaszczuk government helping attract more quality teachers to rural and remote schools?

Ms JONES: I thank the honourable member for his question. I have had the privilege of meeting with the member for Mount Isa numerous times about how we can provide better quality education for all students in Queensland no matter where they live in our great state. We have worked together on a number of things to improve access to good quality education in rural and remote Queensland. I thank him for his genuine passion in this regard. I have also been working with the Isolated Parents Association with whom I know the honourable member for Mount Isa has a close working relationship.

I am very pleased to inform the House that one of the first things I did, taking up concerns raised by members of parliament, including the member for Mount Isa, was to look at ways that we can attract new, talented teachers to rural and remote parts of Queensland. I am very pleased to inform the House today that a program introduced by the Palaszczuk government to deliver new teachers to rural and remote Queensland through a bursaries program has been a great success. In actual fact, we have 38 new teachers who are taking advantage of this new program that started this year. I am very pleased to inform the House that eight of these teachers are in the honourable member for Mount Isa's electorate. There are two at Spinifex State College, one at Townview State School, two at Hughenden State School, one at Happy Valley State School, one at Cloncurry State School and at Doomadgee State School as well. Through the program we now have 14 teachers teaching in Central Queensland, 13 in North Queensland, 10 in Far North Queensland and one in the Western Darling Downs. I am sure when I have my next trip to Mount Isa I will join the member for Mount Isa to talk to Hayley Mellon and Karlee Bowtell who are two of the bursary recipients who have started work at Hughenden State School.

There are two issues when it comes to providing additional teachers in rural and remote Queensland—I see the member for Dalrymple nodding because it is an issue he has raised with me as well—one is ensuring that we get new, talented teachers. This year we have had 1,250 beginning teachers start their career with Education Queensland. So the first issue is attracting them to the portfolio. The second is ensuring that they stay. Through this bursaries program we provide new teachers with up to \$20,000 and they commit to staying in that school under a mentoring program for three years. Up to three years we have a mentoring program in place for the best and brightest of teacher graduates from across Queensland.

This really is a great step forward to providing excellence in teaching and teaching careers in rural and remote Queensland. This is something that I am very passionate about as I travel across Queensland and our 1,234 state schools. I believe that every child deserves the best start in life and that can only be delivered by a quality education system. I finish by calling on the shadow minister for education to stand up to his colleagues in Canberra and start fighting for Queensland.

Emergency Services, Infrastructure Projects

Mr KING: My question is for the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services. Will the minister please advise the House of recent infrastructure projects underway to help Queensland emergency services workers help others within their communities?

Mr BYRNE: I thank the member for the question. I know how he takes a keen interest in the high standards of service delivery from the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services. I am pleased to advise that work is well underway on the new fire and rescue station at Petrie. With this new fire station we will soon have room to expand to meet our future demands. This replacement fire station will be built for a cost of almost \$3 million. Work started in July last year and it is expected to be completed by August.

We have also upgraded the fire and rescue station at Burleigh Heads. Those opposite are happy to take credit for projects that have been funded in Labor appropriations and they are still at it. Earlier this week the member for Clayfield claimed that the upgrade of Burleigh fire station had been built and opened by the LNP. Even for the opposition that is a bit of a stretch. The Palaszczuk government delivered the bulk of the funding, \$1.567 million, included in the current Labor budget. I note that the member for Burleigh carried out a very lonely one-man opening without anybody else in attendance. The LNP have form when it comes to opening infrastructure that is delivered on somebody else's watch.

This major upgrade at Burleigh will support our fire and rescue staff doing exactly what they do best: keeping Queenslanders safe. Again for the benefit of those opposite, the lion's share of the funding was delivered by the Palaszczuk government.

We are also building a replacement permanent fire and rescue station at Bundaberg at a cost of \$6.5 million. That is built on a two 'hect-acre' site at Wyllie Street. Again it is designed to meet the demands of future operations, training and the needs of the growing area. Construction is expected to start this year. It will be completed by June next year. Works at Petrie, Burleigh and Bundaberg stations will help the permanent station officers and permanent firefighters meet their safety standards and requirements and support for the community with that much improved infrastructure.

The Palaszczuk government's commitment to fire safety and emergency services is not just about bricks and mortar. We have also committed to maintaining safety programs that save lives. The previous government cut vital safety programs like the Fight Fire Fascination and If Its Flooded Forget It programs and did not fund them any further. We know that firefighters and rescue workers cannot do it alone. That is why the Palaszczuk government brought these vital programs back. That is the big difference between those opposite and ourselves.

George Street Police Memorial

Mr CRANDON: My question is to the Minister for Police. With regards to the Queen's Wharf development, can the police minister advise what consultation has occurred with the families of deceased officers and the Police Union about the future of the police memorial on George Street?

Mr BYRNE: I am well aware of the issue. That is a proper question for once.

Mr Crandon interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Coomera.

Mr BYRNE: I can honestly say that that matter is well recognised. Both the commissioner and everybody else involved knows that that needs to occur. A proposal about the type of location that is necessary to relocate that memorial will be required. That consultation is going ahead. The sorts of attributes that the relocation of the memorial requires have been flagged. All the people who will have a say in this are being engaged. The service is certainly looking at that matter as we speak. Of course, it will be appropriately consulted as we move forward.

I do not have in front of me the attributes that have been agreed, but, as members would assume, they would be within certain distances, under certain space requirements and with certain access to facilities and services. The matter is well known. It is flagged. The commissioner and the service are addressing it and the union is engaged on the matter. I appreciate the member bringing the matter to my attention. It is a serious matter that is being appropriately considered.

Central Queensland, Freight Industry

Mr PEARCE: My question is to the Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply, and I ask: how is the government supporting the freight industry in Central Queensland?

Mr BAILEY: I thank the honourable member for Mirani for his question and for his great advocacy for Central Queensland over nearly three decades. I can advise the House that, as part of the Palaszczuk government's State Infrastructure Plan, we will be funding \$40 million in new funding to replace five timber bridges with current load limits along the Dawson Highway between Gladstone and Biloela. More than 1,000 vehicles a day travel between Biloela and Gladstone, including more than 200 heavy vehicles or a 20 per cent mix. Only in January at the Gladstone community cabinet, the freight and agriculture industry raised this productivity block in the local road system and now the Palaszczuk government is getting on with the job. We are getting it done as part of the State Infrastructure Plan.

The timber bridge replacement package will ensure that that section of the Dawson Highway is a more productive freight route for Central Queensland. Replacing timber bridges with concrete structures as a set will improve direct freight access between Biloela and Gladstone. It will extend road-train access to Calliope and reduce the need for excess mass and over-dimension vehicles to detour through longer routes, including hundreds of additional kilometres via Rockhampton, which will be a significant productivity boost for Central Queensland. Those improvements will improve supply-chain efficiency to the port of Gladstone, which is a priority initiative recognised in Infrastructure Australia's priority list.

The package of works will also create around 40 jobs for the region over the life of the project and will complement the Collard Creek bridge replacement that the Palaszczuk government funded last year after Tropical Cyclone Marcia and that I inspected soon after that event. Our investment will support the growth of different industries in the region, which relies on the Dawson Highway for the transport of fuel and agricultural exports. The bridge replacement package will support the development of live cattle exports from Port Alma, which local government has lobbied for.

Like many of the other projects in the State Infrastructure Plan, this is a clear community need and will improve productivity, grow the economy and create local jobs. Importantly, the bridge works will also mean improved road safety for local motorists along the Dawson Highway. I thank our local members for their continued advocacy of this project, the member for Mirani and the member for Gladstone. Only a few days ago, the *Gladstone Observer* published an article in which journalist Helen Spelitis outlined support from cattle farmer Will Wilson. The article states—

He and fellow cattle producer Leo Neill-Ballantine are among a group trying to establish a new industry for the port—box chilled beef.

They are very positive about these productivity improvements that we have delivered but that were not delivered during the three years of the previous government. We are getting on with the job and we are focused on productivity.

(Time expired)

Effects Test

Mr NICHOLLS: My question is to the Minister for Small Business. Yesterday, the Turnbull government announced that it will adopt the so-called effects test in Australia's competition law to help consumers and small businesses. Can the minister explain what the effects test will mean for Queensland small businesses and whether the Queensland government will be supporting the proposed changes?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question. I am thrilled to have a question about small business because over the past several months we have heard only a very limited number of questions asked on this issue, so I do thank the member.

Yes, I am aware that we have seen flip-flopping again occur at the federal level and that the effects test is now supported by the federal government. In Queensland, small businesses are quite encouraged by this change from the federal government, because they see an opportunity to ensure that there is a fair market. However, the Queensland government is still to have a closer look at the flip-flopping by the federal government and the change that it has taken—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: One moment, members. Premier and member for Clayfield, I think it is.

Mrs O'ROURKE: As we have seen from the federal government, there is no plan around tax changes. There is no clear direction around all of that.

Mr NICHOLLS: Mr Speaker, I am reluctantly forced to take a point of order. If I had wanted to ask about tax changes we would have spoken about the federal Labor government's negative gearing debacle.

Mr SPEAKER: This is not an opportunity for a debate. What is your point of order?

Mr NICHOLLS: I ask the minister to answer the question: will she explain the effects test and its impact on small business, or doesn't she know?

Ms ENOCH: Of course, what we are seeing here is another example of the federal government flip-flopping on its policies. We have seen this happen with the effects test. Unlike those opposite, this government is focused on supporting small business in our state. We are developing a small business strategy to support small business, to help them thrive, to help them grow, to help them employ and to help them innovate. That is part of our Advance Queensland initiative. We are developing our small business strategy and this matter will be a part of our discussions on how that will affect small business in Queensland.

Advance Queensland Community Digital Champions

Ms FARMER: My question is to the Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy and Minister for Small Business. I ask: will the minister please update the House on the selection of the next round of Advance Queensland Community Digital Champions?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the honourable member for Bulimba for her question. I also thank her for her strong advocacy around the Digital Community Champions program and, obviously, her desire to ensure that as a state we are prepared for the knowledge economy of the future. In November last year, I launched the Advance Queensland Community Digital Champions program with 10 inaugural champions. Today, I am pleased to announce a further 29 outstanding individuals from across the state who have been selected as Community Digital Champions. Those champions will help inspire their communities to increase the adoption of digital technology and improve digital literacy.

All of our champions are great examples to others and I want to share three of their stories. Brisbane's Anna Kinnane was nominated by the Queensland College of Teachers and has made a significant contribution to increasing the digital literacy of teachers. Melissa Westcott from Moranbah has used digital technology to promote her Big on Shoes business to clients globally and is inspiring other businesses to do the same. Anne Moffat retired to Hervey Bay after a long career in the ICT industry. Now she is teaching young people in her region how to code and she is teaching local businesses how to use digital technologies.

Our Advance Queensland innovation and jobs plan is the Palaszczuk government's road map for preparing Queensland's economy for the future. It is a comprehensive suite of programs to build the skills needed for the digital economy and unleash the entrepreneurial potential of our state.

Contrast this to the former LNP government that had no plan to prepare Queensland for the knowledge based jobs and new economies of the future. Instead they were locked into their four-pillar plan with no real understanding of what is on the horizon for Queensland and what is required to be ready for the changing economy. They drove many of our best and brightest away with a complete disregard for the importance of research and development, and its commercial application.

In the last 12 months, under Advance Queensland, the Palaszczuk government has approved 42 research fellowships, designed to ensure collaboration between research and industry to help generate jobs in our economy. How many research fellowships did the former LNP government initiate and approve in the whole three years they were in office? Just 14 in three years. In comparison, in less than 12 months this government has approved 42 research fellowships. We are committed to the jobs of the future.

With no plan for the future and no confidence in Queensland's entrepreneurial drive, we still have not heard one policy idea in this area from those opposite. That is in stark contrast to our government's agenda to create jobs now and jobs for the future.

Lady Cilento Children's Hospital

Mr McARDLE: My question is to the Minister for Health. Can the minister confirm that children at the Lady Cilento Children's Hospital are waiting more than six months for MRI scans when the recommended time is no more than three months?

Mr DICK: No, I am not aware of that matter either. If the honourable member has concerns, as he knows, the protocol is that he can write to me and I am happy to raise them with the chair and the chief executive of Children's Health Queensland.

National Disability Insurance Scheme, Bilateral Agreement

Mr MADDEN: My question is to the Minister for Disability Services. Will the minister please advise the House what the signing of the NDIS bilateral agreement will mean for people with disability and jobs in Queensland?

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, you have two minutes.

Mrs O'ROURKE: I thank the member for Ipswich West for his question. I know he is a very strong advocate for people with a disability. As the Premier said earlier, I too was delighted to see that the bilateral agreement was signed by the federal government and handed to us this morning. This is a great step forward in providing certainty for Queenslanders.

Everywhere I go and everyone I speak to—people with disability, their families, carers and workers—has been asking me for an update. People have spoken about counting down to 1 July because they know what this will mean. The news this morning has been welcomed by people with a disability and the sector, including CPL's CEO, Angela Tillmans, who said—

CPL is incredibly excited for the NDIS and the opportunities and possibilities that it will provide for people with disabilities.


I am also excited for the 90,000 Queenslanders who will benefit from the scheme. This means they can start to plan for their future and decide how they will reach their goals.

In the first year the scheme will rollout from Townsville to Mount Isa and the gulf, Mackay and the Whitsundays and Toowoomba to the west and borders. In the second year we will be looking at Ipswich and the Lockyer Valley, Bundaberg, Rockhampton, Gladstone and west to the borders. In the third year we will be looking at Logan, the Redlands, Cairns, Brisbane, the Fraser Coast and Burnett area, the Gold Coast, Moreton Bay, the Sunshine Coast and Gympie.

This is also exciting for jobs. In the member for Ipswich West's region, it will create up to 950 jobs in Ipswich. It will create 530 jobs in Bundaberg, 830 jobs in Maryborough and up to 700 jobs in Gladstone-Rockhampton. In Brisbane we are looking at about 1,800 jobs, 1,300 jobs in the Beenleigh area and up to 1,100 jobs in the Caboolture-Strathpine area. This is a great day for the disability sector. I am glad that the bilateral agreement has been signed. It has been a long time coming.

PRIVILEGE


Ethics Committee Report

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade and Investment) (11.34 am): I rise on a matter of privilege. On 18 February 2016 I made a private member's statement in which I referenced the findings of the Ethics Committee report No. 162. I said in my private member's statement—

The Ethics Committee report reveals that the Leader of the Opposition's chief of staff clearly played a coordinating role in a predetermined strategy to leak the proceedings of the PCCC for base political advantage.

Mr Speaker, I respect your ruling on this matter and your guidance. Therefore, I clarify that the comments I made in my private member's statement did not reflect a specific finding of the Ethics Committee report No. 162 but rather were inferences drawn by me from previously unknown facts that had been revealed in the committee report.


Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House by a Member

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Minister for Sport) (11.35 am): I rise on a matter of privilege. The member for Clayfield this week has, I contend, sought to deliberately mislead the House in relation to the State Infrastructure Plan. The member for Clayfield has asserted that the plan contains projects that have been fully delivered. The former treasurer should know how to read a document that clearly identifies what expenditure had occurred prior to June 2015 and what expenditure had been allocated in the 2015-16 financial year and subsequent financial years. These details are on the very same pages he quoted from.

We are nine months into the 2015-16 financial year. It is misleading to infer that projects funded this year were delivered by a former government that left government halfway through the 2014-15 financial year. More concerning, however, is the deliberate way the member for Clayfield has attempted to embarrass me or other government members by making these misleading assertions over two days. Mr Speaker, I will be writing to you about this matter and would ask that you give it further consideration.

CHILD PROTECTION (MANDATORY REPORTING—MASON'S LAW) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

 **Ms DAVIS** (Aspley—LNP) (11.36 am): I present a bill for an act to amend the Child Protection Act 1999 for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Violence Prevention Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Child Protection (Mandatory Reporting—Mason's Law) Amendment Bill 2016 [387].

Tabled paper: Child Protection (Mandatory Reporting—Mason's Law) Amendment Bill 2016, explanatory notes [388].

I am pleased to introduce the Child Protection (Mandatory Reporting—Mason's Law) Amendment Bill 2016—a bill that expands the mandatory reporting provisions to certain individuals employed in the early childhood education and care sector, which I will refer to as the ECEC sector. Mandatory reporting laws are an important component of the Queensland child protection system that assist in the detection of serious cases of abuse of children that might otherwise go unnoticed or remain hidden.

Each Australian jurisdiction has established mandatory reporting laws; however, Queensland and Western Australia are the only two that do not extend mandatory reporting to the ECEC sector. Currently, the Child Protection Act 1999 in Queensland identifies mandatory reporters to be: a doctor or a registered nurse; a teacher; a police officer who works in child protection; and a person engaged to perform a child advocate function under the Public Guardian Act 2014.

We know that previous reviews into the child protection system in Queensland have looked at the mandatory reporting provisions, but have not recommended they be expanded to include the ECEC sector. The most recent inquiry, initiated by the LNP when in government, into the child protection system recommended that mandatory reporting requirements be consolidated into one provision and that a consistent approach to reporting child protection concerns be established. These new laws commenced after a period of training and education on 1 January 2015.

In mid-2014 I met an amazing North Queensland couple named John and Sue Sandeman. I flew to Townsville to discuss with them the issue of mandatory reporting laws. I know that John and Sue are watching this live today. John and Sue are the maternal grandparents of Mason Parker who, at just 16 months of age, was murdered by his mother's then partner in 2011. Mason attended a local childcare centre. Eight days before his death, the childcare staff had observed and taken photographs of extensive bruising on his little body.

John and Sue firmly believe that had immediate action been taken by the childcare staff to notify authorities then this may have made a difference in this case. John and Sue have led two petitions that have been lodged with the Queensland parliament requesting that Queensland childcare services and centres become mandatory reporters. The first petition had 711 signatures and was tabled in the House on 11 February 2014. A second petition with 160 signatures was tabled on 30 October 2014. The member for Hinchinbrook sponsored these petitions and has strongly advocated on behalf of John and Sue, and I know that his advocacy has been greatly appreciated.

It was the LNP in government who made the decision that an independent review was needed on whether the ECEC sector should become mandatory reporters following John and Sue's representations. On 6 November 2014, the former attorney-general asked the Queensland Law Reform Commission to undertake this review and provide a report back to government by 31 December 2015. I wish to thank the commission for the manner in which the review was conducted and the thorough examination it gave to this very important issue.

The overwhelming majority of respondents and submissions received by the commission supported extending the mandatory reporting obligation under the Child Protection Act to apply to the ECEC sector. The commission recognised the protective role of the ECEC sector in relation to children aged zero to five years who are particularly vulnerable. They noted that staff employed in ECEC services are in regular and direct contact with children and their families and are well placed to observe and report concerns that children are at risk of significant harm, thereby enabling timely intervention and the protection of children from harm.

They also noted that ECEC services are already subject to child protection obligations. They have internal policies and procedures in place and can, and do, voluntarily report concerns to Child Safety. The commission considered that the expansion of the mandatory reporting obligation to the ECEC sector aligned with these existing obligations. It also aligned with the increasing regulation of ECEC services and the professionalisation of the workforce that has taken place in recent years.

The Queensland Law Reform Commission report titled *Review of child protection mandatory reporting laws for the early childhood education and care sector* was presented to government in December last year. Only a few weeks ago the Attorney-General tabled this report, but it was only following pressure by the LNP to do so—to do the right and just thing by the Sandemans and those in the ECEC sector to whom the report is about—that she did.

Since then we have not heard any mutterings of a response from this government to the key recommendations that were made; namely that the mandatory reporting provisions in Queensland be expanded to apply to the ECEC sector. There is no logical reason for this—no logical reason why this government would delay a response to something as important as protecting children from harm. The collective wisdom of the ECEC sector in the main believe these laws should apply, and the longer it takes for this government to respond the longer it will be before the mandatory reporting process can begin.

We are putting the wheels in motion because again we see this government is frozen at the wheel—but this time on something as important as protecting little children. It seems to be the case that it will be the LNP who consistently sets the agenda for protecting children in this state.

The bill I introduce today directly responds to the commission's recommendations in the absence of this government stepping up to the plate. The bill amends the Child Protection Act 1999 to include three additional categories of mandated reporters under chapter 2, part 1AA, division 2, section 13E. I note that the exact phraseology used in the commission's report is not reflected in this bill, as the wording needs to reflect Queensland's current drafting practices and account for the various defined terms used in the act and the Education and Care Services National Law (Queensland) Act 2011.

The commission's report identifies in the list of recommendations that mandatory reporting is only to apply to individuals where it sets out 'which individuals should the mandatory reporting obligation apply to'. The amendment is therefore reflected as an individual who is a Queensland approved provider under the Education and Care Services Act or an approved provider under the education and care services national law; a supervisor for, or a staff member who holds an approved qualification of, a Queensland education and care service under the Education and Care Services Act 2013; or the nominated supervisor, or a staff member who holds an approved qualification, of an education and care service under the Education and Care Services National Law (Queensland) Act.

The addition of section 13E(1), paragraph (f) will limit the application to 'an individual who is' an approved provider. The word 'person' is defined in the Acts Interpretation Act 1954, as including corporations. It is therefore appropriate to only apply the mandatory reporting obligation to approved providers who are individuals and not corporations. The insertion of section 13E(1), paragraphs (g) and (h) are intended to cover all persons employed—that is, family day care coordinators, family day care educators et cetera—provided those persons hold the relevant approved qualification.

The commission was clear that neither volunteers nor staff members who do not meet the minimum professional qualification requirements above would be subject to the mandatory reporting obligation. The commission found that extending the mandatory reporting obligation to the ECEC sector could be adequately addressed through appropriate training and education about the scope and content of the reporting obligation and the provision of adequate support and resourcing to the ECEC sector to fulfil the obligation.

Implementing this bill will provide for sufficient time for the department of education to prepare for a comprehensive training and education program about the scope of the reporting obligation prior to proclamation on the operation of the legislation on 1 January 2017. We also believe that the cost of implementing mandatory reporting to the ECEC sector can be met from contingency allocations to the Queensland child protection reform. The LNP made sure that there was financial allocation for this reform through contingency for any unforeseen or unexpected circumstances that arise—and this is a perfect example of the responsible planning that we took to ensure that issues like this were covered.

In closing I would like to thank all those who put in submissions to the QLRC and those who attended meetings to ensure that Queensland gets this important reporting function correct. There were 29 organisations and individuals who responded to the QLRC review discussion paper. These submissions came from many and varied fields including the legal fraternity; education unions and other unions; early learning centres; kindergartens, including the Aspley East Kindergarten and Preschool Association in my very own electorate; teachers' associations; state peak bodies; government departments and commissions; academics; and, of course, John and Sue Sandeman.

The extension of mandatory reporting to the ECEC sector in Queensland through this bill is a step towards national consistency and a huge leap forward towards protecting our most precious resource—our children. We all have a responsibility to protect children from harm. May the 16 months that little Mason Parker lived his life serve to remind us all in this House that whatever we get fired up about in politics, whatever it is that riles us, nothing is more important than the safety and wellbeing of our children.

First Reading

Ms DAVIS (Aspley—LNP) (11.48 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Crawford): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee.

Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date



Ms DAVIS (Aspley—LNP) (11.48 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That under the provisions of standing order 136 the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee report to the House on the Child Protection (Mandatory Reporting—Mason's Law) Amendment Bill by 8 June 2016.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

UTILITIES, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note



Mr KING (Kallangur—ALP) (11.48 am): I move—

That the House take note of the Utilities, Science and Innovation Committee report No. 9, *Inquiry into Auditor-General report to parliament 14: 2012-13—Maintenance of water infrastructure assets*, tabled on 3 December 2015.

One of the first orders of business of the Utilities, Science and Innovation Committee was to look into the Auditor-General's report on the maintenance of water infrastructure assets. The committee requested a private briefing from the Queensland Audit Office which was held on 20 May 2015. Following the briefing, the committee requested an update from Seqwater on progress in relation to the implementation of the recommendations made in the Auditor-General's report. This was provided to our committee on 8 July 2015. The committee noted that Seqwater has implemented the recommendations made in the Auditor-General's report.

We also undertook a site visit to Seqwater's manufactured water assets. The site visit, which included a briefing from Seqwater, was conducted on 29 June 2015. After the visit to the Gold Coast desalination plant, I have to say: rust—what rust? After all the stories I heard from those opposite and the media about this rusting piece of plant, I did not find what I expected. There was no rust. I was informed on the day we visited that some couplings and bolts which were installed during construction were the wrong grade and were repaired under the defect liability process, and that is where the rust myth was perpetuated. What we saw was a well-built, well-maintained piece of infrastructure which will more than likely be required to meet peak demand for water on the Gold Coast from 2020. In fact, the Gold Coast desalination plant now runs in a hot stand-by mode so that it can be brought back online for rapid response as it may be needed during flood events to help provide clean water.

I was pleased to note that one of our committee members, the member for Southport, was a staunch supporter of this piece of infrastructure, and I commend him on his support. In essence, we noted that the decision to develop manufactured water assets was an appropriate response to the severe drought circumstances at the time and they have provided water security. The recommendations were that Seqwater expand baseline data on operating and maintenance costs for benchmark reporting, enhance performance measures and investigate opportunities to reduce ongoing costs for the desalination plant and the recycled water plant.

The evidence presented during the committee's inquiry has provided sufficient reassurance for the committee to conclude that the issues raised by the Auditor-General in the report have been significantly ameliorated since 2013. As I have stated, the desalination plant now operates in hot stand-by mode which has generated savings of 15 per cent against 2011-12 actual costs. The recycled water plant has been decommissioned and is currently in care and maintenance mode, which has reduced operating costs by more than 60 per cent compared to 2011-12 actual costs.


Seqwater continues to review options to reduce operating and capital costs of the bulk water system as part of an overall operational efficiency focus designed to put further downward pressure on bulk water prices. Water security for South-East Queensland is assured as the desalination plant can gear up to 33 per cent capacity within 24 hours and 100 per cent within 72 hours. The recycled water

plant can be recommissioned if the combined level of key water grid storage falls to 40 per cent. Seqwater has advised that as of June 2015 it has implemented all the recommendations made by the Queensland Audit Office in its 2013 report.

As I usually do, I would like to thank committee members Don Brown, Chris Whiting, Rob Molhoek, Dale Last and Jason Costigan and our hardworking secretariat, Kate, Rachelle, Lisa and Julie.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr KING: I take that interjection from the member for Lockyer, who did turn up at the western corridor recycling plant where I was able to inform him there was no rust at the desalination plant. He was quite happy to hear that and will never talk about rust again as far as the desalination plant is concerned. Having thanked the committee members and the secretariat, I commend the report to the House.

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (11.53 am): I rise to speak to the report tabled by the Utilities, Science and Innovation Committee in respect of maintenance of water infrastructure assets. It always amazes me when we come into the House how history rewrites itself. As the chair of the committee pointed out, I am on the public record as having been a supporter of the desalination plant. I was chair of finance at the Gold Coast City Council at the time when, as has been pointed out, we were facing one of the worst water crises in South-East Queensland. However, I think I need to correct the record.

When the first business case came to the Gold Coast City Council, the estimated project cost was in the order of \$120 million. There were four or five sites that were located at the time. Further studies were done and further reports came back which short-listed the options to three sites, and the cost was expected to be in the order of \$200 million. What history does not record is the conversation I had with the then premier at the Indy on the Gold Coast over lunch when I pointed out to him that the council had grave concerns about the cost, at \$240 million. We did not think it was a project that we could afford to carry as a city.

Miraculously, in something of a panic, a letter appeared the following Monday from the then premier to the Gold Coast City Council saying, 'We are taking the project over, we will take full responsibility for it, and we will reimburse council for the cost of the land that will be acquired at Tugun.' We had to take away soccer fields and relocate some other sporting facilities. 'We will also reimburse council for all of the investigative costs they have incurred so far.' Then, hey presto, suddenly we are building a desalination plant not at \$120 million, not at \$240 million but a plant with no business case that ended up blowing out to a cost somewhere in the order of \$1.5 billion.

Mr Hart: How much?


Mr MOLHOEK: \$1.5 billion. Then we had this wonderful idea of a water grid where we would create all these pipes across South-East Queensland. Apart from the desalination plant, I point out that none of them produce water.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr MOLHOEK: That is correct. I take that interjection from the member for Lockyer. There is good news in this report in spite of the disaster created by the previous Labor government with the \$10 billion cost blowout to create the water grid and the \$1 billion-plus cost blowout of the Gold Coast desalination plant. Is it any wonder there is no rust? It was gold plated in the process by the previous Labor government.

I am pleased to point out the outstanding work that Minister McArdle did when we came to government in 2012 in initiating a proper review of the water grid. He insisted that there be a review of the cost and a review of opportunities to try to reduce costs. This report says what a great job the LNP government did in trying to rein in costs. This report is saying what a great job Minister McArdle did, as the former minister for water and energy, in reining in costs and bringing in some common sense to the approaches undertaken by Seqwater both in relation to the western corridor recycling scheme and the Gold Coast desalination plant.

In the report—which the chair of the committee failed to point out—as a result of that initiative we have seen a saving of some \$257 million in respect of ongoing costs for the western corridor recycling scheme and a saving of approximately \$10 million a year as the Gold Coast desalination plant now operates in what is called hot mode. It is a great outcome and great work. What it highlights is that the LNP are the only people who should be in government because the LNP are the only people who can be trusted to manage the state's economy and assets well.

 **Mr WHITING** (Murrumbidgee—ALP) (11.58 am): I rise to speak to report No. 14 on the maintenance of water infrastructure assets. I have read this report, as has the member for Southport, who said it shows they did a great job of reining in costs. I take a different view on this, and that is the beauty of these reports. What I see in this report is that the Water for life program was a measured, very necessary response to the crisis that we were facing at the time.

I will just remind members opposite of where we were at the time. Like the member for Southport, I was there too. I was a councillor at the time and I will tell people the situation we were in at the time. We were one failed wet season away from we do not know what. In a lot of dams throughout Queensland, we were right at the bottom of the dams and we were drinking the last 10 per cent of the water that was there. I think it was a very measured response because action had to be taken and taken rapidly, and that is what I get from this report as well.


I have to say that the Gold Coast did lead the way on this, and I do congratulate them on that. We heard today the member for Southport talking about how they started the project in the Gold Coast City Council. That \$120 million or \$200 million project was taken up and it was certainly made bigger. From a Queensland perspective, I think that was the right thing to do. As I said, I think the member for Southport can congratulate himself on supporting this and being a supporter of this desalination plant.

From reading this report, it is very clear to me that these assets are not stranded assets; these assets will be needed very soon for Queensland. The report said that, because of this, the assets beyond 2030 are well and truly covered and that the desalination plant may be needed to meet the Gold Coast's capacity by 2020. That is only four years away. I hear criticism that it is just sitting there, but when we visited the desalination plant we found out that it is working all the time. Twice a week, it manufactures a certain number of megalitres of water—I think it is three megalitres—and that is put into the system on the Gold Coast. It is constantly working and supplying water to the residents of the Gold Coast.

This report shows that it has been used, and it was crucial that it was used at that time in the 2013 floods. It is good to see in this report that it can be used quickly in case of a catastrophe. These figures that are talked about are quite crucial. The desalination plant can get to 33 per cent within 24 hours and 100 per cent within 72 hours. If we are faced with another dire flood in South-East Queensland and in other parts of Queensland where our water treatment plants have been inundated, this plant can come on line quickly.

Our tours of the western corridor plant and the Gold Coast desalination plant were quite instructive. I do not think members can say this is a gold plated asset; it is a working water plant. There is a lot of concrete and a lot of stainless steel, but there is no gold plating whatsoever—metaphorical or otherwise. It is a working plant and it is a very good working plant. Like all the plants I have seen through this, it is basic and functional. I think Queensland should be proud of what we have produced with the western corridor plant and the desalination plant. We can be very proud indeed.

Once again, I emphasise what we were facing at the time. As I said, within council we were discussing what would happen if we had another failed wet season. It was unknown territory. As it was, we were taking water from the lowest part of the dam—that last 10 per cent or so from some of our dams—and the water had to be treated at such a high level and it was a very expensive process. I commend this report to the parliament.

 **Mr McEACHAN** (Redlands—LNP) (12.03 pm): I rise to speak to the *Inquiry into Auditor-General report to parliament 14: 2012-13—Maintenance of water infrastructure assets*. As a very recent arrival to this committee, I do not have the corporate knowledge of my colleagues. What I do have is a memory of the drought that started in 2001 and extended for a long time into 2008 and a memory of the ham-fisted plan that was put together at the back end of the drought and rushed through by Peter Beattie and Labor that cost Queenslanders more than \$9 billion. There was no business case for the Tugun desalination plant. It may not actually have rust on it, but it definitely has the metaphor of rust on it. The rust is a metaphor for this hulking creature that costs Queenslanders millions of dollars a year because Labor had no plan and no business case to get it going.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr McEACHAN: I will take the interjection from the member for Lockyer. There is a litany of failures when it comes to Labor and planning with water, and I will go through a few of them. We have the Tugun desalination plant which cost \$1.5 billion, and council has that going at a cost of a couple of hundred million dollars. The original scoping study had it at less than a third of the price, but Labor managed to create this white elephant. What about the Traveston Dam? What a travesty. There was up to \$700 million wasted on the establishment of a dam that never went ahead. Wouldn't it have made

sense to at least get the environmental approvals before the government bought all the land and disrupted the communities and caused havoc up there in the Mary Valley? What a disgrace. Then we have Wyaralong and the pipeline to nowhere—the dam that does not have a pipeline. There is just a litany of failure after failure after failure with what is one of our most important resources. Without water, we just come to a stop.

We cannot trust Labor to manage anything, let alone something as important as water. That is why when I read this report I was very pleased to see that it was the LNP that finally started to get a handle on the cost blowouts. I will go back to the desalination plant and read from the report. It stated—

The decision to develop the manufactured water assets was an appropriate response to the severe drought circumstances at the time—


And no-one is disputing that—

Mr Brown: You said it was ham-fisted.

Mr McEachan: It was managed in a ham-fisted way. The member for Capalaba could argue that. The report continued—

... the cost-efficiency of these assets cannot be demonstrated. ... no robust business case was developed for the Gold Coast Desalination Plant. ...

I think that is pretty telling. The figure is \$1.5 billion and there is an ongoing cost to Queenslanders year in, year out, but Labor never took the opportunity to have a look at it and do something about it. It took an LNP government to say, 'Hang on a second. How much is this costing Queenslanders? Let us have a look at it and see what we can do to maintain this thing that has been forced upon us at an exorbitant cost and sort out the ongoing maintenance cost for Queenslanders.' In wrapping up, I would like to reiterate that only an LNP government was able to reduce costs and manage this system for the benefit of Queenslanders.

 **Mr BROWN** (Capalaba—ALP) (12.08 pm): I too would like to rise in support of the motion to take note of the report entitled *Inquiry into Auditor-General report to parliament 14: 2012-13—Maintenance of water infrastructure assets*. Although I am not a member of this committee anymore, I do sit back and remember the good times and the camaraderie that we had in that committee. There were many times when we had bipartisan support in regard to these reports. They were good days, but it is a bit different now. I would like to thank the members of that committee. I would also like to thank the secretariat staff, in particular Kate McGuckin and her team. They always do a fantastic job with these reports.

With regard to the tour of the water infrastructure, which I was lucky enough to go on with the committee, I would like to thank Mike Foster from Seqwater. He could talk the leg off a donkey, but he knows his stuff. He showed us around the infrastructure including the desalination plant and the western corridor with great insight. I found the Gold Coast desalination plant fascinating—the reverse osmosis process. Again, I did not see any rust down there. What I saw was—

Mr McEachan: Metaphorical rust.

Mr BROWN: That is it! What I saw was a piece of infrastructure that was an appropriate response at the time to a need in the circumstances of a drought that was unprecedented. I understand it is getting used at the moment while dam wall work is happening at the Gold Coast. We also visited the western corridor recycling plant. I also found that interesting. As a microbiologist, I found it interesting to see how the treatment process occurred in a safe manner. Despite my scientific background, I did not understand that we purified the water and then we pumped it back into—

Mr Rickuss:—into contaminated water.

Mr BROWN: Yes, into contaminated water. I take the interjection from the member for Lockyer. This is where we need to do the policy work now. We have 90 per cent dam capacity at the moment and we do not have the policy steps in place to inform the public that this water is safe to drink. It is perfectly safe to drink. It comes out cleaner under that process and then we pump it back into another dam so it gets filtered again.

Mr Rickuss: Just run an advertising campaign on toilets.

Mr BROWN: That is it; 'it is safe to drink poo water'. That is the next campaign slogan!

Moving on from that, the auditors' conclusion confirmed that the Beattie government's development of the manufactured water assets was an appropriate response to the severe drought circumstances at the time and has provided water security into the future. It has helped my area in

terms of the Leslie Harrison Dam. Currently, that dam has been emptied to allow the dam walls to be assessed and reviewed. Having that water grid in place provides the ability for Seqwater to undertake these processes.

Mr Hart: How do you figure that?

Mr BROWN: The water grid interlinks the water assets. Therefore, we have the ability to not hold as much water.

In conclusion, it was an appropriate process. I am glad that Seqwater has accepted all the recommendations. It has meant that the residents of Redlands have a secure water source now and into the future.



Mr COSTIGAN (Whitsunday—LNP) (12.12 pm): I am not going to duplicate the efforts of my colleagues, my good friends the members for Southport and Redlands from this side of the House, in relation to our take on the inquiry into the Auditor-General's report to parliament No. 14: 2012-13 in relation to the maintenance of water and infrastructure assets. I will make the point that it is glaringly obvious to many observers that when it comes to water infrastructure, under the ALP we see cost blowouts and when we see the LNP come to office we have the clean-up to try to stop the rot and stop the waste of money. It is not easy to turn around the ship. In the 34 months when the LNP was occupying the Treasury benches, the former minister the member for Caloundra did a fair job in trying to turn around that ship.

Mr Millar: We're still waiting for local management.

Mr COSTIGAN: The member for Gregory makes a great point there about local management. We can talk about it till the cows come home, whether it is in relation to water resources or health services, which have certainly been well documented in this place, and back in our electorates this week and in other areas of public policy.

When we talk about the wastage of money in terms of water resources, as a proud North Queenslander I think of where some of the money could have been spent. It could have gone to other worthwhile projects in terms of building up our water resources, particularly north of the Tropic of Capricorn. So many different projects come to mind. Where do I start? There is the Nathan Dam, lifting the dam wall on the Burdekin Falls Dam, Lake Dalrymple, Hells Gate and the Nullinga Dam on the Walsh River on the Atherton Tablelands. My pet project, in a very remote corner of my electorate of Whitsunday, is the Urannah Dam concept, which has been talked about for a long time. Of course it will take a lot of big coin to get it done. I know it is a project that is well supported by my good friend and neighbouring colleague to the north, the member for Burdekin, and his predecessor in this House.

With respect to Bowen Collinsville Enterprise, sadly, from my perspective, we have seen lukewarm interest from the Mackay and Whitsunday regional councils. That is something that the ratepayers and residents of those two local governments should ponder as they go to the polls this Saturday. I take my hat off to people like David Evans from Bowen Collinsville Enterprise, Stephen Darwen and Dave Nebauer. They certainly come to mind because they have been looking to fulfil the ambition of the former member for Bowen in this place, the legendary doc himself, Sir Peter Delamothe, who was a great advocate of the Urannah Dam concept when it was first mooted back in the early 1960s alongside legendary North Queensland grazier the late Ted Cunningham. That would be great for not just my electorate and the electorate of Burdekin, but also North Queensland.

If we are fair dinkum about developing the north, we have to start with the obvious: water. I can remember some years ago I was in the electorate of Mulgrave. I remember going to one of the schools there that year and hearing from the locals about the wet season. Mr Deputy Speaker, with great respect, this will resonate with you of all people. I think that year was the year of Cyclone Larry. There was seven metres of rain that year. You know, Mr Deputy Speaker, as do many people in this House that when we get a big wet season in North Queensland, we get a ripper. We are not harnessing that water. There is no doubt that more needs to be done. We have stopped building dams and stopped developing our water resources. We are scared of that crazy green element. We have seen the rivers of gold on the back of the mining resources boom wasted when it could have gone into water resources.

It is my vision to see us develop the north. I know our federal colleagues in Canberra want to see that happen. I welcome the \$5 billion Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility. A couple of weeks ago it was disappointing to hear the Premier say via a press release—it must have been the B team that weekend—that it should be based in Brisbane. Pleasingly, we saw a change of heart from the Palaszczuk Labor government to see that not be the case. I am looking forward to that \$5 billion infrastructure facility being administered from North Queensland for the development of water resources across the north.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Crawford): Order! I wish to advise of a school tour. In the House today are students from Ananda Marga River School in the electorate of Glass House.

Mr NICHOLLS (Clayfield—LNP) (12.18 pm): I was not going to say too much in relation to this report, having lived through most of the poor decision-making that was made in terms of the lead-up to the construction of the Gold Coast desalination plant and the various other advanced water treatment plants, one of which was in my electorate. I see with some degree of humour that the member for Sandgate, who was the then member for Stafford in this place, was part of the decision-making team—if you can call it that—that led to \$9 billion worth of debt being placed on to the balance sheet of the Queensland government. That was \$9 billion worth of debt with no plan for repayment with a ‘do and spend’ mentality. Nothing exemplifies that more than this report itself, which actually quotes from the Auditor-General’s report. It states—

the cost-efficiency of these assets could not be demonstrated, due to limited comparative benchmarking data ...

It also stated—

no robust business case was developed for the GCDP, the decision on the capacity of the plant did not benefit from the rigorous cost-benefit analysis that is required to be applied to such large scale investments

For the Western Corridor Recycled Water Scheme it stated—

while there was a business case that set out the expected full costs—

which subsequently were overblown—

of the scheme, less rigour was applied to estimating potential benefits and the benefits were overstated

The importance of this report is that it also highlights the failure of the Labor Party when it came to looking after consumers. We all remember the original bulk water price path produced by the Queensland Water Commission—another quango—that would have seen prices go up by over 300 per cent by 2017-18 unless the LNP government, which came to power in 2012, took immediate remedial action. That is what we did. On 13 April 2012 we immediately commissioned a review of the bulk water price path. What did the good work of that government require? After coming in with a fully formed plan—unlike this current government—it required the merger of the three bulk water entities with less waste, fewer quangos, fewer boards and more efficiency. In its first year there was a saving of in the order of \$60 million, which is something they said could never be done.

We see in the report how those savings have translated: in its 2014-15 annual report it delivered an actual operating cost result of \$232 million, which is \$127 million—or a 35 per cent reduction—compared to the pre-merger budgets of the previous water entities. We saved \$127 million as a result of eliminating the duplication and wasteful bureaucracy that had been established under Labor, and that is despite the fact that we had to go in and fix up the mess that was left there. We had to fix up the pipes that were rusting and we had to fix up the filters that had not been properly commissioned at the Gold Coast. Notwithstanding that, we were still able to save operational costs by rigorous expense control by maintaining a strict line in terms of the size of the bureaucracy—not just putting people on because it was convenient or easy or popular—and making decisions that saved taxpayers money. That has led to a 15 per cent reduction in the price of water that would otherwise have been expected to go up by more than three times the amount that was predicted back in 2007 when this rushed, botched, hastily conceived and ill-thought-through program was put in place by a Labor government that was panicked, that had not invested in infrastructure for a lengthy period of time and that left Queenslanders high and dry.

It is good to see this report from the Auditor-General, who has in fact pinpointed the problems of the previous Labor government’s failure to plan properly, failure to do a proper cost-benefit analysis, failure to state the benefits of the program properly—in fact, to overstate them—and the failure to keep costs under control such that in a three-year period up to 2011, if memory serves me correctly, the bulk water cost paid for by consumers had more than doubled to more than \$110 per megalitre. The cost of living was going up and the state’s debt had gone up by over \$9 billion, which was found—not only by the independent commission of audit that we commissioned, but by Treasury itself and by the Auditor-General—to have added to the debt load of Queenslanders, thus restricting the ability to invest in other assets. As identified in those reports, there are now efficiencies in place. Those efficiencies were put in place through the great work done by Minister McArdle in 2012, by the then Water Commission and the department, by the amalgamation of the three departments together and by its operation. I support the report, but it is a salutary lesson of letting Labor loose with water infrastructure.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

INFRASTRUCTURE, PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note



Mr PEARCE (Mirani—ALP) (12.24 pm): I move—

That the House take note of report No. 15 of the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee, *Consideration of the Queensland Audit Office Report to Parliament 8 for 2014-15—Traveltrain renewal: Sunlander 14* tabled on 4 December 2015.

As chair of the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee, I welcome the opportunity to comment on the Queensland Audit Office report *Traveltrain renewal: Sunlander 14*. The responsibility of the committee is the assessment of the integrity, economy, efficiency and effectiveness of government financial management, which includes consideration of annual and other reports of the Auditor-General. This report focuses on the Traveltrain renewal program; more specifically, the Sunlander 14 project. The report states—

The scope of the Sunlander 14 project was for delivery of three, 14-car trains at a cost of \$195 million. This 14-car tilt train would replace the diesel-hauled locomotive and reduce travel time.

which was welcomed. It goes on—

Furthermore, two other existing Cairns tilt trains were to be upgraded to 14 cars under the \$195 million plan approved by the then Shareholding Ministers—the Treasurer and Minister for Trade, and the Minister for Transport—in August 2011.

The Sunlander project established a fixed price contract for three new and refurbished trains to be branded the ‘Spirit of Queensland’. When Queensland Rail identified that it could not deliver the project outcomes within the existing government investment approval levels, it decided to de-scope the project and deliver three, 9-car trains rather than three 14-car trains.

The audit assessed the planning and decision-making processes for both the original decision to replace the Sunlander rollingstock and the subsequent decision to de-scope the project. The Queensland Audit Office also audited governance-related matters, including the timing of key decisions made either shortly before or during the 12 months after the separation of QR National from QR and the impact on information-sharing, and the effectiveness of communication about the project to executive government. Finally, QAO also assessed the corrective action taken by QR once it became aware of the systematic failings in the project management.

That sounds pretty confusing. When Queensland Rail officers noted the problems that they had with payment for the train that was proposed at the time, you can understand how they became so frustrated about the whole process. It goes on—

The report’s examination of the QR project to replace long-distance trains concluded that the Sunlander 14 project was a “case study in obfuscation and ill-informed decision-making”. The report stated that QR failed to provide “full and frank advice”—

that is a concern—

before proceeding, and did not demonstrate value for money.

The report made the following key findings—

- While the capital outlay of \$195 million to acquire and upgrade the cars for the Sunlander 14 project was reasonable, the case presented to invest in Sunlander 14 did not demonstrate value for money.
- The three 14-car train solution exceeded requirements based on patronage, which was declining.

They were saying that there was overspending on a project where there was actually a decline in the requirement of the service. Thankfully, the Queensland Audit Office requires committees such as the one I chair to look into these projects to ensure that we get good governance.



Mr HART (Burleigh—LNP) (12.29 pm): This morning we have heard some scathing comments about the lack of probity in relation to water. I refer to the Western Corridor Recycled Water Scheme and the Gold Coast Desalination Plant. It gives me absolutely no pleasure to stand here and talk about the Auditor-General’s report *Traveltrain renewal: Sunlander 14*. This is another example of how badly Labor governments construct and build these items. Over the last couple of days we have heard from those opposite about their Infrastructure Plan. They are not going to handle this at all well.

The Auditor-General’s report is absolutely scathing. We have just heard the chair of the committee read extracts from the report. What he did not mention is that the shareholding ministers involved in this were Andrew Fraser—one of the worst treasurers we have ever seen—and then minister for transport Anastacia Palaszczuk, now the Premier of Queensland. The Auditor-General’s report states—

The Sunlander 14 project is a case study in obfuscation and ill-informed decision making.


This government is really good at ill-informed decision-making. There was an initial capital outlay of \$195 million. When we came to government in 2012 the project was running way over budget, so the decision was made to descope the project. We ended up with trains with fewer carriages—less bang

for our buck. In fact, the descoping process led to the then government writing off \$50 million. In order to save \$50 million it wrote off \$50 million that had already been spent. This morning we heard about the waste of money in the Western Corridor Recycled Water Scheme and the desal plant. This is just another thing the Labor government did not get right.

The Auditor-General's report found that by reducing the investment in the project by \$50 million, following the descoping decision, QR wasted a similar amount of money. They just poured \$50 million down the drain. The report went on to say that it did not demonstrate value for money and resulted in writing off the \$50 million already spent on the project.

The descoping resulted in 40 per cent fewer new cars at 88 per cent of the original price. For 88 per cent of the original price we got 40 per cent fewer train cars. Those opposite are incredibly good at spending other people's money but not getting any bang for their buck. The average cost per carriage is now slightly more than \$10 million, which represents a 92 per cent increase from the original fixed cost. A fixed price contract was negotiated, but there ended up being a 92 per cent increase in the cost. I do not know how members opposite can possibly say this is a good result for the people of Queensland because it is, quite frankly, an absolute disgrace. It seems that those opposite go from one disgraceful project to another. They have no care for the money of the people of Queensland. They just go out and spend money.

Earlier in the day the Deputy Premier said that there was an underspend in infrastructure when we were in government. Wonderful! We saved money! Those opposite just want to waste it: 'We've got no money in the bank and the credit card is full, but we will go and get another credit card and we will go out and spend it on something we really do not need.' They spent that amount of money and we are ending up with fewer train cars. Those opposite should feel disgraced by that.

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (12.34 pm): I rise to speak to the report *Traveltrain renewal: Sunlander 14* and endorse the comments from the member for Burleigh. Many members in this parliament would know that rail is very important to the electorate of Gregory. It is something I have been very conscious of. I have certainly advocated for continued investment in rail and rail infrastructure in Western Queensland, because a lot of our wealth-creating regions need to use rail to get their product to port.

When we read the Auditor's report *Traveltrain renewal: Sunlander 14*, we become quite disturbed at the waste of money the Audit Office has pointed out. The report states—

While the capital outlay of \$195 million to acquire and upgrade the cars for the Sunlander 14 project was reasonable, the case presented to invest in Sunlander 14 did not demonstrate value for money.

The three 14-car train solution exceeded requirements based on patronage, which was declining.

The concern I have is that spending money on this and not doing it properly takes money away from rail upgrades and investment in Western Queensland. We need to have that investment in Western Queensland. When we see reports like this that show a lack of regard for proper business case analysis, we see the wasting of money and we consider the lack of money invested in rail over the past 20 years, it becomes quite disturbing.

What we need in places like Gregory, Warrego—I acknowledge the member for Warrego here—Mount Isa, Dalrymple, Cook and Callide—

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr MILLAR: Callide is one of the fastest growing food production areas in Queensland. We need proper rail. When we see reports like this which show a lack of regard for financial analysis, understanding a project and value for money and then we do not see money being invested in Western Queensland, it becomes quite disturbing.

This week Labor Party members have been talking about their great Infrastructure Plan for Queensland. In that context, the comments and recommendations in the Auditor-General's report led to me becoming quite disturbed about the Infrastructure Plan. We need value for money in electorates like Gregory.

Mr Butcher: Just like 1 William Street?

Mr MILLAR: I take that interjection from the member for Gladstone.

Mr Butcher: I'm going to sit over there one day.

Mr MILLAR: You probably will sit over there one day—and you will not sit here!

The report also found—


QR did not undertake comprehensive market or other analysis to support its expectations of patronage and full fare growth.

We need to make sure that when we are spending Queensland taxpayers' money we spend it right and on the right projects. This report shows that there was a complete lack of regard for a business case. It is certainly disappointing for people out my way who continue to see money wasted on projects. We heard earlier about water and rail projects by the previous Labor government.

Mr Hart: Trains without seats.

Mr MILLAR: Trains without seats and trains without toilets. I think it is important that we take note of this report. It gives a clear indication that we need to make sure that money is invested in the right way.

We need to make sure that Gregory and Western Queensland have the right infrastructure. Rail plays an important part. We need to be able to use rail more effectively, making sure we have cattle on rail and goods going out there on rail. Imagine how much of the wasted money identified in this report could have been used to upgrade the line from Rockhampton to Emerald and Longreach or we could have upgraded the line from Toowoomba to Roma, Charleville and Quilpie. There is a great opportunity to invest in infrastructure out there. It creates wealth for the region and for the state. We should invest in the right projects.

 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (12.39 pm): I rise to speak to the Queensland Audit Office report 8 of 2014-15, titled *Traveltrain renewal: Sunlander 14*. I take this opportunity to thank the committee that I worked with when we considered this report. I have changed committees. The work that that committee did with the secretariat was a great opportunity for me to get an understanding of how the Queensland Audit Office reporting system works and the way reports are considered by committees.

The Sunlander service in Queensland, particularly in my region of Gladstone, is fantastic. I note that the minister travelled by train to come to Gladstone for the community cabinet. I met him on the deck of the train there at Gladstone. It was good to see the minister utilise the train to come to Gladstone.

A government member interjected.

Mr BUTCHER: I will take that interjection. It was great to be there to greet the minister at Gladstone station, because at that time we also celebrated 10 years of service of one of the members of the Gladstone based staff of QR. We have great people working for us in Queensland Rail in Queensland.

After considering the Auditor-General's report, the committee came to the conclusion that there were some errors in the process, particularly the change in the structure of the board and how different groups had access to the way the project was put forward. As the member for Burleigh said, the committee found that some funds were wasted. But to QR's credit, a lot of the issues that were recognised in the Auditor-General's report were tabled at a later stage and were fixed.

I am proud to be part of a government that has released the State Infrastructure Plan. We are getting on with the job of building these vital pieces of infrastructure. As we have heard recently, the Queensland government has just released the funding for a bridge renewal program. So the government is not only fixing rail in our state but also getting on with providing vital infrastructure such as replacing bridges in my electorate of Gladstone.

Mr Millar: There is 24 per cent unemployment in the outback.

Mr BUTCHER: I will take that interjection. We will utilise local labour to help build bridges for vital roads leading to Gladstone Harbour. Speaking of Gladstone Harbour, this Labor government has saved our assets, including the Gladstone port. It would have been absolutely pointless building vital infrastructure to connect our regional areas to the Gladstone port if we were giving that money and all of those bonuses to the Chinese. That massive port in Gladstone is now generating billions of dollars for the Queensland government instead of being potentially owned by a foreign corporation. Not only that, these vital roads leading from our regional areas into the wonderful Gladstone port, as mentioned this morning by the minister, will supply cattle for a potential beef processing plant in the Gladstone industrial estate. That is a fantastic opportunity and a great investment by the Labor government to provide \$40 million for infrastructure to rebuild bridges.

We have a great train system in Queensland. As I said before, many people in Gladstone utilise that service to travel to Cairns or to go down to Brisbane. A lot of my friends in Gladstone use the train service to get from Gladstone to Brisbane to watch certain events that are staged in Brisbane. It is great that those people can travel in comfort on the Queensland Rail service. As I said before, the committee recommended that the report be accepted.



Mr NICHOLLS (Clayfield—LNP) (12.44 pm): I must say that reading these committee reports is like taking a trip down memory lane. It is great to be able to get back up again and speak about Labor Party mismanagement. I am expecting to be able to do it a little bit more often over the coming months and years as their projects roll out—or do not roll out. We have already seen the rollout of the four-year State Infrastructure Plan. The member for Gladstone talked about rail projects. The problem is that the only new rail project that is mentioned in the State Infrastructure Plan that has been funded is the next generation rolling stock. The top five projects in the State Infrastructure Plan are all projects that were put in place by the LNP, secured by the LNP as public-private partnerships. I thank the member for Gladstone for his endorsement of the LNP's program.

Unlike Labor, the LNP is getting twice the number of trains for the same amount of money. According to the Auditor-General's report, Labor got two-thirds of the number of trains for 88 per cent of the money. One would have to say that that is probably a pretty good result for Labor, because the previous report that I just spoke to told us that we were getting a wastewater plant that is delivering no water and dams that are not connected to pipelines.

When I look through this report I recall the events of 2011. This report is a scathing indictment on the Labor government's management of Queensland Rail. I ask members to remember that I am referring to what was left of Queensland Rail after the Labor Party sold it off without telling anyone about it. We remember the former transport minister, the former member for Ipswich, who on one day was asked, 'Are there any plans to sell Queensland Rail?' With hand on heart she swore, 'There are no plans to sell Queensland Rail.' The next day the then treasurer walked in and said, 'We are selling Queensland Rail.' He did not even tell his own side. As per usual, Labor's complicit mates in the union—Owen Doogan and the RTBU—just faded off into the background. They were standing up for workers' rights—as long as they still had a job left at the end of it.

It is also good to reflect on some of the comments that were made in the Auditor-General's report about the board. The member for Gladstone mentioned that there was quite a lot of chopping and changing around on the board. Who was the chief executive of Queensland Rail back in 2011? The name Scurrah comes to mind. For those members who were not here at the time, or do not remember, or were not paying attention, I point out that Paul Scurrah was the partner of Nicole Scurrah, the chief of staff of the then premier, Anna Bligh. I remember Queensland's million-dollar couple. Paul Scurrah was in charge of the process. In his report the Auditor-General found the following—

... ignored or did not want to advise government on the full costs of the project, preferring instead to communicate costs in what they perceived to be more palatable portions ... could not establish whether information was withheld intentionally.

The report noted further—

... the distinction is important, as it is the difference between maladministration and possible malfeasance.

That is a difference between someone being clueless—like this government—or someone being deliberately misleading, like the previous Labor government.

When did Mr Scurrah leave? A media statement dated 24 November 2011 states that he had resigned, effective 2 December. In that media statement Paul Scurrah is praised. It states—

... Paul has led the Executive Team in delivering first class results for Queensland Rail Limited ...

What a damning indictment on Queensland Rail this report is: \$50 million—almost 25 per cent of the total project cost of \$221 million—thrown away, not able to be spent on roads, not able to be spent on other railways, not able to be spent on fixing up the Westlander, not able to be spent on fixing up the carriages and providing a better service or improving stations. Fifty million dollars was wasted.

Do members know where the money came from? It was borrowed. I remember this report coming across my desk and the horror of the then new board of Queensland Rail, which has been commended for fixing the problems. There was a new board, new management and a government and a minister who was prepared to look into the matter, not to simply sit there and be told what to do by bureaucrats like the then transport minister, Anastacia Palaszczuk. The minister looked into the situation and got on with the job of fixing the problem. That is what this report says. It was a failure under Labor, but fixed under the LNP. That is what always happens in this state and that is what will no doubt happen again at the next election.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders



Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (12.50 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That, notwithstanding anything contained in the standing and sessional orders, the House will continue to debate committee reports until the lunch break today and resume debate of committee reports from 3 pm to 4 pm today, with government business to commence at 4 pm.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

INFRASTRUCTURE, PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note



Mr PEARCE (Mirani—ALP) (12.50 pm): I move—

That the House take note of report No. 16 of the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee, *Consideration of the Queensland Audit Office Report to Parliament 16 for 2014-15—Results of audit: Local government entities 2013-14*.

We need to be in a position of ongoing monitoring of government and local government agencies to meet community expectations of transparency and accountability. I believe that the Auditor-General is not only doing a job that is necessary, but doing a great job in ensuring that we as members of parliament are made aware of where agencies may not be performing to the expectations of the community.

The report undertakes an audit of financial statements of public sector entities, including local governments and their controlled entities. The Auditor-General issues an audit opinion on the financial statements of each council and their related entities. This process provides assurance about the reliability of the financial reports and monitors compliance with legislative requirements.

I support 100 per cent the good work being done by the committee in going through these reports. All members of this place should not only encourage the Queensland Audit Office but congratulate it for putting the reports in such a way that we can understand them and, as a result, make comment.

The local government sector consists of 182 entities, including 77 councils and 105 entities they control. Only 154 entities are required to prepare financial statements. The other entities are classified as non-reporting under the accounting standards. In 2013-14 one council received a qualified audit opinion, which represents an improved understanding of accounting requirements. However, eight councils had unfinished audits, compared to two unfinished audits in 2012-13. Historically, unfinished audits can result in qualified opinions. The Queensland Audit Office is working with the eight councils and one related entity to finalise the outstanding audits.

It is important that the department takes up these issues with the councils because if they are not pulled into line and made to correct the direction they are taking and get it right it will simply go on and on. In a situation where it is allowed to continue there is an opportunity for people who are in the know to expand on what has already been happening. It is very important that the Auditor-General carry out these audits over a required period of time and report back to the parliament, such as this one that we are discussing today.

The QAO report stated that there are many significant financial reporting risks and issues that were common across the local government sector. These related to asset management; deamalgamations; deficiencies in contract management; not having the system for documenting decisions made in relation to contracts, such as to review, extend or re-tender; processes for monitoring supplier performances; procurement and contracting practices. Those points are enough to indicate to the members who have some understanding of local government that there are a lot of opportunities sitting there waiting for people who do not want to play by the rules to tap into and get into a situation where they put their council and the ratepayers at risk.



Mr HART (Burleigh—LNP) (12.55 pm): I also rise to speak about the Auditor-General's local government entities report. I attended the briefing that the Auditor-General gave every member of parliament last year on this particular audit. I was very interested to see the program that the Auditor-General's office is using to highlight the issues that are appearing in our local governments. They have a traffic light situation. They put all the data into a program and that produces a traffic light

indication to local government and to anybody who wants to have a look at their website as to how the local government is travelling. If there is a red traffic light then obviously there is an issue. If there is a green one it is travelling okay. If there is an orange one then it might need a bit of an eye kept on it. I congratulate them on the process they have in place because it makes it very easy for people to check that system out and to get an idea really quickly which councils we may need to keep a bit of an eye on.

In relation to the financial audits of the local governments, there are 182 entities, which include 77 councils and 105 entities that they control. Only 154 entities are required to prepare financial statements and the other entities are classified as non-reporting under the accounting standards. In 2013-14 one council received a qualified audit opinion, which represents an improved understanding of accounting requirements. One of the key things that we are seeing is that councils are realising what their responsibilities are in keeping control of their assets, finances, debts and so on and they are actually getting better at it.

It is very important, and I think the Auditor-General has hit the nail on the head, that we have proper training for our councillors and our council staff to ensure that they know what the important things are that they need to keep an eye on. They are, in fact, doing that. It is good to see that once the Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning received this report they acknowledged that they need to do a little bit more in that area: get out and train some of the councillors. In fact, this year they started running a program where they were giving instruction to council candidates so that we had people who were standing for council who had a bit of an idea of what they may need to do when they got in there. That is good.

The other issue I wanted to talk about was the timeliness of financial statements. That is an issue that is highlighted in the Auditor-General's report. The Auditor-General needs to have all the audits completed by 31 October and negotiates a time with individual councils as to when they should provide their financial statements to them. There were 17 councils that did not meet the legislative deadline for the second year in a row, which is not good to see at all, and eight councils that missed their deadline and have missed it for the last three years. There is obviously a problem there and the department needs to keep an eye on those particular councils.

The committee did acknowledge that timely and accurate financial reporting is of the utmost importance and that ultimately councils are accountable to their communities for that. We see more and more people taking an interest in what is happening inside their councils as far as financial control goes. Being a member from the Gold Coast I know that the council there has a budget of about \$1 billion a year. It is very important to me as a ratepayer of the Gold Coast that the council spends that money in a good fashion and gets results for that money.


I think that there is an opportunity here for the Labor government to look at doing exactly the same thing: be careful about the money that it spends and get a good result from it.

Debate, on motion of Mr Hart, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.30 pm.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Queensland Economy

 **Mr PEGG** (Stretton—ALP) (2.30 pm): During the last sitting of parliament, I outlined the incredible economic successes of the Palaszczuk government and the unmitigated economic failures of the former LNP government. Even now, people rightly tremble when they think about the bad old days of the LNP government, and for very good reason. In contrast, our economic record since early 2015 has been outstanding and the envy of other states. We have had a turnaround in the economic fortunes of Queensland with operating surpluses across the forward estimates, outstanding economic growth forecasts and lots of new jobs being created. A staggeringly high figure of almost 10,000 jobs were created in January alone.

I have spoken at length about the numerous economic failures of the LNP government, but today I want to focus on one particular aspect of that: the attempted Queensland fire sale of 2014, also known as Strong Choices. When the former treasurer, the member for Clayfield, worked out that his huge cuts ruthlessly implemented in the 2012-13 state budget had not worked, he desperately searched for a way to reduce the state's gross debt, which had skyrocketed under the LNP from \$62.6 billion in 2011-12 to \$75.5 billion in 2014-15. It was then that he took the lazy option and decided that he was going to

liquidate \$37 billion in highly profitable state assets. Rather than going for growth and investing in the incredible potential of Queenslanders through smart strategies such as Advance Queensland, the member for Clayfield ploughed ahead with asset sales while pretending to consult Queenslanders, mainly through hosting a couple of community forums and setting up a dodgy website in early 2014 with a range of biased and suspect options for reducing gross state debt.

Despite the LNP wasting \$6 million of state government money on this nonsense, the response from the people was clear. It still indicated that Queenslanders firmly opposed assets sales, but the LNP government simply would not listen to the people, although there are certainly no surprises there. Even when noted economist John Quiggin stated that Strong Choices would only provide a short-term sugar hit to the budget while costing the state \$9 billion in foregone revenue by 2020, the member for Clayfield and the LNP ploughed ahead with the fire sale, justifying it in any way they could. The member for Clayfield even consented to using some of the money from the sales to prop up shaky LNP electorates. A sum of \$8.6 billion from the sale would not be used to reduce debt, but was earmarked for wild and pork-barrelling election commitments. That commitment was fiscally irresponsible beyond belief.

We all know how it ended. The people of Queensland rejected that approach and the LNP was deservedly thrown out of power. I stress that there is still an opportunity for the LNP to learn from their mistakes and understand that they cannot just cut their way to prosperity. Rather than thoughtlessly criticising the government, I encourage the LNP and, in particular, the member for Clayfield to swallow their pride, publicly congratulate Treasurer Pitt for the outstanding work—


(Time expired)

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! I call the member for Noosa.

Mr Pegg interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Stretton, your time has expired. If a member's time has expired and the Speaker or Deputy Speaker has informed the member that their time has expired, they must resume their seat.

Maguire, Mr P; Playford, Mr N

 **Mr ELMES** (Noosa—LNP) (2.33 pm): In light of the local government elections due to take place this Saturday, I take this opportunity to mention two retiring mayors, one from my second favourite place in Queensland, Emerald, and the other from my home of Noosa. This Saturday, my very good friend Peter Maguire, known universally as Maggot, will retire after 28 years in local government, on both the Emerald Shire Council and the Central Highlands Regional Council, the last 16 of those as mayor. Emerald and the region owes Peter Maguire an enormous debt for his service and promotion of a community I love dearly.

I also thank and highlight my deep personal regard for retiring Noosa mayor, Noel Playford. Noel was the chairman of the Noosa Shire Council between 1988 and 1997. He thought he had retired from public life until the Bligh government and, in particular, then treasurer Andrew Fraser decided that they would meddle in our local community affairs and forcefully amalgamate Noosa into the Sunshine Coast Regional Council. In a way I should thank them, because that fostered a belief that a small community, justifiably angry and with passion and determination, can achieve anything. It does that by having community leaders who are prepared to put themselves forward at the expense of almost anything else in their lives in order to carry the argument or, should I say, fight. Noel Playford, along with others, was at the forefront of the successful Free Noosa campaign. His long and extensive background in local government gave him that vital edge. It is now history that the Noosa community won that fight, and we celebrated the third anniversary of that vote last Wednesday.

Another piece of history closes this Saturday, 19 March and that is the two-year stewardship of Noel Playford as mayor after he stepped back into the public limelight to guide the rebuilding of our local authority. When standing for election, Noel said it would be only for this two-year transition period and it has been time well spent. With others, he has recrafted our council and leaves it in good shape: money in the bank and a zero rate increase this year.

As I speak here today, I know that at Noel's home the engine in the car is turning over. It is hooked up to the caravan and Noel's wife, Diana, is sitting in the passenger seat, eager to get on the road. I know he is, too. I will especially miss our regular meetings, which were always open, honest and friendly. There have been some outstanding leaders in the Noosa Shire since its inception in 1910. Noel Playford deserves to be among the very best; perhaps even a little higher.

Gold Coast World Surfing Reserve



Hon. MC de BRENNI (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (2.36 pm): Last week I joined the Premier and the Minister for Environment at a momentous occasion on the Gold Coast. It was an event that was the culmination of many years of hard work by many people, including beach lovers, businesspeople, athletes, industry leaders, tourism operators and some dudes with sun-bleached hair. It was a campaign rooted in the heart of the Gold Coast community, waged with a passion that we should all envy.

The World Surfing Reserve is a boon for Queensland and the Gold Coast. It will attract thousands upon thousands of tourists, encourage participation in a great sport and showcase Queensland tourism to the world. We faced down competition from some of the world's best beaches, but they simply could not compete as Queensland beaches are that good. As a keen surfer, I know most of those beaches intimately and I can vouch for them having some of the truly best breaks in the world.

I am proud to be a member of a government that supported the World Surfing Reserve initiative from the very beginning. I pay special tribute to a special bloke named Andrew McKinnon. Andy has led the charge on this from day one. Without his drive, leadership and commitment, not only to surfing but also to the people of the Gold Coast, the initiative would never have got off the ground. It was Andy who approached the Premier when she was the opposition leader and started working with her to move the Gold Coast reserve from a dream to a reality.

Let us be clear: this designation is about more than simply acknowledging the superior breaks of the Gold Coast. The Gold Coast World Surfing Reserve means global attention and that means increased tourism, and increased tourism means jobs. That is right—surfing means jobs: jobs in hotels; jobs in surf shops and boutiques; jobs in board manufacturing; and jobs in pubs, clubs, hotels and cafes.

Given all of this, I am amazed that opposition members, especially those from the Gold Coast, were not willing to support the reserve nomination. If members have not heard the radio debate in which the member for Burleigh attempted to match wits with Andrew McKinnon, I suggest that they do themselves a favour. Andy systematically lays bare the absurdity of the position of the member for Burleigh. He wipes the floor with his opponent's poorly constructed arguments.

Despite the LNP's recalcitrance, the Gold Coast won out and it is a good thing, too. It is clear that only Labor stands up for jobs on the Gold Coast. We stood up for the Gold Coast to deliver light rail and we are getting closer to starting construction on stage 2. We are standing up for the Gold Coast in the State Infrastructure Plan, with upgrade projects that are of crucial importance to people on the Gold Coast. Labor has always stood up for the Gold Coast and we have always stood up for jobs, and we always will.

Miller, Mr B



Ms BATES (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (2.39 pm): I rise to inform the House of one of the saddest cases of mismanagement within Queensland Health I have ever come across in my seven years as a member of parliament and in my 35 years as a nurse. Barry Miller is a former soldier, security guard and first responder with St John Ambulance who lives in my electorate and suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder, acute anxiety and acute depression.

Tragically, in recent months, Barry has twice attempted to take his own life—on 25 August 2015 and 7 December 2015. On 6 February this year Barry sought assistance from Robina Hospital when he informed staff that he had suicidal ideations and intent of purpose and wanted to be admitted so he did not self-harm. Shockingly, Barry was not admitted. In fact, he informs me that he did not even get to see a doctor and was given a valium and sent home with a brochure for homeless people.

Two weeks later he was threatened with eviction from his home and cannot receive appropriate financial assistance through the Department of Human Services for a disability pension until his PTSD, depression, anxiety and his cardiac and pulmonary conditions are appropriately medically managed. On the day that Barry sought help from Robina Hospital, he wrote in his diary—

Present myself at Robina Hospital as I am feeling suicidal and crying my eyes out.

I need help and I usually don't ask for it but today is different.

Heart racing; diaphoresis, etc.

"Wait in the waiting room and we will call you shortly."

Gave me a Valium then and there and 1 to take home and have tomorrow.

Kicked out at 2050 and sent home to rest.

Hello! I come to you as I have suicidal ideation and intentions and you give me a Tic Tac and kick me out.

On 29 February I wrote to the Minister for Health to seek his urgent assistance to admit Barry for an immediate inpatient psychiatric assessment by the mental health unit of the Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service. I table a copy of this letter for the benefit of the House. I also table a subsequent article from the *Gold Coast Bulletin*.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 29 February 2016, from the member for Mudgeeraba, Ms Ros Bates MP, to the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services, Hon. Cameron Dick, regarding Mr Barry Miller [389].


Tabled paper: Article from *Gold Coast Bulletin*, dated 1 March 2016, titled 'System at Robina "scary"' [390].

Barry informs me that he has still not been seen by any doctor, he has not been admitted and, in fact, they are reviewing the processes and are off on a witch-hunt instead. Barry needs to be urgently admitted for an inpatient psychiatric assessment. I call on you, Minister, to do the right thing and make this happen today. I can assure you, Minister, that if Barry presents to the hospital—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! I will ask the member to direct her comments through the chair.

Ms BATES: I can assure the minister that if Barry presents to the hospital again for suicidal tendencies that he will be admitted because he will call me personally and I will do the minister's job for him.

Central Queensland University, Biodiesel Project

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (2.42 pm): A Central Queensland University research team based in Mackay is converting waste grease and oil into biodiesel. This has attracted the attention of an international oil major. There are plans to go into commercial production sometime this year.

A dedicated team of teachers and students from the Mackay CQU campus have come up with a cheap and easy way to make renewable biodiesel by putting used cooking oil into a filter tank and then passing it through a centrifuge. The oil is then heated, cleaned and some additives put in. It takes five minutes to chemically change the cooking oil into biodiesel. It costs only 30 cents to make a litre.


Under the dedicated guidance of CQU fabrication teacher Paul Kelly, the team—the average age of students is around 16—has spent the past five years building the pilot plant to test the production of the biofuel at scale. This is a project that has caught the attention of industry and major fuel company Caltex. The hope is that the first CQU blended fuel could be in vehicles later this year. The fuel that is being produced by CQU could already be used to power diesel engines, but the team is still waiting for the final Australian fuels certification.

The fully automated plant is computer controlled and can treat and refine fatty waste products such as cooking oil. It is capable of producing more than 200 litres an hour of high-grade biodiesel. The university plans to make the biodiesel available to community organisations in the Mackay region following its certification. Since 2010 the project has gained support from regional industry, including Rio Tinto's Hail Creek Mine Community Development Fund and the Mackay Regional Council.

The project has allowed students and teachers to work closely with industry, get hands-on experience and contribute to a worthwhile project that has community and environmental benefits. VET in Schools students from Mackay, Mackay North and Sarina state high schools have worked on the project over the past five years, as well as Indigenous students from across the region and certificate II in engineering students. Many have since secured apprenticeships within industry.

I commend Paul Kelly, along with his Mackay CQU colleagues Doug Wootton and Josh Van Loenen, for initiating this pioneering project and congratulate all the Mackay students involved with bringing it to life. If these young people are an indication of our future trailblazers then Mackay's future looks very bright indeed.

Gumdale State School

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (2.45 pm): 2016 is shaping up as a very exciting year for one of my local primary schools—Gumdale State School. This incredible school has come on in leaps and bounds over the past decade and has quickly grown to be one of the most in demand educational facilities in my Chatsworth electorate. However, as a result of the rapid increase in numbers, we have seen students forced into cramped classrooms, rosters set up for the use of the oval and an overcrowded parents' car park.

The school had been struggling with these issues as more families moved into the local catchment, putting more pressure on the capabilities of the school. The plight of the school was brought to my attention when I was first elected in 2012. I made it my focus to see the Gumdale master plan delivered and become a reality.

I am pleased to inform the House that, at the end of last year, after more than three years of campaigning on the school's behalf, the project was finally signed off. Already this year we have seen construction start on phase 1a which sees a new school oval built on department of education land which lies adjacent to the school as well as a new car park. In addition to this, phase 1b is being constructed at the same time, delivering new science and arts precincts to cater to the growing needs of the students.

In a moment of bipartisanship, I take this opportunity to thank the Minister for Education for seeing this project remain a priority for Gumdale State School, as these works will boost the ability of the school to service the growing local community. While this is a great step forward, I will continue to work with Gumdale State School and the department of education to ensure this project is just the beginning for this dynamic and vibrant school.


New classrooms are still urgently required for the students as we need to work together to get students out of demountable buildings and facilities into quality classrooms. I will now lobby to keep the Gumdale master plan on the agenda so that phase 2 may quickly follow the completion of phase 1.

I am pleased to advise that work should be completed in the coming months, and I look forward to attending the celebrations. I have often said that as a politician I am not interested in cutting ribbons and appearing on official plaques. What drives me as a member of parliament is providing material improvements to the lifestyle of my constituents and to provide enduring facilities that stand long after my time as a parliamentarian in this place.

I congratulate the Gumdale State School P&C and the wonderful local community for their help and encouragement in continuing my relentless quest to see the master plan come to fruition. The journey has indeed been worthwhile.

Like many members in this chamber, I am sometimes asked why I ran for parliament. In the coming weeks when I hear kids getting out at lunchtime and laughing and playing on the new sporting oval, that will be one of the reasons I am proud to be a state member of parliament.

Coorooman Creek Boat Ramp

 **Mrs LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (2.48 pm): It is no secret that I love getting out on the water. There is nothing better than heading out in Keppel Bay, dropping a line in and, if you are lucky, hooking a big fresh Spanish mackerel or coral trout. One of the world's greatest natural wonders is just off the coastline, so it is easy to see why boating is such a popular pastime for many Keppel locals.

On Saturday, 27 February over 150 locals, representatives from Maritime Safety Queensland, the Department of Transport and Main Roads, the Queensland Water Police, Keppel Sands Coast Guard and Livingstone Shire Council joined me for the official opening of the additional two lanes at the Coorooman Creek boat ramp and for a boatie barbecue to celebrate our beautiful Coorooman Creek.

It was a great day, with many locals coming along to grab a sausage and a drink, learn about boating safety, local marine facilities and pollution reduction in our waterways. They say a bad day's fishing is better than a good day in the office, but I would have to argue that the boatie barbecue was a good day at the office, albeit a mobile one, talking about boating and fishing.

We celebrated the opening of the additional two lanes at the Coorooman Creek boat ramp, which has doubled the capacity at this very popular ramp. They say a 'reel' expert can tackle anything and the experts from Maritime Safety Queensland, Department of Transport and Main Roads, the Queensland Police Service and the Coast Guard answered questions from locals regarding boat registration, safety requirements, bag limits and much more.


With so many people getting out on the water, it is important to consult with the community about boating safety and facilities. Boating recreation is very popular in Rockhampton and Livingstone, with almost 10,000 people owning a boat, and I am one of them. No-one knows the area as well as they do. That is why it is important to get locals in the one place to discuss the community's boat infrastructure needs.

The forum follows on from the Palaszczuk government's commitment to boaties in this financial year's budget for a \$30 million Marine Infrastructure Fund over two years. The Palaszczuk government is committed to seeing boating communities have great facilities that the locals can enjoy, as well as providing a boost for local tourism. The \$551,000 upgrade to the Coorooman Creek boat ramp will allow for increased access during busy periods. During the boatie barbecue the other day the boats were lining up to get down the additional two ramps that had been opened. Many people were very excited to see those additional two lanes there.

Widening of the ramp will provide long-term benefits for the community by easing congestion and will help meet the projected demand at this popular ramp. The project has also complemented works undertaken to the boat ramp last year which included lengthening the ramp and installing a floating walkway.

Many thanks to local Central Queensland company QMC Group who carried out the works and delivered the project ahead of time. My sincere thanks goes to the Emu Park Men's Shed for running the barbecue on the day too. The Men's Shed is an outstanding local community group providing support to the men of Emu Park and the community.

Bank Branch Closures; Motion, Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (2.51 pm): I have two issues to talk about today—firstly, the closure of banks around the state. An ANZ branch closed at Toogoolawah this week. A petition was tabled this morning under my name to that end. A Westpac branch was closed in Normanton last year. I want to make the House aware of the impact that this has on rural and regional areas. When a bank branch closes down, it affects access to cash and it impacts the functioning of small businesses in those areas. I think it is one of those things that is silently happening out there that impacts on the viability of businesses, convenience and employment in those areas. This is happening and it has been happening in a big way. I think close to 30 bank branches have been closed over recent years. It is of great concern.

Also, there is a sticker going around from that group that is standing up against this growing issue. It is an important issue for the House to be aware of. I think the banks have a responsibility to these communities that they continue to make money from and have for very many years. They play a vital role in the economy. For them to ruthlessly deny those communities that opportunity is, in my opinion, very wrong.

The other issue I wanted to talk about briefly is the timing for consideration of private members' bills. It can be three months from the time the committee report comes back for a private member's bill to be considered. It is something for the House to consider in the long term, when government bills can be considered on the same day that the report from the committee is tabled. There is a real disadvantage there for private members' bills. We have many bills in the House at certain points in time. If there are acute issues dealing with those bills then they need to be dealt with. To that end, I seek leave to move a motion without notice.

Leave granted.


Mr KATTER: I move—

That, notwithstanding anything contained in standing or sessional orders, the second reading debate of the Transport Legislation (Taxi Services) Amendment Bill commence during the sitting week starting 19 April 2016, with all remaining stages to be completed by 5 pm on 21 April 2016.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Samford to Ferny Grove Cycle Link

 **Mr FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (2.54 pm): I rise this afternoon to make a contribution to this debate and it relates to an activity on the weekend. On Saturday, 12 March I was privileged to join Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy and Water Supply, the Hon. Mark Bailey, in opening stage 1 of the Samford to Ferny Grove Cycle Link. Also present were Doug Wass, North Coast District Director from the Department of Transport and Main Roads, and Andrew Demack, the Cycling Development Officer from Bicycle Queensland.

Stage 1 of the Samford to Ferny Grove Cycle Link, costing \$3.5 million, between Ferny Grove Railway Station and Petersen Road in Samford has instantly proven to be a success, with locals either end of the link demonstrating their patronage. This cycle link also highlights our commitment to continual investment of infrastructure in our state, consistent with our State Infrastructure Plan. Stage 1 of the cycle link runs between the Ferny Grove Railway Station and Petersen Road, Samford, travelling along Lanita Road to connect with Samford State Forest. It then follows a 1.5-kilometre path through the forest to connect with McLean Road, where it travels north via a section of the old rail corridor to connect with Petersen Road.

Once completed, the cycle link will provide a new 8.3-kilometre cycle path between the Ferny Grove Railway Station and Samford Village. This is a shared path with recreational bike riders and horseriders using various sections of the path, in addition to pedestrian traffic who will use it quite often. In fact, on the weekend there were copious numbers of people out walking, riding horses and riding bikes along the cycle way. I must put on the record my appreciation and thanks to Electric Bikes Brisbane from Enoggera for bringing along some of their cycles to use. They got me on one of those. The only thing they could not get me into was a set of lycra, thank goodness!

Ms Pease: Thank God!

Mr FURNER: I agree. I take that interjection. I am so proud to be a part of a Labor government that recognises the need to provide cycle infrastructure in Queensland. The link between Ferny Grove and Samford has already received quite a bit of use over the past fortnight. It was great to see so many people out at the official opening to try it out.

During the construction I had an opportunity to meet some of the contractors and workers, including Camp Mountain local Michael Burtwistle, who are benefiting from the jobs created by this infrastructure project. As the local member, I am encouraging all users from horseriders to bike riders to use and enjoy the outdoors and this new facility.

In closing, I would like to put on the record the commitment and foresight of former member for Ferny Grove Geoff Wilson, who had the vision of starting the discussion and planning of this cycle link as far back as 2009 in collaboration with the local council at the time. The proof of the pudding was there to see last Saturday, with many, many people using this cycleway. It is another demonstration of a Labor Party commitment.

Early Childhood Development Program



Mrs SMITH (Mount Ommaney—LNP) (2.57 pm): I rise to highlight to the House how crucial the Early Childhood Development Program is. I will share excerpts of Bella's story, provided to me by her mother, Karen, to share her experience at Mount Ommaney Special School ECDP. She states—

Our experience at daycare was not always a happy one. There were some educators there who were amazing, and I will always be grateful to the directors who had to gently push me into getting a diagnosis for Bella ... But in her last year there, despite having funds allocated to provide a support person ... More often than not I would arrive at pickup time to find Bella sitting alone outside eating mud ... She was picked on by the other kids, and none of the parents were interested in talking to me as the parent of the 'naughty, weird kid'. I spent her 'graduation ceremony' fighting back tears as she was so obviously different to the other children and nobody did anything to try to include her.

When Bella was diagnosed with ASD at the age of 4, we were referred to the local ECDP—

at Mount Ommaney—

which was attached to the local special school. This was a free service and she was to attend for 2 mornings a week. There was a clear focus on preparation for school, as well as lots of support with her severe speech delay and high sensory needs. We had one year before she started school and she needed to be able to do basic, obvious things like keep her shoes on in the classroom, not hold her comfort toys in her hands every minute, not eat all the non-food items she could get her hands on ... and actually be able to sit still on a chair for more than 10 seconds. She needed to know how to interact with other children, that her name was Bella, be able to actually write her name—all things that most children take for granted by the time they reach school age.

Now Bella did also attend speech and occupational therapy, but this was in a one on one setting with her therapist. At Ecdp she was in a classroom with other children, and a teacher and an aide who gave her direction. She had to put her bag and lunchbox away when she arrived, and pack them up again at the end of the day. She had work time, playtime and food time—she learned to go by their schedule and rules and not her own.

This was an eye opener for us ... we started to see that she could be independent. She could pack and carry her own bag, she could put her own shoes on. She could follow instructions and complete tasks ... When she was very small we just thought she was a very difficult child. When we got her diagnosis we thought she simply couldn't and wouldn't be able to do any of these things, because she was autistic. The Ecdp taught us that there was so many more to her than the autism. That the diagnosis did not mean that she couldn't learn and grow just like any other child.


...

Now let's consider what her transition to school would have been like without that foundation year at the ECDP. Without all the support and knowledge that her teacher shared with the school. It hasn't always been an easy transition but she has come a very long way from the little girl who couldn't talk, who would sit in the corner of the playground eating sand, who couldn't sit at a desk or hold a pen. And we owe all of that to the time she spent at the ECDP. If they get closed down, the Department of Education is failing all those children like Bella who deserve a fair start to their education.

I am pleased to say that Bella is thriving now at Jindalee State School.

ETHICS COMMITTEE

Report


 **Mr BROWN** (Capalaba—ALP) (3.01 pm), by leave: I table Ethics Committee report No. 164 titled *Matter of privilege referred by the Speaker on 11 November 2015 relating to an alleged deliberate misleading of the House*.

Tabled paper: Ethics Committee: Report No. 164—Matter of privilege referred by the Speaker on 11 November 2015 relating to an alleged deliberate misleading of the House [391].

I commend the report and the committee's recommendations to the House.

MOTION

Citizen's Right of Reply

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (3.02 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

- That this House notes report No. 163 of the Ethics Committee and the recommendation of the committee that a right of reply be incorporated into the *Record of Proceedings*; and
- That the House adopt the committee's recommendation and incorporate the right of reply into the *Record of Proceedings*.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

RESPONSE BY AUSCRIPT TO A STATEMENT MADE BY THE MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE ON 25 NOVEMBER 2015

On 25 November 2014, the Member for Redcliffe made the following statement in the Queensland Parliament:

Another great debacle overseen by this Attorney-General has been the outsourcing of the court transcription services. The cost to consumers has almost doubled. The cost for a day's transcript in the 2013-14 financial year under the State Reporting Bureau was \$1,267.90. In the same financial year the average cost of a day's transcript under Auscript was \$2, 189.88. That is a massive increase of 73 per cent.

Not only was the cost to customers massively increased; the cost to government departments saw even greater rises. Under an RTI obtained by the opposition last week, the department wrote that the outsourcing of the recording and transcription services was anticipated to give rise to \$6 million in savings for the department. Instead, additional costs were experienced by the Magistrates Court and QCAT. During the implementation process it was anticipated that these would be \$2 million for the Magistrates Court and \$170,000 for QCAT. The Department of Justice and Attorney-General was directed to find the \$2 million in savings internally, but no steps were taken to do so.

The QCAT costs increased from the previously budgeted amount of \$60,000 for transcription services to a total cost of \$600,000 for recording and transcription. One of the key cost-saving initiatives that was highlighted in the Auscript implementation was the ability for the judiciary and court staff to access the recordings online through court FM. That, however, according to the department, is proving impractical.

The outsourcing did not go as planned. One of the staff took a phone call from the Attorney-General who was calling to ask how the outsourcer was going in May 2013. It only started in March. Apparently that call was sparked by a conversation with the OPP. The view from the Office of the OPP was that they were not too impressed by the Auscript service and were not inclined to send much more work their way until they sorted themselves out.

Back at the 2012 estimates hearing, when asked about the time frames for the provision of transcripts in criminal trials under the outsourced model, the Attorney-General said-

The government will put a time frame on it. We would expect that we would do it more efficient and more reliable and faster than is currently the case offered by the State Reporting Bureau.

This has not been the case, however. There are significant delays. The Court of Appeal has particularly been affected. There are constant references to the delayed transcript issue.

The Court of Appeal in particular had to ask for specific turnaround times, which could not be provided because of Auscript delays. A meeting was held in August last year because 27 Court of Appeal matters were experiencing delays. The Attorney-General is the worst manager of government procurement processes in this parliament and all so he can give millions of dollars of government contracts to LNP donors.

Auscript Australasia Pty Limited (Auscript) refutes the assertion by the Member for Redcliffe on 25 November 2014 that the outsourcing of recording and transcription services for Queensland Courts to Auscript has been a debacle, that costs to consumers and government departments have increased significantly and that there have been significant delays in the production of transcripts. Auscript contends that on any measure—accuracy, speed and cost to taxpayers—the move to an outsourced recording and transcription service in Queensland has been an outstanding success.

Auscript also contends that any initial delays were overcome quickly through working closely with the court and its stakeholders, and there were no issues caused by Auscript that delayed proceedings or listings. Auscript notes that this arrangement has resulted in an external quality assurance framework and auditing processes being introduced with the Department for the first time. Auscript also notes that the processes that Auscript utilise for the Queensland Courts are regularly audited by the Department of Justice and Attorney-General and Auscript is also internationally quality certified to ISO9001.

Similarly, Auscript refutes the claim that accessing recordings of proceedings online through the Court.fm portal is proving impractical. Auscript contends that as at 25 November 2014, there were more than 400 licences in use by the Department and Court.fm is used daily by the Judiciary, Associates and Court staff.


Auscript also refutes the imputation that Auscript is the beneficiary of an improper procurement process. Auscript assures the House that it was awarded the contract by the Department of Justice and Attorney-General following an open, competitive tender process and after a comprehensive due diligence process was completed.

INFRASTRUCTURE, PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

Resumed from p. 867, on motion of Mr Pearce—

That the House take note of report No. 16 of the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee, *Consideration of the Queensland Audit Office Report to Parliament 16 for 2014-15: Results of audit: Local government entities 2013-14*.

 **Mrs LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (3.02 pm): I rise to speak to the Queensland Audit Office report to parliament No. 16 of 2014-15 with regard to local government entities. Before I begin, I acknowledge my fellow committee members of the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee. I have really enjoyed being an active member of the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee, and I really enjoy working side by side with the member for Mirani, as chair; the deputy chair, the member for Burleigh; the member for Gladstone—who has left us to go to another committee, but we really enjoyed the contributions he made to the committee—the member for Dalrymple, Mr Shane Knuth; and the wonderful member for Gregory, Mr Lachlan Millar. I would also like to acknowledge the excellent secretariat that our committee has: Erin Paisley, who was our research director but who has left us to go to bigger and better places; Margaret Telford, the principal research officer; Mary Westcott and Marion O'Connor.


We are here to talk about the Queensland Audit Office report to parliament with regard to local government entities, and I have to echo the comments of the member for Mirani when he talked about the importance of transparency in local government, particularly with regard to local government financial reporting.

The Queensland Audit Office report to parliament No. 16 was tabled in the Legislative Assembly and referred to the committee for consideration. On 28 October the committee held a public briefing with officers of the Queensland Audit Office. Following the briefing, the committee followed up with the Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning in relation to the implementation of the report's recommendations, and the department kindly provided a response to the briefing that we had with the Audit Office. That is in the appendix to the report. It was really useful to follow up with the department. I thought that was a valuable exercise for the committee to undertake.

The Audit Office report stated that there are many significant financial reporting risks and issues that were common across the local government sector. These are quite concerning. The issues related to asset management, deamalgamations, deficiencies in contract management, processes for monitoring supply of performance, and procurement and contracting practices. The Audit Office report suggested that the benefits of robust asset management are not clearly understood across the sector. That is quite concerning considering the local government sector manages \$72 billion worth of infrastructure assets. When the Audit Office is recognising that robust asset management principles are not in practice, it is quite concerning for me as a state member but also for me as a ratepayer.

It was pleasing to see that the Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning has been undertaking a number of sessions around the state for candidates of local government elections who are intending to contest the 2016 local government elections. For those sessions, the purpose was to highlight the roles and responsibilities of councillors including the obligations of councillors to ensure that local government and community assets are managed sustainably. It was really pleasing to hear that the department is doing some ongoing work in that space so that local government, councillors and those contesting council elections have a good understanding of the importance of asset management and their financial responsibilities.

The internal control frameworks outlined in the Queensland Audit Office report were also quite concerning. The Audit Office reported 565 significant control weaknesses to management in local government. Whilst this is a reduction on last year's number, there are still nine unfinished audits at the time the report was completed. The Auditor-General provides an opinion on whether the statement has been calculated correctly. The report essentially identified that a number of councils continue to experience delays in finalising supporting documentation. I think the Audit Office report is an important one for local government and its findings should be taken seriously.

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (3.08 pm): I rise to speak to the auditor's report on the results of the audit of local government. I would also like to thank the member for Keppel for her kind words. I acknowledge the member for Keppel's previous role. She brings a great depth of knowledge in planning ability and planning intricacies to our committee. I think it is important that we have that skill base on our committee.

Local governments are very important in the seat of Gregory. In my electorate we have the Central Highlands Regional Council, the Barcaldine Regional Council, the Longreach Regional Council, Barcoo Shire Council, Quilpie Shire Council, Blackall-Tambo Regional Council and the very important Woorabinda Aboriginal Shire Council, which also does a great job. Local councils are more than just roads, rates and rubbish in Gregory. They play a critical role not only in delivering services at the grassroots level. They play an important role in providing services from economic incubators, getting projects off the ground and getting events off the ground. They play a critical role in Western Queensland and Central Queensland. I enjoy a great relationship with all of my councils.

It would be remiss of me if I did not pay respects to probably one of the best mayors regional Queensland has ever seen who is retiring after the council election on Saturday. That is Peter Maguire, who is affectionately known in regional Queensland and across the state as 'Maggot'. He is one of the original larrikins in regional Queensland and he has certainly played a significant role in not only the Emerald Shire Council but the Central Highlands Regional Council for 28 years and for 12 years as mayor. I have known Peter Maguire and the Maguire family most of my life. It is not only Peter who plays a critical role; it is his whole family including his brothers. Everybody involved with the Maguire family has a significant role in the town of Emerald and Central Highlands.

Mr Pearce: What is his nickname?


Mr MILLAR: 'Maggot'. I take that interjection from the member for Mirani. Peter certainly deserves to be recognised in this House as one of the most significant mayors in regional Queensland for a very long time. I certainly pay my respects to him. I wish Peter, his beautiful wife, Jo, and his two children, Brooke and Mark, all the very best. I am sure we will continue to see Peter Maguire play a significant role in regional Queensland. We need him to do so because he is certainly a strong advocate for regional Queensland.

This report looked at many issues, including the financial reporting issues that councils face. It can be difficult for regional councils—certainly councils out in my seat—because they have such a large area to cover. This report looked at asset management, but one of the biggest issues that faced regional councils and councils in Western Queensland was amalgamation. It had a significant impact on how those councils had to operate. It forced a lot of issues onto those councils that they had never seen before. One only has to look at the new Barcaldine Regional Council. Before amalgamation, it had the Aramac council, the Jericho council and the Barcaldine council. They have been joined into one. Trying to have the resources, the funds and the management expertise to cover the whole council can be very difficult. I can tell the House now that that council does a significant and fantastic job trying to cover as much of the area as they can to maintain those services.

Members only have to look at the Longreach Regional Council, which had the old Ilfracombe council plus the Longreach council come together. Those councils out in Western Queensland have large areas to cover. Look at the Central Highlands Regional Council: it had the Peak Downs council, the Bauhinia council and the Duaringa shire council come together. The Central Highlands Regional Council covers an area the size of Tasmania. That regional council in regional Queensland has to maintain a lot of infrastructure and a lot of resources and keep all the services going for the local community. They certainly play a significant role.

Finally, I would like to talk about something that is very important—that is, the tendering process for these regional councils. If we are going to tender projects in regional councils such as the Central Highlands, Longreach or Barcaldine, we must make sure we keep local people employed on these tendering projects. The last thing we need is outsiders taking those jobs, and we have seen outsiders


from as far away as Cairns come down to the Central Highlands Regional Council to take those jobs. We have to employ locals and we have to make sure that those tendered projects go to local people to keep local people employed in local councils.

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (3.12 pm): I was pleased to read the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee report on the results of the audit of the local government entities. However, reading about finance and local government, unfortunately, brings back some not so good memories for me about former ALP state governments and their hostile treatment of local government. I could not help recalling how the Beattie Labor government took a billion dollars in grants and subsidy funding from local governments over a period of 10 years. I see the report mentions another word—de-amalgamations. Who could forget the treatment of communities and local governments across the state following the ALP government's forced council amalgamations in 2008? I can tell members that in my electorate and in regional Queensland they still remember the way their communities were treated and they will not forgive the Labor Party for what happened to their hardworking, community minded councillors.

Council amalgamations were supposed to make councils more financially sustainable, so after finding in this report that there is a total of \$72 billion worth of infrastructure assets managed by local government, I expected to find a combined level of debt figure that councils are incurring. I note that this figure is not reported in this report and the debt is reported in terms of ratios, and the Auditor-General does not have an opinion about the appropriateness of ratios or the council's future sustainability. I find that to be a very interesting statement from the Auditor-General. I hope the committee was advised of the total amount of debt for local governments in Queensland. It is just as important to keep track of what government is spending as it is to know what the debt is for future generations and what they may have to pay back.

I note the department of local government has been conducting sessions for councillors who are considering contesting the 2016 local government elections. A number of those sessions were held across my electorate. I was pleased to meet with the departmental officers, and they did quite a number of sessions and quite a number of candidates attended those sessions. I believe there will be some changes at the forthcoming council election, particularly in my electorate and also across Queensland. I hope we will see the department back very soon supporting and helping our new councils with their responsibilities.

Given that the 2016 local government election is this Saturday, I wish to pass on my best wishes to the retiring councillors in my electorate and also across the state for their future endeavours. I would also like to thank the councillors for the hard work they have done for all of our communities. I pass on my best wishes to the candidates and councillors in Queensland who are contesting the forthcoming 2016 local government election.


 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (3.15 pm): I rise to take note of the committee report. I thank the committee for their hard work in noting the Queensland Audit Office report into local government and their financial situations. This Saturday we are prepared for the festival of democracy that is the local government election. I make no comment on the very contested nature of the Logan City Council—one of the most important and growing city councils in this state. I wish to express my thanks and those of the member for Woodridge, the member for Waterford, the member for Algeester and the member for Springwood to the outgoing mayor, Pam Parker. It will certainly be an end of an era in Logan. Her passion, enthusiasm and absolute drive for the city of Logan is undiminished and will remain very strong in the minds of Logan residents. I also note her passion for fixing the M1 and her complete commitment to get the funding of 80-20 from the council. When we talk of audit offices and audits, those funds are essential to the connection and growing of our city. I thank the House for giving me the time to make those points and to thank Pam for her service to the city of Logan.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note


 **Ms FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (3.17 pm): I move—

That the House takes note of report No. 19 of the Finance and Administration Committee, *Inquiry into the report on the strategic review of the functions of the Integrity Commissioner*.

I wish to take note of the Finance and Administration Committee report *Inquiry into the report on the strategic review of the functions of the Integrity Commissioner*. Before I proceed, I would like to take the opportunity to say what a privilege it was for me to chair the Finance and Administration Committee until my appointment as Deputy Speaker. I never got the chance in the transition to that position to thank all of the members of the committee, including our deputy chair, the member for Coomera, and the members for Barron River, Stretton, Condamine and Broadwater. The committee reviewed a lot of legislation last year. We worked very hard and we achieved a lot to get bipartisan support for the quite eclectic range of bills we considered.

This particular inquiry was a very interesting one for us. I also must acknowledge the role of Professor Peter Coaldrake, who is the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer of the Queensland University of Technology, who was engaged to conduct the strategic review of the Integrity Commissioner, and also the Nous Group, who were appointed as consultants to assist Professor Coaldrake with the strategic review. I also want to thank the Integrity Commissioner for the number of times on which he briefed the committee and assisted us with the inquiry. This review has some history. Section 86 of the Integrity Act specifies that a strategic review of both the commissioner's functions and the performance of those functions must be conducted within four years of the commencement of the position, which was by 1 January 2014, and the strategic review must be conducted every five years afterwards. However, as was noted in the final report, the previous government led by the former premier sought to defer the strategic review to a start date of December 2014. Although that review was commenced in 2014, the calling of the 2015 election meant it was suspended during the election period. Following the election period, the Premier confirmed that the strategic review should proceed. The timing was somewhat out, but we particularly thank Professor Coaldrake for progressing that in a very timely fashion.

The strategic review made 20 recommendations. We received a number of submissions and heard from a number of witnesses. It is fair to say that the recommendation regarding the definition of 'lobbyist' was the one that caused the most comment and that probably received more submissions than any other of those recommendations. That recommendation had been that the definition of 'lobbyist' should be expanded to include regulation of in-house lobbyists and other professionals discharging the lobbying function. With the exception of third-party lobbyists—those already registered under the Queensland scheme, who supported the broader definition and expanded scope of regulation—most other stakeholders had a preference of not being required to register and publicly disclose their lobbying activity. In fact, we had a joint submission representing 10 peak industry associations and supplemented by individual submissions. We had submissions from organisations such as the Chamber of Commerce & Industry Queensland, from the Property Council of Australia, from the LGAQ and from Clubs Queensland. They raised a number of issues including the regulatory burden that would be required if the recommendation were to take place and also issues around the transparency that already exists in organisations like theirs, like peak industry bodies. Although we received arguments to the contrary, it was arguments such as these which really led the committee to not recommend that that expansion of the lobbyist definition be accepted. There was a range of other issues. I commend the report of the committee.

 **Miss BARTON** (Broadwater—LNP) (3.23 pm): I pass on my apologies to the member for Bulimba. I had anticipated the current chair of the committee jumping. I did not intend to try to supersede the member for Bulimba.

I rise as a former member of the Finance and Administration Committee to speak to the report that we tabled with respect to the strategic review of the functions of the Queensland Integrity Commissioner. At the outset, can I acknowledge the former chair of the committee, the member for Bulimba, Di Farmer, for the work that she did as the chair of the committee. This is the first opportunity I have had to publicly acknowledge that. I am sure that everyone who was at the time a member of the committee would agree that, whilst we did not necessarily always end up on the same page, in terms of the way we worked as a committee it was very much a collaborative thing. I am sure that the member for Bulimba and I will both miss our time on the Finance and Administration Committee.


One of the things that we did get to do was look at the strategic review of the functions of the Integrity Commissioner. To that end, I think it would be very appropriate on behalf of the opposition to acknowledge the work that Professor Peter Coaldrake from the Queensland University of Technology did in conducting the strategic review and, of course, thank him for the guidance and the information that he provided to our committee as we were considering his review. Of course, we also acknowledge Richard Bingham, who is the Queensland Integrity Commissioner. Richard also made a lot of time and effort for the committee when we were going through and considering the recommendations that had been made by Professor Coaldrake.

I think it is fair to say that, when we were considering whether or not we would accept certain recommendations of Professor Coaldrake, there were just a couple that probably went a bit too far in terms of the efficacy of the Office of the Integrity Commissioner and how we maintain an appropriate regime around the Register of Lobbyists. Without Professor Coaldrake having full knowledge of how the function operated, he perhaps did not understand the implications of some of his recommendations.

The really big thing that we as a committee had to address was the extent to which we would broaden or narrow the definition of 'lobbyist'. One of the things that Professor Coaldrake had recommended was that we broaden the definition of 'lobbyist' to take into account advocacy organisations and whether they would have to appear on the lobbyists register. Certainly, there was very persuasive evidence provided by organisations like the Queensland Property Council, the Chamber of Commerce and other organisations about whether that was going to be an effective use of the lobbyists register and whether that would perhaps be an appropriate understanding of the work that they do. I think that would be the best way to put it. As we all know, whether they are business groups, industry groups or even unions, there is a role to play in terms of advocacy, and it is a very important role to play. It would come as no surprise to anyone, particularly with the CCIQ for example, that they would advocate with respect to payroll tax and the cost of doing business. I do not think the committee ever really at any time considered it appropriate that we expand the definition of 'lobbyist' with respect to what would be on the lobbyists register to capture organisations like CCIQ or the Property Council.

One of the other things that I think we probably did consider to an extent but did not necessarily make any findings on was the recommendation with respect to advocacy groups. It gave us an opportunity to have a broader discussion about just how interventionist we should be, whether it is the role of government, whether it is the role of the person who is lobbying and the like.

I also want to take this opportunity to note that there has certainly been a very bipartisan view over the past few years. When it comes to these kinds of things everyone has worked together. One of the things that the Newman government did that was quite significant was the publication of ministerial diaries. Everyone would agree that, when it comes to people lobbying government to make decisions that have an impact on their personal circumstances, it is important that we have an understanding of who is lobbying and who is advocating. I am sure that everyone would agree that the publication of ministerial diaries was a significant and positive step and perhaps we can consider moving forward with what we should do.

 **Mr RUSSO** (Sunnybank—ALP) (3.28 pm): I rise to speak to the Finance and Administration Committee report No. 19 and to commend the report to the House. The chair of the committee at the time of the tabling of the report, Di Farmer, the member for Bulimba, stated in the chair's foreword—

The Committee resolved to formally review the Report and to consider the recommendations made and comment on other findings where appropriate. The Committee agreed with some and disagreed with other recommendations.

Although the committee made eight recommendations, in the time available to me I intend to deal with only one of the recommendations.

The Integrity Act 2009 expanded the advice that could be given in relation to ethics, integrity issues and conflicts of interest. Section 86 of the Integrity Act specifies that a strategic review of both the commissioner's function and the performance of those functions must be conducted within four years of the commencement of the position, and that was by 1 January 2014. A strategic review must also be conducted every five years thereafter. It is important to note that the act does not allow for an extension of time to be granted for the commencement of the review.

The act specifies that the strategic review must be conducted by appropriately qualified persons acting as independent officers, and to that extent Professor Peter Coaldrake, vice-chancellor and chief executive officer of the Queensland University of Technology, was engaged to conduct the strategic review. The Nous Group was also appointed as consultants to assist Professor Coaldrake with this strategic review. The terms of reference state—

In conducting the strategic review, the appointee is to have regard to the functions of the Integrity Commissioner and relevant objectives of the Act in assessing the ongoing economy, efficiency and effectiveness of the Office of the Integrity Commissioner. The appointee is to also have regard to the Integrity Commissioner's annual reports, the organisational structure, goals, operational conduct, internal/external policies, operational management, corporate management and service provision of the Integrity Commissioner. The review should also consider comparative models, practices and procedures used by offices in other jurisdictions equivalent to the Integrity Commissioner.

The appointee is to interview the Integrity Commissioner about the strategic review and consideration should also be given to interviewing staff of the Integrity Commissioner and the Finance and Administration Committee.

The appointee may also wish to consult with a selection of the following stakeholders, including designated persons and lobbyists from the Registrar of Lobbyists, and to gain information from sources and documents relevant to the strategic review including: Integrity Act 2009; Integrity Commissioner's website; Queensland Integrity Commissioner Annual Report 2013-14; Register of Lobbyists; Finance and Administration Committee, Integrity Commissioner; Finance and Administration Committee report No. 13, *Oversight of the Queensland Integrity Commissioner 2011*; Final Queensland Government Response report No. 13 *Oversight of the Queensland Integrity Commissioner 2011*; Finance and Administration Committee report No. 26 *Oversight of the Queensland Integrity Commissioner 2012 and Review of Lobbyists Code of Conduct*; Queensland Government Response report No. 26 *Oversight of the Queensland Integrity Commissioner 2012 and Review of Lobbyists Code of Conduct*.

As stated in recommendation 4 of the committee's report—

The Committee recommends the Government confirm that the HP Records Manager system operated by the Department of Premier and Cabinet has appropriate security protocols in place to protect the confidentiality of the Integrity Commissioner's files stored on the system.


As stated in the Professor Coaldrake's review—

Confidentiality is the cornerstone of the Integrity Commissioner's advisory function ... "a person must not record, use or disclose information in relation to an ethics or integrity issue about another person ..."

...

Confidentiality for those contacting the Integrity Commissioner for advice is a key condition of success for the office.

I commend the report to the House.

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (3.33 pm): I rise as a member of the Finance and Administration Committee to make a contribution to the debate on the *Inquiry into the report on the strategic review of the functions of the Integrity Commissioner*. As has already been mentioned by the member for Bulimba and the member for Broadwater, there was really one issue that demanded most of our time and generated the most interest in this report, and that was recommendation No. 7 by Professor Peter Coaldrake concerning the definition of lobbyists. He stated—


The definition of lobbyists should be expanded to include regulation of in-house lobbyists and other professionals discharging the lobbying function.

Section 41 of the act defines the meaning of lobbyist as follows—

A lobbyist is an entity that carries out a lobbying activity for a third party client or whose employees or contractors carry out a lobbying activity for a third party client.

That generated a lot of discussion about whether a lobbyist is actually a lobbyist or an advocacy group. We received a number of submissions from various organisations which you would call advocacy groups such as Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland, Local Government Association of Queensland, Property Council of Australia, Clubs Queensland and Master Electricians Australia. They were very opposed to broadening the definition of 'lobbyist'. The committee as a whole also had some reservation about expanding the term 'lobbyist'. As the member for Broadwater mentioned in her address regarding the publication of ministerial diaries, all ministers know the process they have to go through when they engage in conversations with a lobbyist. To expand that definition to organisations like Clubs Queensland and others really would have been taking it a step too far. At the end of our deliberations—and it was unanimous—the committee decided that the current lobbyist regulatory regime was adequate and more than covered the role of lobbyists. This was really the one issue that took up our time.

'There have been a couple of changes on the Finance and Administration Committee, and I would like to thank the member for Bulimba for her contribution to the Finance and Administration Committee during her time as chair. I would also acknowledge the contribution of the member for Broadwater. Her contribution was always valued, particularly if there were any grammatical errors in our reports. None of them got past her scrutiny. I would also like to thank the research director Deborah Jeffrey and other secretariat staff, as that support crew has changed as well. I welcome our new chair Peter Russo, the member for Sunnybank, and Tony Perrett, the member for Gympie, to the Finance and Administration Committee.

 **Mr PEGG** (Stretton—ALP) (3.36 pm): I rise to speak to the Finance and Administration Committee's report No. 19 *Inquiry into the report on the strategic review of the functions of the Integrity Commissioner*. I would like to echo the comments of the member for Condamine in relation to some of the changes that have taken place on the committee. At the time of this report the member for Bulimba was the chair of the committee and she did a fantastic job, but she is being ably replaced by the member for Sunnybank as chair. Also the member for Broadwater—

Miss Barton: I am sure you are terribly disappointed.

Mr PEGG: I will take that interjection. I am extremely disappointed not to be on the committee with the member for Broadwater, but I am sure we will have plenty of opportunities to talk about issues and work on policy in the future, and I look forward to that.

Mr Furner interjected.

Mr PEGG: I take that interjection from the member for Ferny Grove. I am sure the member for Broadwater will make just as lasting, longstanding and memorable a contribution to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee as she did to the Finance and Administration Committee. I also wanted to welcome the new members of the committee. I already mentioned the member for Sunnybank, but also the member for Gympie. It has been great to work with them so far. There have also been some changes to the committee staff and I did want to thank Deb, Maggie, Megan, Louise, Julie, Lynette and Mel, who were all involved with the committee and the compilation of this particular report back in December. There have been a few changes in staff since. All the staff work so hard and do a fantastic job helping to put all these reports together.

As some of my colleagues have mentioned, the report made eight recommendations. Time is against me in terms of being able to speak to each particular recommendation. I think it is important to note that the Integrity Commission was first established in 1999 under the Public Sector Ethics Act. When it was initially established it was limited to providing advice to designated persons with respect to conflicts of interest and to, where sought, providing the Premier with advice regarding issues of ethics and integrity including the setting of standards.

In the formulation of this report the committee called for public submissions, held a public hearing and held a public briefing. The inquiry was advertised on 18 September 2015. As is the usual course, we wrote to stakeholder groups inviting written submissions and asking them to address the terms of reference. The committee held a public hearing on 13 October 2015 and a public briefing with Professor Coaldrake on 28 October 2015.

Some of my colleagues have already mentioned some of the submitters and the work they put into making their submissions. In fact, organisations such as the LGAQ and the CCIQ are regular contributors and submitters to the Finance and Administration Committee, and they do a lot of work contributing to committee reports and outcomes. I take this opportunity to place on the record my thanks to them for that.

I think it is important to have regard to the terms of reference for the strategic review of the functions of the Queensland Integrity Commissioner. I will not go through them all, but I think a couple of terms of reference are particularly important when we are considering this particular report. One was to have regard to the functions of the Integrity Commissioner and relevant objectives of the act in assessing the ongoing economy, efficiency and effectiveness of the Office of the Integrity Commissioner. Others were to consider comparative models, practices and procedures used by offices in other jurisdictions equivalent to the Integrity Commissioner; to interview the Integrity Commissioner about the strategic review, giving consideration to interviewing staff of the Integrity Commissioner and the Finance and Administration Committee; and to consult with a selection of stakeholders including designated persons and lobbyists.

I conclude by thanking my fellow members of the Finance and Administration Committee and the staff. I have enjoyed working with them so far and look forward to working with them into the future.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

INFRASTRUCTURE, PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note



Mr PEARCE (Mirani—ALP) (3.42 pm): I move—

That the House take note of the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee report No. 17, *Consideration of the Queensland Audit Office report to parliament 19 for 2014-15: fraud management in local government*.

Mr Butcher: Spot on.

Mr PEARCE: I am a bit flustered this afternoon. FIFO got me so excited this morning—the outcome for the people of Central Queensland. I am just so happy for them. I cannot wait for the mining companies to say, ‘It’s done. We can’t do it anymore.’

As local members we come in contact with a lot of councils. That is part of our job. We understand the role that councillors have in dealing with their community. We also come in contact with ratepayers who raise concerns about the performance of their elected council. Many of the concerns are more linked to misunderstanding the issue of due process or the consequences of misinformation. We know that credibility of local government is the key to successful management of council. That is why I support the Queensland Audit Office having the power to audit the books, scrutinise the management of council and, if necessary, enforce appropriate actions and penalties.

I note that the business sector of Moura and Banana is asking why an accommodation camp has been allowed to continue operating without having complied with local government development conditions and not complying with Main Roads requirements for a road upgrade at an intersection. I understand that this accommodation camp is drawing customers away from the motels and hotels in the area and as a result the hotel at Banana has recently closed. That is a big loss to the community. Hotels and motels have to construct their premises according to the conditions of a development approval. I just cannot understand why this business has been allowed to continue to flourish. I have to say—

Mr Butcher: Business is doing the right thing and being punished.


Mr PEARCE: That is exactly right. When businesses do the right thing they are punished because they lose business—

Mr Rickuss: It sounds like there is some grey corruption going on there.

Mr PEARCE: I would never accuse anybody of being corrupt, but it is certainly an issue that needs to be looked at. As a ratepayer, I think the Audit Office having the ability to go in and check councils and the way they are performing is a good thing. It is about transparency and accountability. I wish the Audit Office good luck. I encourage them to keep coming forward with good reports.

The committee report states that the Audit Office was of the view that councils keep poor records. That is true. I spent a little bit of time on council in the late 1980s. It is easy to see how things can get out of hand if the people who are doing important things and making important decisions are not being watched over in a way that keeps councillors clean. That is not good business for the local communities.

Voters want the people they elect to council on Saturday to do their job and to be honest, up-front, accountable and transparent. Then they can have faith in their local government moving forward and doing things that are in the best interests of the community—not in the best interests of developers or councillors themselves but in the best interests of the community. I encourage the incoming councillors. They will find it a great lifestyle. It involves plenty of work, but if they like that sort of work they will take to it and enjoy it. Some members of this place have come from local government into state parliament. People can move forward, but it is about their own idea of continuing to be a credible person and working with a credible organisation.

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (3.47 pm): I rise to add to the debate on the committee report *Consideration of the Queensland Audit Office report to parliament 19 for 2014-15: fraud management in local government*. As part of the performance audit the Queensland Audit Office sent a survey form to 77 local governments in Queensland to see what their standards and processes were on fraud management. They sought information for the period between 1 July 2009 and November 2014. Unfortunately, only 55 councils responded fully to the survey. Eleven councils partially responded and 11 councils did not respond at all.

The Queensland Audit Office concluded that most councils were not good at managing fraud. That is a real problem that we are facing in this state at the moment. Fraud and corruption are happening in councils but few of them sufficiently know how widespread it is. One of the issues with fraud is that you do not necessarily know it has happened until you find out about it. That is the real issue. Once you find out about the fraud you can look through your records and find out exactly how it happened and find the missing money, if it is money that is involved. Until you actually find it, most of the time you have no idea it is happening. We saw a perfect case in the health system with the Tahitian prince, who disappeared with \$19 million from Queensland Health.

Mr Rickuss: Would you believe he was getting funded better than Diabetes Queensland?

Mr HART: There you go. He was being funded better than Diabetes Queensland. He had a massive house down along the river, a lot of designer clothes and fast cars. Unfortunately, the Queensland government was able to recover only part of that money.

That fraud was able to happen because the right plans were not in place, the right protections were not in place. Queensland Health did not know it was happening until somebody doxxed this man in. That is what the Queensland Audit Office found in its survey—that a lot of these frauds are

discovered not because councils have processes in place, but somebody dobs the person in. That person spends more money than they earn, or they create some other fraud and somebody becomes aware of it and dobs them in. Without processes in place, it is going to be very hard to find these frauds.

I certainly encourage local councils to put in place fraud management plans. I understand that there is a set of Australian standards for fraud management plans. I understand that the majority of South-East Queensland councils have fraud management plans in place. However, some of our Indigenous councils and some of our smaller councils do not have them in place. That is possibly where some of this fraud is happening.

The Queensland Audit Office made a couple of recommendations to the government. Recommendation 2 was as follows—

All councils assess themselves against the findings in this report as a priority and where needed develop, revise or update their:

- policies and procedures for fraud and corruption management
- fraud and corruption control plans
- fraud risk assessments
- data analytics capability for fraud detection

To the credit of the Deputy Premier and the minister, who has responsibility for this area, she has written to all of the mayors suggesting that they look at this report and follow through with its recommendations. I understand that the acting director-general has also written to those councils and has said basically the same thing. The acting director-general has asked for councils to give him a report as to how they are going with implementing these plans. As a follow-up to this report, the committee has asked the Queensland Audit Office to come back to the committee at a future date to let us know how all the councils are going with implementing these plans.

Mr Rickuss: After this election there should be some new mayors and councillors.

Mr HART: And I take that interjection. There will be a lot of new councillors after this election. I encourage all of those new councillors to get involved with fraud management in their councils.



Mr BUTCHER (Gladstone—ALP) (3.52 pm): I rise to speak to report No. 17 of the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee titled *Consideration of the Queensland Audit Office report to parliament 19 for 2014-15: fraud management in local government*. The Queensland Audit Office report found the following—

The most common types of fraud committed against councils are the misappropriation of council assets including theft, and corruption by employees who use their positional authority or their access to information for personal benefit. Corruption can involve preferential treatment in the allocation of work, receiving gifts, kickbacks or bribes from suppliers to council employees or elected officials, or unauthorised disclosure of council information to third parties.

The report stated further that it is considered—

... a serious threat to councils because it is difficult to detect and can create the most financial and reputational damage.

The report stated further—

Councils have a high inherent risk of corruption because of the high volume of goods and services they procure from local suppliers and their proximity to those suppliers.

As a result, councils have to be particularly vigilant in their procurement practices. Some local councils have only limited resources by which they can check for fraud. As the member for Burleigh mentioned, the Queensland Audit Office sent out a survey to 77 councils. Fifty-five of those councils responded to the survey, 11 councils partially responded to the survey, and 11 councils did not even bother to respond to the survey. During the committee hearing the Queensland Audit Office was questioned about that matter at length. The Queensland Audit Office did not know why those councils had not put in a response to the survey. Those councils that did not respond were small councils located in regional Queensland. That is quite concerning because, as we talked about during the committee process, these councils have the highest risk of this type of fraud occurring.

The committee discussed the issue that matters referred to in the Queensland Audit Office report were not addressed: there was still fraud happening in some of our councils that was not being reported, these councils were not reporting that fraud and there was no detail as to how that fraud could be stopped. In its report the Queensland Audit Office made the following recommendations—

1. The Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning pursue amendment of the Local Government Regulation 2012 and the City of Brisbane Regulation 2012 to require:
 - loss as a result of fraud to be a reportable loss to the Auditor-General and to the Minister responsible for local government
 - councils to keep written records of alleged and proven losses arising from fraud.

2. All councils assess themselves against the findings in this report as a priority and where needed develop, revise or update their:
- policies and procedures for fraud and corruption management
 - fraud and corruption control plans
 - fraud risk assessments
 - data analytics capability for fraud detection.

It is vitally important for councils to have good systems in place to detect and record instances of fraud. The regulatory changes, as recommended, will provide a consistent framework for reporting loss as a result of fraud and better record keeping. I take on board the comments of the chair of the committee, the member for Mirani. In terms of fraud in local councils, not only do the ratepayers lose out because they have to replace the money that has been taken through fraud but also it affects the credibility of councillors.



Mr PYNE (Cairns—Ind) (3.57 pm): I see this Queensland Audit Office report as a vindication of many of the concerns that I have been raising in this place for a number of months now. Certainly, in hearing the member for Burleigh say that fraud and corruption exists in local government, I would not describe it as music to my ears but it is certainly someone speaking the truth about at least some of what is happening in local government in Queensland.

In its report the Queensland Audit Office concluded—

Most councils are not effective in managing their fraud risks. Fraud and corruption is happening in councils, but few understand sufficiently how widespread it is, or what it costs them.

Mr Rickuss: So your grey fraud would be vindicated, then?

Mr PYNE: I take that interjection. This vindicates comments around the issue of grey corruption that is happening within local governments in Queensland. I think it is very pertinent to mention that all we know about is what has been reported. I suspect that an inquiry would reveal that far more widespread fraud is taking place. All too often this stuff is swept under the carpet, because it is an uncomfortable thing to recognise. As with most things, it is hard to fix a problem if you do not recognise that there is one.

The Queensland Audit Office was of the view that councils kept poor records on fraud, omitted a substantial volume of frauds that have been perpetrated against them and inconsistently reported instances of fraud. I would like to see the Minister for Local Government, after the upcoming council elections, write to every newly elected local government in Queensland outlining recommendations as a result of this audit office report. Many Queenslanders will decide to get a new broom to sweep the local government they have aside and we need to make sure that those people who are elected are aware of these concerns from day one so that they can institute the necessary reforms within their individual councils to make sure there is greater transparency and accountability.


I would like to think that this Queensland Audit Office report would be read by the Local Government Association of Queensland. I would certainly love to highlight certain tracts of this report and put it in front of Mr Greg Hallam because he truly needs to be aware of this. With respect to fraud planning and prevention, I note with interest that the Queensland Audit Office concluded that the majority of councils are not managing fraud risks well because they do not have a plan to prevent, detect and respond to fraud. Most councils do not have a plan and are not following through with control activities to manage fraud. This is a concern. The amount of fraud that comes from abuse of access to information has been mentioned. Certainly, anecdotally we are hearing of people who work for councils who are then either passing that information on to friends or are setting up a business with the benefit of the information they have acquired as council employees and operating in competition with council.

I could speak for a long time on this matter, but I think the most important thing is that the Minister for Local Government acknowledge the problem of fraud and corruption in local government, that the Local Government Association of Queensland acknowledge it and that the people of Queensland, when they go to the polls on Saturday, vote for those people, regardless of partisan politics or whether their candidates be left, right or whatever, whom they feel are going to operate transparent and accountable local government with the No. 1 priority being the elimination of fraud and corruption in local government in Queensland.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Linard): The time for consideration of committee reports has expired.


MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Answer to Question on Notice No. 923

 **Hon. WS BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services) (4.02 pm): I refer to question on notice No. 923 asked of me in October last year when I held the portfolio of Agriculture and Fisheries. In that question on notice I was asked the details of the total number of new starters administered in the agriculture and fisheries section of my then portfolio who had commenced employment over the period of June 2015 to September 2015 broken down by industrial agreement. The number of new starters, 53, 4 and 1, were tallied at 58. However, due to a technical error the figure 58 was added to those initial figures so the total was 116 provided in the answer. I wish to set the record straight and advise that the answer to the question on notice should have been 58.

PUBLIC HEALTH (WATER RISK MANAGEMENT) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (4.03 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Public Health Act 2005 for particular purposes. I table the bill and explanatory notes and I nominate the Transportation and Utilities Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Public Health (Water Risk Management) Amendment Bill 2016 [\[392\]](#).

Tabled paper: Public Health (Water Risk Management) Amendment Bill 2016, explanatory notes [\[393\]](#).

Outbreaks of legionnaire's disease related to hospital drinking water supplies have been widely reported worldwide. Legionnaire's disease is a severe form of pneumonia caused by legionella bacteria that can be fatal. Legionnaire's disease can be contracted by breathing in water droplets or airborne droplets that are contaminated with legionella bacteria. International consensus is that the proportion of acute infections caused by legionella bacteria that are fatal tends to be much higher for healthcare acquired infections. This may be attributable to the fact that those at highest risk are likely to spend increased time as hospital inpatients or as residents of aged-care facilities and that the complexity of the plumbing in these premises may encourage the multiplication of legionella bacteria. While legionella bacteria detections in hospital water supplies are not unusual, there have been relatively few fatal cases of hospital acquired legionellosis in Queensland hospitals.

In 2013, Queensland's Chief Health Officer, Dr Jeannette Young, investigated two cases of hospital acquired legionnaire's disease at a metropolitan private hospital. Following this investigation, the Chief Health Officer published a report that included recommendations to improve the management and control of legionella risks in hospitals and residential aged-care facilities. These recommendations included interim arrangements requiring Queensland hospitals and public residential aged-care facilities to develop and implement water quality risk management plans to address the risks associated with legionella bacteria. These arrangements have been in place since mid-2014.

The Chief Health Officer also recommended that in the longer term amendments be made to the Public Health Act 2005. In December 2015, there was a further case of legionnaire's disease at the same metropolitan hospital. This case attracted significant media interest, in part due to confusion regarding the number of positive tests for legionella bacteria the hospital had recorded during routine water sampling undertaken since 2013. Unfortunately, the Department of Health was prevented from publicly disclosing information about the hospital's water test results due to restrictions on the disclosure of information under the Private Health Facilities Act 1999.

While most hospitals are vigilant in monitoring their water supplies for legionella bacteria, I undertook to review our existing laws with the view to putting in place a comprehensive legislative framework which is more transparent and gives the public more confidence that hospitals and residential aged-care facilities are managing the risks associated with, and regularly testing their water supplies for, legionella bacteria.

The Public Health (Water Risk Management) Amendment Bill 2016 amends the Public Health Act to establish a legislative framework to improve the management and control of health risks associated with the supply and use of water in hospitals and residential aged-care facilities—in particular health risks associated with legionella bacteria—and provide for greater public transparency

of water testing activities being undertaken by these facilities. This framework consolidates and expands on the interim arrangements currently in place. The bill will initially apply to public hospitals, public residential aged-care facilities and private health facilities licensed under the Private Health Facilities Act 1999. These facilities are currently captured under the interim arrangements. Implementation of the legislation in the private residential aged-care sector will be undertaken at a later date through a phased implementation process and we will be consulting closely with stakeholders as part of this process.

Water risk management plans are recognised internationally as the most effective method of managing health risks associated with water related hazards. These hazards are not just confined to microbial hazards such as legionella bacteria. Therefore, the bill requires facilities to have in place water risk management plans that address the risks associated with a range of hazards such as disease-causing micro-organisms, including legionella and chemical contaminants, and other issues such as interruptions in the supply of water. To ensure that the plans are robustly designed and considered, the bill outlines the content that a water risk management plan must contain. This has been informed by world's best practice and aligns closely with the new national guidelines for the control of legionella in health and aged-care facilities that were approved by the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee in late 2015.

To assist in ensuring the suitability and quality of water risk management plans, the bill enables the chief executive of the Department of Health to request a copy of a facility's plan and to direct the responsible person to amend the plan if required. Currently, the Public Health Act does not require persons to notify the Department of Health if legionella bacteria are detected in water samples. To address this, the bill requires the person in charge of a facility to notify the Department of Health within one business day after being notified of a test result confirming the presence of legionella bacteria. The rapid notification of legionella detections in water samples will enable the Department of Health to check that the facility has activated its water risk management plan and that it is responding to the detection of legionella. Repeated positive detections will also highlight those facilities that may be facing challenges in managing their water supplies.

The bill also requires facilities to provide periodic reports to the Department of Health regarding water tests undertaken for legionella in accordance with their water risk management plan, including test results. It is intended that these reports will be provided by facilities on a quarterly basis. The bill enables the data provided by facilities to be published by the Department of Health. This will give greater public transparency to the water testing for legionella being undertaken by these facilities and will give the community confidence that facilities are regularly testing their water supplies for legionella bacteria. It is intended that the department will publish the data quarterly, although circumstances may arise that necessitate more frequent reporting, for example, in response to hospital acquired cases of legionnaire's disease.

Hospitals and residential aged-care facilities care for some of our most vulnerable Queenslanders. The bill provides for a range of offences relating to noncompliance with bill provisions and associated penalties ranging from \$23,560 to up to \$117,800 for the two most serious offences. The community rightly has an expectation that those facilities should proactively manage and control risks to the health of their patients and residents, and the penalties reflect the significant responsibility that hospitals and residential aged-care facilities have in this regard.

The proposed amendments contained in the bill are the most stringent in Australia with regard to water risk management in hospitals and residential aged-care facilities. These amendments build on current international best practice in legionella risk management in hospitals and residential aged-care facilities. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. CR DICK (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (4.10 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the Transportation and Utilities Committee

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Linard): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Transportation and Utilities Committee.

Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date



Hon. CR DICK (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (4.11 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That under the provisions of standing order 136, the Transportation and Utilities Committee reports to the House on the Public Health (Water Risk Management) Amendment Bill by 12 May 2016.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

PLUMBING AND DRAINAGE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 16 March (see p. 809), on motion of Mr de Brenni—

That the bill be now read a second time.



Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games) (4.12 pm), continuing: As I was saying before the debate was adjourned yesterday evening, the position of assistant commissioner is simply a re-creation of the previous position, which was then known as the plumbing industry council registrar. I understand that, in his letter to the chair of the Transportation and Utilities Committee, the member for Redlands expressed some concerns around this matter. I believe that those issues have been addressed as the costs will be met within the Queensland Building and Construction Commission. The creation of this position recognises the fact that in Queensland the building and construction industry is worth billions of dollars and supports tens of thousands of jobs. That means that the unique role and identity of plumbing is not lost. Indeed, as recently as yesterday the Master Plumbers Association of Queensland reiterated its support for this position. The committee received no submissions supporting the view that there is a concern or problem with the creation of the position of an assistant commissioner. I note that, in March last year when consultation began on the establishment of the council, nine submissions were received and all of those submissions supported a dedicated plumbing regulatory body.

This bill highlights the Palaszczuk government's commitment to the service trades of plumbing, fire protection, and air heating and cooling. The government recognises that the plumbing licensing system must stay strong. I applaud the government's work to ensure that representatives from local government are included on the council: one representative from the Local Government Association of Queensland and one from the Institute for Plumbing Inspectors. That will ensure that local government is given a strong voice.


Maximising policy outcomes that benefit Queenslanders and industry would not be possible without stakeholders. I know that a number of stakeholders provided a lot of assistance, advice and input into the creation of this bill, such as Penny Cornagh, the Executive Director of the Master Plumbers Association; Gary O'Halloran; the state secretary of the plumbers union; Wayne Smith, the Executive Director of the National Fire Industry Association; Graham MacKrill, the Executive Director of the Air Conditioning & Mechanical Contractors' Association; and Glen Chatterton, the Operations Manager of Service Trades Queensland.

I thank those stakeholders for their willingness to put in time and effort to work on the creation of the council and lend their expertise to assist in the assessment of technical and complex licensing applications, such as those from overseas, to ensure that the standards that Queenslanders expect are maintained. That is what they are doing by making sure that this council is in place. As I was alluding to late yesterday, when I was the minister responsible for plumbing in Queensland I had the opportunity to work with some of those people. It is great to see that they remain consistently connected and committed to ensuring that there is proper and appropriate regulation in the plumbing and drainage industry in this state.

I acknowledge the work of the Transportation and Utilities Committee in examining and making recommendations on the bill. I congratulate the members of the committee for the work that they have done. I thank the former minister for housing and public works, the member for Algester, who I

acknowledge in the chamber, for her work in introducing the bill and consulting the relevant stakeholders to reinstate this dedicated regulatory body for Queensland plumbers and drainers. I also congratulate the new Minister for Housing and Public Works, the member for Springwood, for the work that he has done in progressing this bill and for staying closely in touch with those very important stakeholders in what is a very important industry. I know that his work with stakeholders has been very much valued by those industry leaders.

This is a case of industry and government working together to get the best outcomes for Queenslanders. I know that yesterday in his contribution the Minister for Housing and Public Works outlined the helpful work that a number of representatives from Queensland government departments have done in providing valuable input into the creation of the bill. A strong plumbing industry is vital to Queensland. We do not do urban development and we do not get the developments we need without good quality plumbing to support our built environment. This bill recognise that by supporting and developing that industry in a regulated space that provides the best outcomes for all Queenslanders. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr RUSSO** (Sunnybank—ALP) (4.17 pm): This afternoon I rise to speak in favour of the Plumbing and Drainage and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. This legislation seeks to implement one of our important election commitments regarding the re-establishment of an independent plumbing industry regulatory body within the Queensland Building and Construction Commission. The bill also proposes numerous amendments to do with housing and tenancy, including the regulation of a tenancy database to protect the rights of renters and the introduction of tenancy guarantees for private lessors.

Prior to 2014, the plumbing industry council had existed in one form or another for 64 years. It was a powerful representative body with control over occupational licences, disciplinary action and wider industry advocacy. In 2014, the Newman government abolished the council and transferred those responsibilities to the Queensland Building and Construction Commission, against the interests of both the Master Plumbers Association of Queensland and the Plumbers Union Queensland. Many industry organisations objected to the lack of consultation surrounding those changes and resented the fact that the industry was being handled by an authority that lacked the proper skills and experience.

This bill seeks to reinstate a separate plumbing industry regulatory body named the Service Trades Council under the QBCC. The government has developed this new model through a lengthy process of consultation with industry and stakeholders, and it goes further than just reversing the Newman government's changes. The Service Trades Council will reclaim many of the powers of the Plumbing Industry Council and will also retain the ability to internally review disciplinary decisions made by the QBCC. The council will also be required to report directly to the housing minister on any issues relating to the plumbing or drainage trade and make representations to the QBCC about the performance of the commissioners.

The bill also outlines the operational processes of the council and the methods by which members will be appointed. The bill requires that the council be made up of a mix of industry stakeholders, government representatives and consumer advocates. This model was released for feedback mid last year, and all respondents expressed support for the new proposal. I commend the work of both ministers on the fulfilment of this important election promise.

I will also speak to the proposed amendments to the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act. Since being elected I have become aware of a lot of the problems faced by young people in the rental market. Due to my electorate office's proximity to two Griffith University campuses, we have seen many complaints from many young students, many of whom rent accommodation.


I know from my conversations with the previous minister for housing that the minister spent much of her time last year conducting a range of investigations into the way in which housing laws were falling short in protecting Queensland's most vulnerable. I know this important work is being continued under the new minister. I note that many complaints that have been brought to my office regarding tenancy agreements have been resolved with the help of the newly refunded Tenants Union. While this is an integral safeguard, I am pleased to note that the government is still working to build legislative provisions to protect the rights of tenants.

The amendments in this bill relate to the regulation of the tenancy database under the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act. The proposed regulation will bring Queensland's system up to the minimum national standards that were adopted by the Ministerial Council on Consumer Affairs in December 2010. It is worth noting that Queensland Labor has long been at the forefront of the fight for tenants' rights. The previous Labor government would have implemented these minimum standards were it not for the change of government in 2012.

Tenancy databases are privately run information-sharing organisations that allow landlords to receive feedback about their tenants for the reference of future lessors. These databases are an important tool for the industry as a whole, but without proper regulation tenants can be left in a vulnerable position. As the minister stated in her introductory speech, many of the databases hold incorrect or severely outdated information. The information can prejudice potential tenants and in some cases this effectively leads to them being locked out of the market altogether.

The proposed regulations will require lessors to advise prospective tenants when they receive or send information to a database and to provide the contact details for the operators of the database. It will also impose standards on the operators of a database to ensure their information is correct and up to date. Information will only be permitted to be stored on any database for a restricted period of time. These regulations simply allow tenants to access and question the information that is stored about them. They implement a minimum standard of accountability and transparency to help protect the basic rights of Queensland tenants.

The government is committed to restoring the rights of tenants to enable them to stand up for themselves and their entitlements and to be able to seek reliable information when trouble arises. This regulation of the operation of the tenancy database is an important step. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr COSTIGAN** (Whitsunday—LNP) (4.24 pm): I rise to speak in relation to the Plumbing and Drainage and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. From the outset, I say that I will not be opposing the bill. However, as noted last night, if my memory serves right, by my colleagues the members for Southport and Redlands, the LNP opposition has some reservations, specifically in relation to the establishment of a service trades council under the auspices of the Queensland Building and Construction Commission, which was set up by the former LNP government because of the dysfunctional BSA. What a basket case organisation that was.

Although I note the support for the STC by the Masters Plumbers' Association of Queensland, we on this side of the House are concerned that the formation of this particular body poses a potential cost to the plumbing industry—an industry in this state that plays a central role in good public health outcomes in a First World economy. That is something that we should not take for granted. I dare say that all of us have been guilty of taking it for granted that you press a button and the lights come and the toilet flushes and so on. There are plenty of places around the world where that is not the case. This is something that I acknowledged to the industry recently at a gathering of plumbers from across Mackay and the Whitsundays at the North Mackay Bowls Club.

Some prominent names from the plumbing trade came along that evening. I acknowledge their contribution to the plumbing industry and our local economy in employing local people and young apprentices, in particular. The names in the industry in my part of the world include Col Baldock, the divisional president of the Master Plumbers' Association of Queensland. Col has been a captain of industry for quite some time. I would like to thank him and Penny Cornah and Bob Kimlin from the MPAQ for their kind invitation to catch up and for their hospitality. Also present were Graeme Townson, Ross and Karen Jewell, Keith Ringuet, Bruce Williamson and Joe Parotta, who is not backwards in coming forward when it comes to giving his take on industry developments and public policy.

With World Plumbing Day being held just a few days ago, I also acknowledge a legend of the trade in my electorate, Ken Weir. He is a constituent whose business is well known, particularly on the northern side of the Pioneer River, but on both sides of river, the valley, the coalfields and the Whitsundays. There are plenty of jobs of great diversity that Ken has undertaken over many years in the industry. It is in his blood, just like his passion for Rugby League is.

Ken has done a lot of love jobs over the years, I have no doubt, for some good causes. I am sure he is not alone. I am sure many members of this House have plumbers in their electorates who have done love jobs. That is the case for not just plumbers, but all sorts of tradies. That is particularly so when it comes to our not-for-profit organisations and sporting clubs.

Mr Butcher interjected.

Mr COSTIGAN: I take the interjection from the member for Gladstone. It even happens in Gladstone.

I acknowledge Ken's support of Carltons Rugby League Club, nowadays called the Northern Suburbs Rugby League Football Club. Ken has devoted a lifetime to the Red Devils. It is a club that is based in my electorate of Whitsunday.

I also want to mention some other plumbers in my electorate like Robert Clanfield and his team from Laser Plumbing in Airlie Beach. Noel Gardner and company in Proserpine with ThinkWater Whitsunday are also great supporters of Rugby League. In fact, they were very proud to show their support ahead of the first home game of the season for the juniors the other day when the Baby Brahms, as we call them, were at home. Unfortunately the games were washed out. I know that support is appreciated by the Proserpine Whitsunday Junior Rugby League and the wider community.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr COSTIGAN: I take the interjection from the member for Lockyer. There are no buffalos. There are maybe some two-legged buffalos in his electorate, but we are the Baby Brahms in Proserpine.

I want to thank all of those plumbers who do contribute outside their day-to-day business operations for the betterment of our local community. There are plenty of them, whether they are in the sporting arena, sporting clubs, Rotary, Lions, chambers of commerce and on it goes. As I said, the junior Rugby League was washed out the other day, much to the disappointment of the team from ThinkWater Whitsunday. I hope it is not an omen for tomorrow because the plumbers are getting on the sporting field themselves in my electorate. It is their golf day in the electorate of Whitsunday.

I know that there is lot of rain around Townsville this afternoon in the lead-up to the big St Patrick's Day Rugby League clash between the Cowboys and the Roosters. I hope the skies clear for the golfers tomorrow, because the plumbers from across my electorate and the neighbouring electorates of Mackay and Mirani will be getting out there and doing their best at the Mackay Golf Club. I am sure it will be a great day. From all reports, Graham Townson—he is a local plumber; he was there the other night—talks it up, so it remains to be seen how he goes. If he has had a couple of quiet ales on the front nine, he might struggle on the back nine. We will see what happens.

I want to acknowledge the plumbers for their contribution to protecting the health of Queenslanders. In all seriousness, it is something that all members of this House are grateful for. I have heard members of the government touch on that already, as well as members of the opposition. I am sure that I speak for the people of Whitsunday in saying that. I also want to salute the professionals from our councils for the work they do in terms of compliance. It was good to catch up with representatives of the Mackay Regional Council just recently at that industry get-together.

Again, I will make the point that the formation of the STC, whilst having the blessing of the MPAQ, should not be a burden for the plumbing industry in this state. There is no need to be ramping up licensing fees. I will be the elephant in the room in the House: there is no need to ramp up those licensing fees.

Government members interjected.

Mr COSTIGAN: There are a couple of elephants on the other side. It is a concern. We on this side of the House will be watching this space. All jokes aside, we will be watching this space because that is the last thing we want to see. The Leader of the House should take note. We will be watching this because the plumbers do not want to see increased regulatory burden and fees to facilitate the formation of the STC. We respect that the industry wants it. As we have said before since the election and change of government, there are many things that the former government did well and that we are proud of. There are some things that we are not so proud of. We have listened to industry. We have taken our medicine—some more so than others, if I could be so candid. We are going to be watching this space because the last thing we want to see is the plumbers being loaded up with extra licensing fees going forward to pay for this new level of bureaucracy, which is how it is seen in some quarters.

For plumbers, like other tradies, times are tough. They are tough in my electorate and in other electorates of members on both sides of the House. Obviously that is, by and large, thanks to the downturn in the resources sector in my part of the world. It goes without saying that the infrastructure freeze of the Palaszczuk Labor government is not helping. It would be remiss of me not to touch on that here in this chamber tonight. If there is any doubt about that, one only has to get on the Peak Downs Highway, that key link between the coast and the Bowen Basin, and see the wooden bridges on the Mackay side of Nebo and see the roadworks that were started a long time ago—

Mr Pearce interjected.


Mr COSTIGAN: The member for Mirani can interject as much as he wants, but guess what? We say they are frozen at the wheel—the roadworks on the Peak Downs Highway are exhibit A. Nothing has been done for 12 months or so. I have been there with Councillor Geoff Bethel. I wish him well for Saturday's local government elections. It is his divisional patch on the Isaac Regional Council.

Mr Pearce interjected.

Mr COSTIGAN: The member for Mirani can carry on like a pork chop as much as he wants. The fact remains that those roadworks have stalled. Hence we say there is an infrastructure freeze in this state, and that is exhibit A in our part of the world.

Finally, I want to thank the people who have come before the committee and provided submissions to the committee. I accept what we have heard earlier—that is, there were not too many submissions. I think that is a story in itself. Nevertheless, we thank those people who provided those submissions to the committee. I want to thank my committee colleagues for their work in relation to this bill but also the secretariat. We talk about it time and time again, but their professionalism and their ability to go beyond the call of duty with the paperwork and doing those extra things for us is very much appreciated by government and non-government members on our particular committee, and I dare say on all committees.


We will certainly hold the government to account. We do not want to see an increase in licensing fees. There is one big job, given the state of the economy in Queensland, particularly the regional economy at the moment. I call on the plumbers if they have some spare time to come to Brisbane, because there is one big blockage and it is in the form of the Palaszczuk Labor government.

 **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) (4.34 pm): I am pleased to rise in support of this important piece of legislation. I strongly support the vital amendments which will allow for changes to residential tenancy databases to help ensure that information is dealt with fairly and that vulnerable people are not further marginalised by not being able to rent a property. I know from talking to people in my electorate who rely on rented housing of the huge problems that can come from having a negative listing on that database. Having a home is a vital part of being connected to your community and, of course, a place to raise your children. The evidence is clear that a stable home life is vital to raising capable, confident children.

There are certainly unintended consequences for women experiencing domestic and family violence as a result of database listings, and it is vital that we tackle this problem. The Queensland Public Interest Law Clearing House in its submission to this bill told some moving and frightening stories about how people who had been unfairly listed on tenancy databases were excluded from the rental market as a result—like Ruby, whose violent partner damaged her rental property and who then fell into arrears. She slept in her car for eight months and had to give her children to relatives to care for them. She then secured a studio with a landlord which did not require a tenancy check—so she stayed there with her four children. It turned out that Ruby's listing was unlawful and thankfully her story did end happily.

In my portfolio of domestic and family violence prevention, I regularly hear about issues with women being trapped into staying with violent partners because they have nowhere to go. The Public Interest Law Clearing House's submission reflects this, telling of a woman who stayed with a violent partner as she considers her listing on the TICA database would lock her out of any other mainstream housing options. Sadly, this is a familiar story. It is horrific to think that not only are women being physically or emotionally abused by partners but that damage to their homes which they have had no part in can then contribute to a negative listing and mean that they cannot secure a new home for themselves and their children.

We must do everything we can to break down any barriers which might lead to a woman thinking that she cannot leave a violent partner. It is right that such listings exist, but we must be aware that they are a powerful tool and that the information requires careful management to ensure that vulnerable people are not denied the opportunity to secure housing. It is essential that women are not unfairly stigmatised or blamed for damage to rental properties which was, in reality, caused by the actions of a violent partner. Queensland has long recognised the negative impact that such listings can have, and these amendments will help to ensure that listings do not unfairly lead to homelessness. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (4.37 pm): I rise in support of the Plumbing and Drainage and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I note the policy objectives of the bill are to establish a dedicated plumbing industry regulatory body, to be called the Service Trades Council, within the Queensland Building and Construction Commission; to implement uniform national law provisions on tenancy databases; to allow approved housing providers to give tenancy guarantees to private lessors; and to introduce a provision which deems that any development work for properties approved or used as public housing has been or will be lawfully carried out in accordance with the relevant legislation applying at the time. I would like to touch on each of those particular objectives. The first one I would like to talk about is the issue of tenancy databases and the reforms that will be enacted by this legislation.

Before I do so, I want to acknowledge some amazing organisations in the Morayfield state electorate that served the Morayfield state electorate in the housing space. Not only should I acknowledge Housing Services, within the Department of Housing and Public Works, at Caboolture and its area manager Matt Hogan for the outstanding work that they do helping vulnerable people in the Morayfield state electorate; I would also like to acknowledge Caboolture Community Action, who have been around for five years doing great outreach work helping people transition into secure housing; Morayfield Wellness Specialist Centres, who have a great commitment to providing support to disadvantaged people; RiSE Qld; and Enhanced Care.

I note that Enhanced Care made a submission when consultation was being undertaken in respect of this bill by the committee. Enhanced Care, which used to be called Near North Housing Tenancy Advice Service, is a phenomenal organisation which has been providing services for almost 20 years to people on the north side of Brisbane all the way up to Caboolture. One reason they had to change their name is not only because of the expansion of their outreach work and the wonderful services they provide to disadvantaged people but also because they had to move beyond just providing tenancy advice services because of the actions of the previous government. We will never forget the cruel action taken by the former government to cut all funding to tenancy advice service agencies like Near North Housing Tenancy Advice Service—agencies which help the most vulnerable people who are disenfranchised and disengaged and who need assistance to navigate what is quite a complex area of law when it comes to tenancy law. It was quite cruel of the previous government to cut funding to tenancy advice services such as Enhanced Care.

As a sign of Enhanced Care's commitment to the Caboolture region, it continued to provide tenancy advice services with no funding to ensure vulnerable people continued to receive support. I am so pleased that Enhanced Care was not only able to ride out that terrible time of the previous government where no support was provided for tenancy advice services but also now able to continue to do more work helping vulnerable people in our community.

The Morayfield state electorate has an overrepresentation of the number of people who live in rental accommodation. One of the local councillors told me that in the Morayfield-Caboolture south area almost one in two houses is a rental property. This bill and the reforms that it introduces, particularly in the area of tenancy databases, has particular relevance to my electorate and the people within it.

One thing we should never forget is that secure housing is one of the most basic needs that members of our community require. It is connected to so many other things. It is a basic need that not only provides a safe place for people and families but also allows people the time and space to be able to advance themselves and to address other needs in their lives. By providing a thorough and robust tenancy database regime, we are able to ensure that people's basic needs are addressed and that we keep the most marginalised and most disadvantaged in their houses wherever possible.

I note that tenancy database legislation was introduced into the Queensland parliament in 2003. The residential rental sector welcomed the legislation because it clearly set out the rules to follow when using tenancy databases. The amendments contained in this bill which will be debated in the parliament today will bring Queensland tenancy database legislation into line with national standards. They will ensure a fair go for everyone involved in the residential rental sector.

The private rental market represents a substantial part of our housing system. Around one in three private dwellings in Queensland is rented. As I mentioned earlier, that number is higher in the Morayfield state electorate where about one in two private dwellings in the Morayfield-Caboolture south area are rented, according to information provided to me by one of the local councillors.

Residential tenancy databases play a legitimate role in the rental process. When used appropriately, they are a useful tool for property managers and owners to mitigate rental investment risk. Tenancy databases allow property managers and owners to make informed decisions about prospective tenants while providing them with information about prospective tenants' rental histories.

The existing legislation makes clear that information can only be listed after tenancies have ended and when there remains a serious and unremedied breach such as property damage or rent arrears greater than the amount of the bond. Also, only tenants whose names appear on the tenancy agreement can be listed. The new provisions introduced in this amendment bill will improve the quality of information held in tenancy databases. Most notably, a time limit of three years will be imposed on tenancy database listings. This time frame ensures the database information remains relevant and useful.


The time frame was established as part of a national minimum standard and is considered a fair period that balances the wishes of different sector groups. The three-year time limit will be phased in with a transition period of six months during which old listings can be removed. Being electronic,

tenancy databases are easily amended. I also understand from the minister that an amendment to the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Regulation 2009 is proposed to be moved in the consideration in detail stage shortly to impose a minimum threshold amount that must be owed before a person can be listed on a database.

This amendment will require that, where there is no bond paid or no tenancy guarantee given, information cannot be listed on a database unless the amount owed is more than one week's rent. I must commend Enhanced Care for its wonderful submission in respect of that amendment which will be moved. Enhanced Care, from what I recall from its submission, suggested that the amount be \$300, which is more or less around the average of one week's rent in the Caboolture-Morayfield area. That will be a welcome amendment not only by Enhanced Care but also by vulnerable people all over Queensland who may be adversely affected by small amounts triggering listings on a tenancy database.

Property managers and owners must let prospective tenants know which databases they use during the rental application process. During the rental application process, when property managers or owners find an applicant listed in a tenancy database they must let them know and tell them how they can get a copy of the listing by directing them to either the owner-agent who listed them or to the tenancy database operator. Managers or owners must also provide information to listed prospective tenants about how they could challenge a listing, which they can do by directing tenants to information on the RTA website.

I note the other proposals and policy objectives of the bill. They are as admirable as the ones in respect of the tenancy databases. I commend the minister and the former minister on bringing this bill to the House. It is an outstanding bill, and I commend it to the House.

 **Mr FURNER** (Ferry Grove—ALP) (4.47 pm): I rise this afternoon to support the Plumbing and Drainage and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. In doing so, I congratulate both ministers for having the foresight to introduce this piece of legislation and the Transportation and Utilities Committee for its inquiry into the bill. The bill amends the Housing Act 2003, the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002, the Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act 1991, the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008 and the Sustainable Planning Act 2009.

This bill will deliver certainty and fairness for Queenslanders. The bill delivers on our election commitment to re-establish a dedicated plumbing industry regulatory body within the Queensland Building and Construction Commission. When I was campaigning prior to the 2015 election a number of people approached me with concerns about the previous government's involvement in removing the previous body. The reinstated regulatory body will maintain public health and the environment, and ensure we have a strong plumbing industry. The Palaszczuk government understands the benefits of a strong industry with the best possible standards. This government is committed to working with, not against, Queensland's plumbing industry.

The former government abolished the Plumbing Industry Council, transferring its functions to the Queensland Building and Construction Commission—a move opposed by the plumbing industry as it weakened the industry's voice. This government takes the concerns of the plumbing industry seriously.

In examining these bills and the amendments, the Transportation and Utilities Committee held an inquiry and made four recommendations to the House. The committee received 11 submissions from stakeholders. I would like to refer to one submission that I sighted in examining this bill. It came from Gary O'Halloran, the state secretary of the plumbers union in Queensland and the Northern Territory. He hit the nail on the head when he said in his submission—

It is critical that the plumbing industries of sanitary plumbing, fire protection as well as mechanical services ... have a dedicated plumbing industry regulatory body—

He went on to say—

... the industry has focused on achieving the best possible outcome for consumers as well as industry professionals. This focus has led to world best health and safety outcomes for the Queensland public.

I want to digress slightly and talk about something I was involved with in a previous career while in the Senate. I was extremely privileged to have been given the opportunity to go to Mozambique and Tanzania in Africa to examine AusAID funding into water sanitation. While you are over there, you start to realise how fortunate we are in this country to have our services, our water sanitation and our provisions. You do not really appreciate that until you get those opportunities to look at countries that are less fortunate. Unfortunately, that AusAID funding either has been removed or is minuscule now in terms of the current federal government.

When we went through the streets—whether it was Maputo in Mozambique or Dar es Salaam in Tanzania—I saw the benefits of that AusAID funding in respect of water sanitation and sanitary services for young children and residents of those countries. Once again, I understand why this bill is necessary and why it is important to have a regulatory body. I am not suggesting for one moment that we are heading down a path of getting to a level of having Third World sanitary conditions and water sanitation, but I am sure if countries like that had some sort of protection like this bill proposes they would be in a better position today.

The reinstated regulatory body, the Service Trades Council, will replace the disbanded Plumbing Industry Council. Establishing the Service Trades Council within the Queensland Building and Construction Commission will allow the improved service delivery outcomes being achieved by the commission to be maintained. Just recently, we had the misfortune of having to ring a plumber, something that comes naturally when you own a house. Only a few weeks ago, it got to the extent where I could not bear the toilet in the ensuite dripping and also the problems with the children's toilets, so I had to get a plumber in to fix it. I do not dare try to tackle those chores myself.

Mr Ryan: You're not licensed.

Mr FURNER: That is right. I will take that interjection, and that is another reason this bill has been brought on. The plumber who came provided an expert and professional service to stop that dripping so I can sleep with pleasure at night now, and the hot water system needed a bit of maintenance as well.

Mr Ryan: That's why you're so happy now.

Mr FURNER: I am very happy. It is important that we have plumbers who are licensed and governed by a regulatory body to make sure they do the right thing and make sure that Queenslanders are protected in respect of their rights. The Service Trades Council will have a number of critical roles in its representation of the plumbing industry. Some of these include: conferring on national policy development—for example, licensing, discipline and other related matters; and reporting to the minister on issues related to plumbing and drainage. The Service Trades Council will also be able to make recommendations to the Queensland Building and Construction Commission about the performance of any of the commissioner's functions under the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002. The Service Trades Council will establish a panel of industry and training experts to consider complex licensing applications, such as migrant applications, and provide recommendations to the commission on the appropriateness of issuing the applicant a licence. The council will also have an important role in the disciplining of licensees by taking on the function of internal reviewer for disciplinary decisions made by the commissioner.


Moving to the other part of the bill, the bill also delivers on our commitment to fairness for Queenslanders. For prospective tenants, out-of-date or inaccurate information on residential tenancy databases can have significant outcomes. It can have particularly significant impacts on our most vulnerable by placing them at an increased risk of homelessness. The bill seeks to introduce the national uniform law on residential tenancy databases to the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008 to provide extra protection for tenants. By ensuring these databases contain only current and accurate information, tenants can be protected from unfair disadvantage, and their rights when it comes to their personal information can be safeguarded. These provisions also allow databases to continue to be used as a screening tool by lessors and agents to manage investor risk.

Database operators are obligated to amend or remove listings consistent with advice from lessors and agents. Lessors, agents and operators who made the listing are obligated to provide a copy of the information on the database to a tenant on request once any associated fee is paid. The bill will also ensure listings do not remain on databases for longer than three years. The adoption of these provisions will help protect the rights of Queensland tenants. This government is committed to making sure all Queenslanders get a fair go and have the opportunity to get ahead.

The bill also seeks to amend the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008 to ensure more Queenslanders can grasp the opportunity to sustain a private market tenancy when they are in a position to do so. The RentConnect product has helped thousands of Queensland families access the private rental market. Tenancy guarantees are part of this offering. A tenancy guarantee is an undertaking to pay up to a stated amount to cover loss or expense to lessors caused by a breach from a tenant where the tenant's rental bond is insufficient to cover the amount owing.

The bill further seeks to introduce a deeming provision to the Housing Act 2003 to allay potential concerns and to provide security and certainty for future owners and financiers in relation to public housing that may be transferred. The proposed deeming provision will provide that when and if

properties approved or used as public housing are transferred to another entity all development and building work has been done lawfully and in accordance with the relevant laws at the time. This bill is about providing security and fairness for Queenslanders who deserve it. On that note, I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr PEGG** (Stretton—ALP) (4.57 pm): Today I rise to offer my support for the proposed bill, which includes provisions to establish the Service Trades Council and re-establish a dedicated regulatory body for plumbers and drainers in Queensland. This will not only implement the government's commitment to restore high standards in Queensland's plumbing and drainage industry; it will also restore a strong voice for plumbers and drainers on important national policy matters, disciplinary proceedings and licensing decisions. Plumbing and drainage plays a vital role in maintaining the health and safety of Queenslanders through the delivery of clean, uncontaminated water and the disposal of waste. This factor has been recognised time and time again, with the World Health Organization stating that plumbing is—

... important to health today and will be even more important tomorrow. If we look back at history we see that simple actions on simple plumbing errors have often protected public health.

It was therefore disappointing to see that on 10 November 2014 the previous government saw fit to disband the Plumbing Industry Council, which had until that point provided a strong, dedicated voice for the plumbing and drainage industry. In fact, up to that point, Queensland had a long history of ensuring high-quality plumbing standards were maintained through a regulatory body. The first plumbing regulatory body, which was called the Plumbers and Drainers Examination and Licensing Board, was established in 1950, and over the subsequent 64 years it evolved into the Plumbers and Drainers Board and eventually the Plumbing Industry Council.

Those previous regulatory bodies consisted of a range of plumbing and drainage professionals from a variety of sectors including industry, education, local and state government and health. Their role was to grant licences to plumbers and drainers, hear complaints, investigate alleged breaches by licensees and, where necessary, undertake disciplinary action. Having a wide collection of skills and experience brought a broad cross-section of ability for fulfilling these roles and both industry and the community were better for it. With the abolition of the Plumbing Industry Council, however, this wealth of skills and knowledge was lost—a fact that was not lost on industry. It is worth noting that a range of plumbing industry stakeholders voiced a number of concerns about the government's decision including the Master Plumbers' Association of Queensland and the Plumbers Union of Queensland. Unfortunately, these concerns were not heeded by the government of the day.

Demonstrating its commitment to consultation, this government made an election pledge to reinstate a dedicated regulatory body. However, in making this commitment, it actually listened to industry; it listened to the Master Plumbers' Association of Queensland and the Plumbers Union of Queensland. As such, I note that the bill provides that the new regulatory body will be positioned within the Queensland Building and Construction Commission, which absorbed the operational functions of the former regulatory body. Industry noted that certain efficiencies had resulted from the merger with the Queensland Building and Construction Commission but that this had come at the cost of an industry voice for plumbers and drainers.

This government is not about petty pointscore but about achieving good outcomes for stakeholders. The reality is that that is what all good government should be about. As such, I am pleased to note the structure of the Service Trades Council is a hybrid of the old and new model. Instead of just overturning the decision of the previous government, the Palaszczuk government worked with key stakeholders to honour its commitment and restore a strong voice for the plumbing industry while also retaining the benefits of the move to the Queensland Building and Construction Commission.

I note that at the public hearing on the bill undertaken by the Transportation and Utilities Committee, the Department of Housing and Public Works was commended for the extensive and collaborative consultation it undertook with industry. I have no doubt that this consultation has led to the best model of reinstating a dedicated plumbing industry regulatory body. The model acknowledges that simply reinstating a plumbing industry representative body exactly the way it was previously would not take advantage of improvements made since the Queensland Building and Construction Commission took over the functions of the former Plumbing Industry Council. These improvements include giving plumbers and drainers and their clients the benefit of using a one-stop shop service for plumbing licensing. It has also dramatically reduced turnaround times for undertaking disciplinary action from an average of four months to 40 days. These changes have come about because of officers being empowered to take action without having to wait until a meeting of the regulatory body. The amendments proposed in this bill will not change this but will restore the plumbing industry's voice on key matters and decisions.


The Service Trades Council has been empowered by this bill to undertake internal reviews of disciplinary decisions made by the Queensland Building and Construction Commission. Currently, licensees who have had disciplinary action taken against them have a choice to appeal their decision to the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal or to an internal reviewer. This bill will transfer the role of internal reviewer from a senior officer within the Queensland Building and Construction Commission to the Service Trades Council whose membership will include organisations that provide trade specific expertise. As a result, where a plumber is not satisfied with a penalty imposed on them for a disciplinary matter, they will be able to have the decision reviewed by the Service Trades Council. Under this process, the members of the Service Trades Council will be able to bring their collective experience and knowledge to hear and consider whether a penalty imposed by the Queensland Building and Construction Commission investigators was reasonable in the circumstances.

I am supportive of this change as it will restore an independent, low-cost examination of disciplinary decisions in the plumbing industry, decisions which can have a significant impact on a person's livelihood. The ability to refer a review of a decision to the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal in the first instance will remain but will now be supplemented by a review process that, because of the skills and experience of a body comprising their peers, will have the confidence of plumbers and drainers. This improvement will also ensure that enhanced outcomes achieved by the Queensland Building and Construction Commission and delivering shorter time frames for finalising complaints will remain while also offering the opportunity for certainty and transparency for decisions.

Additionally, I understand that the commissioner of the Queensland Building and Construction Commission will still perform important functions for the plumbing industry like licensing, conducting audits and promoting acceptable standards of competence for the industry. However, the Service Trades Council will also support the commissioner in a range of ways, including by the establishment of a panel to provide recommendations to the commissioner on complex licensing applications. Such licensing applications could include those for people who have attained their qualifications from other countries and it is necessary to make a determination as to that person's skills and experience. In this regard, I think the Service Trades Council will play a very, very important role.

The Service Trades Council will have access to reports and data from the Queensland Building and Construction Commission which will allow them to monitor and identify issues and trends in the industry. For example, they may identify that there is a higher than usual number of complaints on the quality of work for the installation of hot-water systems. Using this information, the Service Trades Council will be able to recommend to the Queensland Building and Construction Commission that additional technical guidance material is provided to industry. As such, the council will provide an extra set of eyes and ears for the government and the Queensland Building and Construction Commission, allowing them both to be as responsive and adaptable to changes on the ground as possible. I think in this particular instance having an extra set of eyes and ears is very, very important to ensure that we get it right.

Ultimately, I support this bill because it not only delivers on the government's commitment to restore high standards in Queensland's plumbing and drainage industry, but it does so in a way that incorporates industry feedback and achieves the best outcomes for industry and community. I think it is a great example of good policy and a fantastic bill. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (5.06 pm): I also rise to speak on the Plumbing and Drainage and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. I am going to limit my comments to the Service Trades Council because, as we have already stated tonight and today, we will not be opposing the bill. However, I do disagree with it because when I was the minister for housing and public works we undertook one of the most significant reviews of the regulation of the building and construction industry. There were many, many problems with the old BSA. So the first thing we did was we brought about a parliamentary inquiry which made sure that people from industry and consumers could come along and talk about their experience with the BSA. After that particular parliamentary inquiry we also conducted an independent review and a whole range of consultation happened across the sector. It put us in a position to be able to bring about what we commonly called a 10-point action plan to change the way that the regulation took place in the old BSA.

The first thing we did was create the Queensland Building and Construction Commission. We actually put in place a board that had some authority. The old BSA board was simply an advisory board. We wanted to make sure that the new building regulator could be in control of its own destiny and make sure that both consumers and contractors had some confidence going forward. This was well received right across the sector by consumers and contractors, and some fabulous reforms have taken place. One such reform was the rapid dispute adjudication service. We managed to bring disputes to resolution

far quicker than had happened in the past, saving an enormous amount of frustration and anxiety for consumers and saving a lot of money as well. We looked at a review of the private certifiers, and I am really keen to see how that continues under this government. We also looked at the licensing and compliance systems. Of course what is relevant to this particular bill tonight is that we looked at the licensing role of the QBCC to make sure that it included as many licensed tradespersons as possible, including plumbers.


I am a great supporter of the plumbing industry and, like the member for Whitsunday, do not take it for granted and appreciate when we turn a tap on we have clean water. That is something that many countries around the world do not experience, and we should never take it for granted. I have a great relationship with the Master Plumbers' Association, with Penny Cornah and Kelvin Slade, and of course the doyenne of the plumbing industry, Mr Bill Watson. We had many conversations about this change. Yes, they would have preferred the PIC stay the way it was, but they agreed that this was a good way to go. They wanted to give the model a chance to operate, and they were still going to have an opportunity to be involved in an advisory capacity through the QBCC advisory board that we were putting together.

What is very important to realise is that in no way did any of these changes lessen the standards that we would apply to plumbers. All of those things were taken into account, and of course that was incredibly important. We wanted to make it easier for consumers and contractors to have a one-stop shop so that, rather than trying to negotiate through quite a few different organisations, there was no confusion about where people went to get a licence or where they went when they had a complaint about plumbing. We were also looking at cost savings for plumbers. Under the old system they had to get an occupational licence with the PIC and a contractor's licence with the old BSA. By putting it under the same umbrella, with the QBCC, plumbers were saving around \$130 a year, and they welcomed that very much. We were trying to achieve a one-stop shop, streamline red tape and administration, and at the same time maintain the standards that are absolutely necessary for those who work in the plumbing industry.

What changes has the government brought about and are they going to cause an unnecessary level of red tape? There is another layer of administration which is totally unnecessary, and of course it is going to cost money. It will cost \$59,000 to establish the Service Trades Council, and it will cost at least another \$400,000 per year on an ongoing basis. That is money which could be spent elsewhere to improve standards and ensure that we have a great service for contractors and consumers. This cost will eventually inevitably be passed on in licensing fees. There is no doubt about that whatsoever.

I draw the minister's attention to the fact that the QBCC has not had a permanent head for eight months. I mean no disrespect to anybody who is acting in that role, but when we have an organisation that is going through a reform process and it does not have a champion—somebody on the board who is trying to bring about these reforms, has a vision and has been appointed to the board on a full-time basis—they are going to find it very difficult to bring about that implementation. I know there are people in the industry now who are frustrated and they feel that the momentum has stopped.

I believe if we had a commissioner there—and I understand that he had personal reasons for leaving—the Master Plumbers' Association would have been confident that the proposals that we had in place would have achieved our goals. Without a permanent commissioner it is very difficult for people in the industry to have confidence that their voice will be heard. I call on the minister to please look at this appointment. It is important that we have a permanent head there as quickly as possible so that the reforms that we undertook can be carried out with the speed that they deserve and so that we can give confidence to contractors and consumers.

 **Mr MADDEN** (Ipswich West—ALP) (5.13 pm): I rise today to speak in support of the Plumbing and Drainage and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. I would like to begin by thanking the Transportation and Utilities Committee, the committee's secretariat, as well as the groups and individuals who made submissions to the committee.

The objects of the bill are to amend the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002 and the Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act 1991 and to establish a dedicated plumbing industry regulatory body to be called the Service Trades Council within the Queensland Building and Construction Commission. This bill delivers on the government's election commitment to re-establish a dedicated plumbing industry regulatory body within the Queensland Building and Construction Commission.

As the then minister pointed out in her introductory speech, to maintain public health and the environment we must have a strong plumbing industry. This government understands the benefits of a strong industry with the best possible standards and this government is committed to working with, not

against, Queensland's plumbing industry. The Campbell Newman government abolished the Plumbing Industry Council, transferring its functions to the Queensland Building and Construction Commission. This was a move that was not supported by the plumbing industry as it weakened the industry's voice. The government wishes to ensure that the concerns of the plumbing industry are taken seriously. The government have listened to these concerns and consulted with industry stakeholders on this matter.

The bill proposes to amend the Plumbing and Drainage Act and the Queensland Building and Construction Act, to establish the Service Trades Council as part of the Queensland Building and Construction Commission, provide for its functions and powers and set out how the council is to operate. The council will replace the former Plumbing Industry Council which was abolished on 10 November 2014. The former council oversaw the licensing and conduct of plumbers and drainers in Queensland. After the former council was abolished, its functions were transferred to the Queensland Building and Construction Commission following the former Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee's report No. 14 *Inquiry into the operation of performance of the Queensland Building Services Authority*.

The Service Trades Council will have a number of critical roles in its representation of the plumbing industry. These include conferring on national policy development—for example, licensing, discipline and other related matters—and reporting to the minister on issues relating to plumbing and drainage. The Service Trades Council will also be able to make recommendations to the Queensland Building and Construction Commission about the performance of any of the commission's functions under the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002.

Various submitters indicated their support for reinstating a plumbing industry regulatory body; however, there were some suggestions submitted in relation to aspects of clause 7 of the bill which deal with the establishment, functions and powers of the council. The council's key functions will be to: confer on national policy development and implementation for the plumbing and drainage trade; report to the Minister for Housing and Public Works on any issue related to the trade referred to it by the minister and any other issue the council considers the minister should know about; make recommendations to the Queensland Building and Construction Commission about the performance of the commission's functions under the Plumbing and Drainage Act; establish a panel of the council to assist the Queensland Building and Construction Commission in performing their functions in relation to licensing of the trade; and finally, undertake internal reviews of decisions made by the commission in relation to disciplinary matters involving plumbers and drainers.

The Plumbing and Drainage and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 also amends the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008 to allow approved housing providers to give tenancy guarantees to private lessors. The bill also amends the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008 to implement uniform national provisions on tenancy databases. The bill also amends the Housing Act 2003 to introduce a provision that deems that any development work for properties approved or used for public housing has been, or will be, lawfully carried out in accordance with the relevant legislation applying at the time.


The bill puts into law the national uniform law on residential tenancy databases adopted by the Ministerial Council on Consumer Affairs in December 2010, with some additions and minor variations to ensure the provisions operate effectively in Queensland. The model provisions are similar to the existing provisions in chapter 9 of the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008 in that they recognise the right of lessors and their agents to list former tenants on residential tenancy databases while introducing limitations and obligations on lessors and their agents to ensure tenancy databases are used fairly for the benefit of those investing in the residential rental sector.

The residential tenancy databases are privately owned databases that contain information on an individual's tenancy history. Most real estate agents subscribe to one or two tenancy databases and use them to screen prospective tenants for the purpose of renting private residential properties. Queensland was the first jurisdiction in Australia to develop legislation to regulate listing on tenancy databases by amending the Residential Tenancies Act 1994, repealed in 2003.

This bill implements the national uniform legislation for residential tenancy databases in Queensland with local variations. There are some new obligations on lessors, lessors' agents and database operators. The aim of these provisions is to strengthen and offer additional safeguards and protections for residential tenants.

This bill delivers on the government's commitment to fairness for Queenslanders. For prospective tenants, out-of-date or inaccurate information on residential tenancy databases can have significant consequences. It can have particularly significant impacts on our most vulnerable by placing them at increased risk of homelessness.

In closing, I am proud to say that the Plumbing and Drainage and Other Legislation Amendment Bill is about providing security, certainty and fairness for Queenslanders. The residential tenancy provisions are about protecting tenants' rights and respecting the voice of lessors, lessors' agents and tenants. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (5.21 pm): I rise to contribute briefly to the debate of the Plumbing and Drainage and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. My father, Jim, is a plumber, albeit a retired plumber, and my nephew Max is now a plumber also. They will be pleased to see this bill passed.

A government member interjected.

Mrs GILBERT: Plumbing is in the family.

Mr Rickuss: Do they have to come to the electorate office? They said there was a drip there.

Mrs GILBERT: Very funny. I will not encourage him because the jokes just get worse!

As other members have stated, a lot of us do take our water and sewerage services for granted. We are used to being able to turn on a tap and get good, clean, potable water. We also take for granted our high standards of sanitation with flushing toilets and drainage.


When travelling overseas you do realise just what good services Australia has in terms of plumbing and drainage. As the member for Ferny Grove was saying, it is quite upsetting to see the level of sanitation in Third World countries because of the poor plumbing they have. You do not have to go to Third World countries to realise that we have very good plumbing and drainage here. In some quite sophisticated cities around the world you cannot drink water out of the tap and what you can use your toilet to flush is very limited. The plumbing industry is very important for our health and safety. It is a serious industry, and the Palaszczuk Labor government takes this industry very seriously.

The former state government abolished the plumbing industry regulatory body, transferring its functions to the Queensland Building and Construction Commission. Plumbers need to have a voice in their industry. That is why this bill is so necessary. This bill will reinstate the regulatory body, which will be called the Service Trades Council. This body will sit within the Queensland Building and Construction Commission.

The Service Trades Council will have a number of critical roles in its representation of the plumbing industry. This includes conferring on national policy development, including licensing and discipline, and reporting to the minister on issues of plumbing and drainage. The Service Trades Council will also be able to make recommendations to the Queensland Building and Construction Commissioner about the performance of any of the commissioner's functions under the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002.

A panel of industry and training experts will be established to consider complex licence applications, for example, for plumbers trained under different jurisdictions. We need to maintain a high level of skills. The panel will also review the disciplinary action taken by the commissioner. The membership of the Service Trades Council will consist of government representatives along with industry experts. The Service Trades Council will be a one-stop-shop service for licensing and compliance in the plumbing industry.

This bill is about keeping Queensland's plumbing industry strong. It is about working with industry to deliver the best possible outcomes for Queensland. I congratulate the committee on their work. I also congratulate ministers Enoch and de Brenni for bringing this bill before the House. It is a very necessary bill and I commend it to the House.

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (5.26 pm): I am delighted, as the member for Woodridge and the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services, to make a contribution to the debate on the Plumbing and Drainage and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015.

This is a timely piece of legislation as I believe it will lead to the effective regulation of an important area of our economy and our community, being the construction industry, in particular plumbing. The construction industry has been a very important one to Queensland, especially as our population has grown quickly for most of the past 30 years. People have moved to Queensland, many from southern states, seeking a better life. How could you argue with them, Madam Deputy Speaker? Many people have come to Queensland from southern states and from overseas in recent years. I represent one of the most multicultural communities in Queensland, the Woodridge electorate. It has one of the largest

numbers of refugees and migrants in Queensland. A very large proportion of my electorate is comprised of citizens who speak English as a second language. In some of our schools, up to 60 per cent of children speak English as a second language. People come to Queensland, to the city of Logan and to the electorate of Woodridge to start a new and better life, but that means people need housing and more houses need to be built. Of course, that supports a very strong housing industry in Queensland. It is a very important part of our economy.

One of the reasons people have wanted to move to Queensland is that they can live a wonderful life in a state known for its wonderful climate. Part of living well is that you can get a house relatively cheaply in Queensland, especially when compared with housing prices in Sydney and Melbourne. Queensland has developed a good reputation over the years as a place where you can have confidence in the house you buy. Successive Labor governments have ensured a very strong and important regulatory framework, not just for consumers but also for those in the construction industry.

One of the reasons people can have confidence in the home they buy in Queensland is that the industry is well regulated, as I have said. For years there have been clear lines of accountability where everyone—builders, plumbers and house buyers—knew where they stood. Regrettably, though, when the Liberal National Party came to office they proceeded with their characteristic approach of changing something for the purpose of changing it. In so many areas in Queensland in the three years from 2012 to 2015 we saw the LNP turn on its head the old saying ‘if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it’. As they saw it, ‘if it ain’t broke, fix it’.

The LNP members worked on the principle of changing everything simply because Labor had done it and, if Labor had done it, then it had to be wrong. The Liberal National Party thought it knew better. In January last year the people of Queensland showed the LNP what they thought of that attitude. They made it clear to the LNP that that approach of throwing out things because they were Labor initiatives was not something—

Opposition members interjected.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Miss Barton): Order! Members, your interjections are not being taken.

Mr DICK: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I do not mean to deliberately provoke the member for Nanango, but the truth needs to be told. I acknowledge that, in 2012, the people of Queensland voted for a change of government, but they did not vote for upending absolutely everything that had been in place beforehand.

When the LNP was in office we saw the abolition of the Plumbing Industry Council and the centralisation of most of the regulations covering plumbers under one state body, the Queensland Building and Construction Commission. It was a catch-all arrangement in which all building functions were centralised. As was the standard form with the LNP, it was an arrangement that no-one really liked—not the plumbers, not the broader building industry, not the consumers.

The Palaszczuk Labor government is about standing up for working people and standing up for consumers. This legislation will give better protection to consumers. It is also better for the industry. Under this bill, the Service Trades Council will be part of the QBCC—an appropriate entity to regulate this industry. I believe that, in many ways, this arrangement may very well be the best of both worlds: the industry will have a voice but will also have the benefits of a one-stop shop operating under the umbrella of the QBCC.

We want to get the regulatory framework for the industry right. The rate of growth in Queensland may have slowed, but there is still a strong story of growth. Queensland's population is now just under 4.9 million. In five years time—in 2012—it will be 5.3 million. In another five years after that—in 2026—it will be 5.7 million. Five years after that—in 2031—it will be 6.1 million people. That is future growth but, under the Palaszczuk government, the building industry has rallied. Under the Palaszczuk Labor government, over the 12 months to the end of January this year, nearly 48,000 new homes, worth a total of \$13.7 billion, were approved. That is over 6,500 more homes—about \$2.1 billion—than were approved in the final 12 months of the previous LNP government. That is a very significant increase—6,500 more homes over the 12-month period of the first year of our government compared to the last year of the LNP government. Those people who decry economic growth and the strong policy measures that we have in place, in particular the LNP members, should recognise that the policy settings that we have put in place have stimulated growth in the construction industry.

In addition, in the first 12 months of the Palaszczuk Labor government, there has been almost 3,000 more housing finance commitments for owner occupation than there were in the final 12 months of the Newman government—a 2.5 per cent increase. Over the year to the December quarter 2015, construction work on new houses was up almost 23 per cent. Also in 2015, there was a 53.6 per cent increase in investor finance commitments for the construction of new housing.


We want to keep that momentum going. This change will give certainty to the industry and that certainty will lead to confidence. In turn, that will lead to more jobs. This morning, we heard some terrific news from the Treasurer in relation to employment growth in Queensland—

Mr de Brenni interjected.

Mr DICK: I take the interjection. It is a positive thing that we should all be grateful for in Queensland. When it comes to public administration and jobs growth in Queensland, we are heading in the right direction. As a government, we are about giving certainty and confidence to the Queensland community. That will lead to more jobs.

I want to thank everyone who has contributed to the formulation of this bill. I want to thank the previous minister for housing and public works, the member for Algeester—one of my Logan colleagues. Although not all of her electorate is in Logan, part of it is. I also thank the current Minister for Housing and Public Works, the member for Springwood. I thank him for the enthusiastic way in which he has engaged in his new ministerial responsibilities. It is terrific to work with the member for Springwood as one of the Labor members representing the city of Logan. He has brought that dedication that he applies to representing his community of Springwood to the cabinet. The member for Algeester and the member for Springwood are new members of parliament and both are making terrific contributions as ministers in the Palaszczuk Labor government.

There are other aspects of this bill that are very worthy of mention, including the reforms to tenancy databases and others. As a member who has a very large public housing aspect to his constituency, I support those amendments. I know that they will strengthen the framework for residents in my community. They are a very positive thing for the electorate of Woodridge. I commend the bill to the parliament.

 **Hon. KJ JONES** (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism and Major Events) (5.35 pm): It is my great honour to speak to this bill. In particular, I would like to talk to those amendments in the bill that are near and dear to my heart, and they are new measures in regard to the regulation of tenancy databases. History shows that the Queensland government was the first government in Australia to act on this matter—back in 2003. At that time I had the great privilege and honour of working for the then minister for housing. I remember it vividly. In 2006 and 2007 I also had the opportunity to work very closely with the former member for Kurwongbah, Linda Lavarch, who was then the attorney-general, where we undertook a comprehensive rental review. I have had a long involvement with the rental system and, over that time, I have seen a lot of changes.

More than one-third of Queenslanders rent. They rely on the rental system to provide them with shelter and long-term accommodation. As the Minister for Education, I know how important it is for our students to have a safe place to call home in order for them to do well at school. It is fundamental to their schooling achievement that they have a safe place to go home to do their homework and to study. That should be for everyone. It should not be a privilege that is just afforded to those who are lucky enough to grow up in a home that their parents own. I can see the former headmaster, the member for Townsville, nodding. I know that this is an issue that he has dealt with personally. Often, for some students the struggle is to get to the school gate. As legislators, if there is anything that we can do to minimise their struggle, I believe that we have an obligation to do that.

That goes to the heart of what this legislation is trying to achieve. The amendments in this bill build on the good work that Queensland started as trailblazers back in 2003. It is also fair to say that we are playing catch-up with some of the reforms that have happened nationally in regard to tenant database laws. As I said, I have dealt with this issue now for more than 13 years. I grew up in private rental accommodation with a single mother. I have lived firsthand the consequences of rental law in Queensland.

These amendments are all about creating a level playing field for everybody in Queensland. This bill will introduce for the first time a requirement for property managers and owners to inform prospective tenants if they use tenancy databases as part of their tenant selection process. This straightforward requirement can be fulfilled by making minor changes to wording on rental application forms. Also,

under these amendments, property managers and owners must now inform prospective tenants if their names are found listed on a tenancy database during the rental application assessment process. That is an amendment that I particularly support. Over the years, when I have spoken to families I found that they never heard back. They would make an application and they did not know that they were listed on a tenancy database.

It made it very hard for people to find accommodation into the future. I am sure I am like many people in this House who lived through those share house days. Sometimes you were listed on a tenancy database without knowing it; sometimes not even as a consequence of anything you did but because of the people you were living with—and I will get to the reforms in the bill in regard to domestic violence that I think are significant.

They must also tell tenants how they can obtain details of listings which they can do by directing the person to either the agent who listed them or the tenancy database operator who can charge a fee, which must not be excessive, for providing a copy of the information. Property managers and owners must provide standard information to tenants about the database company used and how tenants can apply to have listings amended or removed if they are inaccurate or unjustified. Once again, this goes to the heart of fairness. These reforms are about providing fairness for people who have to rely on the rental system in order to have accommodation. People deserve to know if they are listed on a tenancy database, why they were listed on a tenancy database and also have an explanation of how that came to be. To be honest, in the past, despite the requirements that we introduced as a government that they had to be informed before a listing was published, prospective tenants named on a tenancy database were often oblivious and continuously frustrated and angered because their attempts to secure rental properties were hindered because of this.

In relation to domestic violence, it is worth mentioning that the reforms in the bill ensure that women who are victims of domestic violence do not find themselves on a rental database unfairly because of the damage done to the property by the perpetrator of domestic violence. I assume we have bipartisan support on this. We are correcting a significant wrong. I have met many women in my time in public life who have not been able to find a rental property because they have been blacklisted because of the damage caused to that property by their former husband. When a marriage breaks down due to domestic violence, a woman often runs away with just the basics. She has to rebuild her life and make sure her children are safe. If there is one more barrier that we can remove for that woman to continue to provide care for her children in a safe environment so that they can get on and rebuild their lives, then we have an obligation to do that.

I am very pleased that, from the initial debate and reforms we introduced in 2003 to this date, we are now specifically addressing this challenge. In Queensland, and indeed across Australia, we are now starting to have a much more sophisticated and honest conversation about the ramifications of domestic and family violence in our country. This reform is yet another example of how our government is working practically to change the lives of people who have experienced domestic and family violence. I welcome these amendments. I think they are sensible amendments. They build on Labor's proud history of reform in this area. There is nothing more heartbreaking, as I know the Minister for Housing would know, than being confronted with families who have nowhere to go. They do not have options. The previous government cut funding for the tenants advisory service and Penny Carr's group. They do a fantastic job. These people are underresourced and do not have the power or the influence to speak up for themselves. They need that advice. I was very pleased that this package of reforms builds on re-establishing and funding that service so that we can provide holistic support for people who need it most.

I thank the honourable minister and the former minister for the work they have done. I think that this is good reform. It is reform that builds on a long tradition of creating a fairer place for people in the rental market and ensuring that everyone gets a go. Do not get me wrong; if you are a tenant and you do the wrong thing then of course there should be consequences. This gets the balance right between those who protect the rights of landlords to ensure that they have good quality tenants who will take care of their home—and let's face, when one thinks about it, 99 per cent of people do the right thing. We need to make sure that the laws in this state do not discriminate against those who find themselves on databases without their knowledge or as a consequence of someone else's actions or behaviour.

With those few words I thank the minister. I am proud to contribute to this debate. It is something near to my heart. It will make a real difference to people's lives, particularly victims of domestic and family violence.



Mr STEWART (Townsville—ALP) (5.45 pm): I rise today to support the bill before the House, the Plumbing and Drainage and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. The importance of plumbing and drainage in our modern society can be traced back as far as ancient Rome where we saw the introduction of expansive systems of aqueducts and tiled wastewater removal.

An honourable member: 'What have the Romans ever done for us?'

Mr STEWART: The aqueducts, roads.

An honourable member: Numerals.

Mr STEWART: Numerals as well. For those who have visited modern-day Rome, evidence of these amazing aqueducts that were built around about 2,000 years ago to carry fresh water across wide expanses of land to a large civilisation can still be seen today. Likewise, in ancient Roman times there was widespread use of lead pipes. These too can be seen when visiting Pompeii, that ancient city that was buried under the ash of the erupting volcano and therefore snap capturing and preserving the life and times of an ancient world. It is interesting to note that recent studies have shown that the people of Pompeii suffered from lead poisoning and it was, in fact, the cause of many deaths at the time.

With the fall of Rome both water supply and sanitation stagnated or regressed for well over 1,000 years. Improvement was very slow, with very little effective progress made until the growth of modern densely populated cities in the 1800s. It was really during the industrialisation period of Europe that we saw the necessity to progress our plumbing and drainage systems in cities such as London and Paris. During this period, public health authorities began pressing for better waste disposal systems to be installed to prevent or control epidemics of disease. Earlier waste disposal systems had merely consisted of collecting waste and dumping it on the ground or into the river. Often the emptying of raw sewage into the river systems contaminated water downstream resulting in disease and illness to those communities. Perhaps it was better to live upstream in those times. Undeterred, society progressed and evolved and eventually the development of separate underground water and sewerage systems eliminated open sewage ditches and cesspools.

Our plumbing and drainage systems and laws have progressed a long way since those days of open aqueducts and sewage ditches. As a result, modern-day society enjoys the benefits of being able to turn on a tap and have fresh, clean water at any time. It is a luxury that, as we have heard from the member for Everton, we quite often take for granted. In North Queensland we sometimes curse during the hot summer months as we incur almost first degree burns by turning on the cold water tap to wash our hands. This is due to the copper pipes running through the roof cavity in the ceiling and being naturally heated. While I am talking about North Queensland, I am a proud North Queensland boy born in Home Hill and even in my time we did not have the flush toilets like they had down in Brisbane. We had the old thunderbox out the back.

Mrs Frecklington: You are showing your age now.

Mr STEWART: I am showing my age. At night-time you had to walk down the back carrying a hurricane lantern and visit the toilet. During the day, however, you had to time your run to make sure that you went to the toilet either before or after the change of the bucket underneath. There was nothing worse than using the thunderbox and then having the pan ripped out from underneath you and a new one put in. It was very embarrassing. He certainly was not the most popular man around town.

The objectives of the bill are to amend the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002 and the Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act 1991 to establish a dedicated plumbing industry regulatory body to be called the Service Trades Council within the Queensland Building and Construction Commission. The bill delivers the Queensland government's election commitment to re-establish a dedicated plumbing industry regulatory body within the Queensland Building and Construction Commission. As the former minister pointed out in her introductory speech, to maintain public health and the environment we must have a strong plumbing industry. This government understands the benefits of a strong industry with the best possible standards. The government is committed to working with and not against Queensland's plumbing industry. The government wishes to ensure that the concerns of the plumbing industry are taken seriously. The government has listened to those concerns and consulted with industry stakeholders on this matter.


The bill proposes to amend the Plumbing and Drainage Act and the Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act to establish the Service Trades Council as part of the Queensland Building and Construction Commission, provide for its functions and powers and set out how the council is to operate. The council will replace the former Plumbing Industry Council, which was abolished on

10 November 2014. The former council oversaw the licensing and conduct of plumbers and drainers in Queensland. After the former council was disbanded, its functions were transferred to the Queensland Building and Construction Commission, following the former Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee report No. 14, *Inquiry into the operation and performance of the Queensland Building Services Authority*.

The Service Trades Council will have a number of critical roles in its representation of the plumbing industry. Those include conferring on national policy development—for example, licensing, discipline and other related matters—and reporting to the minister on issues related to plumbing and drainage. The Service Trades Council will also be able to make recommendations to the Queensland Building and Construction Commission about the performance of any of the commission's functions under the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002. Various submitters indicated their support for reinstating a plumbing industry regulatory body. However, some suggestions were submitted in relation to aspects of clause 7 of the bill, which deals with the proposed establishment, functions and powers of the council.

The council's key functions will be to confer on national policy development and implementation for the plumbing and drainage trade, reporting to the Minister for Housing and Public Works on any issues related to trade referred to it by the minister and any other issue that the council considers the minister should know about; to make recommendations to the Queensland Building and Construction Commissioner about the performance of the commission's functions under the Plumbing and Drainage Act; to establish a panel for the council to assist the Queensland Building and Construction Commission in performing its functions in relation to licensing for the trade; and to undertake internal reviews of decisions made by the commission in relation to disciplinary matters involving plumbers and drainers.

We have learnt from our humble beginnings. When we look at our humble beginnings of lead pipes and open sewage pits, captured for all time at Pompeii, it allows us to look at where we are now and where we need to progress to, given ever-changing technology, evolving building practices and our developing trades. The public needs to be aware of and protected against specific bacteria that live in our modern-day plumbing. As the honourable member for Ferny Grove has outlined this afternoon, it is necessary that we have working in our communities licensed plumbers who know what they are doing to prevent those diseases. We do not want the dodgy brothers carrying out plumbing works in our towns and cities. These changes are important for respecting the voice of the plumbing industry. Therefore, I commend the bill to the House.

 **Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (5.53 pm), in reply: I thank members for their contribution to the debate before the House tonight. In particular, I thank the members who have contributed today, particularly the minister and member for Sandgate, who spoke in some detail about his responsibility and work with the plumbing industry some years ago. I thank all members for their thoughtful considerations. I thank the members of the committee for their consideration of the bill, their recommendations and their contributions in the debate.

I note some specific contributions to the debate. Firstly, I thank the previous minister, the Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy and Minister for Small Business, for introducing the bill to the House. I thank the minister for her important work on the legislation. In particular, I thank Minister Enoch for her thorough and passionate contribution to this debate. The minister referred to the privilege of dealing with a wide range of committed and dedicated stakeholders. I can only agree with her assessment. Once again, I thank all involved for their engagement. I will speak to some of the commentary provided by Minister Enoch a little later.

I thank the member for Kallangur for his tireless work as chair of the Transportation and Utilities Committee, which considered the Plumbing and Drainage and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. I extend my appreciation to the member for Logan for his heartfelt contribution during the debate. I thank him for sharing the moving story of the single parent constituent and that person's young family. That story serves to remind everyone in this House of the critical need for stable housing for all members of our community. I note the warning of the member for Logan about the danger that legionella poses to our community. In particular, I note his reference to the Melbourne aquarium. As the member is aware, this government takes the issue of legionella very seriously. We understand the importance that the plumbing industry plays in keeping the community safe, not just from legionella but also from a range of other diseases and pathogens.

I acknowledge the contribution to the debate by the member for Bulimba, who highlighted her concern that the impacts on the most needy members of the community are minimised through this bill. I thank the member for Bulimba. I know that she has a strong interest in housing issues. I join her in thanking the hardworking public servants in the Buranda Housing Service Centre. On behalf of all

members on this side of the House, I say that we firmly believe that our housing service centre staff do an amazing job right around the state. Again, I extend my appreciation to all employees of the Department of Housing and Public Works for their contributions to this bill. As the member for Bulimba pointed out, the government's approach to this bill is all about fairness. It is all about restoring the human services role of the Department of Housing and Public Works.

I thank the member for Murrumba for his support of the bill and for his strong support for the plumbing and drainage industry in Queensland. As I indicated in my earlier remarks, this bill is a wonderful example of the cooperation between different participants in the plumbing industry. I note the statement in support of the changes to allow community housing providers to provide tenancy guarantees. The member rightly pointed out that this is a sensible step to allow members of the community to access affordable housing options. I thank the member for his support of the equally sensible reforms that are being made to the residential tenancy databases. Aligning with the national standards for databases is well overdue. As Minister Jones indicated, I am pleased to be able to bring this issue before the House and bring Queensland into line with the national benchmark.

As always, I value the knowledge and experience of the member for Sandgate and what he has brought to this debate. I note his strong support for restoring a plumbing industry regulatory body. Restoring a strong voice for the plumbing industry is an important step to maintain the high levels of public health and public safety that we all enjoy as a result of a strong plumbing and drainage industry.

I welcome the member's strong contribution to the debate and acknowledge his strong support for restoring a strong voice for the plumbing industry within the Queensland Building and Construction Commission. As the member rightly pointed out, rather than just reversing the decision of the previous LNP government, this government instead sat down with industry and the Queensland Building and Construction Commission to work out the best way forward. As a result, the best aspects of the new arrangements were kept, while still ensuring that the voice of the plumbing industry will be heard into the future. I will return to that later.

The member for Sunnybank also spoke strongly in support of the government's changes to the housing database laws to enhance tenants' rights. The member pointed out that these databases play an important role for protecting landlords. The member for Sunnybank's interest and commitment in the area of housing is clear as evidenced by his encouragement for me to attend a housing development in Sunnybank just a couple of weeks ago. I thank the member for the Sunnybank for his time.

Debate, on motion of Mr de Brenni, adjourned.

MOTION

North Stradbroke Island Protection and Sustainability Legislation



Mr CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (6.00 pm): I move—

That this House:

1. notes the AWU has publicly been advised by the Finance and Administration Committee chair that the North Stradbroke Island draft workforce transition plans and economic transition plans are 'not part of what is going through parliament';
2. resolves the committee consider the draft workforce and economic transition plans during its consideration of the North Stradbroke Island Protection and Sustainability (Renewal of Mining Leases) Amendment Bill and the North Stradbroke Island Protection and Sustainability and Other Acts Amendment Bill; and
3. accordingly resolves the timeframe for the committee to report on these bills be amended to 1 September 2016.

Before I address the substance of the motion, I will just clarify for members of the House what this motion is not about. This motion is not about the content of the two bills that have been introduced into the House. It is not about the content of the bill introduced by the member for Dalrymple or the alternative bill introduced by the Minister for Environment. Those matters will be determined when the committee reports to the parliament and the parliament eventually considers the merits or otherwise of those bills.

This motion is about what has occurred during the committee's consideration of those two bills. It has become apparent during the Finance and Administration Committee's consideration of these two bills that, in rushing to introduce their bill into the House, the Palaszczuk government has failed dismally to make appropriate plans for the future of the community on North Stradbroke Island. In particular, I point to the advice provided by the chair of the Finance and Administration Committee to the Australian Workers' Union that the North Stradbroke Island draft workforce transition plans and the economic transition plans associated with what will occur on the island subsequent to the provisions of the bill, if they are agreed by House, being put in place have not yet been completed.

We are actually flying blind. In terms of our consideration of that legislation, we have absolutely no idea whether the economic transition plans and the workforce transition plans that have been developed and are currently in draft form are going to provide the necessary pathways and transition platforms for this community to be viable in the future. They have not been finalised. We do not know their final content.

The content of those plans are critical to the Finance and Administration Committee's consideration of those bills. They will be critical for this House when considering the content of those bills. The draft plans for the workforce and economy on North Stradbroke Island are critical for the wider community's consideration of those bills as well. While those plans are not part of the bills per se, the final versions are required so that we can determine if the provisions of those bills are adequate.

One of the problems that we have in considering the bills and that the Finance and Administration Committee has in considering the bills is that we have been told by the Palaszczuk government that no regulatory impact statement was prepared by the government prior to the introduction of their bill to the House. In ordinary circumstances a regulatory impact statement would be prepared so that we would be fully cognisant of the impact on the community on which that legislation will be applied. That has not happened in this case. It is one of the reasons knowing about the economic transition plan and the workforce transition plan is so vital before we consider the bills themselves.

More time is required for the Finance and Administration Committee to actually consider these bills. They should receive the final economic transition plans and the final workforce transition plans before they are required to provide a report to this parliament for both the Katter's Australian Party bill and the government's alternative bill.

The future of the community on North Stradbroke Island hangs in the balance. This parliament owes it to that community to give full and proper consideration to the impact of those bills. Central to what those bills will do is an understanding of the impact on the workforce of the island and the economy of the island. I urge all members to support the motion.

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef) (6.05 pm): I move the following amendment—

That all words after 'amended' be deleted and the following words inserted:

'to 3 May 2016'.

I rise to speak against the motion and in favour of the much more reasonable amendment I have just moved. Tonight marks another embarrassing chapter in the LNP's record when it comes to North Stradbroke Island. Over the last 12 months I have spoken to so many Straddie businesses, locals, workers and traditional owners and they have said to me one thing. What they say to me they want is certainty and a plan.

They say the years since the LNP legislated the mine extension—since the LNP delivered to their election supporter a mine extension even longer than they were asking for—have left them in limbo and not knowing what their future holds. More recently they have begun to express relief that certainty is finally in sight. Tonight, in a cruel twist of the knife, the LNP tries to drag this out for another six months.

They do this with no reflection at all on the obvious contradiction. Those opposite oppose our economic transition plan because they say there is not enough time for the transition. Then tonight they move to reduce the time by six more months. After setting the transition back three years with their outrageous actions in government, now from opposition they try to cut another six months from the transition time frame. It is nothing short of cruel.

The people of Straddie want certainty and a plan. The government does not object to the committee considering the economic transition plan. It is a good plan and it is intrinsically linked to the bill currently before the committee. Therefore we support the elements of the motion that ask the committee to consider the plan. In doing so, we note that the committee has had extensive access to officials who are leading the economic transition strategy. They have been present at committee hearings and have taken questions freely from committee members. The committee is already familiar with the plan. They do not need half a year to look at it, consult and include it in their report. The time frame we have proposed is much more reasonable.


I can indicate for the chamber that the government would have preferred for this motion to be amended for the committee to report back in April. Following discussion and consultation with the mover of the substantive private member's bill, the member for Dalrymple, the government now seeks to

amend the motion to report back on 3 May. I thank the member for Dalrymple for his consideration and compromise on this amendment. I was pleased that the government was able to work cooperatively on this important issue.

I acknowledge that this amended return date gives the committee time to consider further submissions while not delaying the final consideration of the bill. The economic transition strategy will make North Stradbroke Island Australia's most desirable island community. It will open Straddie up for all Queenslanders to enjoy and it will deliver sustainable jobs that will be there long after mining ends.

Through the draft economic transition strategy the government will invest \$23.87 million—nearly \$24 million—to deliver up to 151 direct and ongoing jobs. The strategy is also delivering a further \$40 million in private sector and stakeholder co-investment. As a direct result of discussions with affected workers in their unions, we have also allocated \$5 million to a workers assistance package to directly help them to transition. This draft plan is a good plan. It will deliver sustainable jobs and look after the affected workers. For that reason, we welcome the committee considering it in conjunction with the bill. What we do not welcome, and what we will not stand for, is this cruel attempt to drag it out until September.

North Stradbroke Island, Minjerribah, is a special place. It is special to all Queenslanders. It deserves certainty and a plan. This motion from the member for Hinchinbrook is designed to ruin both.

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Cleveland—LNP) (6.10 pm): I rise to support the shadow minister's motion for more time to allow the economic transition strategy and the workforce transition plan to be thoroughly considered by the Finance and Administration Committee.

AWU state secretary Ben Swan labelled the Stradbroke decision as 'a kick in the guts' for workers. He revealed the reason behind the government's bill when he said—

This decision speaks more to the soy milk latte sipping politics of Paddington and West End in inner city Brisbane than it does to the Government's stated objective of supporting jobs and sustainable resource development throughout Queensland.

Queensland Resources Council boss Michael Roche said he had raised with both the Premier and the environment minister industry concerns that a 2019 end to sandmining on the island was unachievable. He said—

... there was simply no way that the Government could come up with a plan that replaces by 2019 the hundreds of jobs and the \$130 million annual economic injection from sand mining.

While I agree that the government's bill is a bad one, this motion is about the consequences of the government's bill to the workers, families and people of NSI. The motion is about planning the transition for the workers, their families and the whole island population, and more time is needed for the committee to consider that transition. QRC's Michael Roche linked the bills and the ETS when he said—

Premature closure of the mine and an inadequate economic transition strategy will be a sure recipe for a social and economic disaster for the Stradbroke Island community.

Mr Speaker, you cannot separate the bill from its consequences. If the ETS is not done well, there will be devastation. The very least that the government can do is to grant considerably more time—not the time that the minister has put forward today—to do more work on its ETS and WTP. The government does not want the truth to come out about how devastating its bill will be. The government has used mushroom management on the people of North Stradbroke Island, the committee and parliament. This Labor government has treated us all like mushrooms—kept us all in the dark and fed us crap. We have all been kept in the dark.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Cleveland, I think those words are unparliamentary. I ask you to withdraw.

Dr ROBINSON: I withdraw. No regulatory impact statement was done, so no-one knows for sure what we are dealing with. A RIS report would have been a public document and the full picture of how many hundreds of jobs lost, the depth of the economic recession that is coming, and the social and Indigenous impacts would have been visible to the public. The government's Green folly, betrayal of the workers and widening the gap of Indigenous disadvantage on Close the Gap Day would have been on display for all to see.

The fact is that the government does not want all this information known. That has bewildered key stakeholders whose businesses and workers will be severely affected if the ETS is botched. Straddie Chamber of Commerce President, Colin Battersby, said—

I run my business with facts and figures ... I am mystified as to why there would be no analysis of where we are now and where we want to go and then we would come up with a transition strategy ... I did not get the opportunity to have that input early on.

Similarly, SeaLink CEO, David Thomson, said—

... as part of the due diligence that SeaLink—

which was Straddie Ferries—

went through that question was asked of me ... by various SeaLink accountants, lawyers and whatever—‘Dave, where’s the economic rationale from the government for this change?’ and I could not give it to them. We had to use our own numbers, extrapolate them, give them our best forecast ...

Without an RIS the government is flying blind and, like a category 5 cyclone, it cannot be sure how bad the devastation is going to be. The government has tried to limit the committee’s terms of reference—they are limited to the bills only but not their impact. How ridiculous! That is why the committee’s terms of reference must be expanded to include both the ETS and the workers transition plan—which Ben Swan is very unhappy about, by the way, Minister, and he is going to the Fair Work Commission about it; congratulations, Minister.

Further, the government separately conducted research on the island by doing an extensive survey, but when the committee requested the report they were denied it. They needed that information to make a fully informed decision, and I ask again for the minister to release that secret report.

In conclusion, you may ask why is the government bringing mining to an end in 2019? The QRC hit the nail on the head. They said—

As recent news of resource sector job losses have surely demonstrated, Queensland cannot afford the luxury of pandering to a Greens demand to shut down a mining operation supporting hundreds of jobs on North Stradbroke Island and adjacent communities.

I support the shadow minister’s motion.

(Time expired)



Hon. AJ LYNHAM (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (6.15 pm): I rise to speak to the motion moved by the member for Hinchinbrook and support the amendment moved by the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for the Great Barrier Reef. The Palaszczuk government is committed to supporting the transition of North Stradbroke Island’s economy to more sustainable industries like tourism, education and training, small businesses, and health and aged care.

Our government knows that the North Stradbroke Island’s economy cannot be sustained by mining indefinitely. The resource is finite. The transition of North Stradbroke Island’s economy away from a predominantly mining based one will be a continuous and long-term process. That is why we are on the front foot with our economic transition strategy and workers assistance package.

For the economic transition strategy, we have committed \$20 million to actions to drive this strategy and to facilitate stakeholder co-investment, \$3.87 million of in-kind Queensland government contributions for actions and \$5 million to help affected mineworkers pursue new employment opportunities. With 2019 looming, we cannot afford to delay the actions for the island’s sustainable transition any longer. Our government intends to hit the ground running as soon as possible to provide the jobs and foster the island’s economic transition.

The LNP had no plan for the transition of this island. They did not even have a clear policy for the island until Sibelco became a significant donor in their 2012 election campaign. I am talking about a reported over \$90,000 in donations and over \$1 million in a political campaign opposing the previous Labor government. The former premier publicly stated that he would restore rights on Stradbroke and not give Sibelco anything more, twice denying to extend Sibelco’s mining interests. Yet in November 2013 the previous LNP government, under the then premier Newman and with the member for Hinchinbrook as the then minister for natural resources and mines, amended the North Stradbroke legislation to increase the area able to be mined by 300 per cent to over—

Mr Cripps: It gave them some certainty—maintain jobs in the resources sector.

Dr LYNHAM: I take the interjection. Certainty for donations—that is the only certainty.


Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Hinchinbrook, you have had an opportunity to make your contribution.

Dr LYNHAM: The minister at the time amended the North Stradbroke legislation to increase the area able to be mined by 300 per cent to over 10 square kilometres and to extend mining leases to 2035. I wonder why he did that. Why did he do that? We have a plan for the island. We have a transition

strategy. Our government supports the committee expanding its inquiry to also consider both the workers assistance package and the economic transition strategy. Both of these are public documents and fully able to be part of the committee's inquiry.

We have consulted widely and extensively on this strategy with targeted stakeholders since mid-2015 including the Redland City Council, the traditional owners, the Straddie Chamber of Commerce, unions and Sibelco. We have also undertaken public consultation since 2015. Officers from my Department of State Development went to the island and met and consulted directly with affected residents. We also had the economic transition strategy online and open for comments, along with a survey, for any other stakeholder wishing to contribute.

Through all of these mechanisms, the Department of State Development has engaged with over 450 people on the island. We are now working through the 191 online surveys, the 110 stakeholder comments and the 30 written submissions we received to finetune our economic transition strategy. I have also sent Department of State Development officers to attend the Finance and Administration Committee hearings to openly answer any questions they had. We have been open and transparent, and disclosed all appropriate information and will continue to do so to the fullest extent possible. We are finalising our long-term economic transition strategy and would like to implement it as soon as possible. We have more than \$20 million ready to go for the island's sustainable transition.

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (6.21 pm): I rise to support the motion moved by the member for Hinchinbrook relating to the proposed workforce and economic transition plans for North Stradbroke Island. It would appear that the minister has agreed to amend the document to open it up to the transition plans and then give us 4½ weeks to look at those transition plans. Putting aside the fact that he has hidden the report of January-February this year behind cabinet in confidence, it is absolutely disgraceful.

It is also coincidental that today is National Close the Gap Day. At the crux of this day is the fact that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can expect to live anywhere from 10 to 17 years less than non-Indigenous Australians. There is a range of reasons why this is the case. Some of those reasons lie around lower levels of education and higher levels of unemployment. I note that in the 2015 *Closing the gap* report it states—

There are three priority areas that have been proven to have a positive effect on the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples:

- getting children to school to provide the best chance of enjoying success in school and later in life
- getting adults into work to ensure Indigenous Australians participate in the modern economy ...

They are the first two of those priority areas, which fits in exactly with what I have just said. It was with these facts in mind that one of the Quandamooka groups which I spoke with told me that they feared for their people. They made the very salient point that this should not be about closing a mine; it should be focused, instead, on closing the gap. They have seen the proposed North Stradbroke Island transition strategies and they know what it will do to their community if they are implemented in such a short period of time.

That brings me to the motion before us. Both the previous chair and the current chair of this committee consistently advised witnesses and audience participants that the transition plans do not form part of the committee's considerations. This is despite the fact that, prior to our arrival on the island, in early February, the minister arranged for a specialist consultation group to spend some weeks on the island interviewing people, informing people and gathering feedback from people about these plans. This is despite the department requesting and being granted an opportunity to present these plans to the hundreds of people who attended our first two public hearings. This is despite the fact that a senior departmental officer waxed lyrical about how well received the people were who were undertaking the work. He told those present that around 250 people had provided feedback. He told them that was around 10 per cent of the people living on the island. What he did not tell them and what he will not tell the committee is the results of that work.

Initially, he told us that he was unsure whether he would be able to provide the information to us. He then told us that he could not provide the information to us. Why? Because the minister has put it into cabinet. It is cabinet in confidence. What is the minister hiding? Is the feedback so negative on the proposed transition strategy that they dare not let it see the light of day? Based on the vast majority of feedback I have received, the transition strategy is woefully inadequate. The officers from the Redland City Council told me that some of the figures supplied to them by the department were approaching \$60 million, and that was not all of the items that may be considered necessary. The Australian Workers' Union indicated it was inadequate to the extent that it suggested another zero was needed to be put on to it. Is the union suggesting the \$28.5 million proposal should be \$285 million?

There are massive issues around the impact on all aspects of the island—economic, structural, employment and loss of jobs, business, lifestyle and the environment—but ultimately it is the impact on the people of Straddie, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. All of these issues interact with one another in an incredibly complex way, as they do in a broader society, but they are more complex for the people of Straddie because of the remoteness. There is only one way to Straddie, and that is by boat. The ferries are the umbilical cord that ties Straddie to the mainland. Anything that affects Straddie affects the ferry services. Affect the ferry services and you affect the people of Straddie.

I call on all members to support this motion to include the proposed transition strategies in the committee's consideration to give the committee the time that we need, until 1 September, to do the job properly. In doing so, we will be able to give proper consideration to the real impacts of the proposed legislation on the people of Straddie. I can assure members that the more we look the more we realise that this matter before us demands a thorough understanding—an understanding of the impact on the island economy and, ultimately, the impact on the people. If I can finish—

(Time expired)



Ms FARMER (Bulimba—ALP) (6.26 pm): I rise to support the amended motion proposed by the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for the Great Barrier Reef. Before I start, I would like to state my deepest respect for the people of North Stradbroke Island. As the former chair of the Finance and Administration Committee, it was a great honour to speak to so many people who live on the island or who are associated with the island, because there is no doubt that, whether you are a parent at the local school, a member of a community group, a mineworker either on the island or on the mainland, a business owner, a local resident, an environmentalist, Indigenous or not, you care very deeply about what happens on North Stradbroke Island and you want to know that what this parliament does has its best interests at heart. It is a very special place about which its people feel very deeply. We are beholden to treat it and its people with care and thoughtfulness.

That is the reason that I support this part of the motion which suggests that the draft workforce and economic plans be considered by the Finance and Administration Committee during its consideration of the private member's bill and the government bill. It is a shame that, once their speeches are written, the LNP do not seem able to adapt to new circumstances. They were obviously considering that the government was not going to support this motion, but they did not know how to change their speeches to accept that.

The government is fulfilling its election commitment about North Stradbroke Island by putting this bill forward. Underpinning that is that the Queensland government wants to have a balanced approach to the island. It wants to have a balanced approach to protecting the island and to delivering business growth and jobs on the island. That is why I think the economic transition strategy and the bills are inextricably linked.

The ETS was developed as a direct consequence of the government's election commitment. We introduced the legislation in December last year following the legislation introduced by the member for Dalrymple. In moving to fulfil that commitment, we did not walk away thinking we were done and dusted. We have acknowledged that the cessation of mining will mean a transition period for the island. That is why the document is called a transition strategy, because, regardless of which side of the argument you are on, people on the island accept that sandmining will cease on the island at some point. Whether it is according to the time lines of the member for Dalrymple's bill, the government's bill or the existing legislation, sandmining will cease.

The government has actually taken proactive steps to say that we are going to set aside money and we are going to set aside support to help with diversifying the local economy. Both ministers have talked about what that support is all about. It is about diversifying and expanding the current tourism industry, and it is about expanding the education and training sector. We have heard what it is about. The people of North Stradbroke Island deserve for the committee to actually assess that in its entirety so there is a big picture approach to what is happening on the island.

I cannot believe that any person who was attending those public inquiries in January could possibly support putting the people of North Stradbroke Island through the pain of having to wait another six months before they know what is going to happen. If there is one recurring theme from the island, no matter what side you are on, it is the fact that they need certainty. They want to know what is going on. They need to know what is going on one way or the other. That is why we cannot put them through this extension of time. It would be absolutely cruel and it would be absolutely disrespectful.

Committee members are fully aware of what is in the economic transition strategy because they heard it over and over again in their public hearings. They saw people lining up to speak to the Department of State Development officers. They saw them spending hours and hours there. The

thought that a senior committee member would malign the public servants, who are actually doing their jobs by going across to the island, is unbelievable. I believe in supporting the people of North Stradbroke Island with certainty.

Mr SPEAKER: I note that no member raised the issue of the applicability of rule 231 to this debate. Notwithstanding this, I remind members of the contents of rule 231 which deals with anticipating debate. I have allowed members latitude in relation to the contents of their contributions, but this should not be seen as a precedent for the interpretation of the rule dealing with anticipating discussion.

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

AYES, 43:

ALP, 40—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Byrne, Crawford, de Brenni, Dick, Donaldson, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Hinchliffe, Howard, Jones, Kelly, King, Lauga, Linard, Lynham, Madden, Miles, Miller, O'Rourke, Pearce, Pease, Pegg, Pitt, Power, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Stewart, Trad, Whiting, Williams.

KAP, 2—Katter, Knuth.

INDEPENDENT, 1—Gordon.

NOES, 40:

LNP, 40—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Costigan, Cramp, Crandon, Cripps, Davis, Dickson, Elmes, Emerson, Frecklington, Hart, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Mander, McArdle, McEachan, McVeigh, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, Perrett, Powell, Rickuss, Robinson, Rowan, Seeney, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Stevens, Stuckey, Watts, Weir.

Pairs: Palaszczuk, Springborg; D'Ath, Walker.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Question put—That the motion, as amended, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Motion, as agreed—

That this House:

1. notes the AWU has publicly been advised by the Finance and Administration Committee chair that the North Stradbroke Island draft workforce transition plans and economic transition plans are 'not part of what is going through parliament';
 2. resolves the committee consider the draft workforce and economic transition plans during its consideration of the North Stradbroke Island Protection and Sustainability (Renewal of Mining Leases) Amendment Bill and the North Stradbroke Island Protection and Sustainability and Other Acts Amendment Bill; and
 3. accordingly resolves the timeframe for the committee to report on these bills be amended to 3 May 2016.
- Sitting suspended from 6.37 pm to 7.37 pm.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Member for Mudgeeraba



Hon. CR DICK (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (7.37 pm): I refer to ministerial statements made by me on 11 and 12 November 2015 and 1 December 2015. I have today received from the Speaker copies of multiple letters to the Speaker from the member for Mudgeeraba dated 12 and 30 November 2015, 3 December 2015 and 19 January 2016. For completeness, I also refer to the letter I wrote to the Speaker dated 25 November 2015. Those letters cover a range of topics. The member for Mudgeeraba has raised concerns about the status of the investigation conducted by the Health Ombudsman. I confirm for the House that I wrote to the Health Ombudsman on 11 November 2015. A copy of that letter was tabled in this House on 1 December 2015. In that letter, I raised a number of issues and asked the ombudsman 'to urgently investigate these matters'. I confirm for the House that I did not seek to rely on the powers available to me under section 81 of the Health Ombudsman Act 2013. I do not believe and have never believed that it is appropriate to use my powers to direct the Office of the Health Ombudsman to investigate a political opponent. Rather, I provided all information available to me to the Health Ombudsman and asked him to urgently investigate the matters.

I confirm for the House that both the Office of the Health Ombudsman and the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency have completed their consideration of these issues and have determined that no breach of the member's registration occurred and that actions undertaken by the member were in her capacity as a member of this parliament. I accept these findings and conclusions unconditionally. As a consequence of these findings and conclusions, I accept that the member for Mudgeeraba did not breach her registration obligations or mislead this House. I understand that this has been a difficult issue for the member for Mudgeeraba and I apologise to her.

MOTION

Portfolio Committees, Transfer of Responsibilities



Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (7.39 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That, notwithstanding any other order under standing order 136, the House vary the committee responsible for the consideration of the Electricity and Other Legislation Amendment Bill from the Finance and Administration Committee to the Transportation and Utilities Committee.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

PLUMBING AND DRAINAGE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 905, on motion of Mr de Brenni—

That the bill be now read a second time.



Hon. MC de BRENNI (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (7.40 pm), continuing in reply: The member for Sunnybank also spoke strongly in support of the government's change to tenancy databases to enhance tenants' rights. The member pointed out that these databases play an important role in protecting landlords. He was also correct to point out the need to balance these interests against the need to also be fair to tenants. The bill strikes an appropriate balance and implements a fair system that is consistent with the national scheme. Queensland was the first Australian state to tackle the issue of tenancy database listings, introducing legislation in 2003 to regulate who could be listed when and for what reason. It also introduced a way for people to dispute their listings and have them removed if they are inaccurate or they were listed in unjust circumstances.

The national uniform law is based on Queensland's laws with some additional requirements such as the length of time listings should remain on a database. Queensland coordinated the drafting of the national provisions. The amendments in this bill finish this job by introducing the additional measures to update Queensland to the national law.

Earlier this year I had the opportunity to meet with Ms Penny Carr, the Statewide Coordinator, and Mr Peter See, Convenor for Tenants Queensland. I also had the opportunity to meet with Rachel Watson, Chairperson, and Leone Crayden, Executive Director of Q Shelter. It is fair to say that both of these organisations are well experienced in providing a service to people experiencing housing stress or for people experiencing homelessness. On those occasions we spoke about a number of housing related matters including the impact that tenancy databases have or can have on people's ability to find safe, secure accommodation, especially when they need it most.

This government considered all of the committee's recommendations about the tenancy database provisions and it has accepted them all. I thank the committee for considering the submissions so comprehensively. I reassure the members of the committee that the recommendation to establish a limit where no rental bond has been charged before a tenant can be listed will be addressed through a future change in the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Regulation rather than the act. I note the support for one week's rent as being an appropriate amount as indicated by speakers throughout the course of yesterday's and today's debate.

I want to turn the attention of the debate to the issue of domestic and family violence. Many members have voiced their support for the domestic and family violence provisions in the bill. I think it is worth while expanding on why we have decided to include these provisions. Recently South Australia introduced amendments that prohibit personal information of victims of domestic violence and family violence being listed on databases where the nature of the breach resulted from an act of abuse or domestic violence against the applicant. This extends beyond the national minimum standards but is in line with both the federal and state initiatives to address domestic violence issues. Our intention is to prevent victims of domestic violence from being listed on a tenancy database where they were not reasonably responsible for the breach of agreement due to an act of domestic violence against them. This ensures the person responsible for the breach, such as damage to a property, is the one held responsible for the breach. Linking this to tribunal orders about terminations of tenancy agreements on the grounds of domestic violence or where the tribunal has ordered changes to tenants under the

tenancy agreement establishes the requirement for the tribunal to be satisfied that a suitable intervention order about domestic violence is in force against the relevant parties and it guards against the potential misuse of this issue by providing an objective determination of the situation. The parliamentary committee report on the bill recommended that these provisions be included in the amendment bill.

There was commentary from government members and also those opposite about the Logan Renewal Initiative, and I want to take a few moments to respond to that commentary. In particular the member for Southport made some comments about the Logan Renewal Initiative. I think it is important to provide information to the House about the initiative. I draw the attention of the House to the comments of the previous minister, Minister Enoch. Yesterday she said—

When I was appointed housing and public works minister in 2015, the Logan Renewal Initiative was one of the first projects brought to my attention and it is one that the current Minister for Housing and Public Works has a strong interest in.

I can say that that is correct. She went on to say—

What we discovered when we looked into the project was that the former LNP government had failed to properly engage with the local community with regard to the impact the initiative would have on existing residents. Despite the enormity of this project, residents received just one letter outlining the impact of the project. This letter was only provided in English—into a community where English is a second language for a large number of residents. As we know, the previous government had a great aversion to community consultation, but even this level of engagement was nothing short of disgraceful. Given the circumstances—

Mrs Frecklington: You should read the history books.

Mr de BRENNI: I take the interjection from the member for Nanango, who thinks that it is just hilarious in the circumstances of providing a community of non-English speaking people a letter in English.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I rise to a point of order. I take offence at that. I ask the member to withdraw given that I did not even smile, let alone say it was hilarious.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Elmes): Order! There is no point of order.

Mr de BRENNI: Ms Enoch went on—

Given the circumstances, it was only right and fair for the Department of Housing and Public Works to conduct an extensive consultation program to fully inform tenants and other stakeholders about the initiative and how clients may be impacted.

Those opposite should explain why the former LNP government believed it was okay to ride roughshod over the interests of people living in social housing rather than complain about the work the Palaszczuk government has had to do to clean up the mess left by the former minister for housing and public works. The benefits of this bill are clearly demonstrated. It has taken a Labor government to once again restore fairness and certainty to the Queensland public.

The member for Southport claimed that we are holding up this initiative with unnecessary reviews and further consultation. On this side of the House we believe that consultation is very important. As my colleague the previous minister for housing and public works so eloquently noted, one letter is a disgraceful attempt at consultation. This initiative will have a major impact on thousands of families in the Logan community, the community in which I live. It will have a massive impact on people who are currently living in homes that the Department of Housing and Public Works manages. They deserve more than a tokenistic—if I can describe it as that—attempt at consultation. For the benefit of the House it is worth noting some of the following facts to clarify some of the statements that have been made.

The Logan Renewal Initiative is a long-term project and the largest of its type nationally. It will transition approximately 4,900 tenancies and properties to Logan City Community Housing and will see the renewal and redevelopment of social housing in Logan including the construction of approximately 2,600 new dwellings—that is the accurate figure—for rent and sale, resulting in a net increase of 800 social and affordable dwellings for the community. That is also the correct figure.

Mr Molhoek interjected.

Mr de BRENNI: One of the key challenges for the Queensland government in meeting our housing needs is available capital. One of the biggest challenges that our budget finds is a result of the strategy of the former minister for housing and public works of asset sales—

Mr Molhoek interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Southport, the minister is not taking the interjections.

Mr de BRENNI:—of selling off Queensland government buildings in the CBD, losing over \$200 million in the process. When we add in the expenditure on 1 William Street of over \$1.14 billion, that equates to around 5,700 homes that could have been built for social housing tenants.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr de BRENNI: Not the masters of asset sales, but economic amateurs. I will return to the matter at hand.

Since Logan City Community Housing was awarded the contract for the initiative in late August 2014, the Department of Housing and Public Works, Logan City Council and Logan City Community Housing have been working closely together on transition arrangements to achieve a smooth transition and avoid any disruption to our clients. Having been handed this project at the stage where a contract is already in place, this government has taken deliberate action to ensure we are in the best possible position moving forward. This includes instructing that an independent readiness assessment be undertaken whilst transition activities are ongoing, ensuring that ongoing, widespread and effective communication occurs with tenants and the Logan community; supporting key changes to the employee transition arrangements in response to Woodridge Housing Services Centre staff concerns; and committing to ensuring that sustainability is a key element in the properties to be built under this initiative.

The department has put in place additional project controls and mitigations to manage the inherent risks with an implementation of this size, scale and scope. Despite the preparatory work and project controls in place risk will remain, particularly at the point of transition, given the vulnerability of many of the people affected. The department will continue to actively manage the implementation of this initiative to ensure Logan City Community Housing project meets its contractual obligations. We are not holding up the Logan Renewal Initiative; we are taking prudent steps that were not taken by the former LNP government to make sure that it is a success.

I turn to the contribution of the member for Everton. I understand that the member for Everton is keen to protect his legacy, but there is no getting away from the fact the member stripped the plumbing and drainage industry of their voice. I reiterate: industry supports these reforms. They are excited about having their voice back, and there is no doubt about that. This is a regulatory framework that has broad support. The industry, through the Master Plumbers, the Fire Association and the Mechanical Services Association, supports the Service Trades Council. Workers, represented through their union, support the Service Trades Council. It is unfortunate to see the opposition run tired lines about costs and red tape. If red tape and overregulation was an issue with this bill, there is no doubt that the Master Plumbers would have been the first to tell me. I draw the attention of the House to the submission of the Master Plumbers Association, which states—

The MPAQ are strong supporters of a dedicated regulatory body for the plumbing industry.

It goes on—

This model has been proven to be a resounding success for some and we are confident once reintroduced that it will be again.

This is about giving the industry back its voice—a voice that was ripped away from them by the previous government. If, as the member for Everton suggests, industry supported his changes, why was the then opposition lobbied about this by industry in 2014 in time for our policy to be published in July that year.

The member tried to make out that we are undermining the confidence of the construction industry in relation to the QBCC. If you look at the record, what you see is a concerted campaign by the previous government to wreck confidence through the failed program of assets sales to which I referred earlier, wreck confidence by sacking thousands of workers in this state, including apprentices, and wreck confidence by throwing the state infrastructure plan out the window. If anyone wants to talk about confidence, it should not be the member for Everton. The LNP have a history of wreckage.

I want to specifically deal with the issue of fees. It is important to address the scare campaign that the opposition seem to be gearing up for over licensing fees. Let us be absolutely clear: the introduction of the Service Trades Council is funded through the existing budget of the QBCC, and the finances of the QBCC are sound. I draw to the attention of the House the committee evidence of the acting QBCC Commissioner Ms Kellie Lowe, who stated—

In terms of the direct costs of establishing the Service Trades Council and to give effect to the bill, it is a requirement that I as commissioner appoint an assistant commissioner. There could be recruitment costs associated with that, and that person would probably require some administrative support which would also require a recruitment process. We would need to ensure they have office equipment.

What an outstanding proposal. Ms Lowe goes on to state—

So in terms of the direct establishment costs, we estimate that to be \$59,310 ...

that is a specific figure—

... with recruitment costs, office equipment and those kinds of costs.

In terms of the ongoing costs going forward, there will be the salary of the assistant commissioner and their support person. There will be costs associated with the meetings, particularly if non-government members are remunerated for meeting attendance and those kinds of expenses, and stationery, travel and those kinds of costs.

Of course we would expect there to be some travel. The plumbing industry outside of South-East Queensland deserves to have a voice too. I return to the evidence of Ms Lowe—

In terms of the ongoing cost to the commission for the Service Trades Council and the assistant commissioner within the commission, we estimate each financial year going forward it will be approximately \$405,473.

That is a very specific figure. She also states—

In terms of the other costs which I mentioned could arise and I cannot yet assess in any real detail, the bill proposes that the Service Trades Council could establish subcommittees and other committees to inform it. If committees are established there could be costs associated with that, but I cannot quantify them in any meaningful way today without knowing what committees might be established under the Service Trades Council.

These costs are manageable within the budget of the QBCC, and by no means are they an exorbitant expense given the contribution of the plumbing industry to Queensland's economy. Any attempt by members opposite to run a scare campaign on licensing fees must be seen as deeply irresponsible. It is pretty special to say you support a set of reforms, and at the same time try to kick off a scare campaign on them.

In relation to the other concerns, let us be clear that the reforms proposed in this bill do not affect any of the following reforms that the member referred to: the rapid adjudication service; the internal review of disciplinary decisions; the one-stop shop; or costs savings for licensees. We have listened to the industry and restored a strong voice to the plumbing industry. We have not thrown out the baby with the bathwater. We have listened to the industry and kept the best of the previous government's changes while restoring a strong voice for industry, so some credit must be given where it is due.

In conclusion, I would like to once again thank all members for their contributions to this bill. I would also like to thank everyone who has been involved in the consultation and committee stages. May I also take the opportunity to thank the hardworking staff of the Department of Housing and Public Works; Kellie Lowe, the acting commissioner of the Queensland Building and Construction Commission; and the RTA for their attention to detail and commitment to this bill. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 23, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clauses—



Mr de BRENNI (7.58 pm): I seek leave to move an amendment outside the long title of the bill.

Leave granted.

Mr de BRENNI: I move the following amendment—

1 After clause 23

Page 34, after line 26—

insert—

Part 4A **Amendment of Queensland Building and Construction Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2014**

23A **Act amended**

This part amends the *Queensland Building and Construction Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2014*.

23B Amendment of s 36 (Replacement of pt 5 (The statutory insurance scheme))

- (1) Section 36, inserted section 67WA, definition *consumer*—
insert—

Note—

See also section 68H(1)(c) and (5).

- (2) Section 36, inserted section 68H(1)(c)—
renumber as inserted section 68H(1)(d).

- (3) Section 36, inserted section 68H(1)—
insert—

- (c) a person (the **defrauded person**) enters into a contract for the carrying out of residential construction work with a person (the **fraudulent person**) fraudulently claiming to hold a licence under which the fraudulent person may enter into contracts with consumers to carry out residential construction work covered by the statutory insurance scheme; or

- (4) Section 36, inserted section 68H—
insert—

- (5) For subsection (1)(c), this part applies as if—

- (a) a reference to a consumer were a reference to a defrauded person; and
(b) a reference to a licensed contractor were a reference to a fraudulent person.

Editor's note—

Legislation ultimately amended—

- *Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act 1991*

I table the explanatory notes to the amendment.

Tabled paper: Plumbing and Drainage and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015, explanatory notes to Hon. Mick de Brenni's amendments [394].

Amendment No. 1 inserts a new clause 23A to amend the Queensland Building and Construction Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2014. This amendment relates to part 5 of the Queensland Building and Construction Commission and Other Legislation Act that was passed by this House in 2014. At that time an error in the drafting was made that, if left, could have extremely serious consequences for home owners.

In its current form the provisions could prevent home owners from lodging a claim against the home warranty insurance fund, administered by the QBCC, where the person they contract with fraudulently represents that they have a QBCC licence. As home ownership is the most significant investment most people will ever make it is vital that we remedy the unintended consequence, and I am pleased to be able to bring amendments before the House to rectify this situation.

Proposed clause 23B seeks to amend section 36 by inserting a new paragraph (c) into section 68H(1). The new paragraph will maintain coverage where a contractor fraudulently claims to hold a licence permitting the contractor to carry out the work to be performed under the subject contract. The proposed clause also seeks to amend section 36 by inserting a new subsection (5) into section 68H. The new subsection will clarify how part 5 of the QBCCOLA Act is to be treated, specifically where the fraudulent scenario stated under section 68H(1)(c) occurs. The references in part 5 to 'consumer' are to be replaced with 'defrauded person', and the references to 'licensed contractor' are to be replaced with 'fraudulent person'.

Mr MOLHOEK: I rise to speak in support of the proposed amendment regarding changes to the home warranty scheme. We will not be opposing this amendment. I note the minister's courtesy in providing a briefing prior to the sitting tonight in respect of this particular amendment.

I am pleased that the minister acknowledged the great work that former minister Mander did in the previous term of government in terms of establishing the QBCC. This amendment simply deals with one very minor omission from that legislation to protect the rights of people who have in good faith engaged a contractor to undertake residential construction work only to find that the claims that contractor had made were fraudulent in respect of their licence. It ensures that anyone who has been fraudulently dealt with is still covered under the home warranty scheme. We will be supporting the amendment.

Mr RICKUSS: I seek some clarification from the minister. I have brought to the minister the case of a builder having his licence taken away by the QBCC. Will that scenario be covered by this amendment? Will there be any attempt to rectify this in future legislation? This builder's licence has been unfairly taken away from him and he has no right to work as a result of QBCC ignoring legislation and going against the rule of law, common sense and so on.

Mr de BRENNI: I am happy to respond to the question by the member for Lockyer. Without going into the detail of the specific case that he and I have discussed, these particular provisions go to the circumstance of an individual fraudulently holding themselves out to be a licensee. I think the case the member for Lockyer and I have been discussing is one in which a properly licensed builder has had their licence revoked. It does not relate to a fraudulent matter. The matters that the member for Lockyer raises should be dealt with at another time.

Amendment agreed to.

Clauses 24 and 25, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—



Mr de BRENNI (8.04 pm): I move the following amendment—

2

After clause 25

Page 35, after line 24—

insert—

25A Amendment of s 245 (Injury to domestic associate)

Section 245(6), examples—

insert—

3

an order that any other person must not list the person's personal information in a tenancy database under section 459

This amendment proposes a new clause 25A to amend section 245, 'Injury to domestic associate', to include an example of an order the tribunal may make about not listing the personal information of a victim of domestic or family violence on a tenancy database. Amendment 2 amends section 245 of the RTRA Act to clarify that the tribunal can make an order prohibiting personal information of victims of domestic or family violence being listed on a tenancy database. The amendment provides an example of the type of order the tribunal can make when a person who has been the victim of domestic violence applies to the tribunal for an order—that they can be recognised as a tenant or co-tenant under the tenancy agreement instead of the person who committed the domestic or family violence.

Mr MOLHOEK: This amendment effects one of the recommendations of the committee. I am pleased that the minister has seen fit to incorporate these changes. Protecting those who are vulnerable is important. I think it is a wonderful coincidence that on the night we are making this particular amendment to protect victims of domestic violence we have seen the first action plan and the prevention strategy presented to the House.

It would be remiss of me to not pay credit to former premier Campbell Newman on the work he did in initiating this inquiry and the passion both he and Lisa demonstrated in appointing Quentin Bryce to undertake that review on behalf of all Queenslanders.

Mr Stevens interjected.

Mr MOLHOEK: I take that interjection from the member for Mermaid Beach. We cannot deny where it came from. It is great to see, even with the simple things in this legislation we are debating tonight, the flow-on effect of those changes. It is a legacy that both Campbell and Lisa and the former governor-general would be very proud of.

Amendment agreed to.

Clauses 26 to 28, as read, agreed to.

Clause 29—



Mr de BRENNI (8.06 pm): I move the following amendment—

3

Clause 29 (Amendment of s 459 (Restriction on listing))

Page 41, lines 9 and 10—

omit, insert—

(2) Section 459(1)(c) to (e)—

omit, insert—

(c) there is a reason prescribed under a regulation for listing the information; and

(d) the tribunal has not made an order under section 245(6) prohibiting the listing of the information.

This amendment to clause 29 of the bill seeks to include a provision that a person must not list personal information about another person in a tenancy database if the tribunal has made an order prohibiting the listing due to domestic or family violence issues. Amendment 3 amends section 459(1)(d), 'Restriction on listing', by including a restriction on listing a person when the tribunal has made an order under section 245(6), 'Injury to domestic associate', prohibiting the listing of a victim of domestic or family violence. This particular amendment is necessary to support the preceding amendment 2.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 29, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 30 and 31, as read, agreed to.

Clause 32—



Mr de BRENNI (8.08 pm): I move the following amendment—

4 Clause 32 (Amendment of s 461 (Application to tribunal about incorrect or unjust listing))

Page 46, lines 10 to 12—

omit, insert—

- (7) Section 461(3)(b), example 1, from 'Y is' to 'Y's spouse'—

omit, insert—

Personal information about Y is listed on a tenancy database for a reason relating to damage caused to premises by a domestic associate of Y

This amendment seeks to amend section 461 of the RTRA Act. Section 461 allows a person to apply to a tribunal to have their personal information removed from a database if it is inaccurate or unjust. The amendment provides an example of an unjust listing in section 461(3) which is that the tribunal may order the removal of personal information of a person from a database where damage to rental premises was caused by a domestic associate of the person.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 32, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 33, as read, agreed to.

Clause 34—



Mr de BRENNI (8.09 pm): I move the following amendment—

5 Clause 34 (Insertion of new ch 14, pt 4)

Page 49, lines 2 to 8—

omit, insert—

subject to subsection (2).

- (2) Section 459D applies to an old listing as if the reference to keeping the information for longer than 3 years were a reference to keeping the information after the day that is 6 months after the commencement.

- (3) In this section—

old listing means an existing listing that, at the commencement, had been kept in a tenancy database for at least 2 years and 6 months.

This amendment to clause 34 of the bill seeks to change the time period mentioned in section 564(2), 'Keeping existing listings in tenancy databases', from one year to six months after the commencement.

This amendment is in line with the committee's recommendation that the transition period be reduced to ensure that tenants who have very old listings are not unduly disadvantaged in having the listing removed. It will not prevent tenants from applying to the tribunal to have old listings removed during this transition period. It would also encourage listing persons, such as agents and landlords, to be proactive in removing dated listings.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 34, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 35—



Mr de BRENNI (8.09 pm): I move the following amendment—

6 Clause 35 (Amendment of sch 2 (Dictionary))

Page 51, line 9, '457'—

omit, insert—

457A

This amendment amends a reference in clause 35 of the bill about the definition of 'lessor' in the tenancy database provisions of the RTRA Act in order to correct a minor drafting error.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr de BRENNI: I move the following amendment—

7 Clause 35 (Amendment of sch 2 (Dictionary))

Page 51, line 14, '457'—

omit, insert—

457A

This amendment amends a reference in clause 35 of the bill about the definition of 'tenant' in the tenancy database provisions of the RTRA Act in order to correct a minor drafting error.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 35, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 36, as read, agreed to.

Schedule, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading



Hon. MC de BRENNI (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (8.10 pm): I move—

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

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Long Title



Hon. MC de BRENNI (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (8.11 pm): I move the following amendment—

8 Long title

Long title, after 'Act 1991'—

insert—

, the *Queensland Building and Construction Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2014*

Amendment agreed to.

Question put—That the long title of the bill, as amended, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT (REINSTATEMENT) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction



Hon. JA TRAD (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade and Investment) (8.13 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Environmental Offsets Act 2014, the Sustainable Planning Act 2009, the Vegetation Management Act 1999 and the Water Act 2000 for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Agriculture and Environment Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 [395].

Tabled paper: Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016, explanatory notes [396].

Today is an important day for Queensland. Today we begin the process of bringing back Queensland's nation-leading tree-clearing laws. From the outset, I wish to place on record my deep appreciation to the Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines and the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef for their deep engagement and extensive work in relation to bringing these bills before the House.

The introduction of this bill into parliament has not been a secret, so it should not come as a surprise to anyone. It was a very clear election commitment of the Palaszczuk government. In November 2015, I announced that our government would introduce a bill into parliament in the first quarter of 2016. Today, we fulfil this promise to the people of Queensland.

After a few short years in charge of this state, the LNP wreaked havoc. The slash-and-burn mentality of the LNP set Queensland back 15 years and under its watch tree-clearing rates in Queensland escalated. What did the LNP do about the increase in clearing rates? It made it easier to clear. The Palaszczuk Labor government today takes an important step in redressing the balance to ensure that responsible landholders can still make a living from the land while, importantly, our native vegetation is protected for future generations.

This bill will reinstate key components to the Vegetation Management Act that were trashed by the Newman government. The bill will reinstate the regulation of clearing of 1.18 million hectares of high-value regrowth on freehold and Indigenous land. High-value regrowth is mature regrowth that has not been cleared since 31 December 1989. That is regrowth that has had 25 years to grow and form regional ecosystems that contribute to the biodiversity of this state, regrowth that prevents sediment from being washed out into our reef and regrowth that absorbs carbon dioxide from our atmosphere.

Late last year we saw the Commonwealth government go to Paris and sign up to an agreement aimed at significantly cutting greenhouse gas emissions. The question now is: will the LNP here in Queensland sign up and agree to this bill, or will it continue to go against the rest of the world, against the wishes of the Turnbull federal government, and deny that global warming is happening?

This bill also removes the ability to apply for high-value and irrigated high-value agricultural clearing. Broadscale clearing of remnant vegetation has been prevented by previous Labor governments since 2006. Despite the doom and gloom pedalled by the Liberal National Party here in Queensland, agricultural production did not stop. Landholders continued to produce high-quality produce for us and the rest of the world that Queensland is renowned for and our biodiversity, our reef and our climate were much better off.

This changed in 2013, when the Liberal National Party let the bulldozers run free again. One permit alone allowed for clearing of 300 square kilometres of remnant vegetation on Cape York Peninsula in a Great Barrier Reef catchment for untested crops. To give members an idea of the scale of this destruction, the clearing area would be three kilometres wide, stretching from Brisbane to the New South Wales border.

At the same time as clearing was escalating, the requirements to offset cleared vegetation were reduced. Another component of reinstating a responsible vegetation management framework is meaningful environmental offset requirements to compensate for the loss of significant values, such as threatened regional ecosystems. This bill will, therefore, introduce amendments to the Environmental Offsets Act 2014 to commence reinstatement of offset requirements and ensure adequate conservation outcomes for all impacts on our state's significant environmental values.

In response to the needs of industry, the bill and amendments to the Environmental Offsets Regulation will enable standardisation of offset delivery by enabling use of the Queensland offset account and legal scrutiny mechanisms for Commonwealth offset requirements.

This bill also reaffirms the Palaszczuk Labor government's commitment to protect the Great Barrier Reef by extending the protection of regrowth vegetation along watercourses in all reef catchments. Protection of regrowth vegetation along watercourses in the Burdekin, Mackay-Whitsundays and Wet Tropics catchments have been in place since 2009. This bill will extend protections to watercourses in the Burnett-Mary, Eastern Cape York and Fitzroy catchments. A key action of the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan, also known as the Reef 2050 Plan, is to strengthen the Queensland government's vegetation management legislation to protect remnant and high-value regrowth native vegetation including in riparian zones. The Reef 2050 Plan was developed by the Queensland and Commonwealth governments acknowledging the action required to ensure our reef does not become endangered.

When these provisions are considered in detail it will be interesting to see if the LNP here in Queensland really do want to protect the reef as their federal counterparts have agreed to. I want to make it very clear that the Palaszczuk government will honour the certainty that category X areas on property maps of assessable vegetation, or PMAVs, provides landholders. Landholders with existing category X areas prior to the introduction of this bill will be unaffected by the changes contained in this bill.

This bill will also address some of the offence provisions that were removed in 2013. The bill will reinstate the provision that makes the landholder responsible for unlawful clearing on their land. Unlawful clearing is often detected using satellite imagery. Similar to red light and speed camera traffic offences, the landowner is considered to have undertaken the clearing on their land unless he or she is able to provide evidence to the contrary.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Elmes): Order! Those members on my left—there are a number of you, particularly the member for Nanango—who are making interjections that are not helping proceedings at all. If you feel the need to make an interjection please do it, but do it in a smart way and make sure that it is pertinent.

Ms TRAD: The bill will also remove the ability of a person who unlawfully clears to claim that they made a mistake as their defence. The Vegetation Management Act has been in place for over 15 years now and given the amount of information and assistance available this is a reasonable approach. This bill also seeks to manage the potential for panic clearing and an increase of applications for clearing and PMAVs.

Ms Simpson interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Maroochydore, those comments are totally inappropriate. I ask you to withdraw.

Ms Simpson: Under what standing order, Mr Speaker?

Mr SPEAKER: Disorderly conduct.

Ms Simpson: I withdraw.

Mr Cripps interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Hinchinbrook, I do not need your assistance or you will be warned as well.

Ms TRAD: The bill is proposing that some provisions will be applied retrospectively from today. The bill does not impose retrospective criminal liability on people who clear vegetation that is to be protected by the bill between today, 17 March 2016, and the bill's assent. Instead, the bill proposes that landholders who clear this vegetation between these dates and where the clearing is not expressly allowed will be required by the Department of Natural Resources and Mines to restore equivalent environmental outcomes guided by the Environmental Offsets Act and policy.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I give all members notice that I want to listen to the Deputy Premier in silence. I am not going to tolerate simply disruptive comments from anywhere in the chamber.

Ms TRAD: However, landholders will be able to clear during this period where the clearing is consistent with an existing self-assessable vegetation clearing code or relevant exemption or where they have received a high-value agriculture and irrigated high-value agriculture clearing approval prior to today. This bill will not affect a landholders' ability to apply for a development application where it does not involve the clearing for high-value agriculture and irrigated high-value agriculture or the conversion of an area to category X where it does not involve vegetation proposed to be regulated under this bill.

The government believes that the retrospectivity of elements within this bill are necessary as the interests of the public as a whole outweighed the interests of an individual in this case. Without these provisions for the commencement of the bill there is a clear threat of pre-emptive clearing. To ensure that landholders are fully informed of their obligations relating to the retrospective elements of this bill, information on the implications of this bill will be made available on the Department of Natural Resources and Mines website. Landholders will also be able to enter their property details online to obtain mapping of the areas proposed to be regulated and this information will continue to be free of charge.

Finally, this bill will address yet another attack by the Liberal National Party on one of the most sensitive parts of our environment. The bill will reinstate the requirement to obtain a riverine protection permit to destroy vegetation in watercourses under the Water Act. When this provision was removed in 2013 it removed regulation over the clearing of native vegetation in many watercourses all over Queensland. Without the retrospective provisions contained in this bill there would have been a very real threat of panic clearing. The government understands the uncertainty that retrospectivity creates for everyone and accordingly believes that this period should be kept as short as possible. Urgent action is also required to give our reef the best chance of long-term survival.

The Reef 2050 Plan and the Great Barrier Reef Report Card 2014 have identified that the rate of loss of riparian vegetation in the Great Barrier Reef catchments has increased. This needs to be addressed immediately. In 2013 Queensland was Australia's highest carbon emitting jurisdiction, producing one-third of the nation's emissions. A high proportion of Queensland's emissions are directly related to land clearing. Queensland needs to contribute its share to reducing carbon emissions sooner rather than later.

The Statewide Land Cover and Tree Study, better known as SLATS, which is conducted by the Department of Science, Information Technology and Innovation, has also shown alarming increases in tree clearing rates. We simply cannot allow this to continue. This bill restores the right balance between protecting vegetation that plays a critical role in maintaining healthy and sustainable ecosystems while not diminishing the ability of our agricultural sector in this state to expand and flourish. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. JA TRAD (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade and Investment) (8.27 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

AYES, 43:

ALP, 41—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Byrne, Crawford, de Brenni, Dick, Donaldson, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Hinchliffe, Howard, Jones, Kelly, King, Lauga, Linard, Lynham, Madden, Miles, Miller, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pease, Pegg, Pitt, Power, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Stewart, Trad, Whiting, Williams.

INDEPENDENT, 2—Gordon, Pyne.

NOES, 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, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Watts, Weir.

KAP, 2—Katter, Knuth.

Pair: D'Ath, Walker.

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



Mr SPEAKER: Members, the reason for this position is as follows: on Monday, I met with representatives from AgForce, including President Grant Maudsley and CEO Charles Burke. During that meeting I asked about the roundtable consultation process on vegetation management. I was advised that AgForce was pleased to participate, but that the roundtable process was not able to progress because environmental groups refused to participate unless the government brought in a moratorium on tree clearing. I am disappointed the environmental groups that were invited to take part refused to participate. I do not support or condone what I consider to be blackmail tactics.

AgForce told me they had seen the proposed legislation and they had several suggestions for improvements to some of the clauses in the bill. We spoke about the bill being referred to a committee and AgForce indicated it was willing to participate in the committee process and was already anticipating preparing a submission to the committee. I have also met with environmental groups regarding vegetation management and understand that some of those groups have indicated that they have also seen the bill and have had discussions about it. I understand they are also preparing their case for the anticipated committee hearing.

I consider this vote an attempt to bypass our committee system. There has been no case put to me to justify the urgency, apart from political opportunism, and this matter was canvassed in an exchange of letters between the then leader of the opposition, Annastacia Palaszczuk, and myself on 5 February last year. I believe the bill should be referred to the committee to give stakeholders the opportunity to present their cases and suggestions on how they think the bill can be improved.

I make it very clear that my support for the committee to investigate this bill cannot be interpreted as support for the bill. I have spoken on the issue of vegetation management in parliament in the past and my position on this bill will be determined after I have had the opportunity to consider the committee's report and the many arguments that I am sure will be made in the course of the consideration of the bill.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the Agriculture and Environment Committee

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

Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date



Hon. JA TRAD (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade and Investment) (8.35 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That, under the provisions of standing order 136, the Agriculture and Environment Committee report to the House on the Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 by 15 April 2016.



Mr CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (8.36 pm): I rise to oppose the motion moved by the Deputy Premier because the House should not accept the restricted time frame made available for the consideration of this bill given the extensive, serious and punitive nature of the amendments proposed in it. There is an inadequate period of consultation proposed in the motion moved by the Deputy Premier because of the scope and the magnitude of the bill.

For the benefit of the members present, I will briefly outline some of the provisions of this bill and the reasons why the period that has been made available in this motion is not satisfactory for consideration by the relevant committee. I make it clear to the House that this bill does not contain only a reversal of the amendments to the vegetation management framework that was put in place by the LNP in 2013. This bill goes further. This bill is more punitive, more restrictive and impinges on more property rights of more landowners in Queensland than the vegetation management framework prior to the amendments put in place by the LNP in 2013. I will now outline to the House those initiatives as outlined in the bill, which I have had a very short period to consider. Not only do the amendments proposed in the bill—

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I rise to a point of order. I have been giving the member for Hinchinbrook a bit of latitude to frame his case, but he is now referring directly to the contents of the bill. This is a debate that relates to the committee reporting process and the timing of the committee reporting process. Mr Speaker, I ask you to make sure that you keep the member for Hinchinbrook speaking to the matter before the House, rather than anticipating debate.

Mr SPEAKER: I believe that the member for Hinchinbrook should be entitled to speak to the reasons he wants to vote against this motion. I am prepared to allow him to continue.

Mr CRIPPS: As I was saying, I am speaking to the reasons why the relevant committee will need more time than has been made available by the Deputy Premier in her motion and it is because of the scope and the magnitude of the bill. As I said a moment ago, it is not true that this bill simply reverses the changes that were made in 2013. For example, in relation to the category R vegetation restrictions, those restrictions were put in place by the former Bligh Labor government after the preference dealing following the 2009 state election campaign. If I recall correctly, they were subsequently delivered by the now Minister for Education, the member for Ashgrove. They related to the Wet Tropics, the Burdekin and the Mackay-Whitsunday catchments. The provisions of this bill extend those category R restrictions on vegetation to three further catchments in the state of Queensland, being the Burnett-Mary catchment, the eastern Cape York Peninsula catchment and the Fitzroy catchment, which is one of Queensland's largest catchments, so this could have a profound effect on the landowners in that area.

The members of this House need to understand that these amendments are punitive. They seriously go beyond the amendments that were put in place by the LNP in 2013. That is the reason the period of time made available by the Deputy Premier in her motion is totally inadequate. This is not simply a reinstatement of the amendments that the LNP proposed in 2013.

We should not accept the reporting framework that would be put in place by this motion because we know that the consultation process that was previously proposed by the Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines did not occur. The Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines made undertakings to this parliament on several occasions and he made undertakings to the important stakeholders involved in vegetation management activities, they being landowners, across the state. He met with those stakeholders. He gave them undertakings.

On Tuesday during the matters of public importance debate I outlined the number of times the Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines gave those undertakings to this parliament, including to the estimates committee. He has failed completely. We know that the consultation period leading up to the introduction of this bill has been completely inadequate and flawed. Any period of time made available by the motion put forward by the Deputy Premier for the consideration of the bill by the committee needs to take into consideration that those stakeholders whose property rights will be violated by the introduction of these amendments have not been properly consulted. They have not been given an ample opportunity to give their feedback to the government on the preparation of this legislation. No opportunity has been afforded to those stakeholders whatsoever.

We know from the public record that those relevant stakeholders were given an opportunity—in fact, I believe your good self, Mr Speaker, mentioned the fact that AgForce Queensland confirmed to you personally that the round table met once and did not subsequently meet because the conservation groups who were invited to be part of that community round table refused to attend until the government gave assurances about certain matters around repealing initiatives the LNP put in place in 2013 and introducing a moratorium. We know we are starting from scratch. We are not starting with a body of already undertaken consultation. We are starting from the point of view of demands issued to the Palaszczuk government by the extreme green groups.

We are starting from that point in the development of this bill. We have seen published letters from the Wilderness Society to the Premier of Queensland and other ministers, including the Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines, demanding that they immediately introduce those initiatives that were the subject of the preference deal between those green groups and the Labor Party prior to the 2015 state election. That is the basis upon which this bill has been drafted.

It has not been done in consultation with the thousands of landowners and their representatives in Queensland—AgForce Queensland, the Queensland Farmers' Federation, Canegrowers, Growcom; those peak industry bodies that deserve to have a say. It is their property rights, it is their certainty, it is their livelihoods that are going to be impinged by this bill if it is allowed to proceed. They need to consider the magnitude and scope of the provisions of this bill. They should be afforded as much by the government and certainly by this parliament.

We should not agree to the totally inadequate time frame put forward by the Deputy Premier in her motion. It is a totally inadequate time frame for affected parties to consider and present sensible, articulate and informed submissions to the parliamentary committee about the profound impact that this will have not only on their property values but also on the productive opportunities for their properties into the future.

It is a disgrace that we have been presented with this bill in this fashion. This government came to office promising to be accountable. This government came to office promising to consult and listen to the stakeholders who would be affected by the legislation they bring in. I am absolutely appalled.

I also want to make clear to members of parliament considering the question of whether or not a few weeks is adequate to consider the punitive amendments in this bill the retrospectivity of this bill. The retrospectivity of this bill is serious. It will impinge upon those people in the state of Queensland who already have applications to manage vegetation on their properties as of 17 March. The explanatory notes state—

... the right to clear particular vegetation within the period between 17 March 2016 and the date of assent of the legislation ...

What that effectively means is that this legislation will take effect as of today—not the date on which the parliament agrees to the legislation, but the date that the government chose to introduce the legislation. That is a further outrage. I did not hear anything from the Deputy Premier that indicated that they have told any stakeholders that they intended to introduce that level of retrospectivity.

I also want to refer to a serious issue that has impacted upon the public's consideration of this legislation over the last couple of weeks, that is, the serious manipulation of the figures in the Queensland government's SLATS reports about vegetation management activities in Queensland in recent years. I just happen to have a copy of the supplementary report that was released by the government in November 2015. It debunks completely the outrageous claims made by the Minister for Environment, the Deputy Premier and the Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines in his public commentary over the last few weeks. There are tables and graphs—for the benefit of those people on the Labor back bench; pie charts which even they should be able to understand—about the actual situation with respect to vegetation management activities.

This is relevant because it is a complex issue. It is a complex issue that is being distorted by the public commentary of those ministers opposite. In fact, we can compare and contrast the types of clearing in the SLATS report. In the financial year 2012-13, which was the last reporting period in which the former ALP government's framework was in place, 74 per cent of all vegetation management activities were exempt. If we contrast that to the first year of the reporting period when the LNP's amendments were in place, only 65 per cent of vegetation management activities were exempt from any permit.

Exempted activities actually fell between the last year that the ALP's legislation was in place and the first year that the LNP's legislation was in place. Permitted vegetation management activities in the last year of Labor's regime were eight per cent. Under the LNP permitted activities rose to 20 per cent. On the face of it, that is an increase in permitted vegetation activities.

What did permitted activities also mean? Permitted activities means assessed and approved. We know what is going on in the state of Queensland under the LNP's legislation with respect to vegetation management activities. It is more transparent and accountable than the framework that was put in place by the Labor Party previously.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Hinchinbrook, I know you are on a roll and you are keen to talk about the bill and all the problems, but I just want you to focus your attention on the issue in relation to the timing and not to take all of your time debating the clauses in the bill.

Mr CRIPPS: Absolutely, Mr Speaker. I have no intention of debating the clauses.

Mr SPEAKER: I know you have eight minutes left and you are entitled to use the full eight minutes.

Mr CRIPPS: I relish the opportunity to debate the clauses, but I cannot do that at the moment. What I am trying to do by referring to the SLATS report and referring to the public commentary of the Deputy Premier, the Minister for Environment, and the Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines in the lead-up to this debate is to explain to members of the House the complexity of this issue and the unfortunate and unfair way that those ministers have distorted these figures in the SLATS report to try to whip up apathy and fear in the urban communities in Queensland that are susceptible to these messages that they are trying to peddle.

One of the other interesting statistics from the SLATS report that I would like to point out to the House is the unexplained vegetation management rates. In the last year of the ALP's regime, 12 per cent of vegetation management activities were unexplained. Under the LNP, that fell to 10 per cent which reinforces the point I was making before that we know more about what is happening in Queensland under the LNP's changes to the vegetation management framework in 2013. We have a better understanding about what is going on in Queensland which totally debunks the arguments put forward by the ALP in recent weeks.

The last thing that I will say in respect of the SLATS report is that all of the public comments that have been made by those ministers opposite distorting the facts have used the base rates from 2009-10 and the 78,000 hectares that were reportedly cleared in that financial year or reporting period. Then they contrast that to the clearing rates or the vegetation management activity rates that occurred in the first year of the LNP's reporting regime, 2013-14, which reached almost 300,000 hectares. If you take 2009-10 and compare it to 2013-14, it is a significant escalation in vegetation management activities, but in 2012-13, which was the last reporting period under the ALP's vegetation management framework, clearing rates were above 250,000 hectares.

There has not been a wild and serious escalation of vegetation management activities in the state of Queensland simply as a result of the LNP being in government or making changes to the vegetation management framework. There has not, and the government's own report spells that out very clearly. It is a dishonest and disgraceful distortion of the facts and the truth and it has been done

to manipulate those people in the state of Queensland who are receiving these messages from irresponsible and dishonest ministers. That is the reason why I have gone to some length to try to outline—

Ms TRAD: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I find that characterisation personally offensive. I ask him to withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: Sorry, I do not believe it was a personal reflection, Deputy Premier.

Mr CRIPPS: That is the reason the outrageously short period of time that the Deputy Premier has made available for the consideration of this bill by the relevant committee cannot be accepted by this House. This is a serious and disgraceful attack on the property rights of landowners in Queensland. It is a serious and disgraceful attack on the agricultural sector in Queensland. I am absolutely appalled that this bill has been presented to the parliament of Queensland without so much as a peep from the Minister for Agriculture—a complete failure to defend the people and the sector that she is supposed to represent at the Queensland cabinet table.

Queensland is a big state. These amendments, if they are accepted by the parliament, will have a profound impact on landholders from the cape all the way through to Southern Queensland. To understand the magnitude and the impact of these proposed amendments, the parliamentary committee responsible for investigating this bill will have to travel. They will have to meet with people who will be directly impacted on by the amendments. They will need to understand the financial impact on their business. They will have to understand the impact on property values. They will hopefully understand the basic differences in bioregions and vegetation types that will only be achieved if they have an extensive period of time available to consider the proposed amendments in this bill. If they do not receive that opportunity then the consideration of this bill by the parliamentary committee will be inadequate. It will be inadequate. It is our responsibility as representatives of our communities to make sure that we do a proper job.

Those opposite have been presenting these bills for a decade and a half. Each time we come back after a state election with them having entered into a preference deal with the extreme Greens they turn the screws again on landowners in Queensland. They undermine their property values. They attack their productivity. They attack regional and rural communities by undermining confidence in those areas. It is a complete and utter disgrace. What have we got to do to get it through their thick skulls that you just cannot wander into someone's place and tell them that they are no longer eligible to use parts of their property?

No compensation is being offered as part of the amendments put forward by the Deputy Premier. How are we going to adequately assess the financial impact of the failure of the government once again to offer any compensation as a result of the removal of property rights? That is not going to be a simple calculation. We are not going to be afforded any opportunity with this ridiculously inadequate period of time to consult on the bill. We cannot accept the time frame that is being offered by the Deputy Premier in terms of the investigation by the relevant parliamentary committee. It would be an abrogation of our responsibilities.

All of those people on the Labor Party backbench who represent regional and rural Queensland need to really think about what they are doing in terms of undermining the people who have invested in regional and rural Queensland. All they are being asked to do now is to reject a self-interested motion being put forward by the Deputy Premier because she needs to deliver on the election commitments she gave to a bunch of unaccountable, unelected, extreme greenies based in Brisbane. Those members need to take a long hard look at themselves about how they represent regional and rural seats. This motion is an absolute disgrace. The time frame provided for in the motion by the Deputy Premier is totally inadequate and I oppose it vigorously.

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call the Minister for Environment, I want to assure all members that it is my intention to allow any member to speak on this bill before I call the Deputy Premier to close the debate. I can assure you that there will be no guillotine provided while I am the Speaker. I urge all members who wish to speak to make sure your name is on the list. I already have a preliminary list here.



Hon. SJ MILES (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef) (8.57 pm): I rise to make a contribution to this debate about the time frame for parliament's consideration of this very important bill. I will touch on some of the points raised by the member for Hinchinbrook about consultation and due consideration. First, I want to make one point clear. For those of us on this side of the House this bill and this debate is not about political pointscoring.

Mr Molhoek interjected.

Dr MILES: It is not about one-upmanship. It is not about picking a fight. It is easy to see how much of a game this is to the opposition.

Ms Davis interjected.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members, I am going to be firm in relation to interjections. They need to be relevant and not simply disruptive. I flag that initially for the member for Southport and the member for Aspley. All members are on notice. It is going to be a long night—maybe into the early morning.

Dr MILES: It is easy to see how much of a game this is to those opposite. They are doing this with no sense of irony at all. First of all, they call a division on the first reading of a bill—an unprecedented move where they expect members of this House to make a call without so much as a chance to even read the bill. It is the first time, I am told, since 1860 that an opposition has abused parliamentary process in such a way.

First of all, they say, 'We don't need to read the bill. We've made up our mind.' Then one breath later they turn around and say, 'Four weeks is not enough to consider the bill.' A minute ago no time was plenty of time. Now four weeks is not enough. The opposition is playing games with the parliamentary process to suit its political purposes.

On this side of the House there is a serious issue at the heart of this debate—that is, the reinstatement bill is a piece of vital environmental protection legislation. It is incumbent on this House to act quickly to avoid irreversible environmental harm. The parliament must act to ensure that the fear being peddled by those opposite on this issue does not translate into unwarranted and destructive panic clearing.

Those opposite have already been out there in the public domain trying to incite fear and panic about the reinstatement of these sensible vegetation protection measures. Earlier this week the Leader of the Opposition told the ABC that these laws were a dreadful attack on farmers. Before even seeing the bill, he is whipping up a scare campaign calling them a dreadful attack. First, they did not need to see the bill. Second, they did not need to read the bill. Now four weeks is not enough to decide on the bill. Frankly, this is just irresponsible.

There are farmers out there losing sleep over this, and they should not be. Queensland's farmers and graziers have nothing to fear from these laws. In fact, these laws complement the good stewardship that our agricultural communities are known for. I know farmers love our land just as much as I do. If farmers could see the kind of environmental destruction that we can see—the kind of environmental destruction that the member for Hinchinbrook encouraged, the massive bulldozers, the giant chains cutting swathes through pristine forests—if farmers hearing the opposition leader's inflammatory comments could see that destruction, I know they would be as horrified as I am.

Nonetheless, it would be foolish to assume that those opposite would desist from their fear campaign, and why would they? They have a legacy to defend—a damning, destructive legacy. They know that their actions in government have caused the situation that we are in now—a situation where Queensland is generating more carbon pollution from land clearing than at any time in the last eight years. Queensland is now responsible for 90 per cent of Australia's carbon pollution from deforestation.

Those opposite know that, when the member for Hinchinbrook put out a media release saying that his government would put on hold all investigations of alleged breaches of the Vegetation Management Act, he effectively fired the starting gun. Those opposite know that, when the member for Hinchinbrook told the Rural Press Club he would take an axe to the sound, effective vegetation management laws he inherited from successive Labor governments, he effectively started up the bulldozers himself.

There is worldwide consternation about deforestation of the Amazon, where 600,000 hectares of rainforest are cleared each year, but thanks to the LNP we are nearly halfway there ourselves. The massive spike in clearing that occurred as a result was so obvious and so embarrassing for those opposite that they refused to release the data. SLATS data which both the Deputy Premier and the member for Hinchinbrook have referred to—the Statewide Landcover and Trees Study data—is prepared by scientists at the Herbarium in the department of science. It measures land clearing and carbon emissions using satellite technology. It is normally released every year, but the LNP refused to release it, fearing the facts might affect their re-election prospects.

That is why last year Labor released two years worth of data, and that is the data that shows unequivocally that land clearing rates skyrocketed under the LNP after the member for Hinchinbrook fired the starting gun. That is the LNP's legacy. That is why we know their scare campaign and fearmongering will only continue. I know those opposite will spend the night, as the member for Hinchinbrook did, trying to defend their track record and they will misuse the data just like the member for Hinchinbrook did.

Let us go to just one of the claims that has been circulating about the data. The claim that a few have made is that tree coverage has increased in Queensland. We have cut down 300,000 hectares of trees but somehow there are more trees now. They point to a figure that suggests that tree coverage might have increased by 437,000 hectares over three years. Let me tell the House how they are misusing the data. These claims started in a press release from AgForce. I work closely with AgForce on lots of things. I do not want to cast aspersions, but all the advice I have received about this claim is just wrong. Wooded vegetation includes assemblages of all woody plants—

Mr WATTS: I rise to a point of order, Mr Speaker. We do not seem to be debating the time; we seem to be debating the bill. This would be a good example of why we need more time.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I gave the member for Hinchinbrook, your shadow minister, significant latitude. I am giving the minister a similar degree of latitude, but I expect other members to note that if comments have already been made they do not repeat those comments. I understand that many members wish to speak to the bill, so I thought for the purpose of simplicity both lead speakers can put their issues on the table and that may have an impact on what other members contribute.

Dr MILES: Wooded vegetation in that study includes assemblages of all woody plants. This can include native vegetation, regrowth following clearing, plantations of native and exotic species, and woody weeds. DSITI produces a wooded extent map product and accompanying data on an annual basis. The wooded extent map is produced through a largely automated process which analyses Landsat satellite imagery, informed by field data, to estimate tree and shrub foliage cover across the state. Tree and shrub foliage cover can change over time due to seasonal fluctuations, and this can affect the estimation of tree and shrub cover from year to year.

The wooded extent map is intended to be an annual snapshot—the best possible estimate of tree and shrub foliage cover for the state for the year of production. The estimation of early vegetation regrowth and very low cover woody vegetation is approaching the limit of what can be detected from annual Landsat satellite imagery. Therefore, the wooded extent is not used for comparisons from year to year or to derive loss or gains in vegetation extent. It is, however, useful information about tree and shrub foliage cover for a range of other government applications—regional ecosystem mapping updates, assessments of bushfire hazard and risk, riparian vegetation mapping for reef reporting, and biodiversity planning and mapping. What it is not used for is assessing vegetation change from year to year.

Information about vegetation change is provided through SLATS. SLATS uses Landsat satellite imagery, field verification, expert visual interpretation and other supporting evidence like high-resolution imagery to assess these changes to vegetation. The conclusion to all of this is that the claims that derive tree coverage by comparing wooded vegetation extent from year to year are invalid. The assertion about tree coverage increasing in Queensland is simply not supported by the available data. What we do know, based on scientifically verifiable data, is that land clearing rates have now jumped to nearly 300,000 hectares per year, generating 36 million tonnes of carbon pollution each year. That is the problem we are dealing with, and that is the legacy the LNP cannot escape.

Let me come back to address the concerns that have been raised about consultation and the need for proper oversight and scrutiny by the parliamentary committee. Putting aside the need for urgency, I am confident that the time frame proposed is more than adequate for the committee to give due consideration to this bill. The Palaszczuk government is committed to consultation, unlike those opposite. We believe in meaningful consultation even with those who do not agree with us, and the development of this bill has been no different.

This started as far back as April 2015, when work commenced to identify appropriate options for reregulating high-value regrowth vegetation on freehold and Indigenous land as well as options to address clearing for high-value agriculture and irrigated high-value agriculture. The Minister for Natural Resources and Mines has previously briefed the House on the work of Professor Allan Dale of James Cook University. Professor Dale was engaged in the third quarter of 2015 to liaise with key stakeholders on a package of policy proposals that would contribute to the government's commitments. I know that the Deputy Premier has engaged in extensive consultation with stakeholders, other members of the government and government agencies.

We committed to consult on the implementation of our election commitment to reinstate Queensland's nation-leading land-clearing laws and we have delivered on this commitment. Just like it is a bit rich for those opposite to call a division on the first reading of a bill and then complain about a four-week committee consideration process, it is pretty rich for those opposite to criticise a four-week turnaround when we think back to how they used and abused the parliamentary process during their short stint in government.

Let me remind the LNP of the comments made by Campbell Newman—do members remember him? Campbell Newman flagged plans to bypass the parliamentary committee system to 'fast-track' election promises. In 2012, he announced that certain bills would not be sent to parliamentary committees for checking. Mr Newman said the LNP would look at bills 'on a case-by-case basis' to determine whether or not they needed to go to a committee for checking. Can-do said, 'Don't be surprised if we don't just take it straight through and put it through quickly. We believe we have a mandate for things that we made clear, unequivocal commitments on.' This is certainly an issue that we have made a clear, unequivocal commitment on, but we do not propose to bypass the committee process, as those opposite did. On this side of the House we believe in proper checks and balances. The time frame proposed in this motion respects proper process whilst also acknowledging the need for swift action.

We know from history that panic clearing is a real and significant risk. It has happened in the past. The risks to wildlife, our climate and the Great Barrier Reef are too significant to risk it happening again. The Palaszczuk government is determined to get tree clearing back under control in Queensland, back to sustainable levels. To do that, the parliament needs to move quickly and decisively. I commend the motion to the House.



Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (9.11 pm): I move the following amendment—

That the motion be amended by omitting the words '15 April 2016' and inserting the words '30 June 2016'.

This is an amendment to the Deputy Premier's motion which changes the date from 15 April 2016 to 30 June 2016. In moving this amendment, I agree entirely with the comments you made, Mr Speaker, in your decision to support the affirmative part of this question in the House in terms of going forward with this legislation. What you clearly said in underwriting going forward with the consideration of this legislation in this House is that you want a proper, full parliamentary committee inquiry into this matter. I could not agree with you more on that, and you will have that if we change the date to 30 June.

In this legislation there are people's lives at stake, there are people's investments at stake and there are people's jobs at stake. This needs to be carefully considered and there needs to be an opportunity for the parliamentary committee to travel Queensland. They need to go to those many outward areas that will be affected by this legislation so that the real picture can be determined. The parliamentary committee needs to make a recommendation so that this House can consider the legislation in a proper manner. Mr Speaker, you will then get to cast your vote in a proper manner, being fully informed of the results of the parliamentary committee inquiry into the matter.

The Deputy Premier herself has said that it is retrospective legislation applying from today. That means if this legislation is passed then it applies from today, but that does not inhibit the inquiry from going ahead for the next few months to get that report back date of 30 June. We need to get a full and proper process in place to consider this legislation appropriately, rather than having it delivered into the House late on a Thursday night for specific media reasons to drive the Deputy Premier's agenda in terms of the groups that she supports. It does not give full and proper consideration of a very important piece of legislation in this House.


The minister quoted matters back to me in terms of consideration in previous times. Mr Speaker, as you are well aware, the CLA has come to an agreement, which government members are well aware and supportive of, that unless there is an urgent bill and we have made allowance for an urgent bill—and this has not been declared an urgent bill—then six weeks will be the minimum for consideration of bills before the House. The CLA has agreed to that, under your guidance, Mr Speaker. The bills affected basically cannot be major threats to people's investments, lifestyles and jobs throughout the state.

I go back to the importance of the date in this particular debate. The ridiculous date of 15 April was put forward by the Deputy Premier on a whim to satisfy groups that have obviously been hunting her down for the last 14 months since the election in terms of her support at the last election. That date was chosen to get this legislation through as quickly as possible. Quite clearly, this is not a matter that we can deal with lightly. We have got Easter in that period between now and 15 April. Obviously, that is going to take out movement around the state for a lot of families and a lot of people on that committee. What the Deputy Premier suggests is an absolute nonsense.

Mr Speaker, in terms of having a process so that you and every other member in this House can carefully consider comments from AgForce and every other individual person who has a right to have input into this legislation that will change their life, there needs to be a proper consultation period, and that can be achieved by 30 June. Yes, we will come back and run through all the pros and cons of this bill, but we would have got full and comprehensive feedback into all the matters raised by the shadow minister and people from different areas. We will then be able to deal with this matter in a proper and considered way and the legislation can be dealt with by this House. Mr Speaker, you will be able to make your decision on this very sensitive area. This affects your area of Nicklin because these matters affect the livelihoods, job prospects and investments in your particular area. This is a fair and reasonable amendment to the motion the Deputy Premier has moved. I suggest that this House support that reporting date.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Mermaid Beach, I understand the rules require that the amendment be circulated prior to it being moved. I have overlooked that because your amendment is very simple, but I take it that you will put it in writing shortly to meet and comply with that requirement.

Mr STEVENS: Correct.

 **Mr SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.17 pm): This legislation has been presented before the parliament and the government has claimed some urgency to it. It is legislation that has a very, very broad and far-reaching implication for many Queenslanders who live in rural and regional areas of this state. It cannot be just brushed off lightly. The most appalling and galling thing that we have heard from honourable members opposite is that they have wrapped this up in a veil of alleged green credibility. It is nothing about that whatsoever. This is a capricious action of a vengeful government that is determined to go out there and attack a section of the community that does not traditionally support them but a section of the community that provides significantly for the benefit of this state. We have heard this week in this parliament the heads of this government—I am referring to the Premier and it may have even been the Deputy Premier—talking about the growth in agricultural commodity exports from Queensland over the last few months. We also heard that from the new agriculture minister—somebody who was absolutely clueless as to the effect and benefit of agricultural production on the community of Queensland. On one hand they are turning around and saying that they believe very much in what is happening with that section of the community and wish to support them, but on the other hand they are actually hitting them with the biggest hammer they possibly can.

The effect of what is being done here tonight should never be underestimated. This will reverberate through regional Queensland like an earthquake. Make absolutely no mistake about it. It is all right for the Deputy Premier and the Minister for Environment to stand up here in all their clueless piousness saying that this will have no effect with regard to the sovereign and investment concerns of the people of rural and regional Queensland. It is all right for the people on that side who have spoken already, who are clueless, to stand up in here and say that food and fibre production will continue into the future. Yes, it will, but it will become a lot more difficult and it will become almost impossible to expand; that is the point.

The people on that side have no idea what it is like to run a rural property. They have no idea what thickening is all about except the thickening between their own ears. They have absolutely no idea what happens with regard to that, about the fact that so many agricultural producers in Queensland spend significant time just trying to control woody weeds and woody vegetation that naturally regenerates. It is a significant part of what an agricultural producer does. That is the natural effluxion of what happens in our environment. If people live in a fool's paradise like these people opposite do, they would have absolutely no idea of the reality of that fact. That is the most insulting thing for the people who live this stuff, whose families and whose livelihoods generationally have been about looking after the land and producing food and fibre at a high quality for us in this parliament and also those within the community to consume. How ironic is this—and this is where this time frame absolutely stinks. They do not have time now, and the government is claiming credit for things they had nothing to do with in terms of our agricultural exports.

The Commonwealth government is talking about the expansion of agriculture based around their agricultural policy for Northern Australia and the Northern Australia white paper; the significance of what is now being claimed and demanded by Asia, particularly what is happening in China in terms of them wanting a million flat back cattle to be live exported into their country; what is happening with regard to the demand in India; what is happening to the demand for dairy in China—all of those sorts of things are going to grind to a halt. In order to be able to expand agricultural production for domestic and international food security, we need to be able to manage vegetation which means that we have to be

able to clear vegetation in order to be able to grow it, whether it be grazing or in the area of crop production. This is something that this government seems absolutely clueless about, but they are a clueless government.

Indeed, one of the main reasons why this bill should not have been presented to the parliament tonight in its current form and should not be brought back here by 15 April, as has been proposed, is that what the government promised with regard to consultation has not eventuated. What this government promised with regard to consultation has not eventuated. Mr Speaker, even what you said earlier from the chair indicated as much. A party cannot come to government in Queensland promising consultation, shrouding themselves in a veil of consultation, saying they are going to take people on a journey, saying they are going to respect people, saying they are going to address their concerns, saying they are going to provide an opportunity for them to have direct input into the process and then turn around and ignore every one of those pillars that they indicated. That is what this government has done. Not only has there not been the promised roundtable consultation; they now rush the bill through with limited opportunity to address what are serious issues around sovereign risk, investment and also rule of law and natural justice.

A moment ago we heard from the Minister for Environment some sort of wild and woolly cock-and-bull story with regard to the growth in vegetation clearing in Queensland under the LNP government. I refer the honourable minister to the very document that he himself was claiming was the foundation and justification for bringing this legislation into the parliament. These are the actual figures. If we go back to the baseline, which was 2009-10, there were some 80,000 hectares cleared in Queensland. In the last year of the Labor government in this state, 2012-13, it was around 268,000 hectares. We saw a 300 per cent escalation under the Labor Party in three or four years. What happened in the first year of the LNP? It went up around 10 per cent after going up 300 per cent under the Labor Party. The reason that happened was agricultural producers had confidence in us and we were able to have a system which could manage the growth in clearing in Queensland around particular priority areas, particularly with high-value agriculture. The other thing which was an inconvenient truth for the Minister for Environment is very simple, and that is that he seeks to exclude for his own convenience the amount of urban clearing that is a part of that. He seeks to exclude for his own convenience the amount of clearing that went on for mines in this state or other resource developments, which are exempt from the existing vegetation management legislation and the legislation that the Deputy Premier is introducing today. He also did not mention that which was cleared for drought fodder, which was a part of keeping people's stock alive. Once that is addressed, the nature of this argument starts to dismantle.

By truncating this time frame there is very limited opportunity for those facts to get out into the community. What we have from those on the other side is an emotional and dishonest debate. They can go onto the internet and find a couple of pictures of bulldozers and put that out there and then emotionally scare people. The facts are different to what they are saying. They cannot stand up and claim to have respect for farmers in this state while slagging them with the most vile allegations of environmental vandalism because it is not those who pass the legislation in here whom they are slagging; it is the people who clear the land to grow the food so that those members opposite, others in this place and all people in Queensland can enjoy it. It is the most vile condemnation, the most vile attack, on those people who actually grow the food and fibre.

We heard members on the other side talking about some so-called sensational examples of tree clearing across the cape with regard to major new developments for high-value agriculture. This does not only affect them; it affects every landholder in Queensland who does not have a PMAV and has on their property vegetation that is subject to this legislation. Tens of thousands of landholders, tens of thousands of primary producers in Queensland are affected by this legislation.

The other thing that those members opposite do not understand is that when people buy their freehold land, they buy the vegetation on the land. Anyone who understands the basic fundamentals of fee simple title would know that they purchase the land and then they purchase the timber of commercial value. So by and large it is theirs and the timber that does not have commercial value has no value to the state. This government has come in and taken away the right that exists for someone to do something with their property that they have already paid for without compensation. The fundamentals of a functioning society and another reason why this should not be truncated is the rule of law and property rights. If members opposite do not believe that that is fundamental to a functioning society that rewards aspiration and true value for hard work, they should go to North Korea, China and Russia and see what happens in those places when property rights and rule of law are taken away. That is what they are doing here tonight without any form of compensation.

Another reason this should not be rushed is simply that this impacts on the most disadvantaged Queenslanders. Right across the cape at the moment there is significant concern growing amongst Indigenous leaders as to the impact that this will have on their communities because they know that they are trapped in a poverty cycle that they are unlikely to get out of unless they can grow communities of hope, opportunity and aspiration. If the government condemns those communities to be truncated on some sort of mission boundary that they are not able to step over due to over-the-top wild rivers legislation or over-the-top legislation that restricts their ability to clear land for economic opportunity, it will condemn them to a life of social security servitude.

In the past week we heard a lot from those members opposite who stood up in here and talked about closing the gap. This will not close the gap: this will widen the gap across the cape and this will widen the gap elsewhere, because you take away the opportunity for people to have an income and you take away the opportunity to be able to grow a commodity that someone wants to consume.

Another reason this should not be truncated is the issue of sovereign risk, because people will not invest if they do not know that they have security over their asset. Sovereign risk is a significant issue, and we have seen that with regard to the resources and property sectors; now we are seeing it with regard to the agricultural sector. If you do not believe me, go out and have a committee report due back on 30 June, as has been argued here by the Leader of Opposition Business, and you will soon find out what people really think about sovereign risk. People out there are terrified of this legislation because they know what it means for them: it devalues their asset. It ties their hands on whatever they should be able to reasonably do.

Another reason why it is an unreasonable time frame and 30 June at the very least should be the date of consideration before reporting back to this parliament is because this is the most repugnant invasion of the rules of natural justice: the reverse onus of proof. If you, Mr Speaker, are accused of paedophilia, if you are accused of unlawfully killing somebody, if you are accused of virtually every criminal offence in this state, then the state must prove the case against you. Under this legislation—unlike the protection that is given to an accused murderer—if you go out there and knock down a tree, then you have to prove that what you did was legal. This government is arguing that 15 April is a reasonable time for this parliament to properly consider this through its committee process.

Another reason why it is unreasonable is on the issue of mistake of fact. This is absolutely appalling. On the area of mistake of fact, you as a landholder can be given the wrong advice by a departmental official, you act in good faith and you clear trees, and then you are prosecuted because you were given the wrong information. You acted on that information. The mistake was not yours; it was someone else's, yet you can be prosecuted because the mistaken information was officially given to you by someone in high office. That is completely repugnant. We are supposed to be able to adjudicate this fairly, give people a chance to have their concerns recorded and report back through this parliament, notwithstanding the Easter period, by 15 April? Come on, give us a break! That is absolutely not fair in any way whatsoever.

Whilst this was going on and the initial concerns were being raised by the member for Hinchinbrook, we had the member for Ashgrove and others sitting over there giggling as though this was some form of great triumph. It is not; this is one of the most demoralising, appalling and dreadful attacks on a collective of individuals that any parliament could perpetuate.

Let us look at some of the other reasons why we need an extension of time, and that is so we can get some other facts out there. This government talks about 286,000 hectares, which was a 10 per cent escalation in their time in government—our legislation flattened this out because people had faith and confidence—but let us put this in context of the whole land mass of Queensland so that people can consider this. Just short of 300,000 hectares is basically 1/700th of the land mass of Queensland, or .15 per cent. That is not to say that we should not in some way properly consider and properly manage vegetation which has a high value and is a remnant asset and a remnant long-term benefit to this state. There is no argument about that. Our legislation considered that just the same as the previous government's legislation.

If you listened to this government you would be of the view that every single tree in this state was being knocked over. We are talking about .15 per cent of the land mass, or 1/700th of the land mass of Queensland. Let us have some facts around this. Then as part of this extended period for the committee to be able to look at this, as has been now pleaded by the Leader of Opposition Business, there will be an opportunity through that process, if this parliament supports it, to look at how much of that is for urban development which is not captured by this legislation; how much of that is for mining development, which is equally as critical and managed under a different framework; how much of it is for drought fodder? Then we will start to get some facts out.

The reason the government is rushing this is that it does not want a debate on facts: it wants a debate on a motion. If you run into this place and legislate based on a motion then you will legislate at your haste and you will repent at your leisure, because this will make a significant difference for all of the reasons that I have indicated: sovereign risk; the mental and physical health of those people in rural Queensland; our own food security and our ability to drive jobs and opportunities in this state, particularly for the state's most disadvantaged in those Indigenous communities across the northern part of Queensland where there is a growing level of concern around this.

The least that this parliament can do, if we have to put up with this sort of repugnant approach from the members opposite and a Deputy Premier who has not covered herself in glory this week, a Deputy Premier who has been subject to a range of allegations of inappropriate conduct by her own colleagues—

A government member: How is this relevant?

Mr SPRINGBORG: It is relevant because this is a smokescreen to cover up for the incompetence of the Deputy Premier.

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, that is not relevant. You are well and truly straying off the point. I would ask you to come back and be relevant to the matter that we should be debating.

Mr SPRINGBORG: If this parliament has to deal with this personal folly of the Deputy Premier for a range of reasons, the very least that we can do is to give the members of the committee proper and due time to be able to travel this state and listen to the legitimate and very valid concerns of the people throughout this state. That is the only way we are going to hear the voice of those Queenslanders who, by and large, have been ignored. This has been snatched away from the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines, who should have been responsible for this, because he was not extreme enough.

Instead of having balance, they put this front and centre behind the extreme green movement in Queensland to drive and motivate what is going to be a terrible legislative instrument that will have a major long-term impact on the viability, productivity, job security, job creation opportunities and sovereign risk in this state. It is offensive legislation, and the least you can do in that circumstance is provide this parliament with a reasonable amount of time, through its committee process, to properly consider it.

Mr SPEAKER: I remind members that, as a result of the amendment moved by the member for Mermaid Beach, strictly speaking members should be speaking only to the amendment moved by the member for Mermaid Beach—not the bill and not the motion moved by the Deputy Premier. In light of the contribution made by the Leader of the Opposition, I would urge members to take those contributions into account in relation to what they intend to say.

Mr SEENEY: I rise to a point of order. I seek clarification, Mr Speaker. It has been the normal course in this House that both the amendment and the motion are put together, and because the amendment and the motion are put together then members speak on both the amendment and the motion together.


Mr SPEAKER: I have just made a ruling in relation to how I intend to rule on this matter.

Mr SEENEY: My question is: are the two questions going to be put separately?

Mr SPEAKER: What will happen when this debate is concluded is that the amendment will be put and voted on and then the motion will be put. You are aware that that is the procedure.

Mr SEENEY: With respect, Mr Speaker, my question is: will there be a separate debate on the motion?

Mr SPEAKER: There can be if members choose there to be.

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply) (9.39 pm): We have no economy without the protection of our environment. I rise to speak against the amendment and in support of the motion moved by the Deputy Premier. This is a very well-canvassed issue. Perhaps there are few issues debated in this state that have been more canvassed than this one, given the last 16 to 17 years of public debate about tree clearing and vegetation management laws. Stakeholders are very clear about their position. They are very clear about their knowledge of this matter and they are very clear about their vested interests. None of those groups, whether they be on the environment side or on other aspects of this debate, has an absence of a position on this matter.

Let us put to bed well and truly this supposition that we need a lot more time on this matter. People know their positions on this matter. That has been very clear in the public debate and in this House. A one-month time frame is adequate and normal for this to occur. It will give stakeholders adequate opportunity to submit.

The opposition are not actually in favour of more consultation. They opposed this bill at the first reading—the first time in this parliament's history, I understand—so there could be no consultation whatsoever. Now we have this amendment which says, 'We actually want more time.' The contradiction in their position is pretty obvious to anybody watching this debate. What they really want to do is stall, delay, diffuse and confuse. If members had any doubt that the opposition's position on this is to cause maximum confusion, they only had to listen to the contributions of the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Mermaid Beach. They were not really talking in facts; they were talking from an ideological position. They took an ideological position, as opposed to the evidence and science based position the government is putting forward that is reasonable and pro economy.

I can tell members that the 70,000 jobs that rely on the Great Barrier Reef are under threat from attacks on the reef. Sediment run-off is documented. There is an evidence and science base that sediment run-off is one of the greatest threats to the Great Barrier Reef. This government is moving to act on that. We are putting forward sustainable, evidence based policy that is actually pro economy as well as pro environment. Let us not accept this 20th century argument that we have to choose between the economy and the environment. They are one and the same. We want to protect those jobs on the reef and in regional Queensland in a sustainable way. That is what this bill does. The motion does allow for adequate consultation with stakeholders. They will have ample opportunity to let us know their views.

I also oppose the amendment on the basis that this government went to the people with our very clear position on tree clearing—that is, we would reinstate legislation. That is what we said to the people. We have formed government and we are getting on with the job of doing exactly what we said to the people of Queensland we would do. I contrast that to the opposition, who won the 2012 election saying the exact opposite. They tried to fool the people of Queensland that they would not do anything about tree clearing. They said it twice leading into the 2012 election. It is just like uranium. They said they had no plans when it comes to uranium. They fooled the people of Queensland. That is why they are in opposition after only one term in government. They did not have faith in the people of Queensland. They did not share with them their real position on a range of matters including this. They paid the price at the last election, when the people of Queensland caught up with them.

Another very clear and obvious reason this amendment should be voted down and the motion should be passed is that there is a very real risk of panic clearing in our state. That is a real prospect and a real risk in terms of our environment and our economy. Another good reason to not have an elongated consultation process is that we do not want that sort of environmental outcome in our state.

I note the contributions from opposition members on this point. I note that a range of words were not even mentioned—for example, 'emissions'. I do not think I heard the word 'emissions' once from a single opposition speaker. I did not hear much about protecting the Great Barrier Reef. That seems to have been forgotten. I did not hear anything from the opposition about acting on climate change. That is 20th century thinking from the LNP. I invite those opposite to join us in the 21st century. It is a very good place to be.

Vegetation management legislation is not about attacking farmers or siding with any particular groups; it is about driving policy based on science and evidence. That is what a responsible government does. That is what responsible governments do, not just here but also around the world, in response to the evidence around climate change. You can either accept that evidence or not. Clearly the opposition does not accept it.

Mr WATTS: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I have been listening carefully to the minister and I do not believe he is debating the motion before the House. He is debating climate change at the moment.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you very much, member for Toowoomba North. As I indicated when you raised a similar matter earlier, I gave similar latitude to the Leader of the Opposition when he was debating the amendment. I propose to apply the same principles to the minister.

Mr BAILEY: The Palaszczuk government accepts the science that proves that unsustainable rates of tree clearing are damaging Queensland's environment, our climate and ultimately our economy. Historically, Queensland's agricultural industry continued to grow under Labor's tree-clearing laws throughout the 2000s. That is a fact. It was Labor's vegetation management laws that gave flexibility to landholders suffering from drought. When broadscale clearing stopped at the end of 2006, the then

Labor government did not abandon landholders. It was a Labor government that funded the \$150 million landholder assistance package that provided significant financial incentives for landholders to transition their businesses away from reliance on clearing.

More recently, the Statewide Landcover and Trees Study 2012-14 showed that the annual rate of clearing increased from 153,000 hectares before the LNP was elected in 2012 to a new level where almost 300,000 hectares are now being cleared every year. That is an area more than twice the size of Brisbane or 10 times the size of the city of Rockhampton. I saw the opposition trying to downplay the impact. That is a pretty substantial and graphic comparison—every year.

Labor's vegetation management laws have always had a solid foundation based on science. The rest of Australia is envious of our mapping and science that underpins these best practice laws. The Queensland Herbarium developed the regional ecosystem framework to ensure vegetation management policy is based on real-time and accurate ecological mapping and data—evidence. The LNP did not consider any of this science when it weakened the laws when in government. Why should it? The science was never going to support its plan to reintroduce broadscale clearing and degrade reef catchments and contribute to climate change through increased carbon emissions. Even after the LNP's severe job cuts, the good news is that our government's scientists kept plugging away to keep the science and the mapping current. I congratulate them for doing so and for their tenacity. Labor is now committed to reconnecting our laws to this science, ensuring protection of biodiversity, climate and the reef.

It is a fact that Queensland is responsible for 90 per cent of Australia's total land sector emissions. That is an absolutely scary statistic. Any government in Queensland worth its salt would consider that and act on that. That is what the Palaszczuk government is doing here today. In all other jurisdictions in this nation except Western Australia and the Northern Territory this sector acts as a carbon sink, but in Queensland land clearing is releasing more stored carbon into the planet's atmosphere than at any time in the past eight years—almost 36 million tonnes each year. We have a very proud record of acting in this regard. That we got to a record low in 2009—53,000 hectares—was a proud achievement in this state. I might add: it did not obstruct our economic viability whatsoever.

I note that this bill broadens the protection of regrowth vegetation in watercourse areas, known as category R areas, to the Burnett-Mary, Eastern Cape York and Fitzroy catchments, thereby affording vegetation in all six Great Barrier Reef catchments the same protection. We are serious about protecting the Great Barrier Reef. That is what we said to Queenslanders at the election. We had a plan to do so. We took it to the people. We trusted the people with our policy. That is what a courageous political party does: it shares its policy, it develops its good policy, it engages with the people. Contrast that to the shameful record of the LNP when, in 2012, it deceived the people of Queensland by saying that it would not change the tree-clearing laws.

I also support the removal of the reversal of the onus of proof provisions and the mistake of fact defence for vegetation clearing offences, which were put in by the previous government. It would be highly unusual that that clearing would be made by mistake, given the very nature that it is happening in remote areas and on private property.

This policy is responsible, sustainable, science based policy. The only thing that is a fool's paradise in this place is to ignore the science, is to ignore the evidence, is to ignore the threats to the reef, is to ignore the connection of protecting our environment with our economic viability. That is a fool's paradise. It is 20th century thinking compared to the 21st century thinking of this government.

This bill is not about some alleged green credibility or some self-interest; it is about science and evidence. I look forward to the point in the future, whenever that might be—it might be a while—when the LNP members realise finally what good policy is in terms of climate change and they genuinely accept that we have to act on climate change. Clearly, by their position on this bill, they are showing themselves as being archaic opponents of acting on climate change. That is why they are in opposition. I can assure members that the people of Queensland expect governments to act to protect the environment. That is a modern given and any government that ignores that will pay the price, as the previous Newman government did.

The Leader of the Opposition said that this bill is somehow an attack on property rights. We heard the amazing proposition that somehow we are being like China, North Korea and Russia. It is usual for the state to regulate land use. Whether people buy a house, whether they run a business, or whether they purchase a building, the state regulates behaviour in all sorts of ways. People cannot just walk in and do whatever they want. They have to conform with zonings, they have to deal with councils. It is

usual for the government to regulate property and its use. This is usual Western capitalist policy. For the Leader of the Opposition to be comparing us with China, North Korea and Russia is quite bizarre, I would have to say.


Ms Trad: Not emotional at all.

Mr BAILEY: Indeed. I will take that interjection from the Deputy Premier. I am sure former premier Bjelke-Petersen would have been proud to hear that. It took me back to my childhood.

This is solid policy from the government. We are acting in conformity with our mandate. We are acting in response to science and evidence. This is policy that Queenslanders want. It is not an attack on farmers, or the agricultural sector. We will work with that sector. This does not stop tree clearing, but it regulates it in a more sustainable way that will help protect jobs in this state. We will work with the agricultural sector and with farmers on this matter. The proposition that this is somehow an attack is a very self-interested position that is designed to confuse the electorate rather than engage with them fully.

I absolutely oppose the amendment and support the motion. I am proud that this government is acting on vegetation management and tree clearing in this state. It is a core Labor value. Our record is proud on this matter and it continues to be proud. We will continue to put forward good policy that not only protects our environment but also our economy.

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Dalrymple, I have allowed both the Minister for Main Roads and the Leader of the Opposition significant latitude in relation to the debate on the amendment. I am now going to require that members focus their attention on the matter before us, which is the issue of the date for the report back and the reasons for and against the amendment. I call the member for Dalrymple and I do not intend to allow the latitude that we have just had.

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (9.54 pm): This is a bad day and a bad bill. It is disappointing that a motion has been moved in this House to fast-track this bad bill through the committee system. I oppose the motion to fast-track the referral of the bill. I support the amendment to the motion, moved by the opposition, to change the reporting date to 30 June.

This issue has been going on since time began. Vegetation management is a political football that has been bouncing backwards and forwards. Landowners want certainty. They are sick and tired of this political football. The Bligh government was booted out because of two reasons: its asset sales agenda and its attack on landowners. The situation had reached the point where landowners were so sick and tired of the Labor Party's oppression in regard to vegetation management reforms that they stormed the then premier's office in Townsville. They were prepared to be prosecuted because they were sick of the tree police, the water police, the dob-in-a-farmer hotlines, the spy-in-the-sky satellites.

I commend the member for Callide because, back in 2004 when the vegetation management changes were introduced by the Beattie government, for two days he fought that legislation clause by clause. He never gave up on landowners. That is because primary producers are out there to do one thing and that is to produce a product, to put food on the table. When we go to our restaurants, we are eating that food, we are eating that good beef, we are eating that good vegetable.

These are Queensland's own producers, but they have been attacked by their own government. What is their crime? To be able to support Queensland, to produce a product. We know that we have a \$14 billion primary industry that led us through the global economic crisis. But it is very difficult for landowners when they have all of these restrictions, all of these regulations—all of these dob-in-a-farmer hotlines and the spy-in-the-sky satellites.


I commend the LNP in regard to reversing the onus of proof to ensure that people could clear for primary agricultural land. I absolutely commend the LNP for that. This bill has been introduced because of politics. Land management is about sowing the good seed, producing the good crops and producing the good food on the table. When we see those trees cleared, there is the comment, 'Look at what the bulldozers have done. Look at how they've left it. We are seeing the ozone layer depleted and global warming and everything that goes with that.' But those images do not show the sorghum, they do not show the rhodes grass, they do not show the cattle that have been fattened and they do not show the benefits that we are receiving throughout Queensland.

This is bad legislation that has been brought to the House. We are in the Legislative Assembly to ensure that we stop bad legislation. Cape York Peninsula is crying out for development. Ninety-nine per cent is remnant—

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Dalrymple, I urge you to make your comments relevant to the amendment before the House, please.

Mr KNUTH: This bill has been fast-tracked. I am speaking passionately in support of the LNP's amendment to the motion to stop the bill from being fast-tracked because of all of those significant reasons that I have mentioned. I know that every grazier in Queensland is watching us right now hoping that they have somebody to stand up for them.

I am sick and tired of seeing governments working against businesspeople and our producers. I totally agree that we need a process, but at the same time what we are seeing here is very bad legislation that is being fast-tracked. I support the motion that has been moved by the Leader of Opposition Business. I want to see this bill vehemently opposed by whatever means necessary because this is bad medicine for the state.

 **Hon. KJ JONES** (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism and Major Events) (10.00 pm): It is my great privilege to stand and talk in support of this bill and indeed this motion about the timing. I take your guidance, Mr Speaker, and will keep my remarks to that. It is unbelievable for those opposite to walk into this parliament tonight and say that somehow stakeholders did not know this was coming. The member for Hinchinbrook himself said this has been in and out of the parliament now for a decade and a half. That is exactly right. This has been in and out of the parliament for a decade and a half. To quote one of the greatest politicians in Australian history, it has been l-a-w in Queensland now for 15 years. It is called a reinstatement bill because we are reinstating a bill that has been law in Queensland for a very long time.

Mr Cripps: It goes further.

Ms JONES: I take that interjection from the member for Hinchinbrook. Standing up for the Great Barrier Reef and ensuring that we get a good outcome in regards to our future are the fundamentals of this bill.

Mr Cripps interjected.

Ms JONES: I take that interjection. We never had landholder assessments in the previous bill. That is a concession we are talking about in this bill. I say to the member for Hinchinbrook that this was an election commitment of a Palaszczuk Labor government so it should come as no surprise to anyone that we are now implementing our election commitment. Last time I checked that is what governments were meant to do. What we saw under the previous government was someone who said that Public Service jobs would be safe, that they had nothing to worry about and then they sacked people. This is very different in the sense that we are implementing policy that has been longstanding law in Queensland.

Mr STEVENS: I rise to a point of order.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Mermaid Beach, I think I know what you are going say. Minister, I would urge you to make your comments relevant to the amendment, which is the proposed 30 June date.

Ms JONES: I will make my comments relevant by saying that we are implementing reform that we went to the election with some 13 months ago that has been long-held Labor policy. As the member Hinchinbrook admitted in his own address to this parliament against the law tonight, this has been part of our policy now for, in his own words, a decade and a half.

Mr Cripps interjected.

Ms JONES: That is exactly right. This idea that somehow reintroducing what has been law in Queensland for 15 years is something that needs lots of consideration is a surprise to me. I would like to commend the Minister for Natural Resources. As we have heard from both sides of the House, he has worked extensively with stakeholders about exactly what Labor was going to implement. This idea that somehow there is not enough time to consider this legislation I think is a fallacy. We know what we stand for. The people of Queensland when they went to the ballot box knew exactly what they were voting for when it comes to this legislation. This is something that is core to our values; not green extremists but core to the values of what the Labor Party believes in. Mr Speaker, you have been in this parliament a long time. I have been working here for a very long time. We know that this is fundamental. This myth tonight that somehow this is something that has come straight out of the blue, that none of those opposite knew about it, cannot be believed.

I think that the time frame proposed by the Deputy Premier is an acceptable time frame in terms of the history of this. To be honest, I take credit, as the member for Hinchinbrook said in his address—and I acknowledge that he had a lot of latitude in his address and I sat here respectfully and listened to

him—for expanding this legislation under my watch to reef catchments. As the Minister for Tourism it would be remiss of me not to say that we have a responsibility to protect the Great Barrier Reef and that exactly is what this legislation does.

Ms Bates: You were the minister for the greens back then.

Ms JONES: I take the interjection from the member for Mudgeeraba, I was the minister responsible for ensuring that the children of the future get to see the Great Barrier Reef. That is something I am very proud of.


Ms BATES: I rise to a point of order on relevance. We are not debating the Great Barrier Reef tonight.

Mr SPEAKER: It is a valid point.

Ms JONES: In conclusion, the member for Hinchinbrook, in his address to this parliament tonight as part of this debate—and he spoke for 20 minutes as you would be aware, Mr Speaker—talked about all of the elements of the bill. He had a lot of latitude. I am addressing the comments that he made.

Mr SPEAKER: With respect, I have given both sides a reasonable degree of latitude. I do not intend to continue that. If you can bring it back to the issue that is directly on point, please.

Ms JONES: This idea tonight that 13 months into the Palaszczuk Labor government's administration in this state us implementing an election commitment is somehow a surprise after all the hard work of the natural resources minister to engage with many of the stakeholders is not believable and should be called out for what it is: base politics. I will always stand up for the environment. It is my privilege to stand here tonight supporting this bill.

 **Mr SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (10.06 pm): I rise with a heavy heart to make a contribution to the debate in the parliament tonight. I have to confess that I feel sick to the bottom of my stomach because I have seen this type of legislation introduced into this parliament now for 15 years and every time that it is introduced into this parliament it creates an emotional backlash from a significant part of the population of Queensland. It does that because it has a significant effect on a major part of the population of Queensland. The motion that we are debating tonight is about how long this parliament is going to give those people who are going to be affected, those Queenslanders who tonight will feel as I do—sick to the bottom of my stomach—the opportunity to communicate the effect on them to these people over here who are making the laws without any knowledge, any understanding or even any care for how those people are going to be affected.

This vegetation management legislation was introduced in this parliament first in 1999 and there has been amendment after amendment after amendment. Every time it has been amended there has been a reaction from the community that is affected.

Ms Trad: It's called panic clearing.

Mr SPEAKER: You have the call, member for Callide. If you have finished your contribution you are entitled to resume your seat.

Mr SEENEY: I am not finished, Mr Speaker. I am not finished at all because this is a very significant issue and it does not deserve the sort of belittling, the sort of nonsense comments that we just heard from the Deputy Premier. It does not deserve that sort of attitude. It does not deserve that sort of flippancy, yet that is what has happened. Every time this has been amended it has been amended because of the Green preference deals that have been done by the Deputy Premier and her political comrades. Every election, as the member for Hinchinbrook said, that Labor has won we come in here and the Labor government pays the piper. They amend this legislation to pay off the preference deal that was important to them for that particular election campaign.

The legislation before the House tonight is exactly that: it is a political pay-off for the Deputy Premier and no doubt she can be flippant and dismissive as she just was about the legislation before the House, but my constituents cannot. My constituents cannot be dismissive and certainly they will not be flippant when they hear about this.

Ms Jones: You have already jumped ship.

Mr SEENEY: I take the interjection from the member for Ashgrove. I assure the member for Ashgrove that I will not be going anywhere. I will be here to fight this legislation, just as I have fought it since 1999, because, as the member for Dalrymple said, I do not give up on my landholders. Every single landholder in my electorate will be affected.

Ms Jones interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Minister for Education, I urge you to not make irrelevant and provocative interjections, otherwise you will be warned under standing order 253A.

Mr SEENEY: I say to the member for Ashgrove that she was quite wrong in her contribution to this House and that is the very reason why there should be more than four weeks for this parliament to consider the legislation. She was totally wrong. Every landholder in my electorate will be restricted and will suffer a loss of property rights that they have never suffered before, because this legislation goes further than anything that previous Labor governments have introduced into this House, specifically with the extension of the category R restrictions to the Fitzroy and Burnett catchments. It is easy for those people to write those two catchments into the legislation without realising the extent of that. It means that every landholder in my electorate, most of the electorate of the member for Nanango, a fair part of the electorate of the member for Gregory, a big chunk of the electorate of the member for Mirani and a whole range of others—

Mr Perrett: And Gympie, the Mary Valley, the Mary River.

Mr SEENEY: And the Mary River, I thank the member for Gympie. Every landholder will be subject to restrictions on what is termed, in the quick reading that I have had, 'watercourses and drainage lines'. That is a profound effect on thousands of landholders.

Mr Cripps: For the first time.

Mr SEENEY: For the first time. It has never been done before in any legislation. I will ask the parliamentary library to do a search, but I reckon we have had 12 or 15 attempts at amending this legislation and this is the first time that those thousands of landholders will be so affected. Therefore, I can assure the member for Ashgrove that I will be here to defend those landholders. I will be here to fight this legislation, just I have fought it since 1999. Irrespective of whether you force it through this House in four weeks or if it takes four months or four years, we will restore some justice to those landholders.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Callide, I intend to issue similar warnings to you as I did to the previous speaker. I urge you to make your comments relevant to the amendment before the House.

Mr SEENEY: Absolutely. The amendment before the House seeks to provide a longer period for those people who are injuriously affected by legislation to, first of all, understand what that effect is—because on my first reading of the legislation I cannot understand what it means—and then to be able to put forward to members of this House as legislators a case about how the legislation affects them. They cannot do that in four weeks. We are talking about thousands of landholders who, for the first time, have to come to grips with this particular restriction. I am only using one example of the restrictions that are placed on category R watercourses and drainage lines. That is just one that I have picked out of the legislation. Those people need a lot longer than four weeks. The members of the committee need a lot longer than four weeks to determine what will be the effects of this legislation and to make a sensible recommendation to the parliament about what we should do when we come to consider the legislation.

By coming in here and suggesting a four-week period for consideration by the committee, the minister is taking the outcome for granted. It is taking the outcome of the committee for granted. It is taking the outcome of this parliament for granted. It is taking the vote of every member in this parliament for granted, because they think that they can storm this legislation through, just as they have done in the previous 12 or 15 iterations in this House.


The other comments that I want to make are in regard to the committee process. I was one of a group of members of this House who set up the committee system. We set up the committees as a mechanism in this parliament to make sure that legislation was properly considered and that complex legislation was not passed in this parliament without the parliament fully understanding the complexity of it. I can tell the House that one of the examples that was used in the discussions of members on that committee was the original vegetation management legislation that was introduced into this place in 1999. Members such as the former member for Rockhampton, Robbie Schwarten, and former leader of the House Judy Spence sat on that committee. They agreed with us that that legislation was a great example of legislation that would have been much better had it been subjected to a committee process that allowed the stakeholders, the people impacted by the legislation, to have full and ample opportunity to advise the legislators of its effects. That is exactly what we are looking for tonight. That is exactly what the amendment that has been moved by the member for Mermaid Beach is calling for. It is calling for the committee to have a full opportunity to hear from the people who will be affected by the legislation.

My point is that that was the very purpose of the committee system. That is the reason it was put in place. That is the reason there was bipartisan agreement from a group of senior members of this parliament who put the committee system in place. It was not meant to be some sort of a rubber-stamp mechanism where legislation could be introduced here, rushed off to the committee, jammed through the committee and brought back here, to give it some sort of legitimacy. That was never the case. The vegetation management legislation was one of the key pieces of legislation that was used as an example and as a template for the research that we did on how legislation should be treated through this House.

This House should give the time. The committee needs the time. The landholders across Queensland need the time. My constituents need the time to be able to, first of all, understand what it means and, secondly, have the opportunity that this parliament set out to give them when we set up the committee system.

This is an emotive piece of legislation. It has been an emotive piece of legislation since it was introduced in 1999. It is emotive every time that an amendment bill is introduced into this House, but it is that way for a reason. It is emotive because of the impacts that it has. It is emotive because of the effects it has. For these people over here, it is not. They sit over in the West End cafes and they theorise about these things, but it is an academic argument for them. However, for the people who are affected, it is their livelihood. This is their life. It is their superannuation. It is their living. It is their business and these people steal away the worth of that business. They steal away the worth of that business every time they amend this legislation. They steal away the property rights. They steal away the capacity of those people to use the asset that they have bought and paid for, so there will be an emotive reaction. A whole range of Queensland landholders feel as I do tonight, and they deserve the chance to avail themselves of the opportunity that this parliament provided for them when we set up the committee system.

To do that, the committee needs time. It needs time to hear from all of those Queensland landholders. It needs time for those people to be able to fully explain the unfair impacts that this legislation will have upon them. To ensure that that happens, this House should support the amendment that has been moved by the member for Mermaid Beach.

 **Mr FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (10.19 pm): I rise this evening to oppose the amendment moved by the Leader of Opposition Business and support the Deputy Premier's motion. I will put forward arguments as to why we should support the motion moved by the Deputy Premier.

I have listened to the arguments that have been presented by speakers on both sides of the chamber tonight with regard to whether this matter should be considered imminently or whether the committee should be given until 30 June to consider the matter. I was pleased to hear the contribution of the member for Callide where he indicated the process that was set up for hearing matters before this chamber. It is only proper that there be thorough examination of legislation before this chamber because we are a unicameral parliament. We do not have an upper house to consider legislation.

Notwithstanding that, there have been times in this parliament and in the parliament before when legislation has needed to be presented to the House and expediently put through as an urgent matter. I recall early last year the former attorney-general put forward a bill which, from memory, failed to endorse magistrates and failed to endorse senior court judges. This government had to rush legislation through this House to make sure those judges were formally endorsed to ensure that for people who had been convicted of a charge and sentenced the process was done in the proper manner. I use that as an example of many cases where urgent matters, such as that particular bill, have to be considered by this chamber.

I always impartially present the case for either side. Last year there was a bill presented by the opposition dealing with the issue of additional seats in this House that we considered. It was followed very shortly thereafter by a bill introduced by the member for Mount Isa. The committee had heard the evidence in relation to the non-government's bill not long before the member for Mount Isa's bill was presented. On that occasion, the committee agreed that it did not warrant the waste of time or processes to go out and hear further evidence on a bill that was similar, if not identical, to the one that had been presented earlier. The committee structure that has been set up should not waste the time of taxpayers or the chamber when other urgent matters are up for consideration.

The other argument I would like to present is around the issue of climate change. The issue has been around for some time. It was around when I entered the Senate in 2008. It was debated in 2009. I was fortunate at that stage—

Mr SPEAKER: Member, I would urge you to come back to the matter before the House which is the time frame.

Mr FURNER: I am getting to the point, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: I will allow you some latitude.

Mr FURNER: I am getting to the point about urgency and why we need to consider the motion we have discussed tonight—


Mr WATTS: I rise to a point of order, Mr Speaker. The member keeps referencing a matter of urgency. This has not been moved as an urgent matter.

Mr SPEAKER: That is acknowledged.

Mr FURNER: At no time did I claim that this was an urgent matter. I was referring to urgent issues. Just recently it has been indicated by the World Meteorological Organisation that for the first time on record the temperature in 2015 was one degree Celsius above the pre-industrial era, according to their analysis. We are at a point in history where the issue is imminent. We are at a point where we need to act on the matters before us, whether it be in respect of managing vegetation or managing climate change. We as a parliament have a responsibility to act on behalf of Queenslanders in respect of this matter.

I think there are considerable reasonable arguments to present to this chamber as to why a short period for the committee to consider the legislation is acceptable. I do not believe it is a short period. I believe a month is adequate for the committee to consider evidence that is presented to it, whether that be through submissions or otherwise. There have been many occasions where bills have been presented to the House on the basis of submissions only and without going out. I am not suggesting for one moment that that would be the case for this particular bill.

I believe one month is adequate enough time to get out there and talk to stakeholders in this state based on the submissions and make informed decisions on the introduction and provisions of this particular bill. On that basis, I urge those opposite to give consideration to proceeding forthwith on the basis of the motion moved by the Deputy Premier.

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (10.26 pm): I rise to support the amendment moved by the member for Mermaid Beach. The basis of my contribution will be timing and fairness. Fairness is a very important word to apply in this debate. Stakeholders and people with a connection to the land should have a primary say because they are the ones most affected by this legislation.

It is going to be very difficult for me to get around 570,000 square kilometres to try to engage with people and let them know that this is an issue that will affect them in the future and encourage them if they are motivated enough to make a contribution. I am going to have to get across the issue and explain it to them. That is a ridiculous amount of time to achieve that in an area like mine. I am sure it would be a very similar situation for other rural MPs in this House.

It is important to make the point in this context that it is perhaps a lot easier for someone who resides in an urban area like Brisbane to quickly have a glance at the science and some photographs and say, 'That is great. That makes me feel warm and fuzzy.' They can form an opinion on that.

In the areas most affected by this there are not many votes. Typically, they are not as in touch with the day-to-day operations of parliament or other matters. Timing becomes a vital point in this whole debate. I think that is an important aspect when it comes to fairness.

If I were dragged into a debate on a tree-clearing policy that affected Paddington residents in Brisbane, I would require a lot more time to consider the issue because I would not understand a lot of the issues that a person in the city would find important. It would take me a long time to get across those issues. Someone in Paddington who is going to make a decision that will have a big impact on my electorate should have adequate time to properly educate themselves and understand the impact their decision will have on an area like mine. It can be big and long term. Putting this legislation through in a short time does not pass the fairness test.

I would like to focus a little on the north obviously by virtue of the fact that that is the area I represent. It represents an area of a lot of development. A lot of these people are not really tuned into tree clearing as much as they otherwise would be, because most of that area is not touched. If we completely deregulated tree clearing, we would at best see some pin prick spots on the map of these gigantic pastoral holdings. Not much would happen. We have to put some context around that. These people again will be affected in the future but are perhaps not aware of the gravity of the impacts that are looming in this proposed bill.


Something I find a bit offensive is the comment that a lot of people who would oppose such moves on vegetation management are not as tuned in or do not care for the environment, climate and other issues as someone who resides in an urban area who is perhaps more academic or across more of the science of these things. That is really offensive. By virtue of the fact that these people live out there, they love the land. You do not live in Croydon to have a holiday. You live up there because you love living on the land and observing the animals and nature. That is part of the reason you live up there. You are not going to go and bulldoze the bejesus out of everything if you think that is going to have a detrimental effect. Arguably those people care more for that land than someone in Brisbane. Yet, if we did a poll, there would be more people in Brisbane who would support a move like this against people out there. Those people need to have a say in what is going to happen here, but that is going to be impossible to achieve in this time frame.

The point was made that we seem to be so quick to allow other forms of development like mining or whatever else that is an income-producing commercial activity but we do not apply the same measures to these areas. I also make that point.

The final point I would like to make again highlights the complexity of what we are talking about here and how you have to spend not a few days but a good part of your life in these areas and observing them. I grew up in Charters Towers and there is a place called Burdekin Downs, which one of the Knuth family now owns. I once asked my dad why they call it downs country because downs country is open country. Why do they call it Burdekin Downs because it is heavily forested country? That is what it was—it was open downs 100 years ago; now it is heavily forested country. Someone driving past now would say, 'Don't clear that,' but it always was cleared.

The open Mitchell grass plains now has seven million hectares of prickly acacia on it which is tree canopy cover. It is vegetation—seven million hectares. None of that was there in the fifties. It was all introduced in the fifties and sixties. There is so much misinformation. It is very difficult to get a grasp of this unless you are living amongst it. A lot of the people living amongst it are not going to get the chance to properly engage or prosecute the case or stand up for their rights because of this time period.

This does not pass the fairness test. I would not like to impose this on people in Brisbane, if we were talking about tree-clearing policy in Paddington. Nor should they impose this on someone living out in remote areas who will not get the same opportunity. That is not fair and it is not good government.

 **Ms FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (10.32 pm): I am opposing the amendment moved by the Leader of Opposition Business and supporting the motion moved by the Deputy Premier. I have the greatest respect for many members on the other side of the House in terms of the way they look after their constituents, but I am afraid I cannot cop some of those members who were here in senior positions in the last government lecturing this side of the House on consultation and on giving sufficient time for legislation to be passed through this House.

For us to be lectured by the member for Callide, who was a senior member of the Campbell Newman government, taking the high moral ground about his being through the committee review system and coming up with this wonderful process and everything was going to be consulted upon, when he allowed legislation to be rammed through, sometimes overnight, without any consultation—I did not hear of any defence of the people for whom those particular pieces of legislation were going to have a significant impact. I will not sit here and be lectured to by someone like the member for Callide on what is appropriate and what his high moral ground is on shepherding things through the legislative process.

Mr Speaker, I do want to make several points about this issue. I am cognisant of your advice and your ruling about this. I hope I am going to stick exactly to your request here. I want to say a couple of things. The first is that there has been significant consultation already on Labor's policy on tree clearing. That is what it is: it is about tree clearing. The Labor Party went to the election with a clear commitment on tree clearing. We have had legislation in place for at least the last 10 years. There has been significant consultation by the departments since last year.

We have had a consultative approach to identify appropriate options for reregulating high-value regrowth vegetation on freehold and Indigenous land, as well as on options to address clearing for high-value agriculture and irrigated high-value agriculture. In the third quarter of 2015, DNRM engaged Dr Allan Dale of James Cook University to liaise with key stakeholders on a package of policy proposals that would contribute to the government's commitments. In July 2015, the Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines approved Cardno Chenoweth to undertake a comprehensive independent review of the self-assessable vegetation-clearing codes, which in part considered whether the codes are achieving the required environmental outcomes.

In relation to the review of the self-assessable codes, the findings of the Cardno Chenoweth report were presented to key stakeholders. Stakeholders included AgForce, WWF, QFF, Timber Queensland, Private Forestry Services Queensland, the Wilderness Society, Queensland Regional Groups' Collective and the Environmental Defenders Office. Nine stakeholder submissions were received as part of the review of the self-assessable codes.


On 28 December 2015, the Deputy Premier released the 2012-14 SLATS report and announced that legislation would be introduced in the first quarter of 2016 to reinstate a responsible vegetation management framework for Queensland. Since this time, the Deputy Premier has engaged in extensive consultation with stakeholders, ministers and government agencies. The Deputy Premier has met and spoken with the president and CEO of AgForce multiple times, as well as representatives of WWF and the Wilderness Society, and has also met and consulted with the Queensland Herbarium and representatives of a group of concerned Queensland scientists led by Associate Professor Martine Maron. On 10 March 2016, both AgForce and the conservation sector were briefed on the proposed draft legislative amendments. There has been significant consultation to date.

We cannot afford to wait too much longer to deal with the effects that tree clearing has on Queensland as a whole. The Queensland government modelling released on 9 March 2015 shows that without action our total emissions will continue to significantly increase—an increase of 35 per cent. Over the preceding eight years under Labor leadership, Queensland emissions were declining while the economy continued to grow. The LNP effectively left us with a plan for more and more carbon pollution when they systematically dismantled the forward-looking climate policies of successive governments which was reckless and irresponsible. Land clearing contributes substantially to Queensland's emissions. Under the LNP land-clearing rates skyrocketed, doubling to nearly 300,000 hectares per year in the two years.

Mr SPEAKER: Member, I urge you to make your comments relevant to the amendment.

Ms FARMER: Thank you, Mr Speaker; I will. My consideration here is that we just cannot afford to wait any longer. While I respect the views of the member for Mount Isa, who genuinely wants to consult, and many other members who I am sure genuinely want to consult, I will not have anyone in this House saying that the concerns of the people in the Bulimba electorate are somehow less important than the concerns of the people in some other electorate—that somehow because you drink coffee you do not have the same concerns. I went to the election saying to the people in my electorate that I would fight for the Great Barrier Reef and I would fight against climate change. The people in the Bulimba electorate do not need their concerns minimised by being characterised as coffee drinkers similar to coffee drinkers in West End. I guess the equivalent in my electorate would be coffee drinkers of Oxford Street.

The people in the Bulimba electorate want to know that this government is addressing their concerns over saving the Great Barrier Reef and addressing the urgent issue of climate change. That is why I support the motion of the Deputy Premier and I oppose the amendment of the Leader of Opposition Business.

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (10.40 pm): I will not take up the time of the House in trying to prosecute the bill tonight, but I do want to talk about the proposed report date. I look to my fellow committee members across the chamber—the members of the Agriculture and Environment Committee—who are now being asked to report in four weeks on this bill. How is it really proposed that we can deal with this legislation? These outrageous time frames are unacceptable. I say to those members who are not looking me in the eye because they do not want to look me in the eye: we have already pushed back the Racing Integrity Bill by two weeks because we could not cope with that, and now we are talking about a four-week time frame for this bill which includes Easter and the school holidays.

I say to the members for Whitsunday, Gladstone and Ipswich West: are we going to have Easter at your place in order to deal with this legislation in four weeks, because that is what this means? We are already meeting tomorrow about legislation that has been made urgent—the environment protection legislation that we need to deal with for the Townsville refinery. It is very important legislation, and we are supportive of the concepts the Minister for Environment has introduced. But four weeks? This is important legislation which goes to the heart of a lot of fundamental, ideological views and we need to give our committees, constituents and the people of Queensland an opportunity to investigate the true ramifications of it. I ask the House to consider that.

I will not support this time frame over the Easter break and school holidays. I agree with you, Mr Speaker, that the legislation needs adequate review, and I agree with your sensible comments on appropriate review. If members think we will get an appropriate review with this time frame, they need

to think again because we need time to consider this. I do not understand why after 14 months of the government's legislative agenda—and this is clearly an election commitment; it has to be acknowledged—we have a four-week time frame. This is not a secret. I acknowledge that the government has been talking about this for a long time, but we need those who are dealing with legislation on vegetation management to acknowledge that it has already stalled the vegetation management process in Queensland. The courts are already stalled under the SARA process that the Labor government has already introduced. There are many examples where lawyers are now having to prosecute cases in the courts where legislation has stalled. There is clearly no urgency to this motion. The government already has the framework and the departments under its control. It has its agenda for Queensland so the urgency is not substantiated.

What some opposite do not realise is the current framework and legislation allows clearing to happen for irrigated and high-value agriculture. This process needs a permit and this process is very rigorous. There is no urgency, as the member for Bulimba, Ms Farmer, has alluded. These processes are already in place. There is no urgency for this motion to be passed. We must look at 30 June as a realistic time frame for the committee to deliver on this issue. If we are going to bring these stakeholders together, can anyone in their wildest dreams believe that four weeks will be enough time to consider this legislation?

Land suitability has to be demonstrated under the current legislation, regardless of what the government has introduced. The DNRM has soil mapping processes, and land suitability studies have to be carried out in accordance with the guidelines for agricultural land evaluation and associated land evaluation frameworks. This is very intensive and specialist. It is very complicated. We must have the time to review this. Only suitable land can be applied to be cleared. Every region is different. We cannot have a one case fits all. Some of us live on the coast; some of us live in the west.

In my region the areas are relatively small, ranging from two hectares, under the current legislation, and for smaller businesses it is worthwhile to clear in order to expand their businesses. This should not be discouraged. These farmers are providing food and fibre for the region, and any changes to that would be retrospective. The media and populist politics will focus on the broadscale clearing that has happened predominantly out west and up north which has been clearing vegetation for grazing and fodder because of the drought.

Members of our committee who travelled to centres with me to look at the DRAS will remember that cows were knocking down fodder in the mulga country to feed their stock. I ask them to take a minute to remember the stories we heard about cows knocking down trees themselves. We have worked really well as a committee, and I acknowledge the bipartisan way we have worked over the last 14 months. We have had some good results as a committee and I appreciate their work, but please do not disregard the work we did when we travelled out west and looked at the effects of drought. Please do not let the emotion creep into the issues of drought and the way the mulga has to be used, and has been used, to feed animal welfare issues of stock in the west. This is not about wholesale broadscale clearing. The Minister for Environment loves statistics, but there are also contrary statistics that can be put up such as those of Dr Burrows, who has been mentioned in the debate.


I want to make sure that the people who will be voting on this time frame understand that the application process has significantly tightened under the current VMA. There are technically suitable staff in the department who are assessing this. It is not wholesale clearing, as has been presented tonight. I acknowledge those departments which have worked under the new VMA which have strived to ensure that we have good outcomes for Queensland.

Land clearing has been shown to only occur on a broadscale level. This is certainly not the case in South-East Queensland or my bioregion. It is smaller operators trying to improve their business and expand on suitable land. These landowners are not environmental vandals, as has been presented tonight, and I take offence on their behalf. I look forward to the agriculture minister in Bundaberg and those members of our committee who have regional seats looking their constituents in the eye and explaining why they feel that they are environmental vandals. It is not fair and it is not just.

It is interesting to see that the Palaszczuk government is supporting the Northern Australia infrastructure legislation.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Burnett, I urge you to come back to the matter we are debating, which is the time frame.

Mr BENNETT: In closing, I ask that those opposite, particularly the members of my committee, think about how we are going to deal with this very important issue. A four-week time frame is completely untenable and completely disrespectful to the people who will be affected by this. I urge members to consider the 30 June amendment that has been proposed.

 **Hon. AJ LYNHAM** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (10.47 pm): I rise to oppose the amendment moved by the Leader of Opposition Business that the Agriculture and Environment Committee report back to the House by 30 June and support the Deputy Premier's motion. I listened with interest to the member for Callide, the member for Mount Isa and the member for Burnett, and I get it. I really do. I understand where they are coming from. I know what they are talking about. On our property we freeholded a large portion of our place. We lost a large section of the river which we had to give up in freeholding, but we learnt to live with it. We fenced the river, and it was much better off. At the time we were aghast, but when it becomes normal—when it becomes an advantage, when you see what you can get from this—it does make a difference. But I get it. I really get it.

To speak specifically to the amendment, the people of Queensland do need some certainty on this issue. They need certainty regarding vegetation management. The landholders of Queensland are looking for certainty. Farmers are looking for certainty. The uncertainty of prolonging the consultation time is not what they are after.

We are having the debate tonight about how long we should talk about this, but the whole problem is that the certainty was taken away in the 2012 election by those opposite when promises were made and promises simply were not kept. I want to go straight to the issue of consultation, because I am probably the person here who can explain the consultation process. Mr Speaker, you summarised it beautifully in your opening statement as to why you were supporting or not supporting with the relationship we have with the various parties.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Callide, your interjection is not being taken. I would urge you to be more respectful with your interjections.

Dr LYNHAM: We had high ideals of a vegetation round table where we would all talk and work out a plan that would enable everyone to progress forward. Unfortunately, as you described, Mr Speaker, that was not possible, but the shadow minister said there was no consultation after that. He alluded to the fact that there was no consultation after that. That is false. There was a large and extensive amount of consultation with the agricultural sector, the rural sector and the representative bodies through me and also through Professor Allan Dale. There was extensive consultation. That is why the deadline in April is achievable through the committee process. The consultation process was absolutely thorough. The opposition's consultation process in 2012 was abysmal. The conservation sector never made it through the then minister's door. We had a consultation process that was extensive. The conservation groups at the time rallied strongly against me about the delay. That delay was by me so that I and my department and Professor Allan Dale could consult extensively with the rural sector and we did. The rural sector knows exactly what is in this bill.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Callide, you have had an opportunity to make a contribution. Member for Nanango, I think you are the next speaker on the list.

Dr LYNHAM: We have to act now on climate change. We have to act now on the vegetation clearing. The people on the land understand climate change. They understand the high temperatures, the drought and the uncertainty of weather patterns into the future. The price of delaying this or even ignoring this, as they say over there, will inevitably lead to impacts on the Great Barrier Reef. We have to act now.

Mr STEVENS: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. In terms of relevance, the minister has strayed right off the topic again and back to the bill. Can you please ask the member to return to the timing of the report back date?

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, I urge you to make your comments relevant to the amendment.

Dr LYNHAM: In finishing, can I say that the amendment proposed by the Leader of Opposition Business in the House delays our election commitment to deliver a responsible vegetation management framework. The bill is not a complex bill; it is not a long bill. The consultation period allocated in April is quite adequate considering the consultation that has gone before. I have full confidence in the ability of all members of the Agriculture and Environment Committee to seek submissions, hold hearings and report back by the designated date to allow the House to consider this in detail. For those reasons, I oppose the amendment moved.



Mrs FRECKLINGTON (Nanango—LNP) (10.53 pm): I rise to speak against the government motion by supporting the amendment moved by the Leader of Opposition Business in the House. A couple of weeks ago the *Queensland Country Life* had on its front page the words 'a kick in the guts' and that is exactly what this government is doing to us again. I am talking about the kick in the guts—

Mr SPEAKER: Member, they may be words that the *Queensland Country Life* want to use, but they are certainly not appropriate words in the chamber. I urge you to withdraw those words in relation to 'kick in the guts'.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I withdraw. What we are talking about here tonight is exactly how the *Queensland Country Life* put it a couple of weeks ago. When I have to sit here and listen to the Minister for Natural Resources tell my constituents that this is not complex, I take offence to that. This is complex; it is extraordinarily complex. More than that, the Minister for Natural Resources told this House that farmers knew this was coming. I have never seen this before. This bill has first of all come into the House presented by the Deputy Premier after she took it off the Minister for Natural Resources. Like the member for Callide said, there is more in this bill that is proposed by the Deputy Premier than ever has been proposed before. We need time to look at this bill and consult with people through the committee process if that is the way it is to go.

I heard the deputy chair of the relevant committee, the member for Burnett, talk about what they are going to do for Easter. Whilst I really do feel for the committee members, honestly they are the least of our concerns. Our concerns reside with the long list of people and the long list of landholders who have not been consulted. The member for Bulimba read out a list of people who had been consulted. I did not hear one landholder's name; I did not hear one farmer's name. The closest to that we heard was AgForce. I can tell the House right now that a lot of my constituents are members of AgForce and they have never seen this and they have certainly not seen the explanatory notes that I am holding in my hand right now.

Those people need time. They need the time to get to Brisbane and front the committee—unless this committee is going to spend months upon months travelling the state and actually getting out there and talking to the people that this affects. I would like the committee to go right out west and see how it is out there. I would like them to travel all the way through Queensland. I expect that my constituents and the member for Callide's constituents—as well as the constituents of the members for Mount Isa, Gregory, Warrego, Burnett and everywhere throughout Queensland—will want to have a say. This is a very emotive issue, like it has been said many times.

I have taken offence to a lot of things that have been said in this House tonight. One of the things I probably have taken the biggest offence to is the fact that the member for Ashgrove compared landholders to criminal motorcycle gangs in relation to the urgency motion that we are debating here tonight.

Ms Trad interjected.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I will take that interjection from the Deputy Premier. I am more than happy to take that interjection because it was not only the member for Ashgrove who said that; the member for South Brisbane also compared this legislation to the VLAD laws.

Ms TRAD: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member is misleading the parliament. I did not, and I find those remarks offensive and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I withdraw. On numerous occasions, I heard members opposite refer to the urgency motion and relate it to the VLAD laws. I put it to you, Mr Speaker, and to this House that what we are debating here tonight is extraordinarily different to the VLAD laws. We are talking about constituents all the way through the state who need the opportunity to consult on this. It is absolutely incredible to me that the Minister for Natural Resources obviously has not spoken to the Deputy Premier lately or the Deputy Premier has not spoken to the minister because he rabbitied on about the amount of consultation that he supposedly had—yet the Deputy Premier's own green states, 'Limited consultation was undertaken in the development' of this bill.

It cannot get any clearer than that. We hear that people have been waiting since the election to have this done. The constituents out there have been waiting to work out when the hammer is going to fall on their businesses. What are they going to say to their bank manager? What are they saying to the next generation when they are trying to work out whether to pass on the family farm? Who knows when we have a Labor government that does not care about the rural and regional areas? They are not giving people out there time. They are certainly not allowing the parliamentary process to take place.

I cannot wait to hear what the Minister for Agriculture is going to talk about if she does contribute to the debate on this urgency motion. In relation to the agricultural community of Queensland, I can tell honourable members that from the minute that the Deputy Premier stood up my phone has been running hot. The agricultural community of Queensland—

Ms Grace: Show us.


Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I would be happy to. The agricultural community of Queensland are completely mortified. They are not surprised by this Premier and Deputy Premier because that is what they expected on the election night.

Mr SPEAKER: I urge the member for Nanango to make her comments relevant to the amendment before the House.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I would also like to take slight offence at the comments of the member for Ferny Grove when he called this process a waste of time for taxpayers. That is what the next four weeks are going to be: it is going to be a waste of time for taxpayers. I am sorry, but I am pretty sure that a lot of the people that his legislation is going to affect are taxpayers of Queensland as well. His shallowness towards these people of Queensland is absolutely incredible.

The last note that I want to pick up on is the distance that people have to travel throughout the state. While we are really pleased to see some of those rains and, in fact, flooding out in Western Queensland, I would put to the House that that would make it even more difficult for some of those people to be a participant in such a short period given that Easter is in between as well.

I certainly support the amendment to the motion that would extend the time the bill is before the committee, but I would like to put on record how adamantly I am opposed to the legislation that was put before this House by the Deputy Premier.

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games) (11.02 pm): I rise to oppose the amendment moved by the Leader of Opposition Business and, in doing so, I take this opportunity to express my support for the Deputy Premier's motion before the House. What we have seen tonight is some pretty extraordinary examples of parliamentary conventions broken. We have seen a first reading of a bill divided upon for the first time since 1860—

Mr Cripps interjected.

Mr HINCHLIFFE:—for the first time not only since people sat in this chamber, but in fact since people sat in the chamber that preceded it down in Queen Street. What we have seen here is the level of desperation to which those opposite want to oppose—

Mr Cripps: The level of conviction.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I take that interjection—the level of conviction that those opposite want to oppose even talking about this bill. The great irony is—

Mr Cripps interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: One moment. Member for Hinchinbrook, those comments are inappropriate. I ask you to withdraw.

Mr CRIPPS: I withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: You are now warned under standing order 253A in relation to your disorderly interjections. If you persist you will be asked to leave the chamber.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: The point I was making is the great contrast, the great inexplicable leap of logic that comes after we see the great level of commitment and conviction from those opposite to oppose even talking about this bill. Now we see an amendment moved to provide more opportunity for even more talk about it. That seems contradictory. I have not heard any of those members opposite speaking in support of the amendment moved by the Leader of Opposition Business and against the Deputy Premier's motion explain that leap of logical faith. I do not get it. If they were so determined that no-one would talk about it at all, why do they think that people want more time to talk about it?

The reasons for the four-week time frame are all about ensuring that we do not see the worst problems when these laws come forward, when these laws are being dealt with, and that is the challenge and difficulty that we might see some level of panic clearing go on. This is the opportunity to make sure that these laws can be dealt with, can be considered by the committee, based upon significant levels of consultation that has gone on as a consequence of the fact that this has been on the lips of everyone not only for the last 12 or so months but, as we have heard from a number of speakers opposite, for more than 12 years—in fact, going back to when tree clearing legislation was first brought into this chamber in 1999.

We heard and have seen these debates over and over again. The issues and the arguments are well known. The proponents on both sides of the account are well placed to put their submissions forward to the committee so that they can deal with them in a timely way to ensure that we do not see the negative aspects of laws like this hanging over the state, the negative aspects where we might see panic clearing occur. That is why we need to ensure that we have a timely process, not an urgent process. We are not seeking to declare this bill urgent and pass it in the middle of the night like those opposite sought to do with any number of bills during the 54th Parliament or indeed—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I am literate; I can read *Hansard*. I can recall and see what happened. I can make observations while I am not in the chamber.

Mrs Frecklington: What?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I heard an interjection suggesting that I was not here; I would not know.


Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members and minister, I ask you to come back to the issue before the House, the amendment we are now debating. I would urge members to not provoke the minister.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: The issue that I was making the point about is that we have seen a process put forward by the Deputy Premier to which the amendment was moved which would amend the timing of four weeks provided for the committee to consider the bill and report back to the House. Four weeks may be less than what we normally see, but there are good reasons for that, as I outlined, such as wanting to protect ourselves against the worst aspects that might occur out there in the state of Queensland with these sorts of bills and the legislation before the House. This is not like the examples we have seen—not even urgent matters, but other matters where the committee process was shortened and truncated in the 54th Parliament and where things came into a committee for a day and then were sent back. Four weeks is not a day; four weeks is an opportunity to look at the matters, to make sure that all the interested stakeholders have a chance to have their input and make a contribution, and for the committee to consider and report back to the House.

Ultimately as these committee processes go all of this comes back to this House, and this House will be the final arbiter and make the final decisions. We will have a chance to debate the details in intricate detail in this chamber when the legislation comes before it with the benefit of that committee report. This is not a case where we are abjectly using parliamentary powers to try and ram this bill through the House. What we are doing is giving fair opportunity for it to be aerated and dealt with by all stakeholders involved without putting at risk Queensland's environment and the Great Barrier Reef through the challenges and difficulties that we might see should the worst come to be and we see broad, widespread panic clearing. This process is the best balance and this is a great example of what this government is all about: getting the balance right, making sure that we properly provide opportunities for the community to have their say while making sure we protect the best policy outcomes as far as we can.

I urge the House to defeat the motion to blow the committee's time for reporting out by some months and to open the door to potential panic clearing. That is not something that would be a good outcome. I urge the House to defeat the amendment and support the Deputy Premier's motion.

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (11.11 pm): I rise to speak about the need for more time for the Agriculture and Environment Committee to consult with landholders, land managers and communities across Queensland in relation to the Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill; however, in the eyes of my electorate this legislation will very quickly become known as the regional community execution legislation.

It is not just landholders who will be coming forward to talk to the committee about this legislation; there will be local chambers of commerce, small businesses, local governments and many others. It is possible that the committee may be swamped with submissions opposing this legislation, and I want to advise the House about why this might be the case. The Productivity Commission did some estimates in relation to the cost of past Queensland government vegetation management restrictions on communities. The commission found that approximately \$180 million has been removed forever from the Murweh shire alone by former Labor government vegetation management restrictions. That is just one local government area in my electorate, and I have six of those which are much larger.

I know that the committee will hear multiple times how wealth has been ripped from communities and confidence is now gone. Communities and landholders are suffering from government fatigue. They have had vegetation fights before during the Goss, Beattie and Bligh governments. They have had to deal with hostile Labor federal governments that shut down the live cattle trade overnight and an unrelenting drought that has resulted in increased debt levels and financial stress.


Mr SPEAKER: I would urge you to make sure your comments are relevant to the amendment before the House. I call the member for Warrego.

Ms LEAHY: Last week I took a phone call from a landholder who is being harassed by departmental officers in relation to his vegetation management. There are other landholders in my electorate who are in this situation. If there is not adequate time and meaningful consultation so that landholders and communities can have their voices heard, I fear for the mental health of some of my constituents. There are already people I know who are at tipping point, and they need time to have their voices heard on this legislation. Some of them need to do that under parliamentary privilege.

It is disappointing that this legislation was introduced into the House late on a Thursday night. It will only increase the suspicion and distrust of the government. I did hear somebody speak tonight about panic clearing. Unfortunately, it is successive Labor governments with their restrictive legislation that have been the greatest causes of panic clearing.

Unlike members on the other side of the House, I have some idea of the time that it takes to travel throughout regional Queensland. To undertake the consultation correctly, the committee will have to travel to many communities in all of the different bioregions of the state and across the whole state. That is not easy; it takes time. Regional Queenslanders will put their case forward to the committee; however, every time they have to prepare submissions and take time to appear at a committee hearing or a meeting, this is time they are not paid for. They do this at their own expense, and this is time that is taken away from their businesses and their families. They are not paid; they do it as volunteers.

We are also approaching a period of public holidays with Easter, where public holidays will cut short the number of days available. That is one of the reasons why there is such a need for more time. Unfortunately, what we are seeing here tonight typifies the lack of understanding of regional Queensland by members opposite. At least give regional Queenslanders the time to have an opportunity to have their voices heard.

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (11.16 pm): I rise in support of the motion by the Leader of Opposition Business. I certainly do not support the legislation that has been introduced today by the Labor government. As many of you would probably know it takes a bit to get me riled up, but I can tell you now that you have managed to get me riled up on this. Not so much on the legislation that you are introducing—I am angry about that—but what I am riled up about is the lack of consultation you are giving regional Queensland with regard to this legislation which you are rushing through in the dead of night. It is unbelievable that the Labor Party would allow just under 20 business days for stakeholders to understand—and stakeholders also include farmers in my electorate and right across regional Queensland—this legislation and the impact of this legislation on Queenslanders.

Labor are back to their old ways to demonise graziers and farmers across the state at the expense of Green votes here in Brisbane. What do we have here? Callous vegetation management laws rushed through in the dead of night. The committee now has until 15 April to report back. We have under 20 business days to understand this legislation. The Labor government has not consulted anyone whatsoever. We heard today that they have consulted the green groups. We have also heard of possible blackmailing tactics by the green groups when it comes to this legislation. The other disappointing thing about this is that it is retrospective from today, yet you are only giving them 20 days to consult stakeholders right across regional Queensland.

What happened to the promise from the Labor government that they would listen and they would consult with Queenslanders? What has happened to that? Labor's consultation process was frozen after just one meeting, and they have no real plan to grow agricultural jobs in regional Queensland. The Queensland parliament should not consider any changes to the vegetation management framework which were introduced by the former minister for natural resources, Andrew Cripps, the member for Hinchinbrook, until the Labor government can demonstrate that it has properly consulted with farmers and landholders as they promised to do on several occasions.

Consultation is something the Labor Party have been on about for the past 12 months. They have said that they are a party that will consult. Tell me how under 20 business days represents consultation with stakeholders across regional Queensland! This legislation will have an impact on graziers and landholders right across this state, even in regional areas represented by Labor members.

They need to be consulted so they understand what has been presented tonight by the Labor Party including reinstating the protection of regrowth on freehold and Indigenous land; the removal of provisions which permit clearing applications for high-value agriculture and irrigated high-value agriculture; and broadening the protection—this was brought up by the member for Hinchinbrook—of regrowth vegetation in areas in the Burnett-Mary, Eastern Cape York and Fitzroy catchment areas.

Mr Rickuss: I do not think they realise how big it is.

Mr MILLAR: I take that interjection. One of the most disturbing things about this legislation, which needs proper consultation, is the reinstatement of compliance provisions for the reverse onus of proof. That is very disturbing to many landholders across regional Queensland.

The government talks about being a government of consultation. I am a bit perplexed. I remember that 12 months ago it promised to fast-track wild dog funding for Western Queensland and we received the money only last month. It took 12 months to fast-track dog funding for Western Queensland but the government is going to consult with regional Queensland landholders and graziers in under 20 business days!

I was hoping that when the government flagged they were going to make changes to vegetation management they would have turned to the Minister for Natural Resources and said to him, 'We need you to consult on this important piece of legislation that the Labor Party want to put through. We really need you to consult on this. Jump in your car or on a Dash 8 and fly out to Emerald, Longreach and Charleville. We want you to consult with graziers and landholders on the ground. We want you to hold round-table meetings with graziers on the ground. We want you to talk to them personally. We want you to talk to the business owners who rely on these landholders and these graziers.'

Mr Costigan: Indigenous people.

Mr MILLAR: I take that interjection: 'We want you to consult with our Indigenous communities, who will rely on the ability to increase their food and fibre production in order to increase opportunities and create incomes for their communities.' This week we have been talking about closing the gap. There is a great opportunity to close the gap in these Indigenous communities when we allow them to increase their food and fibre production. What happened there? Did the Deputy Premier or the Premier say, 'Jump in a vehicle. Jump in your car. Go out to Jundah. Head to Stonehenge. Head to Yaraka. Head to Longreach. Head to Clermont in the brigalow belt where we need to see more opportunities'? What happened there?

Mr Boothman interjected.

Mr MILLAR: I take that interjection. Where is the Minister for Agriculture on this issue? Why is she not standing up and saying, 'Hang on, Deputy Premier. We want to innovate in Queensland. We have Advance Queensland. We want to see innovation. We want to see increases in production'? Where is the Minister for Agriculture saying, 'Hang on. This could stop what we are trying to achieve'? I hope that the Minister for Agriculture comes in here and speaks to this motion tonight. I hope that she speaks about the need to consult more with our landholders and our graziers across many parts of Queensland. Of course, I will get an opportunity to speak about this tomorrow because I am heading off to the AgForce conference in Rockhampton.

Mr Costigan: I wonder what they are going to talk about.

Mr MILLAR: Well, they will be talking about this. Guess who else is heading off to the AgForce conference in Rockhampton? It is the Minister for Agriculture. The Minister for Agriculture will get to meet those landholders we need to consult with right across Queensland. I hope that the Minister for Agriculture does listen to these landholders—to the anger and frustrations they have.

I remember the member for Callide taking up this issue for a very long time with regard to property rights. The issue of vegetation management has been a political football for far too long. The former minister for natural resources and the former deputy premier, the member for Callide, got it right. They gave the opportunity for landholders to make decisions for their land that they knew would be sustainable and also increase production.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Member for Gregory, I ask you to make sure you are staying close to the matter at hand.

Mr MILLAR: Yes, Madam Deputy Speaker. Consultation is something that will be raised tomorrow in Rockhampton. I look forward to the Minister for Agriculture being there. I am sure the Minister for Agriculture will get some great speaking notes on consultation and the time frame and how we need to rush in these laws. We do not need to rush in these laws. We need to give landholders and


graziers from Longreach to Yaraka, down to Quilpie and Windorah, across to Charleville and Roma—right across Western Queensland and up towards Cape York—enough time to understand the legislation the government has introduced and how it will affect them.

We can talk and argue about vegetation management and the legislation the government has introduced, but what we are arguing now is consultation. For the past 12 months the government has said, 'We are a government of consultation. We do not like to rush things. We like to just move things along and include Queenslanders.' We have had review after review. How about we have a little bit more patience and give time and respect to landholders and graziers across Queensland?

Mr Boothman: Look at the taxi review.

Mr MILLAR: Absolutely. We have had review after review. Why can we not hold off on this? Why can we not give some time to landholders? Why can we not show respect by giving them time to understand this? They can look at this legislation and at least have the option to express an opinion on this legislation.

I call on the Deputy Premier and the Labor government to provide more time for consultation on this legislation, which will have a massive impact on the people I represent, the people many of us represent and the people represented by those on the other side of the House. Let us give them the respect they deserve and allow them more time to understand what the government is introducing into parliament tonight.

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (11.27 pm): I rise to speak in support of the motion moved by the Deputy Premier. There is an urgent need for a responsible vegetation framework in Queensland. I oppose the amendment moved by the opposition to extend the committee's reporting date to 30 June. They cannot see the forest for the trees because they cleared them all. There is nothing else there.

The Palaszczuk government is taking a considered approach to implementing sensible laws that balance environmental protection with responsible rural industry practices. I grew up in North Queensland on farms. I have family who live on farms. I love North Queensland. There is this big thing off the coast called the Great Barrier Reef. I will talk about that in a moment. I know that those opposite do not care about that. I refer to the hypocrisy of those on the other side of the House.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! The member is using unparliamentary language. I ask him to withdraw.

Mr HARPER: I withdraw, but I would like to deal—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr HARPER: I would like to move on to the hypocrisy I have heard from those on the other side.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: No. I asked the member to desist from using unparliamentary language.

Mr HARPER: I withdraw. I will talk about consultation. Those on the other side of the House demonstrated during the last term of government that they do not consult. They passed laws in the dead of night in a matter of hours.

Honourable members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I realise that this is a heated debate, but many members of this House either have had or will have an opportunity to speak, so let us just try to allow each speaker to have their say in a reasonable level of silence.

Mr HARPER: The member for Callide said that we are stealing the future of landholders. I say that, if we do not take urgent action, we are stealing the future of all Queenslanders. We need to address this issue. The bill will not destroy agriculture in this state.

Mr WATTS: I rise to a point of order. The member is directly referring to the bill, which we are not debating. We are debating the motion.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: I thank the member for that. There has been some leeway in all the rulings tonight. Everyone is getting a little bit of time to talk about it and then I am ready to ask every single member then to move on.

Mr HARPER: Madam Deputy Speaker, thank you for that latitude. The bill will not destroy agriculture in this state, as those opposite hysterically claim. Under the Beattie and Bligh governments, agriculture flourished.

Tonight, the member for Southern Downs claimed that this bill will tear apart farming communities. Landholders will be able to continue to manage their properties and address significant issues such as controlling non-native plants and declared pests. That practice will not change. In late 2013, a number of changes were made.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: I ask the member for Thuringowa to be sure that he talks about the matter at hand.

Mr HARPER: I believe that there was a major backward step in vegetation in Queensland.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr HARPER: No, of course I was not. Let us not forget that, in 2012, the former member for Ashgrove looked Queenslanders in the eye and promised that he would keep Labor's sensible—

Miss BARTON: I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker himself made a ruling earlier in this debate about the need to be strictly relevant to the amendment that is before the House—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: I thank the member for Broadwater.

Miss BARTON: Madam Deputy Speaker, I am simply seeking to finish putting my point of order, if I may.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: And I will ask the member for Broadwater to show respect for the chair in the way she addresses the chair. You may finish your point.

Miss BARTON: Absolutely. Madam Deputy Speaker, I have absolute respect for the chair. Mr Speaker made a ruling tonight. He was very specific that the debate tonight must be relevant to the amendment as moved by the manager of opposition business. I ask that you ask that the member for Thuringowa follow Mr Speaker's ruling that has been the guideline for the rest of this debate and that the member for Thuringowa be relevant to the amendment as moved by the manager of opposition business.


Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: I thank the member for Broadwater. I have the chair at this point in time. I have shown respect to Mr Speaker's ruling and I will continue to do so and I do not need your advice on how to observe Mr Speaker's ruling. However, I do not want to repeat my warning to the member for Thuringowa to remain speaking to the matter at hand. If he is not able to offer any further points that address the amendment, then he may resume his seat.

Mr HARPER: I would just like to finish by saying that I know this is an emotive issue. There is a sense of urgency to get it right. I believe that the process that we are following is certainly the right track. I will just take out the emotive—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: If the member is going to be speaking to the matter of timing—

Mr HARPER: Yes, I understand that. Those opposite have demonstrated that they have not evolved from the 20th century. There is a sense of urgency in protecting our reef and getting this land clearing vegetation legislation through the House as quickly as possible. Have the members opposite heard of the Kyoto protocol? It is simply unacceptable not to act. It is unacceptable that all of those hundreds of thousands of hectares have been cleared. The bill will not destroy agriculture in this state. Those opposite continue to hysterically claim that it will, but it will not.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I will ask the member to resume his seat.

 **Mr SORENSEN** (Hervey Bay—LNP) (11.35 pm): I support the amendment. I feel like the member for Callide feels. I feel really sick in the stomach with this legislation. I am a member of the committee. The committee is expected to do the huge job of consulting with the many people who are going to be affected by this bill in 20 days. Sugar mills will be affected by this bill. The cattle industry will be affected by this bill.

Ms Trad: They were affected by the sugar reregulation bill. You stood back and did that, Ted.

Mr SORENSEN: Just go away. Be quiet. You have had your say. I refer to an article from *Queensland Country Life*. This is the way these guys consult with people. It states, 'Trad to farmers: I'm still coming to get you.'

Ms TRAD: I rise to a point of order. I did not say that. I find the comments offensive. I ask them to be withdrawn.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): I ask the member to withdraw the comments.

Mr SORENSEN: I withdraw. Is that consultation? No. Is it bullying and thuggery? Yes. The article goes on—

'We're not going to back away,' Ms Trad told Country Hour.

Is that consulting with the people? No. What is it?

An opposition member: It is bullying.

Mr SORENSEN: Yes. The article states further—

‘We’ll keep working through the difficult situation that we have and we will endeavour to get our amendments up on the Vegetation Management Act.’

Is that consultation? No. The article states further—

Ms Trad said that like the recently introduced alcohol fuelled violence laws she would be seeking to again do a deal with the Katter Party.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Could I ask the member to observe the same requirements that we have been asking of all the speakers tonight and to make sure that he is addressing the issue of timing. I am finding it difficult to see how what he is saying is addressing the issue of timing. If he is able to point it out to me, I am happy for him to continue.

Mr SORENSEN: I am talking about the consultation. We need to be able to consult with all of those people right across Queensland. We have 20 days. We have the local government elections, we have Easter, we have school holidays and we have 20 days to do it. We should give these people the opportunity to be able to come to the committee and put their point of view. They should have the right to do that. I feel like a second-class citizen because I come off the land. This is terrible legislation.

The article states further—

The legislation which is being framed to appease extreme green groups including the Wilderness Society ...

To do this in 20 days is just ridiculous. The article states further—

In whatever form the Palaszczuk Government’s anti-farmer amendments are expected to wipe-out self-assessable codes ...

Do the members opposite think that people should be able to talk about that? It is very important.

Imagine not giving the development industry time to put some thought into codes. The Deputy Premier flagged the return of the draconian reverse onus of proof law which means that landowners suspected of a breach of the law are assumed to be guilty until proven innocent. People should have some say in that. I will table that document.

Tabled paper: Article from *Queensland Country Life*, dated 3 March 2016, titled ‘Trad to landholders: I’m still coming to get you’ [397].

There is an article in the *Australian* today titled ‘ALP gives foreign bikies an opening.’

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! I ask the member to keep to the issue of timing. I am not going to warn the member again. Please keep to the issue of timing or you will have to resume your seat.

Mr SORENSEN: On the matter of consultation there is another article that I will table with the caption ‘Farmer bashing: the Labor-aligned Wilderness Society took to the streets to show its support for the Palaszczuk Government’s new vegetation management laws.’

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: If the member has no other points to raise about timing I will ask him to resume his seat.

Mr SORENSEN: I will table that document.

Tabled paper: Article from *Queensland Country Life*, dated 17 March 2016, titled ‘Farmer bashing hits new low’ [398].

The timing of this bill—20 days—is absolutely ridiculous. Some people have to travel for a day even on a plane by the time they get there and back again. Some of these people will have to sit down over the Easter break and over the school holidays. It is ridiculous that we are here at nearly midnight debating this motion. I do not think it is right. I think people should be able to have a say. The old Aussie slang is ‘give everybody a fair go.’ This is not giving people a fair go. It is draconian to make people guilty before they have done anything. It is class warfare.



Mr COSTIGAN (Whitsunday—LNP) (11.42 pm): I too rise to speak in support of the amendment put forward tonight by the Leader of Opposition Business and member for Mermaid Beach. Quite frankly, the whole notion of the Agriculture and Environment Committee doing the rounds in regional and rural Queensland in 19 business days, as has been pointed out by this side of the House in this debate this evening, to examine the bill in question is utterly absurd. As has been noted by the non-government MPs, we have the Easter holidays fast approaching and, just in case the Deputy Premier did not know, it also should be noted that the wet season is far from over. Her own boss noted in this place yesterday morning that we had concerns of a cyclone in the Gulf of Carpentaria. That

throws up all sorts of scenarios in terms of cutting the lines of communication and transport. If this committee is fair dinkum about going out and consulting with impacted stakeholders, heaven forbid if people trying to get there to have their say get cut off, marooned, stuck. That is what this is all about.

The member for Hervey Bay has made a valid point, which is that people in the bush are not going to get a fair go in the window that has been allotted here. That is why the amendment put forward by the Leader of Opposition Business makes all the sense under the sun.

Mr Rickuss: Even trying to organise a trip up there.

Mr COSTIGAN: I take the interjection from my good friend the member for Lockyer. The member for Lockyer served as chair of the parliament's Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee on which I served in the 54th Parliament. I know from my time, albeit I have not been here that long, of some of the trials and tribulations in getting around to those communities. Let us not forget we are talking about 13 bioregions across a big state, and the Palaszczuk Labor government going after even more new country. There are places in the Fitzroy Basin that have been alluded to by my good friend the member for Gregory. I wonder how the constituents of the member for Mirani will greet that. He puts his head down here.

Mr Pearce: They won't be listening to you anyway.

Mr COSTIGAN: I tell the member that they will be listening to me more so than the member for Mirani who is well and truly, with all due respect, past his use-by date. The four-week window has people like the Comerfords, the O'Loughlins, the Pullens, the Michelmores and the Fingers—they will give him the finger, that is what will happen.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): I ask you to withdraw. That is unparliamentary language and I ask you to withdraw.

Mr COSTIGAN: I was a bit carried away there. I thank you for your guidance and I withdraw. It is important that stakeholders have their say. Nineteen business days is a joke. Tonight, the Palaszczuk Labor government has made its intentions quite clear. It wants revenge against our farmers, graziers and our primary producers. To the good people of the bush this is nothing more than a declaration of war. Tonight, some of those regional MPs on that side of the House should reflect on the famous words of Admiral Yamamoto who led the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor: 'I fear all we have done is to awaken a sleeping giant and fill him with a terrible resolve.' Tonight, people are working the phones. We have heard from the shadow minister for agriculture that the phones are running hot with a number of MPs on this side of the House. There are people on the warpath and being mobilised. They are fired up because of this so-called window of 19 business days. That is why I keep coming back to the amendment of the Leader of Opposition Business. It makes sense. There are MPs on that side of the House who probably deep down know it makes good sense, but will they stick up for their electorates? No. They will stick up for their masters here in Brisbane.

The Rockhampton-bound Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and member for Bundaberg—more like the minister for pot plants; the member for Maryborough, who is probably more interested—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is the member intending to address the issue of timing?

Mr COSTIGAN: I am, Madam Speaker, because I wonder whether those members are going to advocate for the committee to come to their part of the world. The member for Maryborough is probably more interested in people getting their gear off than farmers getting their crops off.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Many members may find this amusing but this is the Queensland parliament and I urge all members, regardless of the heated feelings about this issue, to speak in a manner that reflects the respect that people should have in the Queensland parliament. I just urge people to temper their language, please.

Mr COSTIGAN: I appreciate your guidance on these matters. This is an emotive time. We heard from the member for Mount Isa, an electorate of half a million square kilometres. That is bigger than some European nations. I dare say that, to do fair dinkum consultation, one could probably travel around just the electorate of Mount Isa alone without getting around to any other electorates. The tyranny of distance is alive and well. I make the point that members opposite just do not get it.

Mr Seeney: Haven't got a clue.

Mr COSTIGAN: I take the interjection from the member for Callide. Some of them must think North Queensland starts at Burpengary.

The member for Gregory talked about Indigenous people and closing the gap. We hear politicians of all persuasions talking about closing the gap. To me, 21st century reconciliation is about making sure that our First Australians have the opportunity to have jobs. A lot of those jobs come from agriculture, particularly with the push to develop Northern Australia, which I know is dear to many people on this side of the House and is being piloted by our colleagues in Canberra.

Mr Seeney: It won't happen now.

Mr COSTIGAN: Again, I take the interjection from the member for Callide that it will not happen now. It pains me to think that that could well be the case. We want to develop the north. On the cape there are Indigenous communities that need those opportunities, but this will be a torpedo to the agricultural sector. It has been to hell and back. We know what happened with the former Labor federal government and the live cattle trade being wiped out. This four-week window comes into sharp focus, because so many of our primary producers are still gripped by drought. There are all sorts of issues and problems that they are dealing with, such as mental illness, paying bills and keeping the banks at bay.

Mr Hart: They need time.

Mr COSTIGAN: They need time. I take the interjection from the member for Burleigh. It is just not fair. It is un-Australian for this to happen.


An opposition member: They are the heart and soul of our country.

Mr COSTIGAN: They are the heart and soul of our country. They are hardworking, salt-of-the-earth people and they deserve a fair go. To Labor members of parliament from the regional communities, I ask: do you really think this is fair go for people in country towns and rural communities? The member for Mackay is sitting over there. She comes from the sugar capital, across the river from me. I wonder if the member for Mackay will make a contribution to this debate on the amendment put forward by the manager for opposition business.

It is important that our primary producers get a fair go. I assure the farming and rural sector that, for those on this side of the House, this is something that we will die in the trenches for. This is dear to our hearts and we are all in it together. If that mob think they can come in here and ride roughshod over our rural sector, with the greatest respect, they can think again. Tonight, to those people who are looking to Her Majesty's opposition to give it to the Palaszczuk Labor government my message is that we will fight them in the north and we will fight them in the west; we will fight them in the grain fields and the cane fields. On this issue we will fight them in all corners of Queensland, because we shall stand up for our agricultural sector and we shall fight to win. The four-week window that we keep hearing about is an insult to the people of rural and regional Queensland. We know that the radical green movement is in this up to their eyeballs—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I am expecting that the member is about to finish, but do you have any more points to raise about timing?

Mr COSTIGAN: I do. Madam Deputy Speaker, I appreciate your question. There is one key date: Saint Patrick's Day 2016 will go down in history as the day that the red army attacked the bush.

 **Dr McVEIGH** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (11.53 pm): Like others on this side of the House, tonight I rise with a heavy heart. It is a heavy heart given that we have to discuss the bill being proposed by the Labor government. It is a heavy heart because in recent years we on this side of the House have done so much to restore the stocks of agriculture, rural communities and regional communities in Queensland after the damage that has been done to them by former Labor governments. I recognise that this debate is about the motion and, in particular, the amendment put by the Leader of Opposition Business. At the outset I state that I very strongly support that amendment.

I want to talk about milestones. I want to talk about how this debate has developed over some years so that we can put into some context the ridiculously short period for consultation by the Agriculture and Environment Committee proposed by the Deputy Premier. I recognise that those who have made a contribution from the other side have displayed an amazing lack of understanding and empathy, no doubt based on a lack of experience in rural and regional Queensland.

I start my reflection on time frames to put this debate into context by going back some 40-odd years to when I was in my early teens on Plainview farm in the beautiful central Darling Downs, just west of Toowoomba. It is an 800-acre dry-land grain farm. I lived there with my parents and my siblings, not far from the former family farm of the member for Condamine. I can recall at that young age I started

to understand the debates that prevailed around rural Queensland, rural politics and, in particular, the rights of farmers and rural landholders. At that time, we heard commentary from extreme greens and ill-informed commentators from afar who were typically associated with the Labor Party, whether they were from Brisbane or elsewhere in Australia, suggesting that we were not properly looking after our part of the world. I recall the late great Hector Tod, a neighbour of ours, who led the charge in developing strip cropping technologies on the central Darling Downs to combat erosion. Those commentators from afar and the extreme greens were aghast. They were aghast that, on the beautiful central Darling Downs, which I know so well and the member for Condamine knows so well because it sits within his state electorate, we had cleared all those trees.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! I ask the member to move towards the issue of timing, please.

Dr McVEIGH: Certainly, Madam Deputy Speaker. As I said at the outset, I wish to refer to time frames that will put context around the short time for consultation being suggested by the Deputy Premier. In relation to the claim that we had cleared all those trees on the central Darling Downs, I saw that those making the claims, the extreme greens and Labor associated commentators from afar, did not spend enough time researching the facts or consulting with people on the Darling Downs. What they missed was that that part of the world is a natural treeless plain. That is the sort of silly, dumb mistake that can be made when there is insufficient time for consultation and research.

I move on in this reflection on time frames to put the debate into context. As the member for Callide has said earlier this evening, we all know that the Vegetation Management Act was introduced by the Beattie Labor government in 1999. That is 20-odd years ago. As the member for Callide said, we have seen numerous amendments to the act. Eventually, in 2013 the LNP government had the opportunity to make some sense of it all when the changes instituted by the member for Hinchinbrook in his ministerial capacity brought about the restoration of property rights for landholders and, of course, the opportunities for agricultural development that regional Queensland was asking for. When we got to that stage we thought that common sense would prevail. In terms of the time frame that I am outlining to put this timing into context, we have seen that Minister Lynham did not continue the consultation that he had promised would occur under in this government and we have seen the Deputy Premier and the environment minister take over the process.

If I can continue this overview of the time frames behind this debate. On 22 March 2012, as my colleagues on this side of the House would remember and I am sure Labor would like to forget, the *Queensland Country Life* ran a full front-page article. It was two days before the 2012 election. The headline of the *Queensland Country Life* article was 'Two more sleeps'. The by-line was 'After two decades'—to reflect on the time frame in this debate—'of being belted and demonised by Labor a new dawn is finally rising for regional and rural Queensland.' What happened with the incoming government was that there were significant regional planning reforms put in place by the deputy premier at the time, the member for Callide. We established an agricultural committee of cabinet. We re-established a dedicated department of agriculture.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I appreciate that the words 'time lines' are sometimes featuring in what you are saying, but could I ask you to move quickly towards the words of the amendment. That is what we are asking all members to do tonight.

Dr McVEIGH: I will certainly do that. I acknowledge that I have 14 minutes on the clock and I am contrasting this with the 20 working days reflected in the motion. That is what I will focus on, as you have requested, Madam Deputy Speaker. At that time there were a whole range of reforms brought in to suit rural and regional Queensland. The vegetation management amendments brought about by the member for Hinchinbrook were key among those.

In terms of the time frame required for consultation, I would suggest that members of this House do not forget the time lines that I have just outlined—the last 20 or 30 years that I have reflected on very briefly by way of contrast. I would ask the government and the members of the Agriculture and Environment Committee how they will consult—as suggested by the Deputy Premier in what is really only a couple of weeks—for example with not only the landholders who have been talked about here this evening in this debate but also the relevant experts in universities? How will they consult with those universities that I have consulted with myself as the shadow minister for science and innovation in relation to agriculture? Griffith University, James Cook University and the Central Queensland University are so concerned about, amongst other things, the coastal agricultural environments. How will they be consulted in that period?

How is the Institute for Agriculture and the Environment at the University of Southern Queensland going to be consulted in that period? How is the University of Queensland's School of Agriculture and Food Sciences going to be consulted in that period when we have Easter in the middle of it and, of course, we have university holidays as well? They will conveniently ignore all of that expert advice no doubt.

In terms of consultation and the time required for consultation, we know that in the last week or so there has been, for example, a significant meeting of landholders in Mareeba—those in the north who are concerned. Traditional owners were involved in that meeting as well as community leaders. They likened this legislation to the live cattle debacle led by former Labor federal minister Senator Joe Ludwig. That is how they felt. They are concerned about the lack of time they will have for consultation on this bill.


I think it is interesting to reflect for one moment before I wrap up on the contrast that those traditional owners and those landowners have drawn with the live cattle export trade. I would ask the government and the committee whether it is possible to consult with federal commentators—for example, Simon Crean, a former federal agriculture minister and regional development minister? He is now chair of the Australian Livestock Exporters Council. Time has allowed him to understand the failures of his then colleague Senator Joe Ludwig. Time is required for people to understand the implications of this bill—a lot more time than just a couple of weeks.

As the *Queensland Country Life* article said on 22 March 2012, 'A new day was dawning,' and so it did with the incoming LNP government, particularly with the amendments introduced by the then minister for natural resources, my colleague and friend the member for Hinchinbrook. What we will see with this legislation and particularly what we will see—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Is the member going to make any more comments about the timing issue? If not, I will ask you to resume your seat. I will not issue another warning.

Dr McVEIGH: I will make one comment on timing in the last part of my contribution. If we do not have sufficient time for consultation—and this is the reason that I am supporting the amendment moved by the Leader of Opposition Business—we will see that new day that dawned with these amendments brought in originally by the member for Hinchinbrook turn into a cold dark winter of Labor once again, led by the member for South Brisbane, the member for Ashgrove and the member for Mount Coot-tha who can think that they can dictate these terms to regional Queensland from their seats in South-East Queensland.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: I point out to members who are going to be speaking—and we still have a number of members still to speak—that it has been very clear tonight that member's speeches should address the issue of timing. I have given a little bit of leeway. I have given a couple of warnings. I am going to give one warning to each speaker from now on. If the speaker persists I am going to ask them to resume their seat. I think there have been enough warnings across the House. It is a long night. I realise it is an important issue, but there are specific requirements for the speeches tonight.

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (12.06 am): I rise to speak in support of the amendment to the motion that has been moved by the Leader of Opposition Business. What a slap in the face for landholders in Queensland tonight! If ever they needed confirmation that the agricultural sector in this state is at the bottom of the Labor Party's list of priorities there is no better example than what we have witnessed here tonight.

This time frame, as proposed by the Deputy Premier, is nothing short of contemptuous. To give the committee 30 days, or 19 working days as it is now, to report back to this House makes a mockery of the committee process and simply reinforces that this government is hell-bent on ramming this legislation through parliament in the shortest possible time frame.

Queensland is a vast state. We have already heard tonight about the expectation that this committee will consult throughout the length and breadth of Queensland. When we think that it is not beyond the realms of possibility that there could be 20 or 30 meetings with farming organisations and community groups right across the state and it is expected that this committee do that before 15 April then they would need to be doing two to three meetings a day every single day commencing today. That gives us some indication of the enormity of the task facing the committee in undertaking a true consultation process across the state of Queensland.


Make no mistake, the ramifications of this bill on our rural and regional areas is massive. To embark on this ideological crusade to save our trees is both short-sighted and insulting to all those people who live on the land.

There is also another point here. That is the recent announcement by the federal government of the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility and what that might mean in terms of the development of Northern Australia. I wonder what they will think today when they wake up and find out that this legislation has been proposed? We have had no end of ministers coming through Northern Australia and North Queensland telling us about the development that they are expecting and looking forward to and the opportunities for agricultural development. I wonder what they will think when they see this legislation? I certainly hope that does not reduce our likelihood and chances of securing some of that money going forward.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I have lived and worked throughout much of Central and Northern Queensland and I can assure you that a lot of the land cleared by our farmers is so overgrown with rubber vine and prickly acacia that it is virtually useless and is nothing more than a haven for feral animals and noxious weeds. I can recall graziers in Cape York living on properties of half a million acres who struggled to make a living because they could not improve their land. This state was built on the back of our farmers. Given the current downturn in the mineral resource sector, I think it is our agricultural industry that can really benefit and take this state forward into the future.

Good decision-making is about being informed. It is about having available to hand the relevant information, the facts and the evidence so that the decisions you are making have been researched, are well grounded and will withstand scrutiny. That is what we are talking about here. If we rush into making decisions that we have to live with for the next several years, it will have huge ramifications for our rural sector. We need to get this right. All Queenslanders, and particularly those on the land, deserve the opportunity to be heard and to put forward their case regarding the proposed legislation.

I say to government members: do not underestimate the passion and the feeling out there in rural and regional Queensland about vegetation management. This proposal by the government to have the committee report back by 15 April will sweep through this state like a tsunami and that anger will grow over the coming days and reverberate through the length and breadth of Queensland in a way they could not begin to imagine. I am saying to the government: do the right thing, put the Greens back in their box and give this bill the time that it needs to be properly considered.

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (12.11 am): I am very pleased to speak in this debate tonight to support the motion moved by the Deputy Premier and to oppose the amendment moved by the member for Mermaid Beach. It is an historic day—the first time in the history of responsible government in this state that a group of members of the Legislative Assembly have voted by division to oppose the first reading of a bill. It is an historic day. I am pleased to speak because of that, but I hope it is another 150 years before that sort of stunt is perpetrated in the Legislative Assembly of Queensland.

Mr Stevens interjected.

Mr DICK: I hear the member for Mermaid Beach calling out. I will have a little bit more to say about the member for Mermaid Beach and his approach to legislation shortly. They do not want this bill debated. That is the bottom line. If they were consistent about that, if there was consistent opposition to this bill, I would accept that. What we have had tonight is hours of argument about consultation and engagement.

Mr STEVENS: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Clearly the minister has not referred to the fact that we are talking about the amendment and changing the date. I ask you, on relevance, to return to what you have basically just—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): I am just waiting for the minister to get to the point of the amendment.

Mr DICK: We have had hours of debate on consultation and that goes to the heart of the motion. We know when we have the member for Mermaid Beach—we know when we have the glass jaw—because he gets up and starts taking points of order. We have an argument about the time of consultation. They opposed the bill outright and then they say, 'We need more time to consult.' That is hypocrisy on double standards and that is what we have had consistently tonight.

The amendment was moved by the member for Mermaid Beach, someone who now professes to be the leader of consultation in Queensland. Of course, what he was the leader of was government business in the 54th Parliament. He was the Leader of Government Business who shut down debate and consultation consistently over and over. Now, he hypocritically comes into this House to suggest that there needs to be longer consultation. What was the form of the previous LNP government? How

did they treat the people of Queensland when it came to legislation? This is how they approached consultation. This is how they approached the time that they now say Queenslanders are entitled to. Who said this—

If after being elected the government sent off every bill to a committee, under the standing orders, for six months, the government would be taking no action for six months.

He goes on—

That is a crazy idea. Queenslanders elected this government decisively. They wanted action; they wanted positive change.

Of course, that was the member for Kawana, who did not want any consultation at all—none at all. Not only was it a crazy idea; we ended up with a crazy government that rammed through legislation in the middle of the night.

Mr STEVENS: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I have not heard one word in relation to the amendment that we are supposed to be discussing.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: I do not agree. There is no point of order.

Mr DICK: What was their experience with legislation that impacted on landholders? What was their form? What was the precedent they set when they have talked over and over tonight about standing up for landholders? It is a mockery. It is a slap in the face. There will be passion and feeling. We had Churchill himself, the member for Whitsunday, talking about fighting on the beaches. We have had all of that. What was their approach? This is what they did when they were in government. Hypocrisy goes to the heart of the debate tonight. Hypocrisy goes to the heart of what the LNP are seeking to do to persuade this chamber that their amendment should be accepted. That goes to the heart of it. It is hypocrisy on double standards.

Opposition members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Many members of this House have had an opportunity to speak. I will ask you to please allow the minister to speak so there is some chance that we can hear him.

Mr DICK: Apart from the many pieces of legislation that were rammed through—some with 24 hours notice, some overnight; motions passed in the middle of the night—how did they deal with one particular piece of legislation? This goes to the conduct of the first speaker in the debate tonight, the member for Hinchinbrook. What was his approach to the Mines Legislation (Streamlining) Amendment Bill? An article in the *Brisbane Times* by Daniel Hurst published on 3 October 2012 stated that environmental organisations highlighted the issue of consultation. The article goes on to say—

... one of the most scathing submissions came from farming lobby group AgForce Queensland, which complained that miners were consulted during the drafting of the law but not landholders.

You have heard tonight, Madam Deputy Speaker, how this government has engaged through various ministers including the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines and the Minister for State Development. You have heard on the parliamentary record, through the Speaker and through others, about the engagement with landholders. When those opposite were in government, what did AgForce say? The article states—

AgForce Queensland general manager of stakeholder relations Drew Wagner took issue with “the ridiculous timing of purported consultation with the community”, saying it was “not conducive to appropriate consultation”.

“To further not include the broader land use sector throughout the development of the legislative arrangement, but to include directly the industries that this review will favour, is tantamount to negligence,”—

negligence by the LNP—

he wrote in a submission to the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee in August.

“No landholder, agricultural, environmental or community group appears to have been consulted throughout this process—only the mining and resources sector.

No member of this parliament should listen to the hypocrisy we have heard tonight.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I ask the minister to withdraw that unparliamentary language.

Mr DICK: Hypocrisy? I withdraw. No-one should be persuaded by the double standards of those members opposite. Those bills, including the bills that were rammed through, were supported by most of the speakers tonight including the member for Southern Downs, who said that this is a retrograde step, that it is a backward step, that it is turning Queensland, in his words during the debate, into China

and North Korea. What an offensive comment to make about our democracy in Queensland. The member for Callide, the member for Burnett, the member for Nanango, the member for Whitsunday, the member for Toowoomba South, the member for Hervey Bay—they all supported that process. Now they presume to come in here and cry foul. Their argument has no substance at all. At the peak of all of this was their approach to vegetation management and their approach to the timing of vegetation management and how the parliament dealt with it. I will not go on.

In a letter sent out 10 days before the 2012 election, Mr Newman promised the LNP 'will retain the current level of statutory vegetation protection', and they completely changed their position when they came to government.

I believe the committee has adequate time to deal with this. That is what we are talking about—time. I believe the parliament will appropriately resource that committee, as it has in the past with urgent consideration of bills. I thank the Clerk and others in the parliament who have supported committees. I believe the committee has sufficient time under the time frame. This is not a surprise. The legislation before the parliament delivers on our election commitment that this government took to the community. There has been stakeholder consultation. There have been round tables. Every stakeholder group which is affected is aware of the process and the framework. It is a commitment. At least we are consistent. At least we did not promise one thing before the election and do another after—something those members opposite pride themselves on. That is what they did in the 54th Parliament.


I am confident of the capacity of the committee to deal with the draft legislation in the time available. I am confident that landholders will be able to adequately express their views on this. I am confident—

Mr Bennett: You don't care.

Mr DICK: I take the interjection. That is not fair to say. As the Minister for Health, I have resourced Western Queensland. I have put additional resources into dealing with health issues in Western Queensland. This government does care about all of Queensland. We care about Queenslanders in regional and rural parts of our state. We will consult thoroughly and in a detailed fashion as we move forward on this legislation. We had hypocrisy on double standards tonight.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! I ask the minister not to use unparliamentary language.

Mr DICK: We had double standard on double standard during this debate. I am confident that all Queenslanders know our government's position, that they will have adequate time to engage and that the committee will be able to deal adequately and carefully with this. I remind members in the 53rd Parliament that before the committee system was implemented bills had to lie on the table for a minimum of two weeks before they were dealt with. It was a very substantial change to the committee system, which I think has significantly improved how matters are dealt with in the parliament. I am confident with the framework around this legislation—a promise that we made to restore the law as it was in Queensland—that sensible and reasonable landholders will be able to engage with the process. Their voice will be heard with respect by the committee, and then a proper and full examination of those issues will be made by the committee and provided to the parliament in the time available. The amendment should be opposed and the government's motion should be supported this evening.

 **Mr ELMES** (Noosa—LNP) (12.22 am): I rise tonight to speak in support of the amendment to the motion that was moved a lot earlier by the member for Mermaid Beach. I will try in my short contribution to stick to some dates and some time lines

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr ELMES: It is now. We have talked tonight about the 29-day period in which to undertake all the consultation that needs to be done. Then we broke it down to the number of business days. We have Easter in that period. The other thing we should bear in mind is that tomorrow there will be council elections across this state, and there are going to be quite a number of days that will pass from Saturday before many people in this state will know the make-up of their local country or regional council. That will add to the difficulty of any consultation on this project.

The regulations that are in place at the moment were put there by the LNP government. It has also been established tonight that the increase in land clearing that happened in this state happened under the regime of the Labor government, and it slowed down very significantly under our time with the regulations that we put in place. In terms of the consultation that needs to take place, I hope no-one for one moment is suggesting that when people wake up tomorrow morning and find out they are under these new regulations they will have to start travelling from wherever they are in the state to Brisbane

to appear before a bunch of ministers and public servants who would not understand. I hope that there are some avenues for the committee to be able to travel very extensively in this state. This is why we need to slow this process down. The committee needs to get out there, visit communities and consult. It needs to hear what is happening in those places.

It is bad enough when we look at where the regulations already apply. We heard from the member for Mount Isa before. Everyone knows that he represents a seat the size of France. When we look at the other five seats from Cook coming down, these are huge areas and they are huge areas where consultation needs to take place. In the last few hours people who live in the Burnett-Mary catchment or the eastern Cape York catchment or the Fitzroy catchment have gone to bed. They are sleeping right now. When they wake up in a few hours time, they will become aware that this nonsense that has been peddled in the House tonight applies to them from the moment they open their eyes in the morning. What an insult to the people to whom this will apply, particularly the people in those catchment areas. Those people will rightfully be very angry.

I look particularly to the catchment of the eastern cape. One of the great things that I was able to progress when I was the Indigenous affairs minister was the banana farm at Hope Vale. There was an opportunity for some land to be cleared and jobs to be given to Indigenous people around Hope Vale. There were great plans to expand that further, to clear some more of the bush to put in crops other than bananas. What happens in a place like that now? We funded some Indigenous groups to selectively cut trees in areas that would give them an income, some self-esteem and a future for their kids. We talked yesterday about closing the gap. We are now going to open it up more.

As I said, the areas that are already covered under the regulations cannot be covered off in 19 or 20 days even by the Easter bunny. That is not possible. It is certainly not going to be possible when you add in all of these other catchments. The members who have spoken tonight from the government side—and I will run down the list—are the members for Mount Coot-tha, Yeerongpilly, Ashgrove, Ferny Grove, Bulimba, Stafford, Sandgate, Thuringowa and Woodridge, and the Deputy Premier, the member for South Brisbane, will speak at some point. I do not see anyone there who has any idea of vegetation management other than starting up the Victa on a Sunday and mowing their lawn.

Ms Trad: You are from Noosa!

Mr ELMES: Noosa is no different. Nowhere else in South-East Queensland is any different. I would hope there are some people over there who have a conscience. The members who have spoken from this side of the House who represent rural and regional seats of Queensland do understand. They understand the area, they understand the people and they understand what those people go through in order to turn a dollar every day and make agriculture the great success that it is in this state. All this Labor government is going to do—this open and transparent government—is put more uncertainty into areas that are already doing it very tough.

The idea that we cannot extend the period for consultation until 30 June is completely and utterly absurd. It is completely and utterly absurd that that cannot happen. I would urge the crossbenchers and anyone sitting on the Labor side of this House who has a soul and some understanding of what is right and wrong—

Mr Costigan: Show some ticker.

Mr ELMES:—to show some ticker when it is time to vote a little later tonight.



Mr POWELL (Glass House—LNP) (12.29 am): I am pleased to rise this morning to speak in support of the amendment moved by the member for Mermaid Beach late last night. I want to list a handful of reasons the amendment needs to be passed and we need to give the committee sufficient time to consider this bill in all of its detail. As a lead-in, I want to state that one of the proudest moments of my life was to serve this state as its environment minister for three years. I am passionate about the environment—incredibly passionate. I have five children who I want to leave a legacy to, and I want to make sure that legacy is better than the one I was left. I do not believe that to protect the environment you take a hands-off approach. You have to be stewards of the environment, you have to care for the environment, you have to be in there getting your hands dirty looking after it.

I want to pick up on a comment made by the member for Thuringowa earlier this evening when he said that this side cannot see the forest for the trees. I invite the member for Thuringowa—through you, Madam Deputy Speaker Farmer—to come to the electorate of Glass House, and indeed I invite the member for South Brisbane to join him. We will go for a drive along Bellthorpe Range Road and I will explain that on one side of the road is a national park and on the other side is a state forest, and I

will ask them to choose which is which. I can guarantee that both of them will select the state forest as being the national park. Why? Because it is pristine. Why? Because for centuries it has been under the stewardship of the people of Glass House in a sustainable way, harvesting timber to provide for our housing, our paper and everything that we use—even the wood in this chamber where we stand here tonight. On the other side of the road is a quagmire. It is a pest and weed-ridden national park. Why? Because for far too long we have taken a hands-off approach to the environment.

Let me tell the House why we need to give the committee the time it needs to review this legislation. My first reason is that the minister himself promised a round table that included all peak groups that would be impacted by this legislation. The member for Nicklin himself said earlier this evening that that round table had broken down because the environmental groups had blackmailed the government into introducing this legislation before anything else could be considered. Mr Speaker also said that the groups—whether they be AgForce or the environmental groups—have all said that they are willing to participate in a committee process. They had seen elements of the legislation here tonight, but they are willing to participate in a committee process. Let us give them that chance. Let us give them the full chance to present their cases to a committee for more than 19 business days over Easter.

My second reason is in the explanatory notes to the bill and it comes from the government itself. Let me use their words. Under the heading 'Consultation', the explanatory notes state—

Limited consultation was undertaken in the development of the Reinstatement Bill. No consultation—

and I repeat: no consultation—

was undertaken in relation to the changes to the Environmental Offsets Act.

I know how long it took to develop that Environmental Offsets Act. I know how much consultation it took to deliver that Environmental Offsets Act. I know how much disagreement there was and how much negotiation was required around the Environmental Offsets Act, some of it with my good friend the member for Callide. If we are going to make changes—and it says here that no consultation has occurred to date—then we need to give those who are affected the opportunity to have their say through the committee process.

My third reason—and I note the member for Noosa picked up on this point, although it has been missed by many—is that there are changes to the Sustainable Planning Act in this legislation. Who is affected by the Sustainable Planning Act? Our local governments. Guess what? Our local governments are going to an election on Saturday. We do not know which mayors and which councils will be elected and indeed which approach any of our councils will be taking after Saturday. The government is going to be giving them fewer than 19 days to get their submissions in on what is happening with the Sustainable Planning Act.

Mr Rickuss interjected.


Mr POWELL: I take that interjection from the member for Lockyer. In the case of the Lockyer Valley Regional Council, they are going to have to wait longer for the outcome of that council election and they are going to be asked to put in a submission in that time, in a matter of days, so the committee can consider it.

My fourth reason is that, contrary to what the member for Noosa said, this is not just about regional and rural Queensland; this is about South-East Queensland. The changes that this legislation brings in are not revisions or reversions to changes the LNP made; they go a lot further. One of those changes is the inclusion of the Burnett-Mary catchment. I am sorry, but that is not rural and regional Queensland; that is Glass House. That is the communities of Cambroon, Conondale, Harper Creek and Kidaman Creek, and Obi which is in the Speaker's electorate of Nicklin. It is the communities of Montville, Maleny and North Maleny in the electorate of Glass House. As the member for Noosa rightly said, they are going to wake up this morning and have no idea that they have been completely blindsided by this government—that all of a sudden legislation that previously only related to areas in my good friend the member for Hinchinbrook's communities is now going to apply to them. The government is considering giving them 19 days to wake up to that fact, to get their contributions in and to have their say on that committee. That is outrageous.

My fifth reason was stated by the member for Hinchinbrook in his opening comments this evening. The community, all of Queensland, require time to consider the campaign of deceit that has already commenced. The member for Hinchinbrook went to great lengths using the SLATS report to point out the kind of deception that is being used by ministers of this government and by environmental groups around this state.

Let me give the House another one because it was used in the lead-up to this announcement. I caught a glimpse of a TV news broadcast regarding koala habitat in this state and a press release put out by the WWF. The WWF suggested that under the LNP government the koala habitat around the state had been destroyed. The problem is that the methodology the WWF used was flawed. They assumed that the koala was considered endangered across the length and breadth of Queensland under the LNP because that is the only way you can trigger an essential habitat map across the entire state. Sorry, but the koala was only listed as endangered in South-East Queensland. The only essential habitat maps in Queensland were in South-East Queensland so any suggestion that habitat was destroyed outside of South-East Queensland is purely false and nothing more than deception. The people of Queensland need to understand through this committee process that they are being deceived. They need the opportunity to hear the true facts and make up their own minds about what this legislation actually entails.

My final reason that this amendment to the original motion should be agreed to is that for all of this week—in fact, for months—we have been hearing from the Palaszczuk Labor government that it is all about jobs, jobs, jobs, jobs. Let us be honest. This bill is not about jobs at all; this is all about destroying jobs the length and breadth of this great state. The committee must have the time to consider exactly how many jobs are going to go as a result of this legislation potentially being passed. To suggest that that can be done in 19 days is farcical. The committee needs the time to completely understand the economic impacts and job impacts of this legislation so that committee members can inform this House so that we can have a truthful and honest debate about the merits of this legislation or otherwise. To do that, the committee needs more than 19 days. Therefore, I support the member for Mermaid Beach's amendment and I call on all members of this House to do the same.

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (12.39 am): I rise to make a contribution to this debate. I fully agree with the member for Mermaid Beach, who called for an extension of time. This is a very complicated issue, and we discussed another one earlier today, the North Stradbroke Island issue. It was also a very complicated report and it was granted an extension. The same should be done here.

I come from a farming background, so I can speak to this firsthand. I come from Cecil Plains. We had property on the black soil which was high agricultural land and we also had a block on which we ran cattle on the other side of Cecil Plains which was more of a sandy block. On the black soil I spent all my time trying to control turnip and burr. On the other block I spent all my time trying to control cypress pine, bull oak and ironbark. When the laws were introduced I well remember the difficulties I had getting my mapping right. I ended up to talking to Stephen Robertson, who was the minister at the time, so I know how time consuming that role is.


It is just not possible for this committee to try to get across all those issues in 19 days. I was listening to people talk about the bill and some of the things in it and they are very broad, sweeping statements. Country varies from one end of Queensland to the other. There is light sandy, loamy soil and heavy clay soil. Some of the things that are in here would be destructive on some of those soils. The legislation needs wider consultation.

I have heard a lot about consultation, and I have heard AgForce mentioned many times. AgForce does a good job, but not every landholder is in AgForce. There are an awful lot of landholders who are not AgForce, especially in the west and up north in that cattle area. These are the ones we really have to feel for. As has been pointed out in relation to those 19 days, Easter falls within that and school holidays. These people have their kids at home for the holidays and they would like to spend some time with them. Instead of that, we are asking them to put submissions together for this committee.

There has been talk about whether the committee has time to put this together. It is not about them; it is about the landholders. There seems to be an idea that these landholders are out on their verandas, sitting in their squatters chair, sipping tea and wondering how they are going to fill in their days. That is not the case. These are busy people. The members for Dalrymple and Mount Isa will tell honourable members that many of them have very poor internet access. They have to put a submission together or they will have to leave their properties and come down here and put a submission together. It is not possible. It is too much of an ask. These people need more time if the government is going to allow them to have a say in this.

The trouble with those people out there is that this will affect their property values. We are hitting them with this at the worst possible time, when they are at their lowest ebb. They are fighting drought, carting water and carting feed for their stock. This is a horrible time to drop this into their lap. I really worry about the mental health of some of these people when they read about this tomorrow.

I note that the member for Noosa made a comment earlier about the speaking list. I looked at that list as well and noticed the seats that are represented therein. I also looked at the primary green vote in those seats and it became very apparent why they were so keen to be on this list. I strongly oppose the motion put forward by the member for South Brisbane. Nineteen days is nowhere near long enough. I support the extension of time.

 **Mr DICKSON** (Buderim—LNP) (12.42 am): I start with one statement: I believe Labor is falling short again. The people of Queensland are being represented by members of the LNP tonight and I am disappointed in those opposite, who pretend that they believe in democracy and that they believe in consultation—and there have been mistakes made in the past by both sides of this House. However, today is Friday, 18 March 2016. I am sorry, I am a little bit tired like most of us in this House. This is where we can make a difference. We are talking about having only 19 working days in which to go out and do public consultation. Regardless of how short or long members have been in the House, we have all been involved in legislation. This is a very complicated issue. It does involve many, many people right throughout the state regardless of whether people live in the gulf, out west or elsewhere in Queensland. We have to do our utmost to get to these people and to be able to communicate with them in a timely manner, and I do not believe that can occur in 19 days.

I can go back into history when my great-grandfather came here from Ireland when things were a little bit different. He drove a horse and carriage from Cooktown to Bundaberg and on the trip they had four children. We move around a lot quicker today but we still cannot cover all of Queensland in a mere 19 days. We need to get to these people and we need to give them the opportunity to have their say. I do use the word 'democracy' a lot because I believe in it. I ask those opposite if they believe in democracy, if they believe in giving people the opportunity to have their say. If they do not, they have absolutely let down the people of Queensland, and I hope that that is not the case.

I know that when the Deputy Premier was in opposition she spouted many times those very concerns. She wanted the people of Queensland to have a say and to be able to be a part of the legislation that is being created. I know that with what is being thrown on the table today that cannot occur. However, we should give the people of Queensland—the farmers, those people who will be affected and particularly the green groups, which we all do care so much about—a chance to have their say. We want them to have their say and we want them to be involved.

I listened to what Mr Speaker said earlier tonight. He is also very concerned that he gives those people the opportunity to have their say. We know that the votes are crucial in this House. I believe that Mr Speaker has sent a very clear message tonight to this House. He made a very strong point about letting democracy be heard, letting people have their say regardless of where they come from, no matter if they are farmers or green groups.

It is retrospective legislation that we are talking about. We are talking about giving people the opportunity to have a say. I think allowing till 30 June would be a very fair period of time. I am on the health and ambulance committee and we have just had a bit more work added to that in recent times. We are extremely busy trying to assist the health minister get his legislation through, as we have done with the smoking legislation. That took a number of months. We are looking at many other bills and they are going to take a number of months as well. What is the difference with this legislation? Is there something in here that we do not know about? Is there some reason that this needs to be rushed through? Is there an election coming and the government needs to do a deal with the Green groups? I hope that is not the case. I am sure it would not be because I know they would not do that to the people of Queensland; they would want them to have their say.

Nineteen days—we cannot do a lot in 19 days. There are 30 days in a month. If people buy a piece of land it is normally a 30-day contract and it takes 14 days just to get finance. That is a bank working hard just on one single project for one single issue. We need to correlate this proposition being put forward today. I have to thank the Leader of Opposition Business for having the courage to stand up to try to protect the people of Queensland, to put this amendment up so that we can speak on behalf of all Queenslanders, who are in their beds tonight. This is being slid through in darkness, and that is not what the Queensland government should be about. It should be about being open and transparent. I thought that is what we all aspired to in this House. I thought we were living in a brave new world with a parliament that is right on the knife edge; we do not know which way votes are going to go. If the government pushes this through, I think the vote may go the wrong way. I am giving them a free kick and free advice tonight. Why do we not work unitedly together? Why do we not give those people on the land a fair crack? Why do we not let them have their say? The farmer out in Longreach and those people in Cooktown want to talk; they want to be listened to. However, what I am hearing tonight is that

the guillotine is going to come down on those people. We are not going to get to them. The committee just would not be capable of covering Queensland. We have a referendum going on in Queensland at the moment—a yes/no vote. We gave people a fair bit of lead time on that, and that was crushed. That will come to an end this weekend and we are going to get an answer.

This issue here—19 days? My goodness me, I have never seen anything so silly after such a learning period that the Labor Party has been through and the LNP has been through. As I said, the date has changed. It is now Friday morning and we have an opportunity to make a bit of a difference. I would love to vote with the Labor Party tonight. I am sure all of us on this side would. Agree with us with regard to 30 June and they have a deal. I know that we can come together on this—a united effort. Let's stand up for Queensland. Let's give the people a go. If they go down the path they are going down tonight, they will kill democracy. 'The Labor Party kills democracy on Friday morning.' They are not giving the people in Queensland a voice, and that saddens me and I am sure it is going to sadden people with whom I grew up on the land.

I grew up in the Dawson Valley. I know farmers. I grew up with farmers. Farming is in my blood. Do you know what I think? When they start to get pushed into a corner, farmers do not like it. Farmers are going to come after your government, so why place yourself in that position? You know it does not have to happen. You are hell-bent on—


Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! Though the member is speaking collectively, I ask you to direct your comments through the chair, please.

Mr DICKSON: I want to repeat a component of what the member for Glass House said, because it was a comment that I wanted to make myself. The consultation period is two lines. It says—

Limited consultation was undertaken in the development of the reinstatement bill. No consultation was undertaken in relation to the changes to the Environmental Offsets Act.

That speaks volumes. It might only be two lines, but it speaks volumes. It said that no consultation has taken place, and for 19 days not much is going to take place.

Members of parliament, here is an opportunity to stand together to protect the people of Queensland's rights. We believe in democracy. We stand shoulder to shoulder with Queenslanders. You can be with Queenslanders or you can be against them.

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (12.50 am): I rise to support the member for Mermaid Beach's amendment to the motion. Obviously I oppose the motion. Let me be clear that I oppose the bill in its entirety, but today I will speak about the timing. So that I can do that, I need to speak about a couple of elements of the bill which require more time.

As a legislature I think it is very important that we respect individuals and their rights. Our job is to create laws that will bring good government, so when we have a piece of legislation that reverses the onus of proof—something that is fundamental to the rule of law in many Western democracies, including here in Queensland—that is something that should not be taken lightly, should not be done in the darkness of night and should not be snuck through as people are getting ready to go on their Easter holidays. If you are going to reverse the onus of proof in a piece of legislation, then you really should consult with people. You should make sure that you have a fair and reasonable way to apply that piece of legislation. It should not be something that is done in the darkness of night.

A piece of legislation that contains a retrospective element to it is also something that I think the legislature should consider very carefully. When we make retrospective laws it should be done with good reason, but it should be done with good consultation because this proposed bill has a retrospective element to it that completely takes away many of the arguments that people have put to rush the consultation. There is no need to rush the consultation, because quite clearly there is a retrospective element to this bill. The moment it goes to the committee the legislation will be retrospective, so people very clearly can be given time without it damaging anything or changing the environment. People were saying that global warming will increase because we only have 19 days to save the planet. The fact that it is retrospective clearly shows that we have more time. At the very least I thank the minister for putting the retrospectivity in there so that we can sit here and debate how long we should consult with the people of Queensland.

The last element that worries me greatly when we come into this chamber and we make laws is that we steal people's property rights in the darkness of night. If someone had invested their life's savings in their house and this legislature moved a motion that we should take a percentage of their house off them in the darkness of night, I am sure that many people here would stand up immediately

and oppose it. If we then tried to do that without discussing that with the people of Queensland and giving them a fair opportunity to comment, I think the people of Queensland would rightly kick us out at the next election. I warn the people on the back bench: if you steal people's property rights, they will be angry. They will remain angry, and they will make you pay at the ballot box.

Unfortunately for us trees do not vote, because we know that western and northern Queensland have far more trees than the south-east corner. We also know that people in the south-east corner have some quite often misguided notions of what farmers are doing. As was suggested by one of the other members tonight, they are not sitting on their verandas waiting for an opportunity to be consulted about someone coming to steal their property off them in a retrospective way with a reverse onus of proof so they have to prove that they should not have it taken away from them.

There are three very dangerous legislative parts to this bill that require a great deal of consideration which I think should be given time. If we just get on to the time, we heard about the number of days. Technically speaking we cannot really count today, because I do not think anybody is going to be rushing out there at seven o'clock in the morning, bearing in mind that it is now five to one, so we are down to 18 days. I assume the secretariat at some point is going to have to write this report, so let us give them three days to get everything together and prepared. Now we are down to 15 working days. Bearing in mind it is the wet season, I wonder how many communities in regional Queensland a committee and secretariat can visit in 15 days to consult with those communities before they steal their property rights in a retrospective way, making them prove that they should not have them taken off them with the reversal of the onus of proof.

The really interesting part of that is for those people who have families and holidays, one of Australia's biggest holiday times is Easter. The Easter school holidays are right in the middle of those remaining 15 days, so there are 10 days of school holidays in the middle. People may not want to cancel a very expensive Easter holiday they have booked somewhere—as we all know, that is the time of the year that is the most expensive—so they can sit at home and prepare a submission in five days for the committee.


The reality is that, whilst I oppose the bill fundamentally and I look forward to debating the bill in its entirety, 30 June is a most reasonable time to be able to get around to those communities. In fact, I would almost suggest that that is too short a time. That is 72 days from now, if we do not count today, for consultation and preparation of the bill and allowing the committee to get around with the secretariat to record people's testimony. That testimony would obviously include the Wilderness Society as well as farmers and the various peak bodies. To suggest that that can all be done within five working days is a ridiculous suggestion.

There has been a lot of talk about what happened in the last parliament and how numbers might have been used and different things happened. I sat here and listened to a few people down there talk about how terrible it is when a parliament runs that way and how obnoxious it is to behave with such disrespect, yet they walk in here and do exactly the same thing. Not on something serious like drug-dealing gangs; we are talking about stealing people's property rights and not giving them the opportunity to even have a say in it. Not only is that extreme green, it is extreme socialism. To steal someone's property in the middle of the night without consulting them, without talking to them and without an opportunity for them to have a voice is abhorrent to me.

I urge the minister and members to consider carefully 30 June as a reasonable time line. Mr Speaker himself has said that he does not want to see a guillotine used in this place. The CLA has suggested that six weeks should be the minimum for a bill inquiry. We have had many bills that are much less complex than this bill, yet such a complex bill that has some really dangerous parts to it—the reversal of the onus of proof, retrospectivity and people's property rights—will be considered in less than six weeks. Whilst the minister may want to get retribution for what has gone before, I would suggest that if we really want to see Queensland governed well we should do this in a mature and responsible way. That has not always happened in this place, but certainly this is not an example of maturity, respect, consultation or any of the things that I think we all aspire to achieve when we walk into this place for the first time.

This bill represents a fundamental shift for a massive part of Queensland. We have talked about the area this covers. Because of the size of the area this piece of legislation is relevant to, you just cannot do that with five days. To suggest it is anything other than five days is to suggest that people do not have Easter, that people do not have holidays, that weekends should be worked on by the committee and by farmers and that everybody is tuned in right now on the live feed, waiting to type up their submission and get it ready for the committee. I suggest that that is not the case.

I urge the member for Nicklin to be true to the things he said in this place just a few short years ago about consultation. I also urge the minister to be true to herself and the things she said in this place about consultation and timeliness. If they are not, I think the people of Queensland will judge them very harshly going forward, as they will judge harshly all the backbenchers who do not allow consultation as people's property rights are stolen off them at one o'clock in the morning on a Friday.

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade and Investment) (1.02 am), in reply: I rise to conclude the debate on this procedural motion before the House. I will be speaking in opposition to the amendment moved by the Leader of Opposition Business and in support of the motion I moved almost five hours ago. We have been debating this procedural motion for five hours now. I respect the fact that Mr Speaker gave the chamber the opportunity to have a fulsome debate around the period in which this bill was going to be given to the community through the parliamentary committee process for consultation. I have listened to the debate on this procedural motion in the House this evening. I have a few comments to make in relation to some of the issues that have been raised by those opposite.

The first issue I want to address relates to the notification of what we are doing here tonight. The Labor Party promised before the last election that we would reinstate Labor's nation-leading, tree-clearing laws. We promised that before January 2015. We also promised in November last year—five months ago—that we would introduce this legislation into the House in the first quarter of 2016. That is five months notice that we would be—

Mr Rickuss: Had anyone seen it?

Ms TRAD: I take that interjection from the member for Lockyer. Yes, in fact. We had a meeting with AgForce. Members from my office and members from Minister Lynham's office sat down with AgForce last week, gave them the legislation and stepped through the changes. I met with AgForce during the last parliamentary sitting last month and walked through the amendments that we would be making. Yes, people did see the legislation some time ago and worked through that legislation. I am not saying that people are entirely happy with it, but I am saying that AgForce, the conservation groups and some people from the scientific community were given the legislation before it was finalised by cabinet.

In my conversation with Charles Burke tonight he did thank me. He thanked me for having officers available from Minister Lynham's office and my office. There was an opportunity for him to sit down with those officers and go through the legislation before it was introduced into this House. He expressed his gratitude and his thanks for that. I take the interjection from the member for Lockyer and say that, yes, people had seen the exposure draft well before it came into this House.

Let us be very clear: Labor has never, ever sought to deceive anyone—

Opposition members interjected.

Ms TRAD:—in relation to our position on tree-clearing protection laws in Queensland. We have never sought to deceive anyone—unlike those opposite—

Opposition members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! I will ask the Deputy Premier to resume her seat. Many members in this House have had a say tonight. It is now the minister's turn.

Ms TRAD: Labor has never, ever sought to deceive one single Queenslanders around these laws. We have been consistent on this for a decade and a half. We have been consistent on this for 15 months. We have been consistent on this for the last five hours. Labor will be consistent about getting the balance right between environmental protection and enabling the economy—unlike those opposite. At the 2012 election the former premier stood hand on heart on two occasions and said that there would be no reduction in the statutory protection for native vegetation in Queensland—hand on heart, in writing. He said that there would be no statutory reduction. What did he do? He came into this chamber and reduced the statutory protections. He deceived Queenslanders. Those opposite deceived Queenslanders. The former premier did that so he could get Greens preferences in Ashgrove.

Opposition members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Ms Bates interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Mudgeeraba, we do not need your interjections, thank you.

Ms TRAD: We have heard a lot tonight about consultation, time frames and engagement with the community. I want to address this in terms of the double standards displayed opposite. First of all, as members on this side of the House have articulated, those opposite did something historic tonight by voting against the introduction of this bill. They voted against the first reading because they actually did not want this parliament to debate this bill and they did not want it referred to a committee. They voted against democracy here tonight on this very issue. Now they are arguing for more time. First they argued for no time; now they are arguing for more time.

I sat in this House in opposition when the Newman government was sitting on this side of the chamber. I sat in this very chamber and I sat on three committees in opposition. I saw a whole range of pieces of legislation brought into this House and rammed through. In fact, I recall that the former *Brisbane Times* journalist, the Fairfax journalist Daniel Hurst, in the first six months of the Newman government undertook a forensic analysis of every single piece of legislation brought into this House and the consultation time frames around those pieces of legislation. For the benefit of the House, I table a spreadsheet and also the story that details the consultation time frames. What did Mr Hurst find? The article states—

Analysis shows the typical time between a bill being referred to a panel and the committee being required to report back to Parliament was two weeks.

I table a copy of the article and the spreadsheet for the benefit of the House.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Brisbane Times* online, dated 3 October 2012, titled 'We need to talk: 40 groups highlight rushed consultation' and an extract from analysis of completed committee inquiries on legislation [399].

But that was okay, because in some instances—not all instances—those opposite argued that they had a 100-day action plan, they had taken their commitments to the people of Queensland and they had received the mandate. They had received the mandate and the committee process was secondary to that. I say to those opposite, especially those members who sat in the last parliament and who tonight argued for a longer consultation time frame—and that is the member for Mermaid Beach, the member for Southern Downs, the member for Callide, the member for Burnett, the member for Nanango, the member for Whitsunday, the member for Toowoomba South, the member for Hervey Bay, the member for Glass House, the member for Buderim, the member for Noosa and the member for Toowoomba North—that on every single one of the occasions that are listed in that article they voted for a truncated time frame that is half the time that we are asking for the Agriculture and Environment Committee to analyse this amendment bill.

Some significant issues came before the last parliament that had no consultation. Tonight, members have been talking about rights. They have been talking about Indigenous rights. Where were Indigenous rights when the former government wound back Native Title Act access to hunting traditional animals? There was a 13-day consultation on the amendments to the Nature Conservation Act. Where was the consultation on the VLAD laws? There was three hours. Those opposite want to talk about consultation. They walked into this chamber at 11 pm and sacked the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee because they did not like what the committee did. As the Minister for Health has already articulated, there was six days to receive submissions on the mines amendment bill. That was six days given for the streamlining of mining approvals in this state under the leadership of the member for Hinchinbrook—six days for submissions from landholders. The member for Woodridge, the Minister for Health, has outlined what AgForce thought of ramming through that legislation and that lack of consultation.

Those opposite have talked a lot about property rights. Let us talk about objection rights. Those opposite did not care about landholders when they took away their objection rights to mine approvals that affected their land.

Mr DICKSON: I rise to a point of order on relevance. Many people have been pulled up tonight.

Ms TRAD: I am talking about consultation.

Mr DICKSON: We are talking about the bill, we are talking about the timing, we are talking about the implementation. Like many of us, the Deputy Premier has had a lot of latitude.

Mr SPEAKER: Yes, I believe that the Deputy Premier's comments are relevant as she is commenting on the issue of consultation.

Ms TRAD: Absolutely. We have talked about property rights tonight. We have talked about native title and Indigenous rights. We have talked about objection rights. Let us talk about human rights. Let us talk about the fact that human rights did not feature when it came to consultation on the civil unions bill. It was okay to come into this parliament and to not even go through a parliamentary process before

the members opposite took away the human rights of Queenslanders, the human rights of same-sex couples to have their relationships registered by law. So that is okay. They can extinguish human rights, they can extinguish objection rights, they can extinguish native title rights, but they cannot extinguish property rights or have them mitigated through a proper balance between native vegetation and economic development. The article lists a number of groups that were very concerned, such as the Queensland Law Society, the Homicide Victims' Support Group, conservation groups, AgForce. More than 40 groups were listed in that article as being concerned about the consultation process undertaken by the former Newman government.

The member for Nanango talked about the fact that phones were running hot tonight. Phones should have been running hot, because there was no surprise about us introducing this amendment bill in the first quarter of 2016—absolutely no surprise. I have been on *ABC Country Hour* and I have been well canvassed in *Queensland Country Life*. Last week the *Australian Financial Review* published an article in relation to vegetation management in Queensland. There has been a considerable amount of public discussion around us doing exactly what we are doing here tonight.

As I said previously, vegetation management has been an issue that has been canvassed for the past decade and a half—15 years—and for the past 15 months we have been talking about fulfilling our election commitment. We are doing it with a bill that is not huge. It is 29 pages long, comprising 35 clauses.

Let me talk about the urgency behind this bill. I know that those opposite do not like to engage in proper debate. They accuse us of being emotional, but we have been vilified here tonight and accused of some pretty vile things. As we know from history and the scientific data that has been collected over the past 15 years, unfortunately, there are some unintended policy consequences to introductions or constraints being introduced into vegetation or tree clearing in Queensland and that is panic clearing. The reason there is on the table before us a reasonable time frame in terms of a month for a bill that is 29 pages long and comprises 35 clauses on an issue that has been canvassed for the past 15 years, and which has been on the agenda for the past 15 months, is that we need to ensure that there is a limitation, or a mitigation, to what we know would be an unintended policy consequence and that is panic clearing. History and data tell us that this is a very real concern. For this chamber to not think that that is an issue that we should address, particularly when we consider all of the scientific data before us—the effects on the Great Barrier Reef, the effects on carbon emissions—when we think about all of the effects that broadscale panic clearing would have, for this chamber not to take a responsible approach would be negligence. It would be terrible.

I have heard a lot from those opposite about the committee needing to travel to communities in order to canvass this issue. When the former government changed legislation on a whole range of fronts, whether that was about mining leases, or objection rights, or even vegetation management, the number of regional consultation forums were one, two, or three at the most. For those opposite to take a new moral high ground in relation to consultation and being accessible in communities I think is ludicrous. Their standard tonight is nothing like the standard that they advanced in government—nothing. There is a world of difference.

We have heard a lot from those opposite about what it means to have a fair go. I have already canvassed that when it came to civil unions there was no fair go. When it came to mining objection rights there was no fair go. When it came to native title rights there was no fair go. It appears that those opposite think that there is a fair go for some but no fair go for others.

I go to the issue of consultation because I want to again pay tribute to the extensive and deep work done by my colleague, the Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines and also the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef. Over the past 15 months there has been quite significant one-on-one engagement with these stakeholders.

Mr Powell interjected.

Ms TRAD: I will take that interjection from the member for Glass House, because the member for Glass House sat in this parliament and he raised his hand to ram through legislation on a whole range of matters over a three-year period. I have met with members of the scientific community; I have had several meetings with AgForce; my office has had several more meetings with AgForce; I have met with conservation groups; and I have met with members of this Legislative Assembly in terms of these laws. We need to move on this issue because fundamentally we made a promise to the people of Queensland that we would reintroduce these laws. We promised them that we would work to save the Great Barrier Reef. We promised them that we would take action on carbon emissions.

Having sat here for five hours and listened to the debate on this motion, not one of them, if my recollection is right, mentioned climate change or biodiversity. We promised to reinstate Labor's nation leading tree clearing laws. Many of the provisions before the House tonight are provisions that landholders had operated under right up until 2013 and the changes introduced by those opposite. They have operated under these laws since 2013 and they have done so responsibly, despite what those opposite say. To assist those members opposite, that was only two years ago. These provisions were in existence in Queensland law and landholders were operating under them up until two years ago. I know it is difficult for those opposite. This is a difficult issue. But we have shown over the past decade and a half that we can get this right. We can reduce the clearing of native habitat and we can grow our agricultural community. Only Labor will deliver that.

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

AYES, 44:

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, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Watts, Weir.

KAP, 2—Katter, Knuth.

INDEPENDENT, 1—Pyne.

NOES, 42:

ALP, 41—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Byrne, Crawford, de Brenni, Dick, Donaldson, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Hinchliffe, Howard, Jones, Kelly, King, Lauga, Linard, Lynham, Madden, Miles, Miller, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pease, Pegg, Pitt, Power, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Stewart, Trad, Whiting, Williams.

INDEPENDENT, 1—Gordon.

Pair: D'Ath, Walker.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Question put—That the motion, as amended, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (1.29 am): I move—

That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 9.30 am on Tuesday, 19 April 2016.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.


Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (1.30 am): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Sunshine Coast University Hospital

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (1.30 am): It has now been confirmed by the health minister that the Sunshine Coast University Hospital has been delayed for five months. A couple of weeks ago the health minister said that the skirting boards and windows were not in yet and that was the reason for the delay. We now know the real reason. It turns out that they have not hired the doctors and nurses—and I suspect the big mirror the health minister wants in there has not been installed pending his arrival in November 2016.

Two weeks ago the health minister misled the parliament when he said that the skirting boards were the reason for delaying the hospital. There are other construction issues. The doors were not in place. The health minister has sat on his hands for months and months—over 12 months—and has not delivered anything on the Sunshine Coast University Hospital.

I congratulate Lendlease for completing their end of the bargain for the hospital which will be constructed and finished in August this year. The health minister would have us believe that the delay is the fault of everyone but him. He has now confirmed, under much protest, that the hospital will be delayed five months. He has not given any document or reason for the delay. He just asks us to accept the secret advice. No documents have been released. The minister appointed an independent

commissioner to commission the hospital. I call on the minister to release the report and make it public. There is a program team for the Sunshine Coast University Hospital. If the minister wants accountability and transparency he can make all this information public. Maybe if the information is public the public can stand back and say, 'We understand why there is a delay.' We do not understand at the moment because there is so much uncertainty around the delay.


While we are talking about incompetent ministers, let us look at the Minister for Main Roads. He says we are going to build all these roads. The LNP promised a \$400 million Mooloolah River interchange. The Minister for Main Roads has come out and said that we are going to have seven projects worth about \$300 million. I do not know how you can have seven projects for \$300 million inclusive of the \$400 million Mooloolah River interchange project. It does not add up. Even with the delayed hospital, which will open in April 2017, the roads will not be sufficient.

Ms Simpson: What do you expect? He doesn't even own his own car.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection from the honourable member for Maroochydore. I did interject yesterday and ask whether the main roads minister had been on Nicklin Way, but then I remembered he had said in this place that he does not own a car. How can he expect Sunshine Coast residents to believe that he understands the road issues around the Kawana electorate? We need the roads built. We need the hospital opened on time so that people can stop travelling to Brisbane for the health care they need. If we do not build these roads people will die because these roads, particularly the Mooloolah River interchange—

(Time expired)

Demaine, Mr W

 **Mr SAUNDERS** (Maryborough—ALP) (1.33 am): This year in Maryborough is the year of Billy Demaine. Billy Demaine was probably one of the greatest Labor men to ever walk this earth. Billy Demaine was the man who started the eight-hour day throughout Queensland. He worked for a company in Maryborough called Fairlie and Sons. Billy Demaine was an absolute champion of the working class. Billy Demaine was a man who was very principled. He was a man who built the modern-day Maryborough. To give an example, Billy Demaine was the oldest mayor ever elected in Queensland. He was elected as mayor of the Maryborough City Council at 70-odd years of age.

Mr Dick: There's hope for all of us.

Mr SAUNDERS: I take that interjection from the health minister: there is hope for all of us. In 1922 Billy Demaine led the vote to get rid of the upper house in Queensland. He was part of the suicide squad, as they were called. Billy Demaine came into the House as the oldest MLA. He was uncontested in the seat of Maryborough. He served for one year before retiring due to ill health. In 1939 Billy Demaine died. His was the first and only state funeral we have ever had in Maryborough.

This year the Maryborough branch is 126 years old—126 years of a continuous political party in Maryborough. It started off as the ALF, the Australian Labor Force. Billy Demaine remained the secretary for that branch for 50 years. We honour Billy Demaine in Maryborough. We talk about leadership in this place; in 1933 Billy Demaine was the mayor of the council and they organised a plebiscite to put sewerage in Maryborough and the town overwhelmingly voted against it and so did the councillors. Billy Demaine walked out of the town hall and said, 'We are going to have sewerage.' Maryborough was the first city in Queensland to be fully sewered because of Billy Demaine, a great Labor man.


It is ironic that Billy Demaine owned a bookshop in Maryborough and his next-door neighbour was Billy Hughes, who had an umbrella shop. Maryborough has a great history with Labor. As we know, TJ Ryan also taught at the Maryborough Grammar School.

Mr Rickuss: Billy Hughes was a member of every party!

A government member: Except the National Party!

Mr SAUNDERS: I take that interjection. He would not stoop as low as to go to the National Party. We are proud that 2016 in Maryborough is the year of Billy Demaine, a great Labor man. We are having a dinner to celebrate Billy Demaine.

Property Rights

 **Mr SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (1.36 am): Secure property rights are an essential element for economic growth, investment and jobs. Protecting property rights has been a central part of my political identity ever since I have been in politics. I have fought to protect the property rights of both rural and

urban Queenslanders in the planning reforms that we brought in and in opposing a number of pieces of legislation that the Labor Party has introduced into this House. We saw that again tonight. After watching that debacle—it will impact on the private property rights of every property owner in my electorate—I am tonight committing myself totally to ridding this chamber of this Labor government.

Tonight I can advise the House that I will not be participating in the LNP preselection for Wide Bay. I will continue to fight for Queensland landowners, as I have done over the last 15 years, to restore the secure property rights that are needed for them to invest in and to create the economic growth that is important to Queensland. I believe that all political parties should facilitate a pathway for state MPs to make a transition to federal politics. I wish my colleague the member for Toowoomba South the very best in his efforts to do that. It has to be a benefit for our whole body politic if individuals can enter politics at a local government level, transition to state government and then go on to serve in federal parliament.

Our nation's federal parliament would be better served if more members on all sides of politics had an opportunity to serve an apprenticeship, so to speak, in state parliaments such as this. In contrast, the Labor Party use this parliament as a dumping ground for their federal failures in the members for Redcliffe and Ferny Grove. Those two members are part of this government that tonight threatens the secure property rights of Queenslanders. They are part of this government that tonight I commit to working to get rid of. I will play whatever role is asked of me in Lawrence Springborg's team to ensure we have an LNP government after the next election, whenever that is—whenever the rapidly deteriorating situation in this House brings about the next election. I want to be part of the effort to get rid of this do-nothing, say-nothing, be-nothing Labor government, because the damage that they are doing to Queensland is reminiscent of the damage that was done by Labor governments that preceded them over the years. This government has the same form. We saw that same form in the House tonight and it is something that I will fight against every day in the future.

Share the Dignity



Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games) (1.39 am): I take this opportunity to bring to the attention of the House the life-changing work of one of my Sandgate constituents, Rochelle Courtenay. Rochelle is the CEO and founder of the not-for-profit charity Share the Dignity, which helps provide homeless women with sanitary care products. Share the Dignity is an example of the power of one person to make a difference in their community and their country.

This organisation was born because of Rochelle's drive and compassion to ensure that no woman suffered the indignity of having to choose between buying food or buying sanitary products. For the approximately 46,000 homeless women across the country, this is a choice that is all too familiar and unfortunate.

Rochelle's work started a national conversation of the sanitary needs of homeless women, resulting in an outpouring of empathy and generosity for this important cause. Around 450 products were donated in the initial drive in May last year in Sandgate, rapidly growing to over 1.5 million sanitary care products being given in total by the end of 2015. An appearance on the Ten Network's *The Project* and a viral social media presence propelled Rochelle's cause to Melbourne, Adelaide, Sydney and internationally.

This year Rochelle hopes to collect more than five million sanitary care products for charities, with the help of community groups such as Sandbag, which is in my electorate. Rochelle is now spearheading the cause for sanitary care companies to print the national domestic violence hotline number, 1800RESPECT, on the packets of all their products.

Rochelle strongly believes that there is a correlation between domestic violence and mental health issues and the rise in homelessness. This is an issue that is increasingly affecting very young and older women. I am proud of the Palaszczuk government's commitment to end domestic and family violence in Queensland, as well as the provision of increased funding for mental health and wellbeing.

I am pleased that my Sandgate electorate office is to be the first place in the nation to receive a donation box for the new drive beginning in April. To ensure Rochelle's message is spread as far as possible, I would encourage all members to promote Share the Dignity's work in their electorates and collect donations. Thanks to Rochelle and hundreds of volunteers, thousands of women in need across Australia now have benefited from this amazing initiative.

Glass House Electorate, Disaster Declarations



Mr POWELL (Glass House—LNP) (1.42 am): I rise to present the frustrations and disappointments of constituents of the Glass House electorate regarding the inconsistent application of disaster declarations, especially when it comes to primary producers. There is no question that Queensland has borne the brunt of the full array of disasters over the past decade—tropical cyclones like Yasi, Oswald and Marcia, just to name a few; floods across the entire state, in the west, in Bundaberg and in Brisbane; drought, especially the ongoing challenges in the west; and severe storms, especially in South-East Queensland.

I do not for a minute want to take away from the devastation wreaked on so many Queenslanders, nor bemoan the support that they rightly received, but on three occasions farmers in the Glass House electorate have missed out: after ex-Tropical Cyclone Marcia in February 2015, after the staggering storm cells that led to four deaths in my electorate in May 2015, and after another storm cell in November 2015. In each instance disaster declarations were made across parts of the state but not in the Glass House electorate and certainly not in the parts that needed it the most.

I have here stories from Peter Young of Glass House Mountains, Elizabeth Noble of Beerwah, Brad Ward of Peachester, Wayne Stewart of Peachester and Susan Fay of Wamuran. Each of those stories is indicative of the pain, suffering and financial loss that they have borne. I will read part of Susan Fay's story from November 2015. It states—

I heard on the news last evening that a disaster relief assist package had been set up for the Fernvale area following—the November storm—

Little known or reported is how badly it hit our little small holding in Wamuran Basin, our current only source of income. We had damage to every fenced paddock, internal and boundary. 1,000 trees down or causing a serious danger to us and livestock.

Our neighbours, substantial fruit growers and exporters also doing it tough due to ill health have substantial damage to fruit nets and fallen debris.

Thankfully, we were able to get some assistance thru our insurance company with fence repair and securing the farm but we need assistance with the remaining danger posed by the fallen and damaged trees making larger areas of the farm inaccessible.

Are we entitled to claim the offered \$1,000 per household, which would make a small contribution towards hiring heavy duty machinery to clear the damaged and fallen trees ...

Unfortunately, the answer to Susan was no. More frustratingly, what ensued was classic government buck-passing. I wrote to the state minister. He blamed the federal government. The federal government then blamed the local government and the local government blamed the state and federal governments.

I know that the ministers for communities and agriculture recently announced a new one-stop shop for primary producers confronted by natural disasters, www.farmerdisastersupport.org.au. Although that is certainly welcome—and I will be promoting it—as a government we must resolve the disaster declaration process inconsistencies. We cannot blame each other. We need to do more, because Queenslanders expect more. We must simplify, strengthen and more consistently apply disaster declarations so that people like those in the Glass House electorate do not fall through the cracks again in the future.

The Good Foundation, Jamie's Ministry of Food; State Schools, Maintenance; Parker, Councillor P



Hon. CR DICK (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (1.45 am): As both the member for Woodridge and the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services, it is a privilege to deliver initiatives that I know have the capacity to positively improve the health of my electorate. It was great to recently announce the expansion in Queensland of Jamie's Ministry of Food—a community based cooking program inspiring people to get back to basics in the kitchen by equipping them with simple skills and knowledge. I am proud to say that our government has committed \$1.34 million over the next 2½ years to The Good Foundation to continue the Jamie's Ministry of Food program in electorates just like Woodridge. I was especially proud to recently make this announcement in Logan, where this program has already worked wonders via visits from its mobile kitchen.


This new agreement will focus on growing the program's reach across Queensland. That will include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, young people, those on low incomes and Queenslanders living in rural and remote communities. This is welcome news for Woodridge, because it means that families and other groups within my electorate needing additional support will be given

the chance to learn basic food and cooking skills and practical tips to help them achieve better health. By making this program available to individuals across the length and breadth of Queensland, including my constituents, we can change the way they and their families eat and how they think about food, which will, in turn, lead to a healthier Queensland and a healthier Woodridge electorate.

Over the summer break, local tradies were also building a better Woodridge electorate by upgrading school facilities in my electorate to make sure that the children of Woodridge are learning in quality classrooms. I am pleased to say that in Woodridge this meant upgrades to three schools. Woodridge North State School enjoyed a refurbishment of blocks B, C and D, totalling \$218,000. Woodridge State High School is now benefiting from improved access to its special education program block, worth almost \$200,000. Mabel Park State High School's budding young scientists learning in their school's J block are relishing new roof repairs—a \$243,000 project. This is all part of our government's commitment to not only build better schools in Woodridge but also provide valuable jobs for local tradies.

I would like to acknowledge retiring Logan City Council Mayor, Councillor Pam Parker. In Pam Parker the people of Logan found a champion who was superbly equipped to fight for them with a passion for and commitment to Logan that was both self-evident and infectious. I know firsthand, from the work that we have done jointly in the service of Woodridge residents, that her motivation has always been drawn from her commitment to make the lives of people better. I take this opportunity to put on the parliamentary record my sincere thanks to Pam for her tireless work to change the image of our region, to unleash the potential of its people and to harness the energy and great diversity of Logan City. Pam is a true credit to Logan and to Woodridge, and she leaves both of them better places for her service.

Bowly, Mr R

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (1.48 am): Vale Richard Bowly Snr, late of Toowoomba. I take this opportunity to pay my respects and honour Mr Richard Beresford Bowly, late of Toowoomba, who passed away last Saturday, 12 March, aged 82. Richard Bowly was a leader and community servant who achieved much in his 82 years, including three separate careers: firstly, as an advertising executive in the 1950s; secondly, as a marketing executive with Carlton & United Breweries in the 1960s; and thirdly and finally, for the last 34 years of his life as a highly successful hotel owner and operator, first at Brisbane's Waterloo Hotel and from 1986 at Toowoomba's own Southern Hotel. It is in this capacity as the owner of one of Toowoomba's best hotels that I came to know Richard well.

Despite receiving a life-saving liver transplant in 1998, Richard remained an active and imaginative hotel licensee well into his 80s and continued to contribute to a wide range of community, charitable and industry causes at an age when most of us would be reluctant to leave the couch. Eighteen years ago, he was scheduled to die from liver disease until a last-minute miracle provided a liver transplant and gave him 18 more years of borrowed, productive time. He did not waste it. Richard used this time to good effect: chalking up 34 years at his Southern Hotel; making major contributions as a member of the board of the Mater Foundation; serving as a QHA divisional chairman and contributing a regular column to its industry magazine; representing the hotel industry on the Gambling Community Benefit Fund committee; remaining fully engaged in my Rotary Club, the Garden City Rotary Club; and, through his hotel and family, contributing to numerous charitable and community causes in his home town of Toowoomba. Such was his impact that Richard was made a life member of the QHA in 1998.

I will return now to Richard's career as a hotel owner and operator at Toowoomba's Southern Hotel. With the support of his family, he turned what was a modest and traditional drinking hotel into a local powerhouse of innovation, best practice and customer service and a highly profitable business which today employs more than 100 people and operates three satellite sites. Richard was an innovator with a canny ability to spot the trend before it arrived. For example, his hotel was one of the first to place quality food at the head of its product offerings, and today it is recognised as one of Toowoomba's premier food venues. He recently expanded the hotel to incorporate a separate and substantial coffee shop—fire+ice—attracting new customers and more families.

Always generous with his time, money, advice and heart, Richard Bowly set an outstanding example of tenacity, innovation, hard work and humility. Remarkably, at the age of 80, only two years ago, Richard was honoured as QHA's Hotelier of the Year for 2014. I will miss my friend Richard Bowly, and Toowoomba and Queensland will miss him also. I commend his service to industry and the community over a generous and productive life, and I extend the condolences of the House to his wife, Judy, and the Bowly family.

Oral Health; St Patrick's Day



Mr POWER (Logan—ALP) (1.51 am): More than half of Queensland children aged between five and 15 suffer from tooth decay. That is a stark and sobering statistic that all in this House should reflect on, as we know that childhood tooth decay leads to significant later oral and general health problems. That is why last week I was pleased to represent Minister Cameron Dick—as he was in Moura opening the brand-new local hospital—at the Browns Plains Community Health Centre to launch a new program that is being jointly rolled out by Metro North and Metro South health services called Lift the Lip. It is a program to equip child health nurses with vital resources so they can support families with preventative oral health advice and give them the skills to recognise dental disease and refer it to professional dental practitioners. It is about ensuring that we break down the silos between health specialties and see that patients get the care they need early to prevent further problems later in life. Queensland's Chief Dental Officer, Dr Brown, said at the launch—

This early intervention has the potential not only to save our kids' teeth, but also reduce the need for additional and sometimes costly and complex dental procedures.

I congratulate the continuing innovation of the health department to act to prevent ongoing health conditions that are so debilitating to the quality of Queenslanders' lives.

Today, 17 March—or at least it was a few hours ago—we celebrate the great St Patrick. He was not just an early Christian but also a unifying symbol of a nation and a diaspora that spreads throughout the world. In this place, many Irish or those of Irish descent have made a strong contribution, not least 100 years ago when Thomas 'TJ' Ryan led Labor to government in this place, building the very definition of Queensland as a progressive, fair state. His father's experience living through the famine in Tipperary would have given him a strong sense of social justice and fairness for all.

My grandfather Morrie O'Kane said—and he is right—that there are only two types of people in the world: the Irish and those who want to be Irish. Tonight—or at least last night—the whole world gets to be Irish, even those whose ancestors never graced that island of saints and scholars in the North Atlantic. Tonight—well, last night—all the Irish of the House, both the O'Palaszczuks and the McSpringborgs, celebrated the great saint and the Irish on this special day. I add, Mr Speaker, that the great Wellington himself was an Irishman, so you can celebrate it, too.

Dalrymple Electorate, Motor Sport Precinct



Mr KNUTH (Dalrymple—KAP) (1.54 am): I rise to speak about a combined development project that is happening in Charters Towers in the seat of Dalrymple. At the end of last year, the Premier came to my electorate and discussed with the North Queensland Motor Sports Association the development of the Milchester motor sport precinct. I am pleased to say that the Charters Towers Regional Council has provided the land, there are ongoing planning approvals and the drag strip development is well underway. I table the Charters Towers Regional Council Project Plan.

Tabled paper: Document, undated, Charters Towers Regional Council Project Plan for a motor sports precinct [\[400\]](#).


This new precinct will be a modern, internationally accredited motorised sport precinct and is located in a central area for the benefit of rural and regional North Queensland. North Queensland Motor Sports Inc. brings together the major motor sporting groups in North Queensland to form a board of directors. They include Townsville City Auto Sports Club, North Queensland Off Road Racing Club, Charters Towers Drag Racing Club, Charters Towers Remote Control Racing Club, Speedway Racing North Queensland and Charters Towers 4X4 Club. These great clubs will provide guidance and fantastic events for the community's enjoyment.

There have already been several events held at the precinct that have been a great success. The first race at the new precinct had more nominations and spectators than there have been for years, and the final round of the North Queensland Off Road Racing Super Series was held at the new venue last November. The benefits of this precinct are not only for motor sports enthusiasts but also for the town and region, with more people coming in to see some great off-road racing. In the past, the Charters Towers Drag Racing Club used the airport as a drag-racing strip, and as members can imagine there were many issues with planes wanting to land. Now this combined effort has taken the drag racing out to this precinct, with work already underway.

The community is obviously optimistic that they can have further development of this facility, and I am pleased to tell the House about it. However, we have a long way to go to fully develop this precinct. The Premier talks about shovel-ready projects, where millions of dollars have been granted in metropolitan areas. We have seen none of this. This is a shovel-ready project that will provide huge

benefits to a region that has almost three times the state average of unemployment. Our regions are doing it very tough. There is no doubt that a fully developed precinct will lift morale, create interest for our younger generations and provide both social and economic benefits for Charters Towers and North Queensland. To make this happen, we cannot keep selling raffle tickets. Like I have said, millions of dollars have been handed out to South-East Queensland and we are calling for a balance of funding to support projects like this that will bring jobs and tourism to the regions.

Toogoolawah, ANZ Bank

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (1.57 am): Earlier this month the ANZ bank announced its decision to close the doors of the Toogoolawah local branch. Several hours ago, a group of some 200 Toogoolawah and Somerset community members held a public meeting at the Alexandra Hall in Toogoolawah to announce their objections to the closure. While I could not be there to support the newly formed Save our Bank group, I would like to add my support to their objections and join them in their fight to overturn this extremely disappointing decision by the ANZ. Nerida Freestun and her group, including the local mayor, Graeme Lehmann, did a wonderful job of organising this meeting.

Toogoolawah is a small regional town in the southern part of my electorate. The loss of any service to any of our regional towns is devastating. Too often we feel the brunt of large companies overturning their commitment to serve regional areas. Unfortunately, this has become a common theme for the big banks, who close their face-to-face banking services and believe they can provide this service just as well online. Unfortunately, for many people in the country this is just not the case. We have poor internet connection or none at all, and some people do not even have a computer.

The ANZ has suggested customers should travel to the Kilcoy branch. From Toogoolawah, this is at least 40 kilometres away on very busy highways, but that is if you live in Toogoolawah. It is too bad if you live an hour the other side of Toogoolawah. This is not always possible and it is sometimes impossible for busy business owners and older members of our community with limited transport options. I also question the ANZ's real reasons for pulling out of Toogoolawah. It is very difficult for my community to fathom this when the Somerset Regional Council has publicly stated—

Council alone has more than \$36 million invested at the ANZ bank at Toogoolawah and has multiple ANZ credit card accounts.

This decision came as a surprise to the council, which relies on the branch to manage their loans, investments and general day-to-day banking. What about the community groups, like the Toogoolawah Campdraft and the Toogoolawah Show Society? They actually access the bank to physically deposit large amounts of money. Obviously, the job losses are also of a concern and we will lose a dedicated group of employees who understand our local community.

On behalf of the customers of ANZ Toogoolawah and the community in general, I have written to ANZ expressing my extreme disappointment and have asked them to reconsider this on behalf of my community. Apparently, the ANZ has decided to desert some 19 other communities across regional Australia. I encourage big businesses to always retain their interests in our regional towns. Loyalty works both ways, as does trust. Let us hope the ANZ reverse their decision in Toogoolawah.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 2.00 am (Friday).

ATTENDANCE

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