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FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT

Thursday, 12 May 2016

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THURSDAY, 12 MAY 2016



The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

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

SPEAKER'S RULING

Rule of Anticipation



Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, report No. 17 of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly tabled on 25 February 2016 relates to that committee's review of the parliamentary committee system. On 21 April 2016 the Premier introduced the Constitution of Queensland and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. Some of the key recommendations of report No. 17 were in relation to statutory recognition of the parliamentary committee system and self-referral powers for committees, and the bill before the House seeks to give effect to those recommendations. It is clear to me that any debate of report No. 17 is likely to be anticipatory of the bill in terms of standing order 231.

Similarly, report No. 11 of the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee tabled on 21 March 2016 relates to that committee's inquiry into a suitable model for the implementation of the National Injury Insurance Scheme. On 19 April 2016 the Treasurer introduced the National Injury Insurance Scheme (Queensland) Bill and that bill has been referred to the committee with a report back date to the House of 19 May 2016.

As report No. 11 addresses the committee's recommendations as to the most suitable model for implementing the National Injury Insurance Scheme in Queensland and the bill before the House seeks to implement the National Injury Insurance Scheme in Queensland, it is clear to me that any debate of report No. 11 is likely to be anticipatory of the bill in terms of standing order 231. Accordingly, I rule that the debate of the above two committee reports will need to be either postponed until debate of the relevant bills or discharged from the *Notice Paper*.

TABLED PAPER

MEMBER'S PAPER

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

Member for Cairns (Mr Pyne)—

[678](#) Document, undated, titled '3 Storey Development at Lennox Street Maryborough'

NOTICE OF MOTION

Federal Budget, Backpacker Tax



Hon. LE DONALDSON (Bundaberg—ALP) (Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries) (9.34 am): I give notice that I will move—


This House notes:

1. the federal budget reveals the government is planning to raise more than \$500 million from the backpacker tax from 1 July 2016;
2. working holiday visa holders will no longer get the tax-free threshold and pay a rate of 32.5 cents in the dollar from the first dollar earned. Instead, money will go directly to Canberra;
3. the tax will hurt Queensland's agriculture sector which relies on backpackers for seasonal jobs like fruit picking and harvesting; and
4. the tax will hurt Queensland's tourism industry and deter holiday-makers from choosing Australia.

This House calls on the Turnbull government to immediately commit to abolishing the tax on working holiday-makers which is already hurting Queensland's agricultural and tourism industries.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Rio Tinto

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.35 am): I would like to update the House on a significant international investment that will benefit the Queensland economy. Members would be aware that on Friday Rio Tinto approved the development of the Oyu Tolgoi mine in Mongolia. This is proposed to be one of the biggest copper mines in the world. The development of the mine is expected to begin mid-2016, following the approval of a \$5.3 billion investment from project partners and the granting of the necessary permits.

Last week I met with Rio Tinto chief executive Sam Walsh as well as incoming CEO Jean Sébastien Jacques for an update on Rio's investments in Queensland and around the world. In a follow-up letter to me, Mr Walsh and Mr Jacques told me their Mongolian project would have flow-on benefits for Queensland. Rio plans on using their already established Brisbane office as a key technical and support hub for its new operations. The letter stated—


Teams of highly skilled professionals will be based in Brisbane to support this multi-decade project in Mongolia.

This is great news for Queensland. As we know, the downturn in the commodities sector, particularly the coal price, has meant not only a downturn in mining jobs but also a downturn in support and corporate staff in Brisbane. Rio's decision to base support staff in Brisbane is a vote of confidence in our state and an acknowledgement of Queensland's close ties with Asia. In fact, the letter acknowledged this saying—

It was a pleasure to meet with you and provide an update on our activities in Queensland. We were very interested to hear more about Queensland's strong innovation agenda and the state's developing links with China.

To hear that from the outgoing and incoming chief executives of one of the world's biggest companies tells me we are on the right track with our innovation and trade priorities. I would like to thank Rio Tinto for their confidence in Queensland and wish them well with their Mongolian project because it also means jobs for Queensland.

Education System, English


 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.37 am): My government is committed to ensuring that our education system provides students with the best possible preparation for future employment, further education and training opportunities. We recognise that, in the digital age, high-quality communication and literacy skills are more important than ever. Effective communication and literacy skills are essential building blocks for success in work, study and life generally. We want to ensure that every student in Queensland who finishes year 12 has these critical skills. That is why my government has proposed to make English studies compulsory for all year 11 and 12 students across Queensland.

It is essential that Queensland students are prepared for the jobs of tomorrow, and we need to foster a culture of innovation, agility and resilience in our young people. We know that studying literature, media and languages promotes creative thinking, imagination, critical awareness and the ability to communicate effectively in different situations. Queensland schools currently offer English, English communication, English extension and English for ESL learners. While we acknowledge that the majority of Queensland's senior students currently undertake English studies, we want to ensure that all senior students are equipped with critical communication and literacy skills.

The Ministerial Senior Secondary Assessment Taskforce will consider this proposal as part of broader reforms to senior assessment and tertiary entrance arrangements. If endorsed by the task force, English studies could become compulsory for year 11 students from 2018. These arrangements will be further considered by the government as part of the broader reforms to senior assessment and tertiary entrance arrangements, expected to be finalised by the middle of this year.

This proposal sends a very strong message about my government's commitment to the quality of education in Queensland and improving educational outcomes. I thank the Minister for Education for her very hard work in this area. She is doing an outstanding job.

Gold Coast Community Cabinet


 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.39 am): My government will hold a community cabinet meeting at the Gold Coast this weekend. Community cabinet meetings are an important opportunity for my government to engage with local residents on issues that

are important to them. This weekend's community cabinet will be the third for the year after earlier meetings in Gladstone and Pine Rivers-Kallangur. On Sunday, my ministers will gather at Southport State High School where we will meet local residents and groups in deputations. The formal cabinet meeting will be held on Monday.

The Gold Coast is experiencing significant growth. The Treasurer recently announced that the population on the Gold Coast is forecast to grow by 350,000 people in the 25 years to 2036. That equates to an average growth rate of more than two per cent. The Gold Coast is benefiting from the extraordinary boost to tourism. Preparations are well advanced for the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games, which is now less than two years away. My ministers are determined to promote further growth and generate more jobs on the Gold Coast. The community cabinet meeting is an important part of our ongoing commitment to the region and we will look forward to going to the Gold Coast this weekend.

Mr Stevens: Where are all your local members?

Planning Reform Bills


 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade and Investment) (9.40 am): He will have a bit more time to participate this time, Mr Speaker. Last night this parliament passed new planning laws that will make a real difference to our communities and our neighbourhoods. These planning laws will be better for the community, better for jobs and better for our environment and heritage. Their passage is the culmination of years of consultation with local governments, the property sector, planners and the community, and I want to thank them for their contribution. I also want to acknowledge those opposite who have contributed over the last three years to what we voted on last night. Of course, as a Labor government, we have acted to ensure these laws get the balance right, to create a planning system that will harness the opportunities of growth whilst ensuring that the community is front and centre.

The legislation honours this government's promise to Queenslanders to listen to councils and communities to ensure genuine public participation in planning. The community will now have more say in planning schemes and will be able to appeal development without fear of cost orders against them. Our laws will mean councils for the first time now have to publish reasons for approvals, ensuring real transparency in decision-making. For too long there has been a veil of secrecy over many development decisions. This added transparency will make assessing authorities far more accountable. These reforms will also give certainty and confidence to industry and to investors which will create jobs for Queenslanders and contribute to the state's economic success.

These laws are part of our plan to deliver Australia's best planning system, which has livability, sustainability and prosperity at its core. There will be at least a 12-month transition period before the legislation is implemented. My department is committed to assisting councils transition to the new planning system as smoothly as possible, beginning with a series of workshops in July. A statewide program will be rolled out to educate practitioners, the community and the development industry in preparation for the new system. This will include a suite of innovative tools and information targeted at various audiences, from brochures to online presentations and videos and participation in local events. This is part of the \$59 million investment that the Palaszczuk government is making to deliver planning reform for Queensland.

When we began this planning journey, the Palaszczuk government understood that we needed to do things in a new and better way. We set out a clear, collaborative agenda and we have accomplished it giving confidence and clarity to the industry to promote growth. Just as importantly, we have also delivered greater transparency and given the community a stronger voice. Good planning is essential for great communities, and our new planning legislation will mean a more livable, sustainable and prosperous Queensland.

Aurukun

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Minister for Sport) (9.43 am): As the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, I want to assure the residents of Aurukun that this government will work with them during the tough times to identify positive solutions. It is an understatement to say that the Palaszczuk government is very concerned about the recent events in Aurukun, including the risks to the safety of our hardworking teachers, our service providers and the wider community. Our commitment to ensuring

teachers' safety was evidenced by the Minister for Education's decision to temporarily close the Aurukun campus of the Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy for a period of five school days and to review the situation prior to reopening the school.

Having been to Aurukun on many occasions, I know the majority of people want to live harmoniously without all of the violence. However, there appears to be a group of people—some of them young—for whom property damage and destruction and threatening or violent behaviour are a part of their lives. This is clearly not acceptable and requires a response from government. The active policing in the community will continue for as long as necessary, but we should not lose sight of the fact that we have to look at the root causes of dysfunction in the community, and that must be our focus.


Directors-general from key government agencies will be working with the Aurukun shire mayor, Derek Walpo, and other members of the community. As a government we will need to apply our individual and collective efforts to immediately improve safety and living arrangements for service providers and the community generally, as well as working with the community to develop a way forward to achieve sustainable calm.

It is important to make sure that a whole-of-government focus is meaningful and sustained in Aurukun. That includes taking every opportunity to have people engaged and busy in the community. Over the next month I have asked that the government receives advice from key agencies and the community on the following: how best to re-engage children and young people disengaged with school or employment; ways to achieve sustainable calm; building community safety and security in the longer term; strengthening community governance; improving school attendance and engagement of young people; harnessing opportunities for business development and employment.

As an immediate response, we have increased the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships' presence on the ground to improve coordination. The department is also working with the Queensland Police Service and the PCYC in providing logistical and other support, and providing activities and supervision for students while the school is closed. I can also advise members of the House that the existing CCTV network in Aurukun has been useful in identifying some of the alleged offenders and installation of the wider CCTV network has commenced. In addition, an urgent review of all safety and living arrangements for service providers has also commenced in the community, and work has started on increased security measures.

Let me be clear: the Queensland government wants to continue work in partnership with the Aurukun community, the council, police, teachers and other workers. I will be in Aurukun tomorrow, joining the member for Cook, the mayor and others in the community at the community meeting which has been called to discuss a plan for a way forward in Aurukun. This government will intensify its efforts, in partnership with the people of Aurukun, to ensure a safer and more secure future can be achieved and to make sure that the community will be as resilient as possible.

Advance Queensland Research Fellowship Recipients

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (9.46 am): The Palaszczuk government is throwing its weight behind very promising Queensland medical research. In April, the Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy announced 54 Queensland scientists and researchers who were to receive more the \$10 million through the Advance Queensland research fellowships and PhD scholarships program.


Today I am pleased to provide the House with an update on some of the Advance Queensland recipients who are working within Queensland Health. Immunologist Dr Paul Giacomini from the Australian Institute of Tropical Health and Medicine at James Cook University in Cairns has been awarded a \$300,000 Advance Queensland research fellowship for his work on coeliac disease. Dr Giacomini and his team recently conducted a human trial at the Prince Charles Hospital in Brisbane where they infected a small group of coeliac patients with parasitic hookworms. The trial produced promising results, and Dr Giacomini and his team hope to use the Advance Queensland fellowship to produce a pill that will be more palatable to patients than the idea of being infected with worms.

Other recipients include Dr Anjali Jaiprakash, who is working on developing a robotic leg-holding device, making keyhole surgery easier and safer. Dr Natassia Goode from the University of the Sunshine Coast is finding ways to improve medication protocols in Queensland hospitals. While Mr Eric Wu from the University of Queensland is developing a 'smart' heart assist device. Ms Rebecca Stockwell from the University of Queensland has received funding to support her research into the spread of airborne diseases in hospitals through coughing.

We already have world-renowned medical researchers in Queensland, and this funding will help ensure they can take their research out of the lab and turn it into a commercially viable product. The result of this will not only provide an important boost to the state economy and create jobs but also significantly improve health outcomes for Queenslanders.

Next week I will be launching the second round of Queensland Health's new junior doctor research fellowships. These are our future senior researchers who will continue to pioneer medical research and cement Queensland's place as a leading medical research state. The junior doctor research fellowships provide unique training and development opportunities for junior doctors in Queensland to create exciting career pathways and encourage ongoing innovative research. This research funding is on top of the Palaszczuk government's \$35 million Integrated Care Innovation Fund. We want to harness the knowledge of those working in hospital and community healthcare settings to develop ways to overcome the many challenges of our health system. By encouraging change from the grassroots, we can implement lasting change.


Education

 **Hon. KJ JONES** (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism and Major Events) (9.49 am): The Australian Council for Educational Research report released today confirms now is not the time to cut federal funding to education. We know that quality education changes lives and we need to continually invest in education to ensure we are providing the support that our students need. Here in Queensland we are now using a strong needs based funding framework to target our resources to improve learning outcomes. Schools use this funding to employ specialist teachers, literacy coaches and attendance officers to ensure students are getting the support they need and, more importantly, students who need it most are getting that support.


We know from our NAPLAN results and our QCE results that this support is making a difference. Queensland schools are improving each and every year. We are the most improved state in Australia when we look at NAPLAN data. Last year our year 7s returned the best results ever. Last year we also achieved our highest ever year 12 attainment including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The Turnbull government has locked in billions of dollars in cuts to Queensland schools, and we know this will have a disproportionate impact on rural and regional Queensland. Our vast and decentralised state has unique challenges. We have more than 1,000 state schools in regional Queensland with more than 380,000 students. Twenty-six per cent of our school students attend schools with fewer than 100 students and more than 30 per cent of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are educated in Queensland schools.

Mr Turnbull does not understand that funding is vital to improving learning outcomes for all students. He wants an innovation nation but he does not want to pay for it. However, I welcome the \$37 billion commitment from opposition leader Bill Shorten that will finally see education funded properly at a national level.

Baden-Clay High Court Appeal

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (9.51 am): I can advise the House that today the High Court in Canberra has granted special leave to appeal in the matter of *The Queen v Baden-Clay*. As this matter will now progress to a full appeal hearing before that court, it is not appropriate to make any comment at this time and I will not be making any further comment on this matter.

Defence Industry Opportunities


 **Hon. AJ LYNHAM** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (9.52 am): My Department of State Development continues to work with our state's industries to ensure they get their share of the substantial national defence spend. That is why my defence specialists have been working to get further details about last week's announcement that the Singaporean government will spend \$2.25 billion to support the increase of its military training using Queensland facilities in Townsville and in Rockhampton. According to the federal government, the recently agreed Australia-Singapore Comprehensive Strategic Partnership will open a new dynamic partnership between the two countries across a range of areas and most immediately it will present defence related construction opportunities in North Queensland.

The new agreement and its implications for Queensland are set to be raised at the annual Defence and Queensland Government Consultative Forum scheduled for today. Under the proposed arrangements, Singapore will send up to 14,000 military personnel to Australia for training—up from the 6,000 a year now. Further, the Singaporean military will stay for up to 18 weeks longer than they currently stay, and Singapore will invest, as I said, \$2.25 billion in the development of new defence infrastructure including training facilities, barracks, roads, fencing and other measures. More than \$1 billion of this is expected to be spent in Townsville.

Based on the information available, it is likely that works in the two regional centres will include construction of accommodation and base infrastructure such as roads and training; transport and logistics to move the troops and equipment; and tourism. Further, the federal government said that, while the details are yet to be finalised, Singapore pilots will be able to train in Australia for up to six months a year. That has to be good news for the Darling Downs, where Singapore helicopter pilot training currently takes place at the Oakey Army Aviation Centre.

Queensland companies won \$3.6 billion in defence contracts last financial year. My department has already introduced more than 20 Queensland businesses to the French winners of the \$50 billion submarine deal, and we continue to work with the Cairns based companies targeting patrol boat servicing. If there is a business opportunity going in the defence industry, this government is working hard to put Queensland businesses at the head of the line because it means jobs for Queenslanders now and into the future.

Hot DesQ


 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy and Minister for Small Business) (9.54 am): The Palaszczuk government is committed to developing a flourishing innovation and entrepreneurial culture in Queensland. We are achieving this through our \$180 million Advance Queensland innovation and jobs plan, which offers a range of funding programs to support entrepreneurs, innovators and start-ups. One program designed to boost the maturity of our start-up sector is the \$8 million Hot DesQ initiative which the Premier launched at the extremely successful Advance Queensland Innovation and Investment Summit two weeks ago.

During my trade mission to the United States last week, it was my honour to host the international launch of Hot DesQ at Plug and Play in Silicon Valley. Combining a funding program with key selling points of our state's proximity to Asian markets and our fantastic lifestyle, Hot DesQ aims to attract interstate and international start-ups to set up shop in Queensland to help accelerate the growth of our start-up ecosystem. The program provides established entrepreneurial talent with the opportunity to add their start-up smarts to Queensland's natural industry strengths such as life sciences and biotech, agriculture and food tech, mining and energy, tropical expertise, software and the creative industries.

In addition to receiving funding of up to \$100,000, successful applicants will be able to select from a range of established start-up communities in places such as the Gold and Sunshine coasts, Toowoomba, Cairns, Townsville and Brisbane to establish their operations. They will be provided with free co-working space and access to the broader start-up network for six months. These entrepreneurs will become active members of our start-up community and bring with them knowledge to help our local talent and start-ups prepare for expansion into global markets.

The response from entrepreneurs and investors at the international launch was overwhelmingly positive. I was inundated with questions about the initiative and all the natural advantages our state has to offer international start-ups. The Hot DesQ initiative received another significant boost after my department secured an exclusive showcase opportunity this week at one of the world's largest start-up events, Disrupt New York. A key event at Disrupt New York was Startup Battlefield, which brought the world's top early stage start-ups together to take part in a pitching competition for the coveted Disrupt Cup and potentially millions of dollars from investors. I can announce that one of the 25 finalists in the Startup Battlefield, Timelooperapp, was selected this morning to be the very first start-up to secure Hot DesQ funding to set up in Queensland. As the team from New York said this morning, there is no better place to be. The Palaszczuk government has a plan for Queensland's economy now and in the future to ensure we are Australia's start-up state.

Queensland Jobs

 **Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (9.57 am): This government is committed to creating jobs and a diverse economy. A demonstration of this commitment is a three-month program with \$100 million worth of capital works projects that have commenced or have been completed throughout March, April and May. This work is supporting around

300 jobs across the state—delivering jobs and working hard to deliver those jobs in local economies. This included work on my own department's projects but also projects for a number of other government agencies including Education and Training, Justice and Attorney-General, Communities and Child Safety, Queensland Health and the Queensland Ambulance Service.


From new public housing in remote communities like Mapoon and Woorabinda to healthcare facilities at Zillmere and ambulance station upgrades in Cooktown and Kirwan, these contractors and subcontractors are delivering results for these local communities. Some examples of this work include five public housing developments on Palm Island—which I know the member for Townsville has welcomed and recently inspected—completed at the end of March and April. I know the member for Capalaba will continue to ensure projects in his electorate are on track including the public housing development in Capalaba and upgrade works to the Capalaba Neighbourhood Centre which are anticipated to be completed this month.

I know the member for Gladstone will be keeping in check the Gladstone Hospital fire safety upgrades due to be finished in May worth \$888,000. I know the member for Pine Rivers will continue to keep the construction of a new Dayboro Fire Station, due to be finished in June, on track. These are just some examples of how we are creating job opportunities and boosting the economies of not only this state but also some of the smaller and more remote communities within Queensland.

Over this current financial year, my Department of Housing and Public Works will be spending more than \$633 million on capital works and maintenance projects for social housing alone. This equates to nearly 1,900 full-time jobs for Queenslanders. In terms of Indigenous community housing alone, 728 full-time jobs will be directly supported. Government employee housing also represents a further development investment by this government. Approximately \$14 million will be spent during 2015-16 on building new housing for government employees. This money will directly support an estimated 43 full-time jobs, as well as allow local communities to importantly gain access to additional essential services.

My department also identified approximately \$9 million worth of maintenance and upgrade works for housing projects in North Queensland which have been brought forward this financial year as part of the Queensland government's Accelerated Works Program. This investment supports around 30 jobs in the region and provides a boost for the local contractors, suppliers and the workforce. The Palaszczuk Labor government is committed to generating jobs across Queensland. With this \$100 million worth of capital works in these housing and front-line service enabling projects across the last three months, we are delivering on our commitment to jobs.

Queensland Rail

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games) (10.00 am): The Palaszczuk government believes in the dignity of work and the value jobs have in the lives of Queenslanders. My colleagues and I are focused on increasing job opportunities for Queenslanders right across the state. I understand the importance of ensuring that people stay in work and are supported in work through opportunities to grow and develop. The most valuable asset to any organisation is its people, and this is clearly evident at Queensland Rail. Queensland Rail is an exemplary organisation which supports and provides opportunities to its employees throughout their career.


On 11 April, the Minister for Training and Skills, the member for Redcliffe, and I unveiled the QR Rail Training Centre of Excellence, based within TAFE Queensland SkillsTech's Acacia Ridge campus, in the member for Sunnybank's electorate. It was good to be joined by him on that occasion as well. As well as providing support to QR staff, this facility will provide TAFE students with hands-on access to industry-specific training, including rail transmission, and distribution, transport and logistics. One way QR achieves other work training opportunities is through the Queensland Rail Young Professionals Network, which is open to any Queensland Rail employee aged 35 and under. This network provides a way for Queensland Rail's young employees to connect, own their career development, actively develop their skills and make a difference to other young professionals within and outside of the business.

On Friday I have the privilege of addressing the fifth annual Queensland Rail Young Professionals conference. This group of talented and driven young people will be crucial in addressing the challenges ahead, identifying and fostering opportunity and making our public transport network the very best it can be. As a leader in passenger transport, Queensland Rail provides an opportunity to operate in an innovative workplace utilising the latest technology. In 2015-16, Queensland Rail recruited 28 full-time apprentices, trainees and graduates to provide an opportunity for their more experienced

employees to mentor and share their tremendous technical skills and rail knowledge with the next generation. We are not only investing in next generation rail; we are also investing in the next generation of rail employees.

I thank the hardworking staff of Queensland Rail for their loyalty, diligence and passion for the job. Due to the strong work culture within Queensland Rail, many employees stay for years, if not decades, which ultimately has a flow-on effect and supports the strong customer focus of the organisation. I thank all of those dedicated Queensland Rail employees.

National Volunteer Week


 **Hon. WS BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services) (10.03 am): This week we celebrate National Volunteer Week. If it were not for our dedicated volunteers, Queensland would not be where it is today. In Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, thousands of men and women who volunteer have saved lives and communities during natural disasters, year in and year out. Their dedication never ceases to amaze me as they selflessly work to help their communities during bushfires, chemical spills, land searches, rescues, floods and cyclones. During Cyclone Marcia, I saw firsthand the tireless effort put in by emergency service volunteers. Without them, my electorate of Rockhampton would not have recovered as quickly.

They are testimony to the Queensland spirit, sacrificing time with their family and friends to help those in need and making a real difference to our communities. We must also pay respect during National Volunteer Week to the families of these volunteers. They know that at any moment their loved ones could be called out to assist in a crisis, and this family support and understanding during these times is a priceless commodity.

To highlight how important our volunteers are, I can say that in 2015 our rural fire brigades attended more than 6,300 incidents and conducted 2,600 permitted burns and close to 400 community education activities. State Emergency Service volunteers completed a massive 340,000 volunteer hours during the first nine months of this financial year. They do wonderful work, as do the stalwart volunteers of Coast Guard and Volunteer Marine Rescue squadrons up and down our coast on our waterways, as we witnessed as recently as yesterday.

I take the opportunity to thank all QFES volunteers who, through their ongoing commitment and dedication, deliver exceptional service and support to their communities. I also commend the men and women in our community who volunteer to support our police, whether in a local Crime Stoppers committee or as a volunteer in policing with victims of crime or justice groups. During National Volunteer Week, I pay tribute to all volunteers for their commitment to make all Queenslanders safe.


Electricity Upgrades

 **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 knows that our government owned electricity corporations help keep the lights on and the wheels of industry turning in our state. I am pleased to advise the House that the Palaszczuk government has approved a \$31 million upgrade of CS Energy's Callide B Power Station. This investment will bring enormous flow-on economic benefits to Central Queensland. The project will create and sustain 350 direct jobs over two months, in addition to supporting the power station's permanent workforce of around 205 employees. CS Energy will kick off works in July this year.

I am also pleased to advise the House that our publicly owned Powerlink Queensland is investing \$34 million in the Whitsundays transmission lines. The investment will improve network performance and support continued economic growth in the region. It is especially good to see given that one of the short-listed solar projects is up in that area. In fact, there are two of them—one in Collinsville and one in Proserpine. We are getting ready for some clean energy to flow into our power system. The Whitsundays project will involve refit works along the 76-kilometre Collinsville to Proserpine transmission line. This stretch of powerline is the backbone of the Whitsunday network, supplying high voltage electricity to Collinsville, Proserpine and the broader region. This \$34 million investment will support more than 90 jobs and help sustain the Whitsunday region's economy—one of Queensland's major tourism hubs—by further improving the network reliability. The works will commence mid-2016 and are expected to be completed by late 2018.

The Palaszczuk government promised to be a government that delivers jobs and a government that invests in our regions. We are able to deliver on our election commitment because the government has kept our power assets in public hands. These two major investments would not have been possible had our power stations and transmission lines been sold off by the opposition leader when he was treasurer in the Newman government. The upgrades are critical to continuing Queensland's reliable electricity supply and powering the Queensland economy.

Tree of Knowledge Festival

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef) (10.08 am): The 125th anniversary of the 1891 Shearers' Strike and the first May Day march was recently celebrated in Barcaldine. I know that the Premier, the Leader of the House, the Minister for Health and many others travelled there to help celebrate with the people of Barcaldine.

A government member: The member for Gregory was there too.


Dr MILES: And the member for Gregory was there; that is fantastic. He will be interested to know that I am pleased to provide an update on another successful event held there in conjunction with the Tree of Knowledge Festival. Hundreds of people turned out to take advantage of the One Government Information, Service and Careers Roadshow. The roadshow, held on 29 and 30 April, aimed to strengthen connections between remote communities and schools and the Queensland and Australian governments. By all accounts, that is exactly what it achieved.

It did that by providing information on government departments, associated services and career opportunities available to students and the wider community. Sixteen government departments were represented at the roadshow including my environment department, the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, the department of education and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services. More than 200 students attended the first day of the roadshow at the Barcaldine Showgrounds. They were from six regional schools: Barcaldine, Aramac, Muttaborra, Jericho, Isisford and Longreach. The students enjoyed a range of interactive activities including making biodegradable planters, putting fillings into model teeth and measuring their running speeds using a police gun—a radar gun, I assume. Feedback from students and teachers was overwhelmingly positive.

The second day of the roadshow attracted another 500 community members to the Barcaldine Village Green who enjoyed displays including the Stay on Track Outback van promoting safe caravanning and Mates Motel—Join the Drive. In total, 700 people took advantage of the services on offer, which is more than three times the turnout at last year's inaugural roadshow, also held in Barcaldine, which attracted about 130 school students and 90 community members.

By being able to connect with rural communities in this unique way, we can find out the issues concerning residents and then take that information back with us to find better solutions in dealing with those concerns. We look forward to continued success when the roadshow rolls on next year.

Privacy Awareness Week

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (10.10 am): I would like to bring to the attention of the House that this week we recognise Privacy Awareness Week. Privacy Awareness Week was first held in 2006 and has been held every year since then. It works to promote a culture that protects and respects the privacy of individuals' personal information.


Privacy Awareness Week is an initiative of the Asia Pacific Privacy Authorities, which was formed in 1992. It is the principal forum for privacy and data protection authorities in the Asia-Pacific region to form partnerships and exchange ideas about privacy regulation, new technologies and the management of privacy inquiries and complaints.

In an ever-changing world and with a growing risk of identity fraud and misuse of personal information, it is important for Queenslanders to know their rights and help keep their personal information protected. Of course, public servants have a particular responsibility to protect and manage the personal information they handle in their official duties. The Information Privacy Act 2009, which applies to Queensland government agencies, sets out how public servants should collect, manage, store, use, disclose and transfer personal information.

Queenslanders concerned about these issues can visit the website of the Office of the Information Commissioner for more information and advice on how to protect their personal information.

MOTIONS

Notices of Motion, Discharged

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.12 am), by leave, without notice: I move—


1. notice of motion No. 4 that the House takes note of report No. 17 of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly tabled on 25 February 2016; and
2. notice of motion No. 5 that the House takes note of report No. 11 of the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee tabled on 21 March 2016

be discharged from the *Notice Paper*.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Suspension of Sessional Orders

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.12 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

Notwithstanding anything contained in standing and sessional orders, the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries be permitted to move, at 12.30 pm, the motion of which she gave notice this morning, with time limits for speeches and debate as follows—


- 5 minutes for each member; and
- total debate time before question put—30 minutes

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITIES COMMITTEE

Reports

 **Mr KING** (Kallangur—ALP) (10.13 am): I lay upon the table of the House report No. 15 of the Transportation and Utilities Committee titled *Public Health (Water Risk Management) Amendment Bill 2016*.

Tabled paper: Transportation and Utilities Committee: Report No. 15—Public Health (Water Risk Management) Amendment Bill 2016 [\[679\]](#).

The committee has unanimously agreed to recommend the bill be passed. On behalf of the committee, I thank those individuals and organisations who lodged written submissions and provided evidence at the public hearing. I also thank the committee secretariat and the Department of Health for their assistance. I commend the report to the House.

I also lay upon the table of the House report No. 16 of the Transportation and Utilities Committee titled *Electricity and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016*.


Tabled paper: Transportation and Utilities Committee: Report No. 16—Electricity and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 [\[680\]](#).

After examination of the bill, the committee has agreed to recommend part 2 of the bill relating to the proposed amendment of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities (Justice, Land and Other Matters) Act 1984 be passed. The committee was not able to reach agreement on parts 3 to 5 of the bill relating to the proposed amendment of the Electricity Act 1994, the Government Owned Corporations Act 1993 and the Judicial Review Act 1991. Government members support and non-government members do not support this section of the bill.

On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank those individuals and organisations who lodged written submissions and provided evidence at the public hearing. I would once again also like to thank the committee secretariat, Queensland Treasury and the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships for their assistance. I also commend this report to the House.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Mining Industry


 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (10.15 am): I give notice that I shall move—

That this House—

- (1) rejects the comments by Labor's federal climate change spokesman that, 'I don't think there's a realistic prospect of new coal mines starting up in Australia in the foreseeable future', and
- (2) unequivocally supports Adani's Carmichael project as a major jobs driver in this state.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Electrical Trades Union

 **Mr PYNE** (Cairns—Ind) (10.15 am): Over recent months I have seen the very worst side of an organisation I once worked closely with, the ETU. Prior to the 2015 election, the ETU ran the 'not for sale' campaign. That campaign supported me on the basis that I would not vote to sell public assets. I never have, and never would, vote to sell public assets. Having remained true to those values, I remain absolutely mystified as to why the ETU has devoted so much time and members' resources to a concerted and current campaign of hatred and vilification against me, my family and my staff.

Some brief facts on the moral high ground of all the players are: firstly, the ETU campaigned against the ALP Bligh government. I have never campaigned against an ALP government facing election—yet. Secondly, the ALP Bligh government sold public assets. I would never vote to sell public assets. Thirdly, when Stuart Traill was kicked out of the ALP, I supported him as a mate. When I resigned from the ALP, Stuart Traill attacked and vilified me. The ALP even expelled state secretary Peter Simpson for his stance on asset sales. I table these relevant papers.


Tabled paper: Bundle of social media screenshots, various dates, regarding the Member for Cairns, Mr Rob Pyne MP, and the Electrical Trades Union [681].

The ETU has subjected my family, my staff and me to appalling treatment, including the following comments on the ETU page. From Peter Simpson, 'Rob is a compulsive liar, a rat and a megalomaniac, end of story.' Other comments include, 'Hope he gets run over by a bus,' 'Pyne makes RATSACK seem like a better option,' 'Can you put someone in a wheelchair twice? Hang this grub for treason,' and, 'Time for rule 303 to be applied.' This was accompanied by pictures of a rat in a wheelchair and an empty wheelchair. People can read it for themselves. I tabled a picture of a new ETU T-shirt printed especially for this weekend. It is printed, 'When you rat on your mates it's a Pyne in the'—expletive— with a picture of my face on a rat's head and the ETU logo.

Let there be no doubt there are strong links between the ETU and some members of this House. I refer to the members who constantly 'like' and support comments made in this hate campaign by the ETU. I ask those members just for one second to ask themselves how they would feel if they were on the receiving end, how would they feel if it were their wife in tears, how they would feel if their 18-year-old daughter was scared to leave the house. I ask electricians across Queensland how they would feel if their families were treated in this manner. I call on Bill Shorten and Anastacia Palaszczuk to condemn the ETU's actions and campaign of hate and vilification.

Whether it is against me or against any candidate of any party at the coming federal election, these tactics, language and behaviour of the ETU must be rejected outright. It has to stop. The leadership of the Labor Party, both state and federal, must condemn the ETU's actions today.

Townsville Stadium

 **Hon. CJ O'ROURKE** (Mundingburra—ALP) (Minister for Disability Services, Minister for Seniors and Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland) (10.18 am): Like other North Queenslanders, I was absolutely gutted on budget night to see that there was no federal funding for the Townsville stadium despite overwhelming support. In another blow, in today's *Townsville Bulletin* it is reported that our beloved Cowboys may have to pack up and leave if we do not get a new stadium. Johnathan Thurston called the minister—

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Minister, that is a prop. It is not necessary. Put it down, please, or table it.

Mrs O'ROURKE: I table the front page of the *Townsville Bulletin*.

Tabled paper: Front page of the *Townsville Bulletin*, dated 12 May 2016, with the headline 'JT's Stadium Plea to Pollies: Build it or We're Gone' [682].

Johnathan Thurston called on the Prime Minister for his inaction on Grand Final night, and he has done it again in today's local paper. There are no more excuses: Townsville needs this stadium. We need this stadium because it will do so much more for Townsville than just hold sporting events. Initially, it will create up to 700 jobs during construction, but the real long-term benefits will come after the stadium is built. This vital project will completely revitalise the Townsville CBD. It will allow us to host bigger and better events. It will attract more visitors to our region from within Queensland, interstate and overseas, and these visitors will stimulate our local economy by staying in our hotels, dining in our restaurants and visiting our local attractions. This is more than just a stadium: this is the boost that Townsville needs to create jobs and opportunities.


Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Members, I cannot hear the minister. Member for Whitsunday and member for Chatsworth, I give you notice that if you persist you will be warned. I call the minister.

Mrs O'ROURKE: We presented the stadium business case to the Turnbull government five months ago. There was plenty of time to ensure that funding in the federal budget was included, but the federal member for Herbert has failed the people of Townsville. He has refused to fight for our city and he has turned his back on this game-changer for Townsville. The federal budget is more proof that the LNP are not serious about North Queensland, jobs or regional growth.

It is the same disconnect from the north that we have seen from Queensland's new opposition leader. In fact, the new LNP leader issued a press release over the weekend outlining Queensland infrastructure projects, but there was no mention of the stadium. There may be a new leader, but there is the same disregard for the regions that we saw from those opposite when they closed the office for North Queensland and tried to sell our income-generating assets. Despite the lack of support, the Palaszczuk government's \$100 million commitment towards the stadium remains rock solid. The commitment is matched by federal Labor and Bill Shorten. This government is working hard to deliver jobs and create valuable infrastructure for the future. We will continue to work with Townsville City Council, the NRL and the Rugby League fraternity to make this community project a reality.

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Unions

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (10.22 am): You can tell a lot about a person, Mr Speaker, by the company they keep. We have just heard allegations from the member for Cairns in relation to—

Ms Jones interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection from the member for Ashgrove. I am talking about the hate and vilification of unions against members of this place and other places, and the minister is smirking and laughing over there. Put that on show for all the students, education minister!

Will Premier Palaszczuk condemn the hate and vilification that the ETU and CFMEU have for not only the member for Cairns but many other Queenslanders? I table a copy of this Tweet from the Premier when she was opposition leader: 'Great to catch up with ETU members at the Brothers Leagues Club in Cairns last night.'

Tabled paper: Photograph, undated, of the Premier and Minister for the Arts, Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk at a union rally [683].

The Premier was with ETU members, and the member for Cairns has talked about their hate and vilification. I table a photo of the Premier at a protest in front of the ETU campaign bus.

Tabled paper: Document, undated, screenshot of Twitter page photograph of the Premier and Minister for the Arts, Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk with ETU members [684].

We have now seen the fear, the intimidation and the thuggish behaviour not only from the ETU but the CFMEU. It is clear who is running this state, and it is not the Labor government: it is the union movement. I table an article in the *Sunshine Coast Daily* yesterday which states—

ETU State Organiser Dan Bessell said only a handful of "scabs" were at working as other tradies refused to go back to work amidst the stand-off.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Sunshine Coast Daily* online, dated 10 May 2016, titled 'Hospital Site Strike: Agreement "all but reached"' [685].

These are yesterday's comments about workers on the Sunshine Coast University Hospital site. They were referred to as 'scabs'. Will the Premier condemn that sort of behaviour, which is in line with what the member for Cairns just said? The industrial relations minister met with the CFMEU on 31 March and Mr Michael Ravbar on 2 February, but many members will not know that not only is Michael Ravbar subject to a police and DPP investigation but he is now also subject to a CCC investigation for potential corruption. Yet they continue to meet with them.

The Minister for Housing put in his diary that he met with the CFMEU but he did not say with whom. It was only weeks and weeks later that he was forced to admit it was Mr Ravbar. We have Labor ministers who are continuing to meet with union thugs who are the subject of police investigations, the subject of CCC investigations and the subject of DPP investigations, and they continue to hold the hands of the unions. We know it is not necessarily the Premier: we know it is coming from the 'union whisperer', the Deputy Premier. We know the Deputy Premier calls the shots. I table a copy of the *Australian*.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Australian*, dated 10 May 2016, titled 'Trad ensures Labor's doors always open for unionists' [686].


It states, 'Trad ensures Labor's doors always open for unions'. If you have a union ticket you get on the red carpet. Like *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, you get on that special elevator and you go straight up to the Deputy Premier's office.

Mr Mander: Express!

Mr BLEIJIE: You get the express elevator straight to the Deputy Premier's office. The LNP will unleash the potential of Queensland and we will—

(Time expired)

Jobs

 **Hon. AJ LYNHAM** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (10.25 am): Mr Speaker, I refuse to address such a disgraceful performance by the member for Kawana. There is only one thing I wish to say, and that is the word 'vilification'. Vilification against doctors, nurses, lawyers, teachers and public servants is the vilification that we get from over there. I am not going to talk about that: I am here to talk about jobs and economic development for Queenslanders.

The Palaszczuk government is focused on generating jobs and economic growth for regional communities. Not only have we accelerated round 2 of the Building our Regions infrastructure program by six months but we have worked with councils to accelerate the projects they already had funded. I personally wrote to 28 mayors in February this year to encourage them to accelerate projects funded under the first round of Building our Regions. In this House I would like to acknowledge their response to the call to step up and help get these projects and jobs rolling in their communities.

Fourteen projects have been accelerated by an estimated total of 125 weeks, with construction underway for four of these projects and 10 projects moving into the design and tender phase. That means jobs and economic activity in regional communities across this state which have been abandoned by those opposite. Meanwhile, the Department of State Development is assessing almost 100 expressions of interest for critical infrastructure projects under the latest round. We took the advice of the Auditor-General in his scathing report on the previous LNP government's Royalties for the Regions program.

An honourable member: A great program!

Dr LYNHAM: Great program! I take that interjection. No-one else thought it was a great program. We took the Auditor-General's advice, and we have put in place a two-stage application process which assists councils by reducing the amount of detailed work they have to do up-front. Let me contrast our approach to that of those opposite. Their first major economic policy announcement was to declare that if they were elected they would recycle the publicly discredited Royalties for the Regions program. Just like they recycle their leaders, I wonder if they are going to recycle—


Mr Cripps interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Hinchinbrook, you are warned under standing order 253A for your continual interjections and trying to talk over top of the minister. I call the minister.

Dr LYNHAM: Are we going to see their dodgy selection process recycled again? What a similarity between state and federal programs. More than 70 per cent of the \$505 million allocated under the two rounds of the federal government's National Stronger Regions Fund has gone to seats which are held by coalition MPs or seats being targeted by Turnbull's LNP. It is disgraceful of them over there in the opposition and it is disgraceful of the federal government. We are sticking up for our regions—

(Time expired)

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Unions

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.29 am): What have we learned this week about this Labor government? We have learned this week that this is a government of the unions, by union lackeys, for union mates. We have just heard the member for Cairns tell us what goes on in the back offices of Trades Hall over there at Peel Street in South Brisbane, what goes on in the Premier's office and what goes on in the Deputy Premier's office.

We have learned that Labor ministers have had more than 350 meetings with their union mates—union mates who donated over \$2 million to state Labor. That includes the ETU, which donated almost \$42,000, and the CFMEU, which donated over \$350,000. We have learned that the deal-maker, the Deputy Premier, has hosted closed-door meetings with her union mates and everyone from the union movement who walked in.

The only market-led proposal that is being put forward by this government is the one to their union mates, who come in and talk to them all the time about the deals they want to do and the jobs they want for their friends. It does not matter whether it is Terry Mackenroth or John Battams: they are doing deals with their union mates. Instead of getting out there and meeting Queenslanders, government ministers are in there talking to the unions.

We have also learned that Labor always wants a carbon tax. It does not matter whether it is Kevin Rudd, Julia Gillard, Anastacia Palaszczuk or Bill Shorten; Labor always wants a carbon tax to push up prices for businesses and for families in Queensland.


We also know that those opposite cannot keep their policy commitments from breakfast to lunch. We know that the member for Yeerongpilly really wants a carbon tax but is afraid to say it. We know that the 'green whisperer' from Mount Coot-tha really wants a carbon tax and is prepared to say it, but he does not really want the Adani Carmichael mine but will not say that. We know that the Premier just says too much. When we looked across the chamber yesterday when she answered that question we saw everyone on the other side of the House going, 'Oh, no! Don't say it!' The media advisers had told her it was coming! She said that under no government she leads will there be a carbon tax.

What we know is that this is a government that has no plan except to increase taxes and stifle development. Only the LNP has the energy and the enthusiasm to get Queensland moving.

Mr SPEAKER: Question time will finish at 11.31 am.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Unions

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (10.31 am): My first question without notice is to the Premier. This morning the member for Cairns called on the Premier to repudiate the attacks on him by ALP union associates. Will the Premier respond to the call from the member for Cairns?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. There is nobody who supports those attacks on the member for Cairns. As a former minister for disability services I can say that there is absolutely no way that anyone in this House would support any of those personal attacks. I say once again: I believe that everybody in this chamber should treat others with respect. Under a former LNP government we saw that that did not happen. I expect everybody in this chamber to be respectful to others and treat others with the dignity they deserve.

Being a member of parliament is a tough job. People make a lot of sacrifices, but they do it because they believe in standing up for their communities and airing their opinions in this House on matters that are relevant to their local communities. That should be the basis we all work from when we take a seat in this House. Only 89 members are elected to serve in this place. It is a privilege that every one of us should always acknowledge. We should treat this House with the dignity and respect that it deserves.

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Unions

Mr NICHOLLS: My second question is to the Premier. Given the answer the Premier has just delivered, will she now cut the extensive ties between her government and this thuggish union, the ETU?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. I have made it very clear that I do not support the views of some individuals who are making those personal attacks on the member for Cairns. I reiterate once again: there is nothing more important than respect and dignity in this place.

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, if you persist in trying to talk over the top of the very person you have asked a question of, you will be warned.

Advance Queensland Innovation and Investment Summit

Ms BOYD: My question is to the Premier. What has the response been to the inaugural Advance Queensland Innovation and Investment Summit?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Pine Rivers for that question. As we know, my government has a very clear position of driving jobs in this state. We will do that by diversifying our economy. The inaugural Advance Queensland Innovation and Investment Summit was attended by over 1,400 people. The majority of those people were small business operators. This government has a very strong focus on liaising with the small business sector to help them with innovation, to help them create jobs and to make sure they have employment and trade opportunities into the future.

I have been overwhelmed by the response to the summit. I will share some of the comments made by people. Leanne Kemp, the CEO and founder of Everledger said—

I've been in London for the past year and coming home just yesterday, I cannot believe what a flower Queensland has bloomed into. We've seen a tectonic plate shift in attitude and the Government has just been incredible. This event is absolutely world class and there is no doubt about it that Queensland is the place to be.

To be able to come home and have conversations with not just government leaders but also really progressive companies, to showcase what a Queenslander is doing on a global scale, there is no prouder moment for me.

Taj Pabari, founder and CEO of Fiftysix Creations, said—

The Advance Queensland \$180 million fund is just fantastic. In particular the Young Starters Fund which is there to help young people, and for young people, so organisations and young people just like me can access these funds with quite a short application and get their dreams turned into a reality.

Peter Bradd, co-founder and CEO of the Beanstalk Factory, said—

Your team has put in an incredible amount of work to get this up and running and it's a real showcase of the QLD Government's approach to actually doing, rather than just talking. I'm excited to be a part of it.

Julie-Ann Lambourne from enVizion, an innovation showcase exhibitor, said—

As a small Indigenous NFP based in Cairns, having the opportunity to come and showcase what we are doing and are continuing to do, having so much media attention and the calibre of people that were being sent to us is beyond any amount of gratitude I could express.

Alanna from Femeconomy said—

My Co-Founder and I learned more in two days at the Advance Queensland Innovation + Investment Summit, than we could have ever hoped to learn in a year. What I found unique and inspiring about the event is not only that I got to listen to world leaders in the startup ecosystem, but I got to chat to them personally.

Adam Humphries said—

I was particularly impressed by the quality of the speakers that had been organised, the calibre of attendees at the various functions, as well as the actual conference venue itself.

Winna Brown, partner of Ernst & Young, said—

The summit was truly inspirational—there is definitely an innovation 'buzz' in QLD.

I am disappointed because I did offer the Leader of the Opposition an opportunity to attend the summit. This could have been a bipartisan venture—

(Time expired)

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Unions

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: My question without notice is to the Premier. I refer to the over 300 meetings between her ministers and union officials, and I ask: have any of those over 300 meetings involved the union officials who have been persecuting the member for Cairns?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I do not have that information quite at hand. The member can look at the diaries. They are all publicly available. Those opposite can do a bit of work and have a look. Let us just put the facts on the table. Those opposite talk about meetings with the unions. I make it very clear that since we were elected my government has had over 2,000 meetings in our diaries with business and industry groups. As I said very clearly from the beginning, we are a government for all of Queensland and that means that we treat people respectfully and we treat them equally. The opposition is being negative. Let me make it very clear: we had a small business reception in this House just this week. Over 300 small business operators from around South-East Queensland came to this House to meet with my government. There is nothing more transparent than having the disclosure of the diaries. They are publicly disclosed and they are there for the world to see. We will be monitoring very closely who the new Leader of the Opposition meets with into the future. Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition can also disclose where the \$100,000 of secret donations from the LNP are. Where are they?

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, Premier and members. Premier, I know you are keen to talk about that topic, but that is not the question. I now call the member for Bulimba to ask a question.

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Planning Frameworks

Ms FARMER: My question without notice is directed to the Deputy Premier. Will the Deputy Premier inform the House about how the Palaszczuk government is delivering effective planning frameworks in the priority development areas of Bowen Hills and Northshore Hamilton?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for Bulimba for the question. Whilst neither of the PDAs are in her electorate, I know that many of her constituents attend great places within the Bowen PDA and the Northshore Hamilton PDA. I also know that the member for Bulimba, like many other members in this House, is very keen and interested in the whole exercise of city building and how we create places for a growing population where people can live, work and play. I can announce that Bowen Hills and Northshore Hamilton were the first two PDAs that were declared by the former Labor government's Urban Land Development Authority as key urban renewal sites. In the last seven years we have seen a significant change in both these areas. These are now major magnets for residents, workers and visitors, with Rydges Fortitude Valley recently opening—it was a great event—and Portside Wharf with its state-of-the-art ship terminal, restaurants and shops. It is a fantastic location and probably has quite a number of locations that the Leader of the Opposition frequents when he is doing the numbers over coffee with members of the LNP. The development in these two PDAs is certainly creating jobs and economic growth. We know that the Bowen PDA extends over about 108 hectares of land. It is an exciting new inner-city precinct with approximately 20,000 new homes, with additional employment centres and industrial spaces all within easy access to the airport and the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital. At the heart of the PDA is the RNA redevelopment, which is providing jobs for 200 construction workers. Cross River Rail will also encourage further development around Bowen Hills, creating opportunities for more jobs and more affordable housing. The Northshore Hamilton PDA includes 304 hectares of land and currently accommodates 3,200 new homes. The PDA has already attracted 750—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, members. Member for Callide, you will have an opportunity to put that question to the minister if you choose.

Ms TRAD: Today I am announcing that we have commenced reviews of these development schemes because they have been in place for some time and the community would like to provide the government with some fresh ideas around the two PDAs. As a consultative government, we welcome that exercise. I pay tribute to the member for Brisbane Central in terms of her advocacy in ensuring that her community gets to have a say, particularly in terms of the Bowen Hills PDA redevelopment.

Member for Cairns

Mr EMERSON: My question is directed to the police minister. Will the police minister now refer the threats to the member for Cairns to the police?

Mr BYRNE: I think the Premier has made the sentiments of the government clear as far as our reaction to those commentaries. I am not in a position to be referring anything to anybody. Those sorts of matters are a matter for the member for Cairns and if the member for Cairns wishes to go down that path he is quite entitled to do so. I would support any actions that the member for Cairns chooses to take. It is not for me as a police minister based on the material that I have witnessed here this morning to make any determinations. I would say that the matter rests with the member for Cairns and if he has a substantive matter to put forward to the Queensland Police Service I encourage him to do so.

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Lytton to ask her question, I am pleased to inform the House that we have students from Guardian Angels' Wynnum in the electorate of Lytton in our public gallery observing our proceedings.

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Economic Plan

Ms PEASE: Perfect timing. Thank you, Mr Speaker. My question is directed to the Treasurer. Is the Treasurer aware of alternatives to the government's economic plan and what they would mean for Queensland?

Mr PITT: I thank the member for Lytton for her question—a hardworking member who is always in my ear about issues in her electorate. In answering the member's question I should remind members of the House that next month will mark the four-year anniversary of when the LNP's so-called independent Commission of Audit was released in Queensland. Before the 2012 election the member for Clayfield promised that he would get somebody independent to audit the state's finances. Who could he get who could be independent and beyond reproach? Of course, it was the right-wing warrior Peter Costello—a former federal Liberal Party treasurer, life member of the Liberal Party and architect of the Howard government's privatisation agenda! To push asset sales, the former treasurer relied on Peter Costello for his findings around gross debt, which were about inflating and scaring people into asset sales.

Mr Nicholls interjected.

Mr PITT: The member should listen to this, because how much did the Commission of Audit under Peter Costello cost? It cost \$2.6 million—\$2.6 million for an independent Commission of Audit. We did our own review of state finances when we came into government. Did we get Paul Keating to do it? No. Did we get Wayne Swan? No. We got the Treasury—the independent Treasury—to do a review. How much did it cost? \$3,000! You always get better value for money from the Labor side, and that is exactly what those opposite failed to see. Despite the claims in the Commission of Audit about \$80 billion of debt as being this figure that we are at, what did the MYEFO show? The MYEFO has shown that we still have not reached \$80 billion. The LNP left debt at \$77 billion gross debt. It increased it by \$15 billion and we have brought it down to \$74 billion. No matter which way you look at it—general government sector, net debt—all levels of debt are lower under Labor than they were under the LNP, and guess what? We did not need to sell assets to do it. It is absolutely ridiculous when we hear those things from the member for Clayfield. I almost forgot his name. I am too used to calling him the Leader of the Opposition already!

What we have seen though, disturbingly, is a direct quote in the *Australian* from someone opposite—a senior member of those opposite—who said 'they need a succinct and clearer campaign to push asset leases'. Who is that person and why are they not coming forward? Is this their plan? Is this the plan that they are not telling people about? The member for Clayfield said that we only had three choices—that is, to sell assets, to have higher taxes, fees and charges or to cut jobs and services. Does he believe in any of those anymore, none of them or all of the above? We do not know because he does not have a position. He has to come clean with Queenslanders and say what his position is. Has he accepted the verdict of Queenslanders or is he the person who is in the *Australian* quoted as saying that they need a clearer and succinct campaign? I can tell members who was succinct and clear: the people of Queensland when they voted out the LNP.

Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs

Mr BLEIJIE: My question is to the Minister for Industrial Relations. I table a copy of a photograph that appears to show the member—

Mr SPEAKER: Yes, table it please and put it down.

Mr BLEIJIE: I table a copy.

Tabled paper: Photograph, undated, of the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Hon. Grace Grace, at a rally for Michael Ravbar [\[687\]](#).

It appears to show the member for Brisbane Central at a rally in support of Michael Ravbar during the royal commission into trade union corruption. I also refer to the minister's numerous meetings with unions, her public support of Michael Ravbar, her apparent lack of action on illegally picketing CFMEU members and I ask: what assurance can the minister give to Queenslanders that she acts in the best interests of Queenslanders and not just union bosses?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I rise to a point of order. There is an imputation contained within the member's question. Mr Speaker, I ask that you reflect on that and consider whether it should be ruled out of order.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Kawana—

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I do not need your assistance, member for Callide. Member for Kawana, can you please repeat your actual question, not the introduction?

Mr BLEIJIE: I refer the Minister for Industrial Relations' meetings with unions—

Mr SPEAKER: No, I am after the specific question, please.

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. What assurance can the minister give to Queenslanders that, as minister, she acts in the best interests of Queenslanders and not union bosses?

Ms GRACE: I thank the member for Kawana for his question. Clearly, he is trying to establish some credibility in relation to this new area that has been given to him. Let me assure him that, when it comes to his credibility, when he was the industrial relations minister in this state it was at absolutely rock bottom. I will put my credibility as a union official from 1980 against his credibility any day of the week.

I can assure Queenslanders that, as industrial relations minister, I will continue to act in the best interests of Queensland as a whole. I have done it all my life. I have always taken a fair and balanced approach to industrial relations. I have always ensured that health and safety is paramount for workers in every single workplace in this state. I am always there protecting the rights of workers when they are injured—unlike the actions of those opposite who stripped away workers compensation for injured workers at a time when they are most vulnerable and most in need. Queensland has always had a proud history of common law rights and they were stripped away by the member for Kawana when he was the industrial relations minister.

The member has no credibility at all. I will go to any employer in this state and ask them about my reputation and I will tell members that they will say that it is flawless. Since being the industrial relations minister, I have met with more employer organisations than I have with unions. I have always acted in a respectful manner, unlike the loose lips of those opposite who continually divulge confidential considerations on matters that should have been held in confidence. That will not come from me.

In answering the imputation by the member for Kawana that somehow I do not have the best interests of Queenslanders at heart, I say to the member for Kawana that for all of my working life I have fought tirelessly for jobs for Queenslanders. I have sat around a bargaining table, found the middle ground and have come back with deals that are to the benefit of everyone involved in that bargaining process. I will continue to do that as industrial relations minister.

When I was at the Nurses' Union, surprise, surprise, I attended union meetings. As secretary of the Queensland Council of Unions, surprise, surprise, I led the Labour Day marches. Surprise, surprise, I am also a very proud unionist. There is no credibility from those opposite.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Before I proceed to the next question, member for Kawana, I am going to warn you under standing order 253A for your continual interjections during the minister's answer to your question. You did not raise a point of order in relation to the issue of relevance. You continued to speak. That is why you are now warned under standing order 253A. If you persist, I will take further action. I would also like to put the member for Logan on notice. If he persists with his interjections, he will also be warned—and he is warned. You are now formally warned, member for Logan.

Nurses

Mr KELLY: My question is to the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services. Can the minister inform parliament how the Palaszczuk government is supporting our hardworking nurses in improving patient care and is he aware of any alternatives?

Mr DICK: I thank the member for Greenslopes for his question on a very important day—International Nurses Day—a day on which each and every one of us in this parliament can acknowledge the fantastic work that nurses and midwives do not just in our public health system but across our health system in Queensland. The member for Greenslopes knows that full well, because of his very dedicated and long experience as a nurse in Queensland.

After the front line in our health system was smashed by the Leader of the Opposition when he was the treasurer in Queensland, we are rebuilding the front line in Queensland.

An opposition member: Rubbish!

Mr DICK: I take the interjection. The member opposite says that that is rubbish. When the Leader of the Opposition was treasurer, thousands of workers were taken out of the Public Service. What is our plan? Rebuilding the front line: 2,000 nurse graduates coming into our health system. We will have 1,000 a year over four years. That will be 4,000. We have already had about 2,000 come in. There have been 400 nurse navigators—senior nurses—and there have been 16 nurse educators. That is \$212 million. We are putting our money where our mouth is and rebuilding the front line.

When the Leader of the Opposition was the treasurer, he had one plan and that was to sack any public servant he could get his hands on. The Leader of the Opposition spent his entire career as treasurer channelling Donald Trump—‘You’re fired.’ ‘Nurses, you’re fired.’ ‘Midwives, you’re fired.’ ‘RoadTek workers, you’re fired.’ The members opposite say that they want to protect the bush. They say that they stand up for agriculture. Yet what Queenslanders got from the Leader of the Opposition when he was treasurer was ‘Biosecurity officers, you’re fired.’ That is the legacy of the Leader of the Opposition.

We know that the Leader of the Opposition is a bit lazy when doing the heavy lifting, so he contracts it out. He contracted out the hard work to Peter Costello. At least he knew that Peter Costello could do the work in cutting his way through the Queensland Public Service. That is the legacy of the Leader of the Opposition.

We will put our plans for Queensland, our plans for health, our plans for nursing against those of the members opposite each and every day. We are about building the healthcare system that we need for the future. That is what we are doing as a government.

Today, on behalf of our government, I formally recognise the fantastic work that nurses and midwives do across our state. They are the lifeblood of our health system. There are more than 30,000 nurses in the public health system alone. Today, I pay tribute to each them. It is a day for us to celebrate the work of nurses in making Queensland a healthier place.

Member for Cook

Ms SIMPSON: My question is to the Premier. I ask: why has the Premier refused to criticise the member for Cook, Billy Gordon, for his comments trivialising violence and threats to safety in Aurukun as ‘just a couple of young fellas out for a bit of fun?’

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member very much for the question. The member for Cook is an Independent member of this House. I have addressed this issue today in a media conference, where I said very clearly that the member for Cook may have been provided with some preliminary information. However, we now have a whole-of-government focus on the issues in Aurukun. The Treasurer is going to Aurukun tomorrow and he is more than happy to update any member of this House about issues relating to Aurukun.

Australian Tourism Exchange

Mrs LAUGA: My question is of the Minister for Tourism. The Australian Tourism Exchange will be held on the Gold Coast for the first time next week. Will the minister outline how the event will help support Queensland’s vital tourism industry?

Ms JONES: I thank the member for Keppel for her question. As you know, Mr Speaker, it takes a lot to get me excited, but I am excited today because the Australian Tourism Exchange, the largest tourism conference in the Southern Hemisphere, will be happening at the Gold Coast next week. More than 2,000 international and national delegates will be on the Gold Coast to celebrate everything great about tourism in this state. The Premier and I, and all my cabinet colleagues, will be there on Sunday for community cabinet and we are looking forward to welcoming these thousands of delegates to the Gold Coast, one of our tourism crowns.

Mr Stevens: Who are all your local members? Me or your local member? All the ALP members down there?

Ms JONES: I take the interjection from the member for Mermaid Beach all the way up the back. I have missed him. I wish he was back here, I really do.

Ms Trad: You can see his dancing better up here.

Ms JONES: I know. I am sure Jeff could dance. The Australian Tourism Exchange will bring together around 700 travel agents from across the world and more than 95 national and international media outlets to showcase everything we have to offer when it comes to Queensland. Queensland

sellers will showcase more than 180 tourism products, meeting with influential global distribution networks. The southern Great Barrier Reef will feature, which I know is something that is very close to the heart of the member for Keppel and many of our local members.

This is an exciting time for tourism in Queensland and to create jobs for Queenslanders. That is why our government is working very hard, in partnership with industry, to grow tourism and to grow tourism jobs right across our vast state. We have wonderful natural assets that encourage many people to visit Queensland and we are working with local tourism organisations to make sure that we are showcasing them. The Australian Tourism Exchange gives us a unique opportunity to have the focus very firmly on the opportunities that Tourism Queensland can deliver.

One of the first decisions I made when I became tourism minister was to fill the black hole left by the now Leader of the Opposition when it comes to tourism funding into the future—not my words, but the words of their own chair of their own Tourism and Events Queensland board in a letter to the now Leader of the Opposition about the funding cuts that he had in the budget for tourism. Despite being a pillar, what the legacy of the Leader of the Opposition is when it comes to tourism is to cut tourism funding. Unlike those opposite, the first thing that we did, and I thank the Treasurer for his advocacy in regard to tourism, was to restore that funding and we are restoring tourism jobs. We want to create opportunities for jobs right across Queensland and that is exactly what tourism has to offer.

The people of Queensland and the tourism industry know that you cannot trust the LNP when it comes to tourism. They have just made the most junior minister the shadow tourism minister, which shows that they do not understand opportunities—

(Time expired)

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Carbon Tax

Mr HART: My question without notice is to the Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland. As the Minister for North Queensland, has the minister taken any steps to find out how much Labor's proposed state based carbon tax would add to the power bills of North Queenslanders?

Mrs O'ROURKE: As the Premier and the Minister for Energy reiterated quite strongly yesterday, there is no state based carbon tax.

Industrial Relations

Opposition members interjected.

Mr KING: My question is to the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations—if I can be heard?

Mr Nicholls interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, you are now warned under standing order 253A. You have had ample opportunities this morning to do the right thing.

Mr KING: My question is to the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations. Will the minister update the House on any progress on industrial matters at the Sunshine Coast University Hospital project and any alternative approaches?

Ms GRACE: I thank the member for Kallangur for his question. I know he has a keen interest in workers' rights and is a proud unionist as well. I can inform the House that electrical workers at the Sunshine Coast University Hospital voted to return to work this morning and the ETU and the contractor, Nilsen Electrical, reached agreement on the terms of a certified agreement yesterday. This is a great outcome and it shows that the system is working and that the matter has been sensibly handled by everyone involved.

Even Fair Work Building and Construction director Nigel Hadgkiss—not a friend of the unions—said this week that he was aware of the situation and as it was an operational matter it would be inappropriate to comment. I reiterate that there was no illegal activity on that site by the ETU. They were taking protected industrial action. There were no orders against the ETU and there were no orders against the CFMEU. But did that stop the opposition? No way! Here we are, the first week back, with a new leadership but nothing has changed. I can imagine those opposite sitting around the table working out strategy. The Leader of the Opposition turns to his deputy and says, 'Come on, give me something against the government.' Nothing there. 'Okay, shadow Treasurer, come on, I need something. What can we get against the government?' 'Sorry, can't think of anything.' 'Hang on, member for Surfers Paradise, weren't you the employment minister in the last government? You've got something, surely?'

'No.' He does not remember. Nothing there. Then we have, of course, the member for Kawana in the back. He is eager to get some credibility. 'Pick me, pick me', just like that annoying kid in the front row of the classroom. He bypasses Maroochydore and Everton.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I cannot hear the minister. Member for Moggill, you are warned under standing order 253A for your interjections. Minister, do you have anything further you want to add?

Ms GRACE: Yes, I have. He sidesteps Maroochydore and Everton and he gets to the member for Kawana. 'I've got a great idea! There's a strike at the Sunshine Coast University Hospital. Why don't we pick a fight with the unions and the workers.' Do members know what is sad? That the Leader of the Opposition agreed. He thought, 'What a great idea! Something new! Something we've never done before! We can really get the government as an opposition on this one.' Nothing has changed around that table. It is Campbell Newman reincarnated. It is Campbell Newman back around the table taking orders from the member for Kawana—who they hid away, I might add, for six months during the last campaign—who has no credibility whatsoever. He was the worst attorney-general we had ever seen and the worst industrial relations minister we had ever seen. We have a new opposition leader with the same old ideas. Those opposite are bereft of ideas or plans. They come in here on the first day and pick a fight just like they did with lawyers, nurses, doctors and firefighters. It is the same old LNP; the same old tired mob.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Mount Ommaney, you have an opportunity to put your question to a minister if you choose. If you persist with your behaviour you will also be warned.

Firearms Licensing

Mr KATTER: My question without notice is to the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services. As a rifle can be cumbersome and unsafe for obvious reasons, many landholders or isolated rural property owners prefer to carry handguns when travelling on motorbike or horse. Can the minister explain why firearms licensing category H licence renewals and applications for primary producers are being consistently denied in recent times?

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call the minister to answer the question, I am informed that we have the Hon. Bruce Scott, federal member for Maranoa, in our gallery observing our proceedings. Welcome.

Mr BYRNE: I thank the honourable member for the question. I am well aware of certain sentiments in some quarters of the rural community about the use of short arms and pistols and so forth—concealable weapons. I have had lengthy conversations with senior people, for example, with AgForce, about these ideas. I come from a very direct perspective. I do not accept the idea, or the inference in the question in the first place, that the use of a pistol is in some way a desirable solution to a long arm for agricultural application. The idea of the lone cowboy having a pistol strapped to his hip as an effective weapon in agricultural applications simply does not cut it with me. There are interesting questions around what he is going to hit with that pistol and at what range. I have had conversations with senior members of AgForce. I simply do not accept the notion that a concealable small firearm—

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr BYRNE: It is an area weapon. Maybe an area weapon would be better for some agricultural applications, rather than a short arm. I have had genuine conversations with leaders of the agricultural community on this issue. No changes are proposed to those categories of weapons for Queensland.

Obviously, there is considerable concern about the use of, security of and access to that style of weaponry in Queensland. The core argument that a concealable pistol, a Glock or any equivalent type of weapon is preferable for application in the agricultural sector is not a viable argument to make. I am happy to take any number of representations that it is a good idea for someone to strap a .45 to their hip as an essential tool of agriculture, but I do not know very many people—although there are some—who genuinely support the application of firearms in the agricultural sector. We will take those representations when the consultation forum goes forward and I am willing to continue the conversation. However, I must say up-front that the Queensland Police Service and I have serious reservations about the veracity of the claim and the argument presented, and we will be testing that in a credible fashion. I cannot give the member any direct sympathy for this proposal. I am highly dubious about the merits of it.

North Queensland, Accelerated Works Program

Mr STEWART: My question is to the Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland. Will the minister please update the House on the progress of the government's Accelerated Works Program in North Queensland?

Mrs O'ROURKE: I thank the member for the question. Like me, he is very keen to do everything that he can to grow jobs and improve our economy in the north. With the downward turn in the resources sector and the closure of the Queensland Nickel Refinery, the people in Townsville and the northern region have been challenged with unemployment and uncertainty. However, the government understands the enormous potential North Queensland has and is dedicated to ensuring that its full potential is reached. That is why we are investing in the north through initiatives such as the Accelerated Works Program, which has been designed to maintain confidence and bring forward more employment opportunities.

In fact, we have already identified \$367 million in shovel-ready projects to accelerate more than 800 regional jobs in the north. I am pleased to say that a number of those projects are now underway and have been awarded to local contractors, creating both jobs and opportunities in the regions.

The contract to replace the Arnot Creek Bridge on the Bruce Highway north of Ingham has been awarded to BMD Group, with construction underway. That important project supports 31 local jobs. Construction of a set of overtaking lanes between Alligator Creek Road and Allendale Drive on the Bruce Highway is also underway, supporting around 29 jobs.

Our government's Accelerated Works Program is working to support regional jobs by bringing forward investment and economic opportunities. As a Townsville resident, I have seen firsthand how the QNI redundancies have affected families in my region. The Accelerated Works Program has brought forward many important projects, some by up to six months, which will fast-track jobs during a time when we need them the most.

In Townsville, we have allocated \$210 million for projects that will support more than 480 jobs. I am pleased to update the House that accelerated works at the Port of Townsville have now been awarded to local firms. The \$55 million berth 4 upgrade has been awarded to CivilPlus for primary wharf works, which is supporting around 100 local jobs, and the \$1.9 million berth 8/9 pile encapsulation works has been awarded to Bluewater Process Engineering and will support up to 15 jobs. We want to keep our workers and their families in the region. The Accelerated Works Program will help us to achieve that.

Nurses, Pay Increase

Mr LANGBROEK: My question without notice is to the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations. I refer to the decision of the previous LNP government to give nurses a 3.12 per cent pay increase per annum. I ask: on International Nurses Day, can the minister guarantee that nurse pay increases currently being negotiated will at least match the same 3.12 per cent pay increase?

Ms GRACE: Unless the member for Surfers Paradise was hiding in a corner somewhere, he should realise that before I was re-elected last year I worked for the Queensland Nurses' Union, so I know exactly what the Queensland Nurses' Union and its members think of those opposite. I can tell the House that it is not much. The former LNP government promised that front-line services in this state had nothing to fear and yet they came in and sacked thousands of nurses. We saw nurses and midwives walk out of hospitals, taking with them years of experience. Careers were shattered and families were left in turmoil because of the actions of all those opposite, but mainly those of the member for Southern Downs as health minister.

Now we are bargaining with nurses. As members know, this government sits very strongly on bargaining in good faith. That bargain process has been progressing extremely well. We are very close to an agreement. 'Agreement' means that the two parties agree to the outcome. It means that, when you settle on a pay increase and the terms and conditions of it, both parties sign the agreement, in agreement. As the minister responsible for industrial relations, I can assure the member for Surfers Paradise that we will come up with an agreement that is a win-win situation for both the government and the nurses and midwives.

On International Nurses Day, I take my hat off to our hardworking nurses and midwives. On International Nurses Day, on the record of this House, I apologise for what they had to endure under the previous LNP government. Never in their entire working careers did they think that their jobs would be treated in the manner in which they were treated by those opposite. This government has restored

front-line services. This government is not sacking nurses; we are hiring them. This government is hiring young nurses. We are giving young unemployed nurses an opportunity to work in our fantastic public hospital system. This government has a Premier and a health minister who care about nurses and midwives.

I congratulate all the hardworking nurses and midwives of this state. They are fantastic. They are what makes the public health system tick. We will give them an agreement that they will be proud of.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Moggill, you seem to be surrounded by a number of women who are having a lot of discussions. I do not want to identify only you, so I say to your colleague on your immediate left, the member for Mudgeeraba, that she will join you on the list of those with a first warning. Before I proceed to the next question, I am informed that more students from the Guardian Angels' primary school in the electorate of Lytton are in our gallery.

Regional Jobs Growth

Mr PEGG: My question is to the Minister for State Development. Will the minister inform the House of the latest action he has taken to support development and jobs growth in the north-west?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the honourable member for his question. However, I digress for a minute: on International Nurses Day, I too would like to pay tribute to our nurses, especially those who work in our mining communities, in the mines and in our regional communities.

I thank the member for Stretton for his question. It is appropriate that the member ask a question about mining. Approximately 169,000 jobs in mining are right here in South-East Queensland. Those mining jobs are in headquarters, in services and in METS. There are mining jobs in Townsville. There are mining jobs in Mackay. There are mining jobs all over Queensland. They do not just have to be in Central Queensland. Mining jobs are so important for this state.

I recently announced that MMG Ltd's \$1.4 billion Dugald River zinc project has been granted prescribed project status. This allows the Coordinator-General to assist MMG to navigate approval processes and gain timely approvals through government. MMG hopes to start construction on the mine located 85 kilometre north-east of Mount Isa midyear. This will give Queensland 600 valuable jobs during construction and 400 ongoing jobs.

Dugald River is one of the world's largest and highest grade known undeveloped zinc, lead and silver deposits with a resource of 53 million tonnes. This project includes the mine, the concentrator progressing plant, maintenance workshops, accommodation and administration, and road, rail and port logistics for export from Townsville.

MMG has advised it is still finalising its workforce make-up, but it anticipates having a mixed workforce of north-west locals being bused into camp and fly-in fly-out workers from the coast. That has to be good news for Townsville as well as for North-West Queensland when production starts in the first half of 2018.

Projects like Dugald River are critical to economic development and job creation in the north-west during these tough times. These tough times are caused by ongoing resource commodity price lows. The North West Minerals Province Taskforce is continuing to work. Last week my department made a valuable presentation to the resources round table. The round table will meet again in June. I am sure the conversation will be as robust and productive as our last meeting in March. Jobs in the resources industry are valuable for Queensland. We are a government of jobs now and jobs for the future.

Electoral Commission, Council Elections

Mr WALKER: My question without notice is to the Attorney-General. In light of numerous complaints made to the opposition regarding the conduct of the recent local government elections and the importance of integrity within the electoral process, will the Attorney-General publicly release any reports and ECQ correspondence relating to the administration of these elections?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. As we know, issues have been raised with the Electoral Commission. We know that these issues are raised after every election. We know that particular issues were raised by opposition and government members in relation to what happened with pre-poll and postal votes and what was happening on booths. These are genuine issues raised by the public and members of the parliament. The government is currently considering those issues that have been raised.

There is no requirement under the legislation currently for the Electoral Commission of Queensland to review a local government election or referendum. There is a mechanism for state elections to automatically be reviewed by the Electoral Commission. It does that after each general election. We know that from time to time it chooses to do them after by-elections, as we saw with the Redcliffe by-election.

There is no requirement for the Electoral Commission to do that for council elections. I can advise that the Electoral Commission has undertaken its own review. I am looking at that report at the moment and will give serious consideration as to whether that internal document should be released to the public. I acknowledge that genuine concerns have been raised by the community. It is extremely important that we make sure that all elections conducted by the Electoral Commission are done in a proper way to give the community the confidence that elections are conducted properly, that counts are done properly and that we do not have issues arising.

We know that they have to deal with a huge volume of votes that come through the booths. There is a lot of work that goes into putting on an election. We see these issues being raised after federal elections as well. These issues arise after every single election. That does not mean we should not be doing more to address those issues, learning from what occurs at each election and working towards improving those issues. I give the member my commitment to look at the internal report of the ECQ and give serious consideration to releasing it publicly.

TAFE

Mr HARPER: My question is to the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills. Will the minister update the House on the government's work across the state to support TAFE into the future?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. We know the invaluable role that TAFE Queensland and its teachers play in helping Queenslanders find new jobs, better jobs, rewarding jobs. We know how crucial quality training is for our continued economic growth. Expanding industries and new business opportunities need highly skilled workforces.

The Newman government deliberately ran down TAFE, stripped TAFE of staff, its campuses and its resources. To enable TAFE to operate across the state, the Palaszczuk government has embarked upon a series of consultation sessions with stakeholders to deal with TAFE campuses across the state. We are keen to bring communities with us because Queenslanders share our vision for TAFE.

These sessions have involved industry, education and training providers, universities, unions, state and local government agencies and local community representatives. To date, the consultation sessions which I have attended have been held at five TAFE Queensland campuses—Bracken Ridge, Townsville, Ipswich, Mooloolaba and Maryborough. I would like to thank all members who attended, including the members for Thuringowa, Townsville, Ipswich, Ipswich West, Maryborough, and my ministerial colleagues the members for Sandgate and Mundingburra. I look forward to joining other colleagues in coming weeks.

These sessions involved exploring solutions and partnerships to improve investment and utilisation, to drive enrolments and to support training in our state. More than 120 stakeholders have attended the sessions and provided their valuable contribution and ideas to meet future challenges. I should say that many LNP members were invited and every one of them has declined. I am pleased to inform the House that further sessions will be held next Monday on the Gold Coast following community cabinet and also at Mount Gravatt. Further sessions will be held in Cairns, Logan and Toowoomba.

The feedback gathered will inform the development of a draft plan that is expected to be released for a further round of consultation in mid-2016. The Palaszczuk government believes in a strong and high-quality public provider. Only Labor can be trusted to build a strong TAFE system, to train people for the jobs of the future and to deliver the skilled workforce that growing and expanding industries demand.

We are committed to training in this state. We are committed to investing in jobs, which means investing in education and training. We will do what those on the other side failed to do. That is to stand up for our premium, public training provider in this state, TAFE Queensland. We will value the teachers and staff who work tirelessly every day to deliver that quality training. We will make sure that they get the support they need by a government that believes in our TAFE system.

Homevale National Park

Mr COSTIGAN: My question is to the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef. Can the minister advise the House what measures have been taken to eradicate declared weeds including lantana and Cook tree from the Homevale National Park and, furthermore, what measures have been taken to prevent bushfires starting in the park and therefore killing local wildlife, including koalas?

Mr SPEAKER: There may have been two parts to that question. I call the minister to answer it as he chooses.

Dr MILES: I thank the member for his questions. I thank him for his interest in national parks, although I note he did not express any interest in conserving them earlier in the week when we debated how to protect our national parks.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, I would urge you not to debate the question.

Mr COSTIGAN: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I have spoken in relation to these matters.

Mr SPEAKER: No, it is not a chance to debate. Do you have a point of order? Do you find something offensive that you want withdrawn?

Mr COSTIGAN: Mr Speaker, I find the comments personally offensive and ask him to withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, will you withdraw?

Dr MILES: I withdraw.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members, we will now hear the minister's answer.

Dr MILES: As many other opposition members will know, whenever I have been asked by members to provide detail of park management operations in their electorate I have always organised briefings and provided that information. I am very happy to do that for the member for Whitsunday. I do not have in my head the exact management plan for every single national park. What I can tell the House is that all of the problems the member pointed to got a lot worse when the member for Clayfield was treasurer and he cut 20 per cent from the national parks budget, because managing pests, managing weeds and managing fires all take resources—they take park rangers. I think there were 68 fewer park rangers under the LNP after the member for Clayfield slashed the budget. That is the legacy of those opposite for our national parks. This week they continue to attack our national parks.

Our national parks are the most important conservation lands that the state manages. The Labor government will manage them well. The Labor government cares about our national parks. While those opposite continue to defend their flawed policies of slashing resources for pest, fire and weed control and continue to defend their failed policies of opening our parks up to open slather, putting commercial uses first, we will conserve our national parks. I am happy to organise a briefing for the member for Whitsunday on exactly how we are managing parks in his electorate.

Mr SPEAKER: Question time has now finished.

INFRASTRUCTURE, PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

Resumed from 17 March (see p. 884), on motion of Mr Pearce—

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*.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Mr FURNER** (Ferry Grove—ALP) (11.32 am): I move—

That the House take note of report No. 18 of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee tabled on 15 December 2015.

I am pleased this morning to be able to stand in the chamber and report to the House in respect of report No. 18 as chair of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee on the oversight of the Criminal Organisation Public Interest Monitor. One of the things that we, as members of that committee, are fortunate to do is to communicate and to get an understanding of this important aspect. I must say that every member of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee takes a very important focus and interest in this particular area of examining the Criminal Organisation Public Interest Monitor, COPIM.

This report provided information regarding the performance of the COPIM and his functions under the Criminal Organisation Act 2009. In respect of the hearing that the committee had on 11 November 2015, Mr Michael Halliday, the COPIM, appeared before the committee. The committee reviewed the COPIM annual's report 2014-15, which was tabled in this House on 29 September last year.

Once again, I would like to thank the COPIM. I would also like to thank the members of the committee for their interest in the opportunity to hear from the COPIM on this particular report. I would also like to thank the research officer at the time, Bernice Watson, who has moved on to greater opportunities in this place and is sadly missed by the members of the committee, for her detailed assistance and performance in regard to putting these reports together and for providing the committee with the opportunity to avail itself to do many examinations not only for this report but for all of the other reports the committee is involved in throughout the course of the year.

In relation to the COPIM's functions as detailed in the report, the Criminal Organisation Act provides for the making of declarations and orders by the Queensland Supreme Court, for the purpose of disrupting and restricting the activities of organisations involved in serious criminal activities, including outlawed meetings of criminal gangs. It is a scenario that I take particular interest in. Previously in my past career as deputy chair of the law enforcement committee, a joint committee of both the Senate and the lower house in Canberra, I examined many details of law enforcement agencies throughout the country. It is great to have the opportunity to be chair of this committee and to come to this House with that experience and with a complete understanding of the effects of law enforcement and the importance of hearing from the likes of the COPIM and other agencies as to why we need to make sure as a community we protect our citizens throughout this great state of Queensland and also, as I experienced, throughout the nation. I am pleased to have that opportunity to bring across my experience from my past career and to be involved in this particular committee as the chair of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee.

The objects of the act are, as I indicated, to disrupt and limit the activities of those organisations involved in serious criminal activities, including their members and associates. Under the act, the Supreme Court can, upon application by the Commissioner of Police, make various orders. Those orders may include the following: an order declaring an organisation to be a 'criminal organisation'; members and associates of declared criminal organisations will be liable to have control orders imposed on them; a public safety order, for any period it considers necessary but no longer than six months, prohibiting an individual or group from entering a premises, specified area or attending an event; and also fortification removal orders requiring an individual or organisation to modify or remove fortifications from particular premises.

As you can see, Mr Deputy Speaker, there are a broad range of opportunities for the COPIM to examine the activities of criminal organisations, their members and associates. In conclusion, it is a pleasure to stand in the chamber to be able to talk on this report.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: There were more speakers? I am sorry. I missed if there was anybody else from the other side who jumped. The question has already been put, so we cannot go back.

LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: In accordance with standing order 71, the notice of motion relating to report No. 19 has lapsed.

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

Report, Motion to Take Note

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: In accordance with standing order 71, the notice of motion relating to report No. 19 has lapsed.

EDUCATION, TOURISM, INNOVATION AND SMALL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note



Dr ROBINSON (Cleveland—LNP) (11.39 am): I move—

That the House take note of report No. 12 of the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee tabled on 29 April 2016.

I rise to speak to the report of the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee on the inquiry into smoking and tobacco use at universities, TAFE facilities and registered training organisations. It was my privilege to be the deputy chair of the committee at the time of the inquiry. The committee worked its way through the various issues in a methodical and productive way, and agreement was reached on many things. I note the work of my colleagues the members for Albert and Gaven along with the chair, the member for Townsville, and the members for Pine Rivers and Maryborough. I thank all of the committee members, and I particularly thank all of the stakeholder groups—the universities, RTOs, TAFE, Treasury and others—who provided very useful information for the committee to deliberate upon. I make special thanks to the University of Queensland, QUT, Griffith University, USQ, QCU and JCU. I hope I have not missed any; I apologise if I have. I am particularly proud of my association, as a former student, with James Cook University's Nathan campus and the University of Queensland.


In terms of the recommendations of the committee, there was one main recommendation, and that was that the committee recommend the government work with education and training organisations and their peak bodies to advise and assist with health promotion about smoking and smoke-free environments, to support implementation measures and to reduce smoking on campus. Apart from that key recommendation, the government and non-government members could not come to an agreement. We had a lot of helpful and useful discussions, but the non-government members made a statement which is in the report. We believe that universities, TAFEs and registered training organisations have a moral responsibility to protect their staff and students from the effect of tobacco smoke, both direct and indirect. As such, our position is for the government to work with universities, TAFEs and RTOs over a two-year period to self-impose and regulate restrictions on their own campuses, after which their actions will be assessed and, if found to be inadequate, the government should then legislate.

In short, our view is that we need stronger self-regulation. Almost all of the other states have used strong self-regulation, and a number of them have been able to achieve smoke-free universities without having the big stick of regulation to force them to do so. We think much more needs to happen in Queensland to achieve that. Getting together with the vice-chancellors of these organisations and working that through is a far better way to resolve this than creating additional red tape.

When I was at James Cook University undertaking my undergraduate degree, I was a casual smoker. I gave it up when I was very young. I was able to stop, but I understand for some people it is an addiction. We really need that understanding to take university students with us, not just impose things. Having been a smoker in my youth, I empathise with those who are addicted and who, despite their best efforts, cannot kick the habit.

When we look at the move towards smoke-free universities, we need to move in a way that considers those who struggle with the habit. It is a blight on our society. We need to work harder to educate people on the dangers of taking up smoking, and we need to continue to work with universities to reduce smoking on their campuses, but we have to do it in a careful and considered way. For example, there are isolated cases where we need to take caution. Griffith University's Nathan campus has a lot of bushland areas. There is a smoking area students can access that is safe, but if we were to make it completely smoke free in a way that is not careful or planned we may end up with people smoking in the bush and inadvertently increasing the risk of bushfire. That is why we say we need to work carefully: stronger self-regulation and legislation as a last resort.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Crawford): I welcome the students from Christ the King Catholic Primary School in the gallery from the electorate of Murrumba.

 **Mr STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (11.45 am): I rise today to speak to report No. 12 of the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee. As chair of the committee, I acknowledge the work done by the committee and the secretariat during this inquiry. This inquiry was about protecting the safety of all Queenslanders. This parliament has worked hard to implement legislation to prevent smoking in public places. Looking at the impact this would have in universities, RTOs and TAFEs is logically the next step.


A number of submitters reported to the committee that they agree with this proposal. We also heard from universities. One of the biggest concerns from universities was whether this would impact on international students. Would the introduction of this legislation drive away international students whom we attract from a range of countries to undertake the high-quality education courses that we deliver in our universities? Would this detract from attracting those students if we were to introduce legislation along these lines? Emphatically every single university said that overseas students come to our universities specifically for the high-quality courses, high-quality teaching and high-quality educational outcomes. They consider that the introduction of a ban on smoking in universities right across Queensland would have no impact whatsoever on attracting international students.

One of the key concerns universities had was the timing of the introduction of this legislation. Their concern was that they needed time to prepare their students and their facilities to ensure they met the requirements within the associated time. I concur with the perspectives that universities and TAFEs provided to us. What they were saying was, 'Give us plenty of time so we can set up processes and clearly articulate to our incoming students so they understand the implications of this legislation should it be introduced.' We left that open to those particular universities to undertake that and introduce it in a logical time but also in a timely manner because we need to protect our students.

Government members decided that we would support the introduction of the legislation. That would take the responsibility away from universities, TAFEs and RTOs and show that this government clearly stands behind a ban on smoking in universities and TAFEs, as we have done in other public spaces as a result of legislation that we introduced earlier this year. By doing that, our clear message is that we care about the health of every single Queenslander, whether they are smokers or nonsmokers. As the House heard in earlier debates this year, nonsmokers suffer from passive smoking on a huge scale. We heard that one in 10 people who are subjected to passive smoke will incur smoking related diseases.

As a result of those facts, the government members really wanted to push hard. As we have heard from the deputy chair of the committee, we could not reach agreement on that but it was the government members' preferred decision that we would support the government implementing and legislating that smoking should not occur on university, TAFE and RTO sites.

With that in mind, I thank all those who were involved. I thank the submitters who came along to the public hearings. I thank the committee for its work. I really look forward to this going forward so we can protect our Queenslanders to make sure they have a safe environment whether they are at work or at university and education facilities.

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Albert—LNP) (11.50 am): I also want to speak to the committee's report on its inquiry into smoking and tobacco use at universities, technical and further education facilities and registered training organisations. I want to thank my fellow committee members. I thank the chair, the member for Townsville, and the former deputy chair, the member for Cleveland, and all other committee members who participated in this interesting inquiry. I also thank the committee staff and the secretariat for their fantastic efforts in obtaining information and putting this report together.

It is a very interesting issue as to why individuals take up a habit which has adverse health effects and potentially causes cancers for them and also for those individuals around them who unfortunately inhale passive smoke. We were very grateful that the universities came out and expressed their opinions. Some of their opinions may have varied only marginally, which leads me to wonder why our universities in Queensland cannot do the same thing that the universities in Victoria and Western Australia have done—that is, have a collaborative approach amongst themselves to sort out the issue which therefore means that regulations do not need to be put in. That is why the opposition members felt it was prudent to give the universities the time to sort this matter out themselves.

As a former Griffith University student, I certainly visited the Nathan campus on many occasions. That campus is in an area which is surrounded by bushland. One of my main concerns is whether individuals would decide to risk smoking in that bushland if there were not appropriate facilities and the

education to deal with smoking on campus. It is certainly something that I personally saw when I was at the university. When you were walking along the paths, you would see a cigarette butt go flying onto the path or almost land in the leaf litter.

As I just stated, the opposition members feel that there should be self-regulation and that we should give them ample time to put these regulations in. That would mean that the state would not need to come in with a hammer approach and say, 'This is what you will be doing.' If they can do it in Victoria and Western Australia, surely all of the universities in Queensland can come together and say, 'This is what we will be doing.'

Our universities have an absolutely fantastic reputation around the world. We want to ensure that that reputation is held high and that international students see Australia as a place to come to learn and study. We need to ensure that these international students who come over understand our rules and regulations and understand that we deem passive smoking to be a potential health risk. Through education, I feel this is something we can certainly make massive inroads in. Again, I would like to thank my fellow committee members and the secretariat staff for all their input and knowledge. We can certainly progress this matter.


Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

ANIMAL MANAGEMENT (PROTECTING PUPPIES) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 16 February (see p. 52).

Second Reading

 **Hon. LE DONALDSON** (Bundaberg—ALP) (Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries) (11.55 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I thank the Agriculture and Environment Committee for its report on the Animal Management (Protecting Puppies) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. I note that the committee made only one recommendation—that the bill be passed. This government continues to deliver on its election commitments, and the bill before the Legislative Assembly today delivers on our commitment to the people of Queensland that we would protect dogs used for breeding and shut down cruel puppy farms.

Dogs are highly valued in Queensland and are an important part of the Queensland way of life, with roughly 40 per cent of households owning a dog. Dog breeding in Queensland provides a hobby and an income for many people who breed and supply dogs for various uses, including pets and assistance dogs. While many dog breeders do the right thing, there are unscrupulous breeders who place profit before the welfare of their dogs. Puppy farms can result in significant animal welfare issues if breeders keep dogs in conditions that fail to meet the dog's behavioural, social, psychological and physiological needs. Dogs that are bred in poor conditions often have health conditions that result in early death or expensive, ongoing veterinary treatment.

It has been estimated that there may be up to 100 puppy farms in Queensland. However, this estimate is based largely on anecdotal evidence. In 2008-09, 12 large-scale farms were investigated by animal welfare inspectors in Queensland and more than 750 dogs were rescued. The difficulty in locating these unscrupulous breeders is the biggest barrier to protecting puppies and shutting down puppy farms.

This government is fulfilling its election commitment to shut down cruel puppy farms by establishing a compulsory registration scheme for dog breeders that will give puppy farms nowhere to hide. The new legislation requires dog breeders to register for a breeder identification number which must be included on the microchip details of their dogs and must be displayed when advertising a dog for sale or to be given away. As all dogs in Queensland are required to be microchipped, except genuine working dogs and some other types of dogs which are exempt, this system will provide lifelong traceability for every dog and their breeder.

This new scheme aims to end puppy farming in Queensland by shutting them out of the market while providing prospective dog owners with greater assurances that their dog was bred by a reputable breeder. A public awareness campaign will support the scheme, urging consumers to only buy dogs from registered breeders. The new legislation introduces a number of key measures that include:


establishing a compulsory breeder registration scheme, recording the breeder identification number against the microchip information of the dog and requiring breeders to display their breeder identification number when advertising a dog at the point of sale, exchange or give away. Extensive public and stakeholder consultation has shown very strong support for a compulsory breeder identification system. It is important for every breeder to be registered, including mum and dad or accidental breeders or people who give away puppies. This is crucial to help track down breeders who have failed to register and it removes any potential loopholes for unscrupulous breeders to exploit.

Consistent with the current provisions of the Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008, breeders of genuine working dogs will be exempt from the registration requirement if breeding a working dog to supply a primary producer to use as a working dog. However, if working dogs are bred to provide for supply as pets, the breeder will need to be registered. The bill also recognises that there are reputable organisations that already accredit dog breeders and therefore makes provisions to recognise these as approved entities. Accredited breeders of an approved entity will be exempt from needing to register as a breeder. However, to ensure that all breeders can be tracked, they will still need to display their entity accreditation number when advertising and supplying a dog. That number must also be recorded against the dog's microchip information.

The bill allows for breeder registration. However, it is proposed that no fees will be charged before 1 July 2018. This will help to encourage registration and compliance with the scheme. Before any fees are introduced, we will seek feedback through public consultation to ensure a balance is reached between the cost to operate this scheme and the financial impacts on breeders.

My department is working with the RSPCA, Dogs Queensland and local governments to develop the Queensland animal welfare standards and guidelines for breeding dogs and their puppies. The standards will promote good management and care practices for breeding dogs in Queensland. Once finalised, the standards are proposed to be adopted as a mandatory code requirement under the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001.

Doing nothing is not an option. We have listened to the people of Queensland and this government is committed to protecting the welfare of breeding dogs and their puppies. For those people who profit from this cruel trade, this new legislation will give them nowhere to hide. Shutting down unscrupulous breeders will mean that the people of Queensland are able to enjoy the benefits of owning a dog with confidence that it has been bred by a reputable breeder. As the chair of the committee noted in the report, this bill creates a balance between meeting the expectations of Queenslanders in relation to the welfare of animals and the needs of primary producers to carry on established business practices without unnecessary or burdensome regulations. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (12.01 pm): At the outset I state that there are few who would disagree that animal welfare issues, particularly if breeding dogs, need strong and determined outcomes that help stamp out illegal breeding activities. In strengthening the powers under the Animal Care and Protection Act 2011 the proposed legislation can be used to shut down what are being referred to as puppy farms.

It is acknowledged that it was a government election commitment to introduce a compulsory registration scheme for dog breeders and for the display of the breeder ID number in advertising and recording the breeder registration ID number against the dog's microchip. It was acknowledged throughout the committee's hearings that animal welfare is a complex problem that requires multiple strategies if it is going to be successful. It was articulated that this can be done with the right policies—and we need the right policies and programs—microchipping, appropriate licensing and of course enforcement of the industry. We need a transparent industry where animal welfare does get addressed.

It was also clear that the proposed legislation was supported by all the committee members, and this was reflected in there being only one recommendation—and that was that the bill be passed—after receiving 226 written submissions, public hearings and briefings from the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. I take the opportunity to thank the department for its deliberations during this inquiry.

The Animal Care and Protection Act 2001—the ACP Act—promotes the responsible care and use of animals. This act places a legal duty of care on people in charge of animals to meet those animals' needs. It was widely accepted and applauded that there was the inclusion of the exemptions for working dogs in this proposed legislation as per proposed new sections 43E and 43ZA. With reference to working dogs, many Queenslanders are involved in breeding, rearing, training and trialling of livestock working dogs and recognition of the importance of the wide spectrum of primary production in Queensland, which uses these dogs, is still important and it needs to be maintained. While many are covered by the listed exemptions, a number were not included. We would ask that further consideration

is given to these in the future. I speak of people such as an employee of a primary producer, those involved in trialling, perhaps those who live in a semi-rural area who breed a few dogs for primary producers, retired farmers who trial dogs as a hobby and stock handling contractors and livestock trucking companies. They should be included in the exemption.

It was clear to the committee that many people make a valuable contribution to the supply of working dogs and that those mentioned above should be included in the exemption as listed. It was argued that if this was not considered, it has the potential to 'restrict ordinary activity' and would be detrimental not only to them but also to the livestock industry. A conservative estimate puts the current contribution of working dogs to the agricultural economy at about \$1 billion per annum.

The committee did receive many submissions requesting that the bill as drafted be further amended to reflect the legislation introduced into Victoria, which is far wider ranging in its implications. I feel we got it right in the committee report as the bill does improve the welfare of animals.

The committee did receive a number of submissions from local governments, which already have significant responsibilities for dog registration, the regulation of domestic animals and the interests of public safety and environmental health. Councils did not support any additional local government responsibilities in the areas of breeder registration or animal welfare and suggested that the responsibility for administration and enforcement of the proposed bill be confined to the Queensland government. Councils also raised concerns with two of the elements of the new breeder obligations that may have potential consequences. The first concern was that the exemption does not cover non-commercial domestic litters. Imposing requirements on these accidental births was reported as onerous and may even lead to greater disposal of pups. Councils requested consideration be given for an exemption from registration for the first litter borne by a domestic dog. The requirement for a non-commercial supplier to implant a cat or dog with a prescribed identification device was also seen as onerous and may result in greater numbers of unwanted animals being given to shelters or dumped. It was argued that any measures that may inadvertently lead to greater rates of euthanasia of unwanted animals, especially kittens, should be avoided. It was, again, requested that greater consideration be given to exemptions for non-commercial supply.

The Local Government Association did raise some recommendations such as the state government develop a strategy to respond to welfare issues particularly in regional settings where the capacity of the RSPCA is limited or does not exist. The LGAQ acknowledged that the explanatory notes state that no breeder registration fees would be charged prior to 1 July 2018 and if registration fees are to be considered after this period, a regulatory impact statement would be completed. The LGAQ notes the problem with the introduction of registration fees and maintains that the state is best placed to respond to any compliance action relating to the non-payment of fees as part of the statewide registration scheme. Council's feedback has also suggested the introduction of registration fees after a two-year moratorium may lead to the surrender or dumping of dogs and place an additional burden on the services of the RSPCA and local councils. Council's feedback and submissions to the committee identified the potential for some confusion in relation to the definition of 'reasonable excuse' referred to in the explanatory notes. It was suggested that the department would need to develop a clear definition of what constitutes a reasonable excuse to remove any doubt associated with the failure to comply with mandatory dog breeder registration obligations. Further information was presented by LGAQ that if an organisation is to be given approval as an 'approved entity', as highlighted in the explanatory notes, and does not require their members to go through the proposed dog breeder registration process, it is crucial that those approved entities are bound to what is proposed under proposed section 43W of the bill. These approved entities will be required to share their membership information with state and local governments and the RSPCA to ensure the compliance strategy can effectively deliver the objectives of the bill.

The commitments by the department in the explanatory notes to resource, develop and implement a comprehensive statewide education and awareness campaign to ensure success in achieving breeder registration and behavioural change were widely accepted. This campaign will need to focus on members of the public being responsible pet owners and not purchasing from dog breeders advertising without a registered breeder number. The committee heard from local councils of the broad support for the development of a compliance strategy in partnership with local governments. The compliance strategy will need to have a clearly identified scope and be developed collaboratively between all parties.

The successful implementation of the legislation is reliant on strong partnerships with local councils providing clarity around roles and responsibilities. The LGAQ raised a number of issues that they believe require further attention in the development of the compliance strategy. These include

procedures for dealing with registrations that lapse and reissuing previous breeder numbers, third-party sales and offenses for using someone else's breeder number. Compliance with these activities including the monitoring of advertisements will be a labour intensive task and will require a commitment from the department at a statewide level.

It is important for this debate that we acknowledge the majority of submissions were of a template style cut-and-paste requesting the same additional measures like: mandatory standards and guidelines mentioned must include regular health checks for breeding dogs and all puppies before sale; capping the litter numbers per breeding female to a maximum of three to limit time spent in a breeding facility; mandatory desexing for puppies sold and retired breeding dogs, as well as a rehoming program, adequate housing, space, exercise and enrichment allowing for normal behaviours and regular human contact; mandatory record keeping; and capping the total number of breeding dogs on a property to 10.

Many submissions called for the legislation to cover all dogs, with no exemptions for working dogs, and that anyone found guilty of animal welfare offences, including having unregistered breeding animals, should have their permit revoked; a ban on the operation at the associated property; a strong financial penalty to act as a deterrent; and their animals seized. There were calls for additional resources for RSPCA Qld and Queensland Police to investigate and enforce these animal welfare laws, along with further funding to welfare groups to house seized animals. The final point that was made by a number of submitters was that the sale of pets in pet shops should be banned unless sourced from a reputable shelter or rescue group, and that was a consistent theme in many submissions.


I believe that the committee report found a good balance between all conflicting views. It is a worrying trend that over the last four years committees are receiving an ever-increasing number of submissions from one author which have been duplicated hundreds of times in an effort to influence policy in Queensland. I do believe this is not a healthy trend and this will need to be addressed.

In response to questions of possible breaches of fundamental legislative principles and other issues, the committee received advice on clause 18—the new section 173C—of examples of circumstances which might satisfy the chief executive that a person's personal safety could be at risk if the person's details are publically available on the breeder register or in a copy of information from the breeder register. These circumstances could include where the person has been a victim of domestic violence and there is a risk that the perpetrator might seek them out. Another example could include a person who is involved in the psychiatric care of potentially violent patients who might seek them out if any of the person's details were disclosed.

With regard to clause 26—the new section 207C—the committee requested an outline on the sorts of functions that a person mentioned in section 207C may perform which require them to use information received from the breeder register. In particular, advice was sought regarding the sorts of functions which may be performed in monitoring and enforcing the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001 and the Racing Integrity Act 2016 or if the person is a police officer in relation to an animal or animal welfare offence and how information received from the breeder register may be used. Persons appointed under the Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008 may use the information to investigate, monitor and enforce compliance with the act. The committee was content with the department's response regarding safety issues concerning the disclosure of personal breeder registration information.

I want to thank the staff of the Agriculture and Environment Committee: Mr Rob Hansen, Mr Paul Douglas and Ms Maureen Coorey. I acknowledge the tremendous work that the committee and technical scrutiny secretariat do. We all need to reflect and thank them for their assistance. I also take this opportunity to thank all members of the Agriculture and Environment Committee for their work during this inquiry and I commend the bill to the House.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Crawford): Order! I inform the House that we have the acting principal and school captains from Stretton State College in the gallery today.

 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (12.13 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Animal Management (Protecting Puppies) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. Dog-breeding operations where profit comes before the welfare of a dog and her offspring is an intolerable practice that operates throughout Queensland. The community's distaste and outrage over puppy farms came across very clearly to the committee during our public hearings, with the vast majority of people supporting compulsory registration for dog breeders. This bill unapologetically targets those breeders who have no regard for the health and wellbeing of their animals and subsequently aims to reinstate confidence in legitimate dog breeders in Queensland. The registration of dog breeders will allow the government to better identify and shut down puppy farms. It will also allow Queenslanders to make

more informed decisions about where to purchase their new pets. This bill strikes the right balance between meeting the expectations of Queenslanders in relation to the welfare of animals and the need of primary producers to carry on established business practices without unnecessary or burdensome regulations.

I would like to acknowledge the committee members, organisations and departmental representatives who provided submissions and evidence to our inquiry. The committee sincerely thanks everyone who took the time to share their views. I would also like to acknowledge the member for Burnett for his contribution to the committee and I congratulate him on his new role.

The Palaszczuk government continues to deliver on our election commitments. At the last election we pledged that we would protect dogs used for breeding and shut down puppy farms run by unscrupulous and cruel breeders who care only for profit. This bill establishes a compulsory registration scheme for dog breeders that will give such operators nowhere to hide.

Like myself and my family, approximately 40 per cent of Queensland households own a dog. Little Jack—quite a unique name for a dog—is a Jack Russell. I gave the job of naming the puppy to the children when they were very young. It was a difficult decision whether to call him Jack or Russell, but Jack won out. It is clear that Queenslanders do love their dogs and there is a steady demand for puppies in Queensland. It follows that reputable dog breeders are essential if the relationship between Queenslanders and man's best friend is to continue into the future. This legislation is about ensuring that those breeders who place profit before the welfare of dogs are eliminated from this supply chain.

Puppy farms have been exposed as places of unthinkable cruelty where breeding bitches are denied any comfort, exercise, human attention and medical care. Puppies bred in such conditions have a miserable start to life. They are also often prone to poor health, and unsuspecting purchasers of these young dogs from puppy farms often find the animals either die prematurely or they need expensive veterinary treatment. The Palaszczuk government has not rushed to introduce kneejerk legislation in response to a few horror stories in the media. This legislation is the result of broad consultation with the likes of the RSPCA, Dogs Queensland and all Queenslanders. It is balanced to meet community expectations without burdening ethical and responsible dog breeders with unnecessary regulations. Indeed, the Agriculture and Environment Committee commended the government for the thoroughness of their stakeholder consultation.

The bill provides a clear and effective scheme to identify and locate dog breeders who are not doing the right thing. The biggest barrier to shutting down cruel puppy farms is the inability to locate them. I believe that the added registration obligation for people who breed and supply dogs is a necessary requirement. I want everyone in Queensland who buys a puppy either from a pet shop, an advertisement in a newspaper or over the internet to have the confidence that their new pet is from healthy and well-cared-for stock. I believe that all dog lovers are of the same mind. Today we can take a step towards stamping out puppy farms in Queensland, and we should all be pleased to take part in that step.

The bill introduces a simple online registration scheme with paper based registration available to those unable to register online, as we realise that there are some who are not computer literate or do not have access to a computer. Once registered, the breeder would be issued with a unique breeder identification number and will be required to display their identification in all ads when they are supplying a dog. This identification is what the families of Queensland will be looking out for when they make that decision to add a puppy to the family. This bill will not impact those breeders who are doing the right thing. Accredited breeders of an approved or recognised dog breeder association will be exempt but will need to identify themselves by the accreditation number issued by the association when advertising and supplying these puppies.

Consistent with the Palaszczuk government's election commitment, breeder identification will be required to be recorded against the dog's microchipped information. Mandatory microchipping already applies to most dogs today, so there will not need to be an undue amount of time spent or cost incurred to comply with this legislation. The Agriculture and Environment Committee looked at the government's proposed legislation and only made one recommendation, and that was that the bill be passed. Those who made submissions to the committee should be thanked. As the committee received 227 submissions, it is an indication that the people of Queensland have a deep interest in this bill. No matter who you speak to or who you meet in your role as an MP, everyone is in support of ensuring that man's best friend is treated properly and humanely.

Under this bill, underground puppy breeders and unscrupulous people will now have nowhere to hide and no-one to sell to. This bill will assist government in identifying and shutting down these unscrupulous puppy farms. I am proud to be part of this government, which is taking a stand and

targeting those who put profit before the health and wellbeing of puppies. With this bill, families in my electorate who are looking for a puppy will have confidence that the puppy was born to a dog that was cared for, treated well and not chained up in a breeder puppy farm.

The bill also contains unrelated minor amendments to the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001 and the Biosecurity Act 2014. The amendment to the Animal Care and Protection Act will clarify that the current offence related to blooding a dog applies in any circumstance where live bait is used and is not limited to giving a dog its first taste of blood. The amendments to the Biosecurity Act are minor and will clarify some existing sections of the act prior to the act's implementation on 1 July. I am sure that I speak for many in my electorate of Gladstone when I say that the protection of puppies and dogs from cruel puppy farms is welcome and overdue.


I will now touch on a few of the points raised during committee hearings. The first relates to working dogs in Queensland. These dogs are an important part of the Australian livestock industry. Traditionally, working dogs were used to work and drove cattle. However, there is also the increased use of guardian dogs to protect livestock from wild dog attack. The 'working dog' definition under the Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008 is quite specific and covers dogs usually kept by primary producers on rural land, primarily for droving, protecting and working stock. I support the exemption for breeders of genuine working dogs because their dogs are usually kept on rural land and are unlikely to cause problems in the community such as straying, barking, nuisance and attacks. This means that local governments would have a very limited role in managing working dogs within their areas.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr BUTCHER: They are man's best friend. A lot of graziers are currently struggling due to the drought and increasing wild dog problems. The government has taken this into consideration and has ensured that unnecessary regulatory burden is not placed on graziers, allowing them to get on with managing their own businesses. I support this bill because it provides the correct balance of community animal welfare expectations, regulatory burden on graziers and enforcement capability.

I also touch on managing the animal disease risk for aviary birds. We heard some good stories about this subject during the committee process. The bill amends the Biosecurity Act 2014 and recognises that different types of birds may pose different levels of disease risk. Birds kept for human consumption or to produce eggs for human consumption or birds that have been released for free flight since they had started to be kept in captivity are considered to pose a greater disease risk. Therefore, there is requirement for these entities to be registered. Birds kept in cages, such as finches, softbills or parrots, typically present a lower disease risk as interaction with wild birds is generally restricted. These types of birds are also less likely to come into contact with birds that are kept for commercial purposes such as poultry. Therefore, the requirement for people keeping these types of birds to register has been removed. To be clear, it is not that we are saying there is no risk, as with any large concentration of birds there will be some risk of disease, but for these particular types of birds the disease risk is considered to be far lower. If an incident did occur, the department would still be able to respond using emergency powers in the act. I therefore also support these amendments contained in the bill. They are consistent with the risk management framework around which the Biosecurity Act 2014 is structured and provide a degree of flexibility to manage disease risk while allowing members of the community to continue to enjoy keeping aviary birds without unnecessary or burdensome regulatory requirements.

I take this opportunity to thank the secretariat for the work that was done on this bill. Our committee is very busy at the moment, and the work that Paul, Rob and the team have done has been exceptional. I also thank members of the committee for the work they have done and anticipate further good work from the team going forward. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (12.24 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Animal Management (Protecting Puppies) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I will address this bill from my background as both a primary producer and a former local government councillor. This goes to the need for primary producers to be able to breed working dogs and the potential financial and administrative impact of burdensome regulation and legislation on local governments.

This bill is about ensuring the welfare of dogs by requiring the registration of dog breeders in order to identify and shut down puppy farms. This bill will institute a compulsory registration system for dog breeders, will clarify what is meant by keeping or using an animal as a kill or lure for blooding or coursing a dog, and makes some technical amendments to the Biosecurity Act 2014. These changes will be achieved by four measures: requiring a person who breeds a dog to register as a breeder within 28 days of the birth of a dog; regulating the supply of dogs by requiring a breeder ID or exemption

number to be included in advertisements; clarifying that the offence of bleeding applies where an animal is kept or used as a kill or a lure to give a dog its first taste or sight of blood without requiring that the dog receive the sight or taste of blood; and clarifying terminology within the Biosecurity Act.

The committee undertook widespread consultation in investigating this bill. I am pleased that a sensible and workable outcome has been achieved, with the recognition of the position of legitimate and responsible breeders and primary producers. Exemptions will apply if the person is an accredited breeder of an organisation that supplies a unique breeder registration number; is a primary producer breeding a working dog; is a member of a prescribed class of persons; or has another reasonable excuse for not registering within the prescribed period.

As a primary producer and a sometime breeder of working dogs, I can say that this is a common-sense approach to what is a legitimate tool in managing and working rural properties and for mustering stock. I am concerned by the purported motives of animal welfare groups such as Animal Liberation Queensland and Place Advocacy, which called for the exemption to be removed. Groups such as these have no understanding of the work required in legitimately and responsibly managing rural properties. In their pursuit of unreasonable and ideologically driven objectives, they continually seek to undermine Queensland's agricultural industries. We are all well aware of how in some instances groups such as these try to criminalise, persecute and destroy the businesses of primary producers. Thankfully, common sense has prevailed. This bill strikes the right balance between meeting the expectations of Queenslanders in relation to the welfare of animals and the needs of primary producers to carry out established business practices without unnecessary, burdensome regulations.

As we all know, it is no good introducing legislation without establishing sensible and properly funded administrative arrangements to enforce the changes. As a former local government councillor for 12 years, I have often seen state governments cost-shifting the burden of their legislation to local governments, which struggle to keep up. Over the years, local government in Queensland has had many experiences of assurances from state government about consultation and funding support. Unfortunately, the state's track record is not good. Enforcement of state regulation and legislation has often created many administrative and financial challenges for local councils. There will continue to be legitimate concerns within local governments that ultimately the buck will once again stop with them and not the state government.

The report notes that the implementation of the registration scheme will be ineffective if it is not accompanied by sufficient funding. This is complicated by the fact that it is not known how many active puppy farms there are in Queensland, which means that the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries is unable to make an accurate estimate. The department has estimated the cost as being upwards of \$400,000 at a minimum, not accounting for ongoing expenses. This will include \$250,000 to \$300,000, plus ongoing expenses of \$2,000 per month, for the set-up and maintenance of an online registration system and \$150,000 for a public awareness campaign to ensure customers do not buy dogs advertised or supplied without a breeder registration ID. In addition, the department has also acknowledged that there will be an ongoing cost involved with the enforcement of other acts that will be affected by the provisions of this bill.

It will be necessary to support local government officers and RSPCA inspectors to prosecute violations of the ACP Act and to care for animals rescued during the bringing of legal proceedings against their owners. As no department or organisation is able to estimate the number of puppy farms supplying animals or currently operating in Queensland, it becomes impossible to estimate the ongoing cost of enforcing the bill's provisions. This is why the committee has noted the ongoing consultation with the Local Government Association of Queensland and other stakeholders regarding a compliance strategy to ensure that the provisions of the bill can be appropriately enforced. In concluding my contribution to the debate, I draw the minister's attention to my ongoing interests in the matters I have raised today.

Debate, on motion of Mr Perrett, adjourned.

MOTION

Federal Budget, Backpacker Tax

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Crawford): Order! Before I call the minister, I inform the House that students and teachers from St John's Anglican College in the electorate of Algester are in the gallery.



Hon. LE DONALDSON (Bundaberg—ALP) (Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries) (12.30 pm): I move—

This House notes:

1. the federal budget reveals the government is planning to raise more than \$500 million from the backpacker tax from 1 July 2016;
2. working holiday visa holders will no longer get the tax-free threshold and pay a rate of 32.5 cents in the dollar from the first dollar earned. Instead, money will go directly to Canberra;
3. the tax will hurt Queensland's agriculture sector which relies on backpackers for seasonal jobs like fruit picking and harvesting; and
4. the tax will hurt Queensland's tourism industry and deter holiday-makers from choosing Australia.

This House calls on the Turnbull government to immediately commit to abolishing the tax on working holiday-makers which is already hurting Queensland's agricultural and tourism industries.

It is difficult to overstate the damaging impact on our rural communities of this ill-conceived tax that will commence on 1 July. The backpacker tax was announced more than a year ago by failed treasurer Joe Hockey and has been causing distress to Queensland's communities that rely on working holiday visa holders ever since. I have lost count of the number of individuals, stakeholder organisations and peak bodies that have raised this issue with me. Pineapple growers in Yeppoon, vegetable producers in the Lockyer Valley, apple growers in Stanthorpe and macadamia farmers in Bundaberg have told me that this tax grab from the Turnbull government will hurt their businesses. Throughout Queensland there are growers who fear that the produce will rot in the fields because there will be nobody to harvest it. They are desperate and they have been pleading with the federal government to abandon Joe Hockey's folly. The Palaszczuk government's position has been consistent throughout. We support our farmers and our tourism operators in their calls for the backpacker tax to be changed. All we have heard in response from the federal government is that it is thinking about doing something. Yesterday the Deputy Prime Minister said—


We will find a point of resolution. We will do it on our terms in our time. There will be some sort of resolution before July. We will deal with this issue.

How surprising it is—or not—that it has taken an election for the National Party to discover that producers had an issue with the backpacker tax because, despite calls from all quarters for the Turnbull government to repeal or delay the introduction of the backpacker tax, Treasurer Scott Morrison has betrayed their trust. He had the chance in the budget before the election to axe this ill-conceived tax before it had the chance to do any harm and he blew it. What producers are saying is that this tax will hit them and rural and regional communities very hard and they are already feeling the effects. Backpackers spend more than \$900 million a year in Queensland, much of it in our regional communities. This is money that goes a long way to supporting thousands of local jobs in towns like Yeppoon, Bundaberg, Stanthorpe and Mareeba. Backpackers who earn wages picking and packing fruit and vegetables spend it on accommodation, in local cafes, bars, restaurants and bakeries. Every year more than 160,000 overseas visitors come to Queensland for a working holiday. Those who provide accommodation and transport to backpackers in remote and rural Queensland will see their income strangled. The bars, cafes, restaurants and shops in those communities will also struggle. Jobs in those businesses are likely to be lost.

Producers and business owners I have met as I travel around our state have made it clear to me that backpackers will simply stop coming. They will go instead to countries like Canada and New Zealand where the tax rate is lower. This will deprive farmers of the labour they need to harvest and pack their crops. Growcom Chief Executive Pat Hannan issued a statement that the peak horticulture body was dismayed by the government's failure to address the issue in the budget. He said—

Make no mistake, the Government has put agriculture generally, and our own production horticulture industry in particular, in serious danger—a step that is completely inconsistent with the current election and budget rhetoric about supporting small businesses.

I am encouraged that at least one of the opposition members has acknowledged that there is a problem. The new shadow minister for agriculture, the member for Burdekin, told the House on 25 February that some farmers were already struggling to find backpacker labour for the upcoming season. It is a shame though that he has not been able to convince his colleagues in Canberra to take action. I hope he will be consistent and vote in favour of this motion. It is about time the Deputy Prime Minister stopped posturing and took action. The Turnbull government needs to commit immediately to reversing this destructive decision. Today we are calling on the Turnbull government to immediately commit to abolishing the backpacker tax before it does more harm to the state's agricultural and tourism industries. The Palaszczuk government stands for jobs now and jobs for the future and stands with rural communities against this harmful tax.

 **Mr KRAUSE** (Beaudesert—LNP) (12.35 pm): I have heard it all now: Leanne Donaldson, member for Bundaberg, grower of veggies in her backyard and defender of farmers! This is an opportunistic, politically motivated and hypocritical motion coming from this Labor government that has completely abandoned any pretence of supporting business, especially agricultural businesses, in Queensland. It is this group of people sitting opposite who want to impose draconian vegetation management laws, criminalising farmers and putting in place laws which will criminalise normal, responsible, common-sense vegetation management. Every day this government is making it harder for people to do business in Queensland and moving this motion beggars belief, but the hypocrisy of those opposite knows no bounds.

This motion broadly reflects representations I have been making for months to the federal government through various federal MPs. I commend the hard work of federal coalition MPs like Scott Buchholz, the member for Wright, and others who have fiercely taken up this issue. We understand that new taxes on businesses are bad for the economy. We understand that taxing businesses is no way to grow the economy. Thousands of tourism businesses will benefit from the federal government's measures in last week's budget to cut company tax for businesses with a turnover of up to \$10 million. In addition to that, the Turnbull government is delivering record funding of \$629 million over four years to Tourism Australia—the government agency marketing Australia to the world. Both of these are terrific measures that will bring jobs and growth to the tourism sector. It is an exciting time to be in tourism, with terrific growth occurring across the sector as a result of a lower Australian dollar and overseas markets for inbound tourism being developed. The coalition in Canberra and our LNP team here in Queensland will get Queensland moving.


Let us be clear about this so-called backpacker tax. We acknowledge the concerns of the tourism industry about this issue and it is a situation which is currently under review. Consultation with industry groups, including the NFF, is striving to deliver a sustainable outcome for farmers and workplace visitors and the tourism industry. As reported in today's *Courier-Mail*, the Minister for Agriculture has stated that it is a complex issue, but there will be a solution. Based on DFAT modelling, the expected impact on tourism under the new system will be minimal as Australia remains an attractive and safe holiday destination for European travellers. I know well the benefits afforded to communities up and down the state by having working holiday makers as tourists and workers. Every year in my home town of Boonah we have many backpackers working in local industries, picking and packing vegetables and putting money back into the local economy. They are also tourists, contributing to the Gold Coast, to the rest of Queensland and to Australia when they are not working.

We understand the concerns. We in this House should always be looking at ways to grow the tourist sector by keeping taxes low and cutting green and red tape to get new projects going. It was the former LNP government that delivered the Queen's Wharf project for Brisbane and fired tourism up in Queensland under the stewardship of the former minister for tourism. We delivered DestinationQ to bring together all parts of the tourism sector after years of neglect and we have them travelling in the same direction. We restored confidence to the economy by keeping government spending under control and giving businesses of all types, including the tourism sector, the confidence to invest and grow. Our economy, and in particular the tourism sector, simply cannot afford another Labor government in Canberra. Bill Shorten's carbon tax—and that is his policy—will kill confidence in the economy and drive the costs of doing business through the roof. The impacts of a job-destroying carbon tax will dwarf any effect from issues mentioned in this motion. Let us never forget that the very reason the federal government is looking to raise more revenue in some places is because of the mismanagement of the comrades in Canberra of those sitting opposite.

I ask members to remember the \$20 billion surplus that was left to us by Howard. It is gone. The \$40 billion in the bank that was left us by Howard was squandered away over six disastrous years. You give lots of money to the Labor Party and they squander it. Then the LNP has to come in to fix the mess. The Labor Party, state and federally, want to introduce a carbon tax and destroy confidence in the economy. Bill Shorten and his Labor mates across the chamber want to impose a carbon tax that the Australian people have rejected time and time again.

We understand the concerns of the tourism sector, we understand the concerns of the agricultural sector, but we will not be lectured to by those economic vandals sitting opposite and their comrades in Canberra. Only the LNP and the Turnbull coalition government in Canberra have a plan to deliver jobs and growth to all hardworking Australians.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Crawford): Order! I inform the House that we have in the gallery students from St Thomas More's School in the electorate of Toowoomba South.

 **Mrs LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (12.40 pm): In respect of this issue, I am constantly shocked by the lack of intelligence from those opposite. Perhaps I should not be shocked. It is crazy to consider imposing a tax on backpackers that will destroy a \$950 million industry in Queensland. We will not have any income from backpackers because they will not come anymore. The coalition wants to not only impose a tax but also destroy an industry at the same time.

I rise to speak in support of the motion. I am concerned about the impact of a backpacker tax on working holiday visa holders. This 32.5 per cent backpacker tax on working holiday visa holders will be a double slap to Central Queensland, because it will not only hurt our local agricultural sector that relies on backpackers to fill seasonal jobs such as fruit picking and harvesting but also hurt our local tourism industry and deter holiday-makers from choosing to visit Australia.

Every year, Queensland welcomes more than 160,000 overseas visitors on working visas. For the year ending December 2015, Central Queensland welcomed more than 44,000 backpackers for over 375 visitor nights. I table a copy of Tourism Research Australia's report on the visitor numbers for the year ending December 2015.

Table paper: Extract, undated, from Australian Government—Austrade website, titled '10B International Backpacker Visitors, Visitor Nights and Regional Expenditure by Capital/Regional' [688].

In Queensland, working holiday-makers spend \$950 million and now the federal government wants to take a third of that in tax. More than half of the \$950 million spent by working holiday visa holders—around \$487 million—in Queensland is spent in regional Queensland. I table a copy of Tourism Research Australia's report on backpacker expenditure for the year ending December 2015.

Tabled paper: Extract, undated, from Australian Government—Austrade website, titled '9B International Backpacker Visitors, Visitor Nights and Regional Expenditure by Top 30 Regions' [689].

The proposed federal government tax changes mean that backpackers will not be eligible for the tax-free threshold, but will pay tax from the very first dollar they earn. Mr Turnbull just does not understand how important working holiday visa holders are to regional economies, such as that of Central Queensland. Not only do they contribute to our annual tourism spend but also they are an important source of labour for tourism operators and other businesses.

The tourism tax will significantly impact local tourism operators in Central Queensland such as Paul and Mandy Neubecker of Emus Beach Resort at Emu Park. Paul and Mandy have a beautiful backpacker resort at Emu Park. I think it is one of the best in all of Australia. I know that operators such as Paul and Mandy will be impacted by this backpacker tax. Tourism and agricultural businesses in Central Queensland also often employ backpackers to cover peak seasons, but with more than 30 cents in the dollar going to the tax office, Central Queensland will become a far less desirable destination for a working holiday.


Today there are many job advertisements for working holiday tourists on the website backpackerjobboard.com.au. Those jobs include grape pruners and mandarin pickers in Emerald and help on a sugarcane farm is required in Proserpine. Pubs in Airlie Beach, which is in the electorate of the member for Whitsunday, and also in Barcaldine, which is in the electorate of the member for Gregory, are looking for backpackers to work as bar staff and cooks. In my electorate of Keppel, farmhands are required in Yeppoon and staff are required for the Pumpkin Island eco resort. Paul and Mandy Neubecker at Emus Beach Resort at Emu Park are also advertising on backpackerjobboard.com.au for backpackers to work in their eco resort. It is ridiculous to suggest that backpackers save their income and take it home. They work to fund their holiday and spend it in Central Queensland. Working holiday-makers are among the highest spending and longest staying visitors to Australia, each spending an average of \$13,000, and contributing more than \$1.8 billion of expenditure to the economy every year.

This backpackers tax is nothing more than a tax on regional Queensland. It is a tax on regional Queensland that has been vehemently opposed by the National Farmers' Federation. Its president, Brett Finlay, said that strong feelings existed right across the agricultural sector about the tax changes for working holiday visa holders.

In closing, I would like to table a couple of comments that I have found from the Poms in Oz online forum where backpackers talk about coming to Australia—'I can see the number of backpackers dramatically falling soon.' 'Me, too, especially now they have stopped volunteering for food and beds as well. No wonder backpackers are considering other countries.'

Tabled paper: Extract, undated, from www.pomsinoz.com, regarding Australia working holiday visa tax [690].

(Time expired)

 **Mr CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (12.45 pm): I rise to contribute to this debate on this opportunistic stunt of a motion. I reflect on the fact that last night the members of the government did not oppose the motion in relation to the need to continue strong border protection policies in Australia, because they knew that that motion was right. While the members opposite came up with every excuse under the sun in their contributions to the debate, at the end of the day they did not oppose the motion, because they knew that it was required.

I am not going to stand here and pretend that this motion is wrong. It is not wrong. The backpacker tax is a bad tax for regional Queensland, it is a bad tax for the agricultural sector, it is a bad tax particularly for the horticultural sector and it is a bad tax for my electorate of Hinchinbrook, which has a large horticultural industry. Backpackers provide a lot of economic opportunities for the communities in my electorate of Hinchinbrook. I am not going to say that this motion is wrong, but I am going to say, as the member for Beaudesert and shadow minister for tourism said, that it is galling to sit here and listen to people such as the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries, the member for Bundaberg, who suggested that we need to be lectured in the Queensland parliament by those enemies of regional and rural Queensland, those enemies of the agriculture sector. I certainly will not do so.

I will go through the list of policies that the Palaszczuk Labor government is pursuing at the moment. It wants a state based carbon tax that will cripple irrigated agriculture throughout the state. The members opposite did not mean for that policy to come out this week, but it came out anyway. If anyone opposite knew anything about irrigated agriculture, especially in the horticultural sector, they would know that it relies heavily on irrigation. Irrigation means that you need a pump. Energy prices will be severely impacted by the government's state based carbon tax that it wants to bring in. If we do not have profitable irrigated agriculture in the horticultural sector, we are not going to have any backpackers working in jobs in irrigated agriculture.


At the moment, there is water legislation before the House that will take away the options for water development to occur in the agricultural sector in Queensland. That is another slight against the agricultural and horticultural sector. There is also legislation in front of the parliament to take away the high-value agricultural and high-value irrigated agricultural opportunities for Queensland agriculture and Queensland horticulture. The government cannot get new jobs in the horticultural sector for backpackers if it is closing down Queensland's agricultural sector. You do not have to be a genius to work that out. We will not listen to the nonsense of the members opposite. We have the land management police back in North Queensland. As a result of the policies of the Palaszczuk Labor government, we have the tree police back out in regional Queensland.

I will move to the tourism sector, because this motion is also about tourism. What has this government been doing for tourism in Queensland's regions? It has introduced lockout laws and reduced trading hours in licenced premises. Backpackers work in the hospitality industry. Those geniuses are ignoring their own ridiculous policies that are hurting regional tourism industries.

In terms of ecotourism, this week a bill went through this House that was introduced by the Minister for Environment that removed sensible, sustainable, commercial opportunities in our protected area estates where backpackers go to have experiences in regional Queensland and in our national parks. Through the passage of that bill, there is reduced access for the community, reduced access for ecotourism. Those opposite are geniuses! They are a bunch of dills! They have absolutely no idea what they are doing in relation to their own policies.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Crawford): Member for Hinchinbrook.

Mr CRIPPS: I withdraw. The Minister for Environment and the Minister for Tourism are running a scare campaign about the Barrier Reef. While we are trying to attract people to Queensland and to one of the cornerstones of our tourism industry, they are out there scaring everybody about its future, saying that its imminent demise is near. What a load of nonsense! The Palaszczuk government is doing more to destroy opportunities for the tourism industry and the agriculture sector, which is the lifeblood of attracting backpackers to the state of Queensland, than the backpacker tax will ever do. If they never come in the first instance because there are no jobs or tourism opportunities they will never have the opportunity to pay that higher marginal rate of tax if they are employed in casual employment in the state of Queensland.

 **Hon. KJ JONES** (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism and Major Events) (12.50 pm): I never thought I would agree with the member for Hinchinbrook, but his comments that this is a bad tax are absolutely correct and I thank him for being honest about that.

Mr Cripps: I'm not ashamed to say it.

Ms JONES: I know you are not ashamed to say it, because the honourable member knows that everybody in his local community is saying that to him and he should be listening to his constituents. Today all we are asking those opposite to do in this motion—

Mr Cripps: Disgraceful!

Ms JONES: You've had five minutes. Come on.

Mr Cripps: Yes, I will keep going, too.

Ms JONES: That is not the standing orders.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Hinchinbrook, you are currently on a warning. We are almost at lunch.

Ms JONES: The member for Hinchinbrook was being honest about what people in his community and, indeed, right across this country are saying: the backpacker tax is a bad tax and it should be scrapped. This motion is that we in Queensland, the tourism hub of Australia, who value our agricultural sector, stand together in a bipartisan way to send a very clear message to our colleagues in Canberra to scrap the backpacker tax. Today we do not go down the well trodden path of divisiveness and, as the Queensland parliament, stand united and send a very clear message to Canberra that we do not want the backpacker tax in Queensland because it is damaging for our rural and regional communities.

Far from hearing the mixed contributions from those opposite, I think that we could actually rise above it today and finish this week on a high. We were promised new energy, a new enthusiasm and a new way forward and all we have seen this week is the same old, same old from the LNP. I am giving those opposite a gold plated wonderful opportunity to show that we are going to do things differently under the new LNP here in Queensland. I say to all honourable members, including the honourable member for Callide, who is now back sitting up the front, that they can show that the decision to stab their mates in the back and take over the leadership was worth it because we are actually going to do something different here in Queensland: we are going to stand here in a bipartisan way and send a strong message to Canberra that we do not want the backpacker tax in Queensland—neither the LNP, the Labor Party, the Independents or the Katter's Australian Party wants the backpacker tax. I call on those opposite to stand up for their communities, to join with Labor and fight for the tourism and agricultural industry here in Queensland.

Those opposite do not have to take our word for it, they can take the word of their own local community who are lobbying all of us to get rid of this. They just need to look at all of the media about how damaging this is going to be for Queensland. I have been on the record now for months calling on the federal government to scrap this backpacker tax. I thank the tourism industry for coming out in force against this tax. Daniel Gschwind from the Queensland Tourism Industry Council has come out against this tax. The backpacker tax has been implemented with no consideration and no discussions. Tourism operators from 1770, from the Islander Resort on the Gold Coast in Surfers Paradise, from Port Douglas and right across Queensland have all stood up against this.


Today I am in a good mood. I am optimistic that we can send a very strong message to everybody that in Queensland we are united against this. I see that the conservatives in WA are taking action. The National Party members in Western Australia are saying they will not support this. They are directing tourism operators not to serve federal politicians who are there on the hustings and who support the backpacker tax. Let us get creative and look at ways that we can send that message. The member for Hinchinbrook has been here longer than I have. I had a little hiatus thanks to my old mate here; but thanks for bringing me back, Jeff! Today we can do something very positive for the tourism and agricultural industries in Queensland. Today is an opportunity to show that we can rise above division and party politics when it comes to real jobs and real economic stimulus that is desperately needed right across our country and, indeed, in regional communities.

Mr Cripps: Because of your policies!

Ms JONES: I take that interjection. Who was the one who cut thousands of jobs from every single town in this state? That will always be your legacy. Nurses, teachers and doctors were cut. That is what you did and it damaged regional communities. That is exactly why the member for Hinchinbrook is back over there where he belongs.

Mr Cripps interjected.

Ms JONES: I am not going to get down there today. Today I am focused on Queensland parliament standing united and sending a clear message to Canberra that we do not support the backpacker tax. It is bad for Queensland and bad for Queensland jobs.

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (12.56 pm): Is it not the height of hypocrisy when this government can move a motion in this House calling on the federal government to abolish the backpacker tax which directly impacts on the agricultural sector, yet in the same breath show scant regard for our hardworking farmers around the state? Since being appointed as the minister all we have seen is the lack of any idea of how agricultural industries in Queensland operate. Last night we had the education minister stand up and say, 'Half a billion dollars will be ripped out of regional communities right across this country and there is deathly silence from the LNP.' I say to the education minister that that could not be further from the truth. It is obvious that the education and agriculture ministers have been living under a rock because if they had been paying attention they would have heard my speech on the backpacker issue during the February sittings. It is patently obvious that this minister has been asleep at the wheel when it comes to agricultural development in this state.

As I said on 25 February—yes, that is right, three months ago—talking to Burdekin fruit and vegetable growers, local growers, some of whom have been in business for decades, they are rightly concerned that they will lose the majority of their workforce. Whilst they would ideally prefer to employ Australians instead of foreign workers, they have found that backpackers reliably perform these labour intensive tasks. Queensland is the largest producer of vegetables in Australia, as well as the second largest producer of fruit. We have around 250 horticultural farms in Queensland and, combined with the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector, employ around 55,000. The Bowen Gumlu fruit and vegetable industry in my electorate alone has consistently produced around \$412 million worth of produce a year for the past five years. The annual influx of backpackers into the Bowen and Burdekin areas contributes an enormous financial boost to those local economies. You only have to drive through Bowen at the peak of the season to see the activity at the accommodation facilities, the hotels, the eateries and all the local businesses to know the impact that the backpackers have on those communities. There is no question that those communities would not survive without the use of the seasonal backpacker labour. Growers have already expressed concern about the potential impact on the horticultural industry.

I have confidence in the industry and I am currently working with Bowen Collinsville Enterprise to develop a food processing plant at Bowen because I am not content to sit back and rest on my laurels. It is about getting out there and actually doing something to create jobs in the agricultural sector. In my new capacity as the shadow minister for agriculture, fisheries and forestry I can assure this House, the people of Queensland and the hardworking constituents in my electorate that I am working feverishly to put Queensland at the forefront, particularly in my agriculture portfolio. Instead of scaremongering, I have been consulting with my constituents, with AgForce and industry representatives. Since the introduction of the second working holidaymaker visa for 417 visa holders, there is a dependence on those foreign workers for seasonal labour. If a grower needs 200 workers over a short four-to-six-week period to harvest their mango crop, there are real concerns in sourcing that volume of labour in the short-term, particularly in our small regional centres.

Despite the wild accusations of those opposite, the so-called backpacker tax has not yet been set in stone. I know the federal member for Dawson, George Christensen, has been assured by the Deputy Premier and the Treasurer that the tax is currently under review. Today I have spoken to the federal member and he assures me that he is doing everything possible to resolve this issue. Not for one minute should members discount the work that is going on on this side of the House to make sure that this goes away.

I know who I trust to look after our primary industries in Queensland and it is certainly not the Labor minister opposite. This is nothing more than a politically driven motion from a member whose connection with agriculture, in her own words, runs to once having a veggie garden. There are numerous facets to this debate. This motion has nothing to do with concern for our tourism or primary industries, and everything to do with playing politics and stirring up unnecessary concern in two of our key industry sectors. Instead of scaremongering, politicising and meddling with the federal government's taxation system, this government should concentrate on jobs and infrastructure projects for this state. I would expect a common-sense outcome to this issue, rather than the nonsense we have heard today from the member for Bundaberg.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Crawford): Before I put the motion, I advise the House that in the gallery we have students from Moreton Bay College and Moreton Bay Boys College in the electorate of Lytton.


Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Sitting suspended from 1.01 pm to 2.30 pm.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month


 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (2.30 pm): Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month is an opportunity for Queenslanders to come together and collectively send a clear message that domestic and family violence does not belong in this state. As we mark Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month this year in May, I am pleased to see Queensland continuing to make positive steps towards stamping out this blight on our society. As members know, no matter one's background, achievements or socioeconomic status, domestic violence is a scourge that touches us all.

This month is a chance to reflect on how those we know in our everyday lives, be it our brothers and sisters, our mums and dads, our friends or our colleagues, may have been impacted by domestic and family violence in some way and reiterate our collective commitment to eradicating domestic and family violence. Whether through legislation being passed through this parliament, services being enhanced and improved by support organisations or attitudes shifting in our communities, in 2016 we can say that clearly times have changed and domestic violence has no place in our society.

I am proud to have been part of an LNP government that in 2013, under the stewardship of the member for Aspley as the then minister for communities, child safety and disability services, commissioned the *Not now, not ever* task force to stamp out domestic violence in our state. The task force, led by Dame Quentin Bryce, was commissioned so that survivors of domestic violence could tell their stories and help inform a strategy to deal with domestic violence. Most importantly, the task force provided recommendations and insights to allow the government to set the vision and direction for a Queensland strategy to stop domestic and family violence. I am greatly encouraged by the bipartisan approach the 54th and 55th parliaments have taken to adopting the recommendations of that task force, which is a demonstration of communities throughout Queensland and we as their representatives coming together and acting to stop domestic violence.

This Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month, I am pleased to see that 57 community organisations have been given funding to host activities and events to raise awareness by promoting partnerships, engaging and educating, challenging attitudes and empowering Queenslanders. It remains as crucial as ever that throughout this state individuals, families and communities continue to raise awareness and provide care and support for those who have been affected by domestic violence. As a parliament, it remains equally important that we continue taking concrete legislative steps to implement the recommendations of the *Not now, not ever* task force and provide the framework needed. In my role as shadow minister for the prevention of family and domestic violence, I look forward to helping to mark this occasion and to working to continue the progress we have already made.

International Nurses Day

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (2.33 pm): Today is a special day for me and all other nurses around the world. Today is International Nurses Day and last week we celebrated International Midwives Day with our professional colleagues. I take this opportunity to pay tribute to all my nursing and midwifery colleagues. I also acknowledge my nursing colleagues in this House.

From start to finish, at some point in your time on this planet you will be cared for by a midwife or a nurse. You will be welcomed to the world by a midwife. Your mother will have been taught to breastfeed and establish sleep patterns. If done well, we know this sets people up for life. On Saturday, I visited St Helena Island to honour the memory of the leaders of the 1891 shearers' strike. While there, I visited the children's graveyard. Every stone marked a reason for death, but today all of the conditions listed can be prevented or cured. Child health nurses keep us safe in the early years of our lives. Thanks to parent education and vaccination, we have significantly reduced mortality before the age of five.

School based nurses teach young people about nutrition and sexuality. They monitor physical development and mental health, and continue the vaccination schedule. I am incredibly pleased that the Palaszczuk government is increasing the number of school based nurses. After school, most of us will not see a nurse again until we reach our older years, although we may see a nurse in an emergency department if we show up to deal with our sporting or dancing injuries.


Some people will develop chronic illnesses, such as diabetes. Some people will develop psychiatric conditions. Other people will be affected by addiction issues. In all those instances, a nurse will be available to help the person to regain health. The creation of nurse navigators by the Palaszczuk government will greatly assist people who have regular contact with our health system due to complex health issues.

Some of us might next experience nursing or midwifery when we decide to study to become one. I am pleased that the Palaszczuk government has recognised the importance of supporting nurses at the beginning of their careers, announcing the employment of 1,000 new graduates per year. Perhaps the next interaction with a midwife will be when children are born. If the midwife-to-patient ratio legislation is passed today, more midwives will be able to deliver safe care to both mother and child.

As our parents age, we will see nurses in aged and palliative care. Dedicated nurses make sure people have dignity for their entire lives. As we age, many of us will see nurses more regularly. All sorts of things can go wrong and we may find ourselves in a medical ward, a surgical ward, an oncology ward or a coronary care ward. The care in all of those places will be safer if this House sees the sense of passing the nurse-to-patient ratio legislation later today. Rehabilitation and community nurses help people get back on their feet and back into their communities. When the end comes, it is a nurse who is there to comfort the patient and their family.

From birth to death, nurses and midwives are there caring for people, promoting and restoring health. I wish all nurses a happy International Nurses Day and all midwives a belated happy International Midwives Day.

Mother's Day; International Nurses Day

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Cleveland—LNP) (2.36 pm): Today in the House I am delighted to speak about two very important days in our yearly calendar of events, Mother's Day and International Nurses Day. Those days are close to the heart of every family and, indeed, every community. Each and every one of us is indebted to the love and nurturing of our own mothers and today I pay tribute to my mum, Lauris Robinson. Undoubtedly, our mothers have had a guiding hand in enabling us to grow into the roles that we undertake in this parliament on behalf of our respective constituencies.

I thank the mothers in my electorate of Cleveland for all that they do. I do not believe that anyone could prepare a duty statement that incorporates everything that mums do in their day-to-day lives, often whilst juggling multiple tasks, all at the same time. Of course, mums' roles vary markedly. We have stay-at-home mums and working mums, mums who take on the care of elderly relatives as well as their own families and mums who volunteer their time to help out at school tuckshops and sporting clubs, to name but a few.


Last Sunday, Mother's Day 2016, I visited the Birkdale Flower Farm, which has been owned and operated by the Sihota family in the Redlands for over 36 years. Nova FM radio was also in attendance to promote and acknowledge the significant role that Sihotas' flowers play on special days such as Mother's Day. The Birkdale Flower Farm has become quite iconic. It is recognised across Brisbane as a supplier of quality blooms. Judging by the flowers that I saw on the day, there would have been many happy mums on Mother's Day.

It would be remiss of me not to mention that my wife, Julie, was presented with a beautiful bouquet of flowers that had been lovingly grown at the Sihotas' farm. Our youngest son, Isaac, was very proud to hand over the flowers on behalf of his six siblings. We love you, Julie, and appreciate all that you do for us. To Julie I say: you are definitely a wonder woman, with a heart of gold.

Some of our working mums are nurses and midwives. It is fitting that we pay tribute to them today, International Nurses Day, for the valuable contribution that they make to society. I have had the opportunity to meet many of the wonderful nurses and midwives who work at Redland Hospital, several of whom are wives and mothers who juggle work and family commitments and undertake night shifts to ensure that our community is afforded the best possible care. It is appropriate that 12 May was chosen to celebrate International Nurses Day as it is the anniversary of the birth of Florence Nightingale. Locally, the Redland Centre for Women is doing a great job supporting women in our community. The WAVSS Domestic Violence Service is also doing a wonderful job.

I conclude by saying that pregnancy and motherhood are very special things. My wife has had seven children born alive. Unfortunately, we lost three children in the womb. We love all 10 of them. Human life in the womb is precious and should be given the greatest protection that we can afford. I give a shout-out to all the mums of Cleveland.

Gladstone Electorate, Biofuels Industry

 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (2.39 pm): I rise to speak today about a fantastic win for the state of Queensland and for my electorate of Gladstone. A few weeks ago I joined the Premier, Minister Lynham and Minister Bailey at Southern Oil's refinery in Yarwun to announce that a \$16 million

advanced biofuels pilot plant will be built in my electorate. If successful, the pilot plant will be expanded to a large commercial-scale refinery costing \$150 million and producing 200 million litres of advanced biofuels annually, suitable for military, marine and aviation use. The plant will be Australia's first commercial-scale advanced biofuels production facility.

A fully fledged biofuels industry has the potential to play a key role in our economic future. This pilot plant is a giant step towards reaching that goal in Queensland. This pilot plant is essentially the launch site for a Queensland biofuels industry. If we can develop this plant into a large-scale refinery, that will mean jobs in Gladstone, but it could also see new investment and job creation right across Queensland. Not only has the Palaszczuk government secured this investment but also it has taken it out of the hands of New South Wales, which makes this announcement even sweeter.


The Palaszczuk government is committed to supporting the industries of the future. In a testament to this, we will deliver the biofutures road map and a 10-year action plan by midyear. Southern Oil Refining's Managing Director Tim Rose said himself that the decision to put this important piece of technology at their Wagga Wagga plant in New South Wales or at a new refinery in Gladstone was made a whole lot easier with the announcement of the Palaszczuk government's biofutures road map. He stated that the road map 'is the only forward-thinking policy in Australia in this critical area'. The pilot plan is expected to be operational by later this year and within the next three years aims to have produced one million litres of fuel for use in field trials by the US Navy as part of its Great Green Fleet initiative and also for use by the Australian Navy.

Southern Oil Refining currently operates a waste lube oil refining plant at Yarwun in the Gladstone State Development Area as a joint venture with JJ Richards & Sons. The \$70 million plant is the only waste lube oil refining facility in Queensland and has the potential to process all of the state's 100 million litres of waste lube oil annually.

The advanced biofuels pilot plant will be co-located with the Yarwun refining facility. The plant will use biomass materials such as sugar cane as feedstock for the production of bio crude oil, which will then be distilled into saleable kerosene and diesel products. Queensland is positioning to be the biofuels industry leader.

The foresight of previous Labor governments brought cutting edge technology and industry to Gladstone with the LNG plants. Here is another example of forward thinking that is at the heart of the Labor government in Queensland.

Home Assist Secure, Lawn Mowing Vouchers; Backpacker Tax

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (2.42 pm): There is good news for those in my electorate. Many elderly and disabled people have been lobbying me for the last four years for the return of the lawn mowing vouchers that were offered through the Home Assist Secure program of the Department of Housing and Public Works. I thank the Minister for Housing, Mick de Brenni, for the announcement of a trial of these vouchers from Rockhampton north. It will be expanded into a few other areas. This is great news for the disabled and the elderly.

There was controversy surrounding this issue. The Newman government cut the \$10 lawn mowing voucher at the time the previous government made the announcement that it would build a premier's precinct and give themselves a massive pay rise. This trial is good news.


A lot of elderly people cannot mow their lawns. A lot of people complain that there are homes where the grass is overgrown. The fact is that these people do not have the finances or the capacity to mow their lawns. This \$10 voucher means everything to them. It is good news. I thank the minister and the government for making that announcement.

Another issue of concern in my electorate is the backpacker tax proposed by the federal government. I believe that this is a massive issue for farming communities. They feel gutted at the present time. They rely on backpackers every year to do work in the agricultural industry.

In places like Tolga and the Atherton Tablelands we see backpackers at the coffee shops. Late in the afternoon we see backpackers at our pubs supporting the pubs by eating their meals there. We see the backpackers going out to Malanda and supporting the dairy centres. We see the backpackers skiing on Tinaroo Dam.

We send a strong message to the federal government that our communities are feeling gutted. They are hoping to get \$500 million out of backpackers. If they put a tax on backpackers they will get nothing because we will not have the backpackers. They will not come to our regions. They will not pick in our regions. They will not stop in those regions because it is not worth it. Now they come to these places, work, enjoy the surroundings and spend their money in the local surroundings. This will be devastating for our farming industry and our economy. We will have nothing in return because we will not have the backpackers supporting our local communities.

Pine Rivers Electorate, Employment Expo

 **Ms BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (2.45 pm): The Palaszczuk government is committed to delivering jobs in Queensland. It is my No. 1 priority in the electorate. So far since the election we have seen the creation of over 60,000 jobs. That is in stark contrast to the tens of thousands of jobs we saw savagely cut at the hands of those opposite.

Investing in skills and training is a key contrast between the LNP and Labor in government. Ours is a government that has set up and reinstated Skilling Queenslanders for Work—a program that delivers \$8 back into the economy for every dollar invested in it. We are also investing in schools and education facilities. The restoration of TAFE last year has moved to restore confidence in capacity in the TAFE system.

I appreciate the dignity that comes with work. I appreciate that many people in my electorate are still doing it tough. They are still looking for work after the decimation of jobs and employment from those opposite. That is why it was so important for me to hold an expo in conjunction with Employment Outcomes in my community.


The Real Deal Pine Rivers Employment Expo was an opportunity for the community to come together and learn about and discuss resumes, job active services, training services with employer stalls, workshops and job opportunities. All told we had over 40 employer stalls at the expo. We had over 20 jobs that were on offer for the day. We had 14 different providers that were offering work experience to attendees. We had a number of sponsors who helped out with food and drink donations. We had many activities as well. We actually looked outside the employment area. The graffiti competition was very well taken up. There were rave reviews about that.

In terms of donation assistance we had approximately 50 different community groups and donors who made this a success. I would like to particularly acknowledge, however, the work that has been done in terms of outcomes from this event. It was not just training providers, employers and community groups that came together; we had over 250 people through on the day. We had 150 people register interest in a particular job. We have arranged over 30 job interviews. Seven people have started work because of the expo. We have another five places to fill in the next few weeks.

Employment Outcomes is a fantastic local business that appreciates that many in our community, especially young people, need more than a job or an apprenticeship in our community. Employment Outcomes go far beyond that. I would like to acknowledge Gerry Lister and her team, particularly Lachlan Young, for putting their hearts into making this forum a success and being out there every day getting young people into work, often through difficult circumstances. I thank them.

My No. 1 priority for Pine Rivers is jobs. I am so appreciative of the work that our amazing community can do when we have business, training organisations and government working together.

Caloundra

 **Mr McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (2.48 pm): Caloundra is a lifestyle and business destination. It offers beaches second to none across the Sunshine Coast including Golden Beach, Kings Beach, Bulcock Beach, Moffat Beach, Shelly Beach and Dicky Beach. It also offers Pumicestone Passage and the beauty of the hinterland towns and lush green areas. It offers a unique lifestyle to young people, families and retirees. We need to do more and consider how we can turn that same area into a business destination for the future—in particular, Bulcock Street. Bulcock Street is the spine of Caloundra, and the surrounding area is the bulwark of the development site for Caloundra in years to come. Bulcock Street has not had a new building or construction site on it for more than 10 years. One of the reasons is the height restrictions contained in the Caloundra local plan area of 2014. I table a copy of that plan for the House.

Tabled paper: Map, undated, titled 'Sunshine Coast Planning Scheme 2014, Caloundra Local Plan Area' [\[691\]](#).


Height restrictions in Bulcock Street and the surrounding area must be sensibly reviewed to reflect an area that will grow into, as I said before, a lifestyle and business destination. We in this chamber know clearly what it is like to be in Lygon Street in Melbourne, in the Rocks in Sydney and at the old Darling Harbour before it was redeveloped. We understand the sense and feel that those areas engender to the places they are. What we need to understand is that we can learn from those areas in Caloundra, take those ideas and develop a precinct that will attract more people and long-term residents and businesses. We can make Bulcock Street into an accommodation, commercial and retail hub.

We also need to review the height of buildings not just in Bulcock Street but in the surrounding area as well. The Kronks Motel site, a large site that has now become available for sale, the Events Centre, Felicity Park and the old council chambers are all close together and can offer a unique opportunity for the people of Caloundra and, indeed, Queensland to come, live and work in the area. The threat from Kawana is real. The development of a hospital in Kawana and the precinct around Kawana is a threat to the economic viability of Caloundra. Caloundra South is also a threat.

We need to plan now to make certain that we develop Caloundra to become the area that we want in years to come. The building heights in and around the CBD of Caloundra must be reviewed. They need to be reviewed to ensure that we can attract the economic growth and economic development that we need to grow the region in years ahead. I do not for one second decry Kawana and Caloundra South. Caloundra, however, does need to understand where it wants to be and start the process by pushing for the realignment of height capacity in Bulcock Street.

(Time expired)

Prince Charles Hospital Research Study

 **Hon. AJ LYNHAM** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (2.51 pm): I rise today to speak about an innovative research study underway at the Prince Charles Hospital in my electorate of Stafford. As a surgeon, as an associate professor at the University of Queensland and as a member of the QUT Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation team, I have seen firsthand the value of technological development in the health sector. I have also spent many years working at the Prince Charles Hospital research facility and I am very pleased to partner with the Prince Charles Hospital Foundation to raise funds for a new medical research project.

This Friday, Michael Hornby, CEO of the Prince Charles Hospital Foundation, is launching a fundraising project aimed at furthering our understanding of the reasons mechanical pumps, which support heart function, sometimes fail. This research is being undertaken by Nicole Bartnikowski, part of the Mending Broken Hearts Team at the Prince Charles Hospital, and the focus is on developing ways in which the pump and the heart can work in unison to support the regulation of blood flow. This research will save lives. This vital research is happening right in the heart of my electorate of Stafford at a world-class research facility.

Simply, the largest barrier to medical innovation is funding for medical research. Without funding, these lifesaving innovative developments cannot continue. If this funding was available, more time could be spent researching and less time fundraising. Many more lives could be saved sooner.


The Prime Minister has spoken about Australia as the innovation nation. We cannot be a nation of innovation unless we are first an education nation. This will not happen if we start charging students \$100,000 for a university degree. It will not happen if we destroy CSIRO. It will not happen if we destroy industry skills. It will not happen if there is a shift from public good science to profit driven research.

The ideas boom is not possible without adequate support for education and the nurturing of an environment which fosters innovation, recognises originality and rewards the advancement of scientific ideas over the commercialisation of inventions. What we hear from the federal government is just words—hollowness. They are ripping away innovation. They are ripping away education. Yet they have some innovation agenda. If the Prime Minister wants to see innovation, he should come here to Queensland, see our Advance Queensland program and learn from us.

In Queensland we are leading the way in innovation. The good Minister for Innovation is here in the chamber with me today. We are leading Australia in innovation through our Advance Queensland research funding. I am proud to have a globally recognised research institution in my electorate of Stafford. This ties in nicely with the government's commitment to the Advance Queensland platform.

(Time expired)

Toowoomba Second Range Crossing

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (2.54 pm): I rise to talk about the Toowoomba Second Range Crossing. We were very blessed in Toowoomba to have LNP members at a state and federal level for the first time in a long, long time in 2012. This was a window of opportunity to finally get on with this great project. I commend Ian Macfarlane and Warren Truss for all the hard work they put into it. It has been great working with John McVeigh to make sure the project gets across the line.

There is an important issue that is starting to develop in my community. There was a commitment made that 1,800 new jobs would be delivered by this project and that 75 per cent of those would be sourced from local contractors and in the local area, areas such as the Lockyer Valley, Southern Downs, Western Downs, South Burnett, Goondiwindi, the Maranoa and, of course, the greater Toowoomba region. I am hearing from a lot of subcontractors that this may not be happening in the way they had hoped. Some of them, rightly so, should lose out because they are not price competitive.

The selection criteria includes prior safety performance, prior work history and price. One of the factors that also needs to be considered is local content. It is very important for us on the Darling Downs to make sure that our local people and young people are getting opportunities to be apprentices on this wonderful job. I know that David Janetzki, who is our candidate in Toowoomba South, is looking forward to getting his teeth into this and making sure that we fight hard for the jobs to stay local for our local community and to ensure that local companies are seriously considered for contracts.


Government members interjected.

Mr WATTS: I hear the interjections coming from the other side about the former member for Toowoomba North, Kerry Shine. He was there for a long time—11 years. In 11 years this project did not progress. It went nowhere. There was not one single dollar from the state government from two different Labor premiers. They did business case after business case—and nothing. I look forward very much to working with David Janetzki to make sure that we keep the LNP right across our region to make sure that we can deliver for our region. This will ensure that not only do we have an advocate in our region fighting for them but we do not have a city focused Labor government that forgets about the people who live west of the Great Divide.

This road is critically important for the infrastructure and the productivity of Queensland, to make sure that our farmers and other commodity producers can get their products to port in an efficient and effective way. Whilst we are constructing this road, the people on the Darling Downs and in the greater Toowoomba region deserve the opportunity of those local jobs. I ask the minister, as have many of my constituents, and I ask Nexus to consider local people. I look forward to working with David Janetzki to make sure that local people get the opportunity of those jobs in our community.

(Time expired)

Education

 **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) (2.57 pm): I rise to thank the Minister for Education and my local principals, P&C and P&F representatives who attended my recent education forum at Beenleigh. Representatives from Beenleigh Special School, Beenleigh State School, Beenleigh State High, Bethania Lutheran, Canterbury College, Edens Landing State School, Loganholme State School, Loganlea State High, Mabel Park State School, Mabel Park State High, Marsden State School, Marsden State High, St Joseph's Tobruk, Trinity College, Waterford State School and Waterford West State School all attended—a lot of schools.

At the most recent forum the education policies of the Palaszczuk government were warmly received. Waterford schools were happy with our record \$9 billion investment in education. They were excited that we are rolling out the Advance Queensland curriculum, with cutting-edge classes in robotics, coding and technology. Over the Christmas break many of the schools had received repairs and renovations thanks to our clearing of the school maintenance backlog. They are also relieved that we as a government are hiring teachers above growth levels. Schools in Waterford gave a big tick to the Investing for Success program, which invests \$480 million in the 2016-17 budget to schools with the greatest needs—some of those are in my electorate.


At this forum we also heard from local Logan legend Aunty Robyn Williams about her passion to include Indigenous education in our local schools and to encourage more Indigenous teachers. Aunty Robyn movingly told the crowd that school students should know and respect the Indigenous history of the land they are walking on and that this passion has been her and her sister Eileen's lifelong purpose.

The speech resonated with me as to how much work we have to do to close the gap in our country and in our education system. That is why I was thrilled this week when our federal leader announced a Shorten Labor government would deliver over four years 400 scholarships to Indigenous Australians to help them become teachers. This will help Aunty Robyn's passion move forward and is a great step in making our education system more inclusive of our first Australians.

Education is not a burden; it is an investment. I will never stop fighting for the fair share of funding and resources that Waterford schools deserve. I am proud to be on this side of the House when it comes to education, and I look forward to my next local schools forum where I can hopefully deliver more good news such as the saving of Gonski—something my schools support unequivocally.

ETHICS COMMITTEE

Reports

 **Mr BROWN** (Capalaba—ALP) (2.59 pm), by leave: I table report No. 165 of the Ethics Committee, titled *Report on a right of reply No. 29*.

Tabled paper: Ethics Committee: Report No. 165—Report on a Right of Reply No. 29 [692].

I also table report No. 166 of the Ethics Committee, titled *Matter of privilege referred by the Finance and Administration Committee on 16 March 2016 relating to an alleged intimidation of witnesses*.

Tabled paper: Ethics Committee: Report No. 166—Matter of privilege referred by the Finance and Administration Committee on 16 March 2016 relating to an alleged intimidation of witnesses [693].


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

ANIMAL MANAGEMENT (PROTECTING PUPPIES) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 1815, on motion of Ms Donaldson—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr MADDEN** (Ipswich West—ALP) (3.01 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Animal Management (Protecting Puppies) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. This bill amends the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001, the Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008 and the Biosecurity Act 2014. I would like to begin by thanking the Agriculture and Environment Committee, the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries staff, the hardworking committee secretariat and all the individuals and groups who made submissions to the committee.

The committee has completed its inquiry into the bill and tabled its report on 28 April 2016. The report had a single recommendation, and that is that the bill be passed. This bill delivers on the Palaszczuk government's election commitment to protect puppies from unnecessary cruelty by establishing a compulsory registration scheme for dog breeders. The compulsory registration scheme provides the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, local councils and the RSPCA with the tools they need to combat cruel puppy farms where breeders place profit before the welfare of their dogs.

The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries will facilitate an ongoing registration system to ensure the registration process is simple and quick to complete. Paper based registration will be available to those unable to register online. To ensure breeder details are up to date, breeder registration will be required to be renewed annually. As we in this House know, we live in society where dogs are highly valued and are an important part of our way of life. They willingly provide companionship, assistance and protection. They are, as the saying goes, man's best friend.

With roughly 40 per cent of households including a dog, they are often considered part of the household. Dog breeding in Queensland provides a hobby and income for many people who breed and supply dogs for various uses including pets and assistance dogs. The vast majority of dog breeders do the right thing, but, unfortunately, there are also unscrupulous breeders who place profit before the welfare of the dogs. These people often breed dogs in poor conditions in premises that are unlicensed to breed or house dogs.

Over the years I have owned a number of dogs and the majority have been rescue dogs, mostly purchased from the RSPCA. They have all been wonderful dogs and great companions all with unique personalities. No matter what time of the day I arrived home, they were always there to welcome me, and my current dog, Rex, is no exception. Many, like Rex, had difficult lives before they came into my care, but I have always made sure that when they came into my life my family and I provided them with a loving, caring household. Before Rex I had Raggsie, Patches, Suzy, Rusty and Ruby—all loving companions wanting nothing more than food and shelter.

I have always been pleased to support my local dog groups including the Ipswich Kennel Club, the Ipswich Dog Obedience Club, the Brisbane Valley Kennel Club, the Lockyer Valley Kennel Club and the Lockyer Valley Dog Training Club—all reputable and long-established community groups. During the election campaign I was proud to advocate for my party's policy to introduce laws to shut down cruel puppy farms and protect puppies in Queensland.


After extensive public and stakeholder consultation, the Animal Management (Protecting Puppies) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 was prepared. Not only is there a community expectation that all dogs will be properly cared for; this is required pursuant to the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001. This act promotes responsible care and use of animals. It places a legal duty of care on people in charge of animals to meet their needs in an appropriate way.

Puppy farms and unscrupulous dog breeders are cruel and do not meet the animal welfare expectations of our community. This bill provides a clear and effective scheme to identify and locate dog breeders who are not doing the right thing without placing an unnecessary burden on reputable dog breeders, the community or government.

The biggest barrier to shutting down cruel puppy farms is the inability to locate these unscrupulous breeders. The bill establishes a compulsory registration scheme for dog breeders. These dog breeders must be registered and each dog they breed must be microchipped with its registration number as well as the name and address of the breeder. The registration obligation for a person who breeds and supplies a dog is a necessary requirement to stop the abuse of man's best friend and will make sure that puppy farms can be tracked and located.

The bill also makes special provision for working dogs kept by primary producers which will not be required to be microchipped. Working dogs are an essential part of the Australian livestock industry. Traditionally, working dogs were used to work and drove cattle, but more recently dogs are being used as guardian dogs to protect livestock from wild dog attacks. It is therefore important to define what is a working dog. The working dog definition under the Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008 is quite specific and covers dogs usually kept by primary producers on rural land primarily for droving and stock control, protecting and working stock. It is totally appropriate that special provision be made in the bill for genuine working dogs because these dogs are usually kept on rural land. They are unlikely to cause problems in the community such as straying, barking nuisance and attacks. This means that local governments would have a very limited role in managing working dogs within their areas.

Many farmers and graziers are currently struggling due to the drought and the increasing wild dog problem. The government has taken this into consideration and has ensured that unnecessary regulatory burden is not placed on graziers and farmers and allows them to get on with managing their business. I commend the Animal Management (Protecting Puppies) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill to the House.

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (3.08 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Animal Management (Protecting Puppies) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. To avoid any doubt and in accordance with standing order 260, I declare an interest in the debate and proceedings as I am a member of the Queensland sheep dog association. This interest is declared in the Register of Members' Interests. I am also the proud owner of three retired border collie working sheepdogs who descend from the Minto Kennel that was owned by Bill Sneddon. My family have had the Minto blood lines for some 50 years. I wish to commend the Australian and Queensland Working Sheep Dog Association and Elizabeth Hughes of the Queensland Working Cattle Dog Trial Association on their submissions to the parliamentary committee.

It was only last weekend at the Roma Show that I caught up with Rosemary and Geoff Gibson. Geoff is president of the Queensland Working Sheep Dog Association, a dog trialler and one of the best trainers of humans and livestock working dogs I have ever met. Geoff has taught me and many others a great deal about livestock working dogs, sheep handling, trialling and welfare. I would also like to commend the following people: Ian and Sharon Beard; Joy Williams, who was the judge at the trials at the Roma Show; Harold Waldron; Rick and Jill Virgo, Bryton Virgo and of course his former dog of the

year, Earl; David and Kathy Kirkbride, who are tireless organisers of the Roma sheepdog trials; and Lisa, Michael and Bob Walsh, who are amazing supporters of sheepdog trialling. It would be remiss of me not to mention Meg and Snow Potter and of course Gary and Debbie Hurtz and the many other members and supporters who make sheepdog trialling a great sport in Queensland and Australia and in competitions with New Zealand.

As I looked around the barbecue last Friday night at the sheepdog trials, I could see how every one of these people who love and respect their dogs would be adversely affected by this legislation as they do not fit into the exemption definition as it currently stands. They are retired primary producers, coffee shop owners, those living on small acreage breeding a small number of working dogs for primary producers, retired shearers, cabinet-makers, and stock and station agents, to name a few.

In a 2014 study by the University of Sydney entitled 'Estimating the economic value of Australian stock herding dogs', it was estimated that livestock working dogs contribute conservatively \$1 billion to the Australian agricultural economy. Elizabeth Hughes summed up the importance of livestock working dogs to all livestock industries when she said—

... our livelihood is very dependent on the use of livestock working dogs.

...

The breeders and handlers of these livestock working dogs are also responsible for the ongoing supply of replacement livestock working dogs to the agricultural sector and have influenced the livestock handling practices by supplying herding dogs and providing education in the use of same.

There are codes of practice and expectations related to breeding, care and welfare of livestock working dogs, which is in stark contrast to the distasteful puppy farms that this bill seeks to address. Those with livestock working dogs value their dogs as these dogs are the workforce in their business or occupation, be it a drover, station manager, station employee, contract musterer, transport operator, or stock and station agent, to name a few.


This bill when understood from a practical livestock working dog and agricultural perspective does not strike the right balance between meeting the expectations of welfare and the needs of the agricultural sector. The agricultural sector will find it very difficult to carry out their established business practices and will be faced with unnecessary and burdensome regulations, and I will detail a number of concerns and questions for the minister.

I was disappointed to read some of the department's comments in relation to extending the exemption to potentially cover appropriate categories of breeder. The exemption makes no provision for stock handling and transport contractors, working dog trainers and others involved in dog trials, stock and station agents, or retired primary producers. The department has not considered that the persons engaged by primary producers might be bona fide contractors providing their own horses, dogs and motorbikes and therefore not considered employees. I ask the minister whether she will give further consideration to contractors being included in the exemption as they are excluded as they are not strictly employees.

I disagree with the department on their view that widening the exemption to transport contractors, trial dog trainers and retired primary producers would increase the scope for misuse as a loophole. This is an ill-informed assumption from the departmental workers who have obviously never owned a working dog that resided on non-rural land. In some local government areas, these working dogs have been for the last 10 years registered and licensed by local governments by kennel permits, and I might add they have been monitored and enforced by local governments. Animal Liberation Queensland are not in possession of the facts, and their assertions of a loophole are ridiculous. I am familiar with the requirements for kennel permits and, believe me, it would be easier to claim to be a grazier than a working dog trainer.

The department has further advised that, consistent with the considerations when the Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008 was developed, the department considers exemptions for working dogs should remain very limited. I remind the department that the Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act was not evidence based and, if it were, we would not have some of the problems with unwanted cats and dogs that we have today. I find the department's arguments against expanding the exemption unfounded and the benefit to the agricultural sector outweighs the concerns by far. It is not the drovers, the station managers, the station employees, the contract musterers, the transport operators or the sheep and cattle dog triallers who are perpetuating the problem with puppy farms—quite the opposite. However, these people are now caught up in legislation and these are very disappointing circumstances.

I strongly urge the government to expand the exemption definition for livestock working dogs to people who are not primary producers and fall into these categories: those who may live in a semirural area on small acreage; retired primary producers who trial and breed a few replacement dogs; those who train livestock working dogs to supply to primary producers, livestock handling contractors and livestock trucking companies; drovers who are not primary producers; and those who are involved in and bona fide members of livestock trialling organisations. I ask that the government give due consideration to expanding the exemption as I have outlined. I ask this on behalf of those organisations who made submissions. I respectfully request that the exemption issue be addressed by the government as a matter of urgency.

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (3.16 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Animal Management (Protecting Puppies) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. The Palaszczuk Labor government is continuing to deliver on its election commitments, and this bill before us today delivers on our commitment to the people of Queensland that we would protect dogs used for breeding and shut down cruel puppy farms. Dogs are highly valued in Queensland and are an important part of the Queensland way of life, with 40 per cent of households having a dog as part of their family. In fact, my grandchildren have a dog called Ziggy and I believe they think Ziggy is one of their siblings by the way they treat him.

Dog breeding in Queensland provides a hobby and an income for many people who breed and supply dogs for various uses, including pets and assistance dogs. While many dog breeders do the right thing, there are sadly unscrupulous breeders who place profit before the welfare of their dogs. Recently, our local Mackay newspaper had a story of a couple of dogs that had been mistreated and abandoned. There was a lot of outcry from the community, so this bill is very timely. People do love their dogs.


Puppy farms can result in significant animal welfare issues if breeders keep dogs in conditions that fail to meet the dog's behavioural, social, psychological and physiological needs. Dogs that are bred in poor conditions often have health conditions that result in early death or expensive ongoing veterinary treatment. It has been estimated that there may be up to 100 puppy farms in Queensland. However, this is only an estimate. The difficulty in locating these unscrupulous breeders is the biggest barrier to protecting puppies and shutting down puppy farms.

This government is fulfilling its election commitment to shut down cruel puppy farms by establishing a compulsory registration scheme for dog breeders that will give puppy farms nowhere to hide. The new legislation requires dog breeders to register for a breeder identification number which must be included on the dog's microchip and must be displayed when advertising a dog for sale or to be given away. As all dogs in Queensland are required to be microchipped, except those in exemption categories, this system will provide lifelong traceability for every dog and their breeder. This new scheme aims to end puppy farms in Queensland by shutting them out of the market while providing prospective dog owners with greater assurances that their dog was bred by a reputable breeder. A public awareness campaign will support the scheme, urging customers to only buy dogs from registered breeders.

Extensive public stakeholder consultation has shown very strong support for a compulsory breeder education system. It is important for every breeder to be registered including people who give away puppies. This is crucial to help track down breeders who have failed to register and removes any potential loopholes for unscrupulous breeders to exploit.

Doing nothing is not an option. We have listened to the people of Queensland and this government is committed to protecting the welfare of breeding dogs and their progeny. For those people who profit from this cruel trade, this new legislation will give them nowhere to hide. Shutting down unscrupulous breeders will mean that the people of Queensland are able to enjoy the benefits of owning a dog knowing with full confidence that it has been bred by a reputable breeder.

I would like to thank the committee and our support staff. I commend the bill to the parliament.

 **Miss BARTON** (Broadwater—LNP) (3.20 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the Animal Management (Protecting Puppies) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. At the outset I say that I trust that all 89 members of this House are absolutely committed to fighting cruelty against animals and that each and every one of us is very much committed to sending a strong message to the community that it is simply not okay. The reason that I want to rise today and make a brief contribution to this bill is that, as the member for Broadwater, I am incredibly proud to say that the Animal Welfare League of Queensland has its headquarters in my electorate at Coombabah. I want to take the opportunity to pay tribute to them and the great work that they have done.


The AWL was established nearly 60 years ago and in that time they have built an incredibly strong reputation and they have had a very longstanding commitment not only on the Gold Coast but also in Ipswich, Beenleigh and other parts of Queensland to making sure that we reduce the number of unwanted cats and dogs. The reason that I particularly want to speak and pay tribute to them today is that they had taken the opportunity to make a submission to the bill, and indeed there was another submission that I think does reflect some of the concerns that the AWL have had.

The AWL, as I said, have a very strong reputation. Their record really does stand for itself, particularly when we consider that their Gold Coast facility has the lowest euthanasia rate for cats and dogs in a large city, that being the Gold Coast. Every time I have had an opportunity to go there I am always welcomed with not only open arms but usually lots of kisses and licks from the puppies and the cats that I get to cuddle. They also have guinea pigs. I would certainly encourage anyone, particularly on the Gold Coast, who is looking to get a cat or a dog for their family to take advantage of the Animal Welfare League's Adopt a Pet program.

The concern that has been raised—perhaps not directly in the submission but certainly by Emeritus Professor Jacquie Rand, who is at the University of Queensland School of Veterinary Science—is that there may be some unintended consequences for animal shelters. I want to go on the record today to not only support the work that the Animal Welfare League do but also encourage the minister to make sure that there are no negative impacts on animal shelters, to make sure that we do support those organisations, particularly not-for-profit organisations like the Animal Welfare League which do rely heavily on volunteers and donations, and to make sure that there are no unintended consequences of this legislation which would hamper their ability to do the amazing work they are doing or have a negative impact on that work.

The only other thing I would briefly touch on is to join my colleagues on this side of the House in questioning whether or not this is the most necessary legislation. Certainly those on our side of the House feel that the existing provisions that enabled councils to manage this were sufficient. However, I appreciate that this is a commitment of the government and that is something on which they are following through. The reason that I am sure all sides of the House will come together on this is that ultimately we need to be able to ensure that when Queensland families go and buy a puppy or a dog—and of course not everyone is going to want to go to a shelter like the Animal Welfare League—for their household they can have absolute confidence not only in the breeder and the lineage of the puppy or the dog they are purchasing but also that through the purchase they are not unwittingly endorsing cruel practices against animals.

As I say, I only wanted to make a brief contribution. In closing, I again pay tribute to the amazing work of the Animal Welfare League. They do a fantastic job. I look forward to seeing them again soon.


 **Mr KING** (Kallangur—ALP) (3.25 pm): I rise today to make a brief contribution to this debate on the Animal Management (Protecting Puppies) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. Indeed, who does not love a puppy? I agree with the member for Broadwater: I am pretty sure that every person in this place loves puppies and dogs, going by the uptake of the opportunity to hold the puppies and pose with them when the RSPCA brought them in earlier this year and the genuine concern in this House for Johnny Depp's dogs, Pistol and Boo, at the time they were in trouble.

This bill delivers on yet another one of the Palaszczuk government's election commitments, and that is to protect dogs which are used for breeding and to shut down cruel puppy farms. Dogs are an important part of many families including my own canine pals, Cristal and Buddy. In fact, roughly 40 per cent of Queensland households have a dog. While most dog breeders love dogs as much as I am sure—and has been mentioned—we all do in this place, sadly, some breeders place the value of the dollar over the welfare of their dogs.

In the consultation we undertook while reviewing this bill, it came out loud and clear from the community that there is an expectation that the dog breeders will care for their dogs properly. No family wants to purchase a puppy or dog that has been treated cruelly and the compulsory registration scheme that this bill will require will give unethical puppy farms nowhere to hide. I believe the added regulation of breeder registration being displayed on adverts and in microchips will help to keep unscrupulous breeders in check. There will be an exemption for genuine breeders of working dogs. These dogs are usually kept in rural areas for the purposes of working with and protecting livestock, and the usual problems of dogs kept in urban areas are virtually non-existent. The unnecessary burden this regulation would place on already struggling graziers was taken into account for the purposes of this bill.

This bill will also help support the restoration of public confidence in our greyhound racing industry by making a change to the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001 which will clarify that keeping an animal to kill or lure for blooding or coursing is an offence, whether a first time or not.

This bill will also recognise that different types of birds may pose different risks of disease. Birds kept for producing eggs for human consumption or for consumption themselves are obviously going to be considered to pose a greater disease threat than birds kept in cages as pets such as finches, softbills or parrots as their interaction with wild birds is generally restricted. Therefore, this bill will require entities which keep over a hundred birds and produce food from those birds to be registered but will allow members of the community with aviary birds to continue keeping them without unnecessary regulatory requirements. I commend this bill to the House.


 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (3.27 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the debate on the Animal Management (Protecting Puppies) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. This bill has at its heart the health and welfare of breeding dogs and their offspring. Is it not a terrible indictment on the type of community we live in that we need to legislate here today to ensure illegal puppy farms are shut down? There is no place for the cruel and inhumane treatment of animals in our society and for that reason I fully support the bill before the House.

I have firsthand experience of the horrific conditions that exist at these puppy farms. In my former role as a police officer I had occasion to accompany RSPCA and council staff on searches of premises which were operating as illegal puppy farms. The conditions that existed at many of those premises defied words. The stench, the malnourished animals, the neglect and the outright cruelty all add up to one word, and that is exploitation. There is no place for these puppy farms in our state and for that reason we need to do everything that we possibly can to make sure that they are stamped out permanently.

I support the registration and breeder ID number in ads and the recording of breeder registration ID in dog microchips. I also note that working dogs will be exempt. To take up the point raised by the member for Warrego, I have some concerns that people such as transport contractors, trial dog trainers, retired primary producers and contract musterers and drovers will not be exempt. As the former owner of seven working cattle dogs, if this legislation had been in place at that time I would have been outside of that exemption, so it is something that we will need to consider down the track.


I note that if this legislation is passed it will be reviewed in due course, and I look forward to that process which will gauge the effectiveness of this legislation and the cost. We have to remember that for all intents and purposes many of the people operating these puppy farms are criminals and they will do anything to escape detection. For that reason it will be difficult to catch these people and prosecute them, but I certainly think this is a step in the right direction. The fact that we are giving 48 hours notice is also of some concern to me. Given that these people are engaged in illegal activities, I think we need to treat these people in the same way that we would anyone who is committing an offence, and for that reason I have some concerns about that.

In summary, I think this legislation will be well received in the broader community, I think it is warranted, and I fully support the bill before the House.

 **Mr FURNER** (Ferry Grove—ALP) (3.31 pm): I rise to speak in favour of the Animal Management (Protecting Puppies) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. May I firstly congratulate the member for Gladstone, the chair of the committee, the minister, and all of the other committee members who made a contribution to make this report and this bill possible.

My interest and understanding of puppy farms initiated during my time in the Senate when the former senator from the Australian Capital Territory, Senator Humphries, the current senator from Western Australia, Senator Cash, and other stakeholders such as the RSPCA had a real passion to eliminate the illegal puppy trade, but my real passion began when I became the patron of Whiskey's Wish. Whiskey's Wish is an organisation that trains care dogs for people suffering from PTSD such as returned service men and women and people involved in emergency services, police, fireys and ambos. You can see the real change that having a care dog brings to people who suffer from that terrible disease and how it transforms their lives. I highly commend their organisation and, in particular, Scott and Liz Jackman, the co-founders of Whiskey's Wish.

This bill does deliver on our election commitment to establish a compulsory registration scheme for dog breeders in order to shut down puppy farms. I do not have a dog myself, although I have had over the years. My two daughters have two dogs each, Boston and Charlie and Otis and Lotie, and they are lovely dogs. I am a dog person. A dog is a man's best friend, and that is why I am standing here today to commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr SORENSEN** (Hervey Bay—LNP) (3.33 pm): It gives me pleasure to rise here today and speak about the bill. First of all, I would like to thank my colleagues on the committee and also the staff, Mr Rob Hansen, research director, and Paul Douglas, principal research officer. I would also like to thank the people who put in a submission to the inquiry, because without them I do not think we would have got the information that we really needed at the end of the day. I would also like to thank the people who came along to the public hearings and gave evidence. They take time out of their busy lives to be part of the public hearing, and I think it is wonderful that we have people out there who will give up their time to try and make things better for puppies.

There are a couple of issues here, and one that we get mixed up with a bit is the protection of puppies. Councils register dogs and have them microchipped or give them a registration tag, and I do not think we should get those two issues mixed up with one another because this is more about giving breeders an ID number to make sure that we can track those pups right through their lives. I guess we might never have had the movie *Red Dog* if Red Dog had been microchipped when he was a pup because you could most probably identify the dog.

Having a council background, I know that it does help. If a dog does not have a tag or a chip, the dog catcher has to go out, pick the dog up, take it back to the pound and the dog stays there. You have to feed the dog and all of rest of it until somebody comes along. In a lot of cases nobody comes to pick the dog up, so it is really important that we do have some sort of a system of identification on those dogs from when they are puppies right through so people know where they are going and what they are doing. It is things like that, and it is expensive if we do not. I remember from my time on council that when you would get a thunderstorm there would be dogs all over the neighbourhood, and people would be ringing up the council to find out whose dog it is. If they had a tag on them you could say, 'That dog belongs to so and so,' because the registration is there.

An honourable member: Red Dog.

Mr SORENSEN: Yes, Red Dog—and a lot of people would take the dog back to their neighbour. It might be down the road a bit, but they would actually take their dogs back for free and the council officer would not have to go out there to do it. There are a lot of benefits out there if we get these dogs tagged right from the start so we can identify the owners and the breeders. I really do not see anything wrong with identifying where these dogs come from, especially with people nowadays travelling more. There are a lot of caravans and nomads who go touring and take their dogs with them, and it would be great to make sure that all of those dogs are identified somehow through the system if they get lost. There is a lot of benefits in tagging and microchipping animals at the end of the day. A lot of people might not think that, but it certainly does make life a lot easier for the people out there who have to go and pick these dogs up.

I was listening to Jim Madden over here talk about how his dogs have more or less all come the pound, and I am a bit like that myself. All the dogs I have had recently have all come from the pound. We just lost old Binny the dog recently, and Jenny, my wife, got another dog that was transported down from Mackay. There are a lot of people out there around the countryside who do a lot of good work trying to rehouse these dogs as well. I have had dogs all my life. I grew up with dogs because I come off a cattle property, and they become your best mate. They are always behind you; they are always in the back of the truck running around somewhere.

With regard to registration exemptions, the explanatory notes state—

There will be exemptions to the registration obligations where the breeder is:

- an accredited breeder of an approved entity;
- they are a primary producer who bred a dog from a working dog for the purpose of using the dog as a working dog or supplying the dog to another primary producer to use as a working dog; or
- the person is a member of a prescribed class of persons.

I suppose we have not spoken about this, but dogs that are used by blind people do a fantastic job and companion dogs are now getting more and more common out there. We did not really get to mention those sorts of dogs at all in the committee meeting, which is a bit of a shame.

An honourable member: I think they are already microchipped.

Mr SORENSEN: Yes, they are already microchipped and they are always well looked after, aren't they?

Once the ID number system is in place, dogs must not be supplied or advertised for supply unless there is a relevant supply number for the dog, either the breeder's ID number or the accreditation number. We also need to be mindful of dogs coming from interstate.


Mr Ryan: You could give them a passport.

Mr SORENSEN: Yes, they need a passport. They certainly do. The bill also amends the Biosecurity Act. The bill seeks to amend terminology and definitions of 'restricted animal material' and 'prohibited feed for pigs and poultry'. We need to understand the importance of that. England ended up with mad cow disease as a result of the feed being given. We do not want to see those types of diseases in Australia, especially foot-and-mouth disease. I know that a lot of people laughed about Pistol and Boo, but at the end of the day it is very important that we keep diseases out of this country. Biosecurity is the only way we can do that. We also need to protect the animals in this country. Biosecurity also protects the cattle industry and so on. We do not have certain diseases in this country and we really do not want them.

The implementation of this legislation is estimated to cost \$250,000 to \$300,000, plus ongoing maintenance of \$2,000 a month. It is estimated that two full-time-equivalent officers will be required initially before dropping back to one officer to look after the data and handle some of the inquiries. The accompanying education and awareness program is estimated to cost around \$150,000. It will be worth it because we have to get the word out to make sure people become registered.

One of the good things about this proposal is that no breeder will pay the registration fee for approximately two financial years from the proposed commencement date. They will not have to pay anything until July 2018. That will encourage a lot of breeders to register puppy farms. It will be great to know about and control the number of dogs. This legislation will stop a lot of dogs being bred. That will result in a saving in terms of councils' responsibility. It is a big cost to councils. Sometimes we have no idea.

I thank the committee and all those who took time to make submissions. I especially thank the committee staff. Around 226 submissions were received. It takes officers a lot of time to go through those submissions as part of the process of us considering this bill.

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (3.43 pm): I rise to make some comments in relation to the Animal Management (Protecting Puppies) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. I note that this bill was reviewed by the Agriculture and Environment Committee, which recommended that this bill be passed.

I place on record my thanks for the hard work of the member for Burnett, the new shadow minister for housing, who has done a fantastic job in relation to this legislation. He has really gone the extra mile to understand the needs and wants of the people who will be affected by this bill. Of course I am talking about our primary producers, who will be affected by the sections of this bill relating to working dogs. Obviously the intent of the bill is to shut down illegal puppy farms. When this bill was introduced, breeders of livestock working dogs were to have been caught up in this unworkable red tape. They felt it would have been quite onerous for them to comply with the legislation.

In my former role as shadow minister for agriculture, fisheries and forestry, I was contacted by representatives of the Working Kelpie Council and the Australian Federation for Livestock Working Dogs. At this point I recognise Mr Gary Milgate and Barbara Cooper from the Working Kelpie Council of Australia and Nancy Withers of the Australian Federation for Livestock Working Dogs, who provided excellent feedback. They highlighted the issues with similar legislation in other states that has impacted their industry. They were worried that this would also be the case here in Queensland.

On a daily basis, many thousands of working dogs make an enormous contribution to the efficiency of livestock management in Australia's large agricultural sector. Quite often it is extremely hard to find a workforce for this sector, particularly in the cattle and sheep industries. While in the past we would have had lots of stockmen doing jobs, now we see trained working dogs doing the work of one or two stockmen. The industry itself makes a conservative estimate that the current contribution of livestock working dogs to the Australian agricultural economy is around \$1 billion per annum. Working dogs are highly valued within these industries, not only as working dogs but also as companions to a lot of the people who work their land by themselves. Their dogs really do help them get through the day and sometimes through long periods of drought.

The working dog sector has its own Australian livestock working dogs code of welfare, which was adopted from the New Zealand government 2010 code of welfare for dogs and the Working Kelpie Council of Australia, with the permission of Animal Welfare in Biosecurity New Zealand.

I congratulate those groups that made hard-copy submissions and that spoke at the public hearings of the committee. That obviously includes the Australian Federation for Livestock Working Dogs, the Queensland Working Cattle Dog Trial Association and the Queensland Working Sheep Dog


Association Inc. Writing a submission to a committee is quite an onerous task. Obviously these people are hardworking people and they do not get paid for what they do to help us make good legislation. I always like to thank them.

The groups commended the inclusion in the legislation of the exemptions for livestock working dogs if the breeders meet the criteria of primary producer. This is a very important point. Steve Bennett, in his role as deputy chair, worked really hard with his committee to ensure primary producers got that exemption. It may seem trivial, but it is certainly not, for the reasons I have given.

Obviously many of the members of the organisations I have talked about will be covered by the listed exemptions, but they are concerned that many may not qualify. I think that is of major concern. Obviously these are breeders that are involved in trialling, perhaps living in a semirural area, who breed a few dogs for primary producers, retired farmers who cannot be eligible to be a primary producer anymore, trainers of livestock working dogs to supply to primary producers, stock-handling contractors, musterers and livestock trucking companies.

We all agree that puppy farms and those who profit from having large numbers of breeding dogs kept in poor conditions should be shut down. That is obviously the point of this legislation. While I support the legislation, I would like to put on record that we as legislators need to be so very careful about not creating regulation and legislation just for the sake of it.

In this instance where we can identify a section of the community that may be adversely affected by red tape and this onerous regulation, we need to look at that and take that into consideration whilst we are legislating. I am sure that the minister will take that into consideration over the next couple of years if she does receive complaints from those sections of the community. I would encourage the minister to take those complaints on board and take them for what they are and the genuineness of what these people are doing.

 **Hon. LE DONALDSON** (Bundaberg—ALP) (Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries) (3.49 pm), in reply: I thank those honourable members who have spoken today in support of the bill. The member for Burnett went through a number of issues that were considered by the committee. He highlighted that there were submissions to the committee that argued against exempting breeders of working dogs from the requirements of the bill and other submissions that suggested the exemption should be expanded. It would in fact be impossible to extend all of the requirements in the bill to breeders of working dogs without also removing the existing exemption for working dogs from microchip requirements under the Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008. On the other hand, expanding the exemption for working dogs would equally be problematic. The exemption is limited because a large proportion of dogs kept as pets are working dog breeds. Exempting working dog breeds more generally from registration and microchipping requirements would exempt the breeders of a large proportion of dogs in the community from the requirements.

I also highlight for the member for Warrego that it is only the breeders of dogs who will need to register and that the registration requirements are not onerous. For at least the first two years there will be no fees whatsoever. If working dog associations accredit breeders and would be willing to supply the details to the department, then the association could become an approved entity and members would not have to register directly with the government. No-one is suggesting that those who enjoy trialling working dogs are doing anything illegal or running puppy farms. The loophole is only that unscrupulous breeders might pretend they are engaging in those activities to avoid registration requirements. I note also that the member for Burnett concluded that the bill achieved a reasonable balance on exempting working dogs.

The member for Burnett further highlighted a number of concerns raised by local government that included, among other things, exemptions for non-commercial breeders, the impact of the potential introduction of fees, and broad support for a statewide education and awareness campaign and the development of a compliance strategy in collaboration with local governments and the RSPCA. Providing exemptions for non-commercial breeders or a dog's first litter to avoid supposed onerous requirements of registering or microchipping were considered. However, it is important for every breeder, except for those exempt such as genuine working dog breeders, to be registered, including people who give away puppies. This is crucial to help track down breeders who have failed to register or are illegally advertising and supplying puppies and thereby removes any potential loopholes for unscrupulous breeders to try and exploit.

It has been suggested that the subsequent introduction of fees for breeder registration may lead to increased dumping and surrender of animals. I want to be clear that there will be public consultation before any new fees or charges are introduced. If introduced, the fees are anticipated to be relatively low and aim to cover the ongoing maintenance of the dog breeder registration database and therefore not act as a deterrent. There are a number of other matters that the member for Burnett mentioned as having been raised in submissions or in the hearings for the committee inquiry. I do not intend to go through all of them individually but note that the committee considered all of the submissions on these issues and was briefed by my department and came to the conclusion that the bill should be passed without requesting any amendment or further clarification.

The member for Gympie raised concerns regarding resourcing for implementation by local government. Local governments are currently responsible for regulating the registration and identification of dogs within their areas under the Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008. It is likely that there will be some increase in the regulatory burden on local governments. However, this is unavoidable in achieving the aim of identifying and shutting down cruel puppy farms and unscrupulous dog breeders. I also want to respond to both the member for Warrego and the member for Burdekin about broadening the exemptions for retired farmers of working dogs and again just remind them that this only applies if they are breeding dogs, not for just owning dogs. Furthermore, the member for Burdekin raised an issue about his concerns about having to wait 48 hours to visit. Under the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001, if a monitoring program is developed, this allows authorised officers to enter a premises without the need for the 48-hour notice.

This bill expands this responsibility so that local governments are also able to regulate breeder registration. Biosecurity Queensland is working with local governments and the RSPCA to develop a compliance strategy and education campaign for the proposed breeder registration. It is anticipated that local governments, the RSPCA and Biosecurity Queensland will work in partnership under the Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008, local laws and the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001 to stop cruel puppy farms and unscrupulous breeders.

A bill does not reach this point without considerable work from many people, both within and beyond government. Firstly, I acknowledge that how legislation can assist to shut down cruel puppy farms has been the subject of considerable community discussion over many years across many states. In the middle of last year this government sought specific feedback on implementation of its election commitment. More than 8,000 people responded via an online survey. I thank all those who were consulted directly by my department during the development of relevant aspects of the bill including the RSPCA, Dogs Queensland, the Local Government Association of Queensland, AgForce Queensland, the Australian Veterinary Association, Animal Liberation Queensland, Racing Queensland, the Australian Federation for Livestock Working Dogs and others. All those who have been involved can feel proud of the contribution they have made to the development of the bill. I also thank the staff of my department who have been involved with the development of the bill.

I note that the Agriculture and Environment Committee commended the thoroughness with which my department approached stakeholder consultation during the development of the bill. The Agriculture and Environment Committee conducted a thorough inquiry into the bill and there were a large number of submitters. I thank the committee and its chair, the member for Gladstone, for the thoroughness of their inquiry. I note that the committee only made one recommendation—that the bill be passed. This is a testament to the high standard of the bill. Indeed, as the chair of the committee, the member for Gladstone noted in the report that this bill creates a balance between meeting the expectation of Queenslanders in relation to the welfare of animals and the needs of primary producers to carry on established business practices without unnecessary or burdensome regulations.

I thank the Agriculture and Environment Committee for its inquiry. I thank the committee staff who assisted with the inquiry. I want to acknowledge the community members, organisations and departmental representatives who provided submissions and evidence for the committee's inquiry. I thank those who made written submissions. There were 227 written submissions, so I will not list them all. This government is fulfilling its election commitment to shut down cruel puppy farms by establishing a compulsory registration scheme for dog breeders that will give puppy farms nowhere to hide. I am very proud to commend this bill to the House.

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


Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 10, as read, agreed to.

Clause 11—

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (3.58 pm): I seek clarification from the minister in relation to clause 43ZA where the legislation talks about the exemption of the term 'primary producer'. I seek clarification for the record in relation to the minister's interpretation or the strictness of the interpretation to include people such as musterers and drovers who use dogs within their role as primary producers but may not be necessarily termed as primary producers for tax purposes.


Ms DONALDSON: I thank the member for Nanango. The issue of working dogs, particularly around trialling and droving dogs, was raised during the committee process. It was quite a confused discussion, because it is only if the farmers are breeding dogs. It does not relate to the dogs that the farmers are droving or the dogs they are trialling. If they are breeders of dogs, they would be required to have IDs. It is not about them owning those dogs and trialling them or droving them, but breeding them. They would be considered working dogs.

Clause 11, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 12 to 71, as read, agreed to.

Schedule, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

 **Hon. LE DONALDSON** (Bundaberg—ALP) (Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries) (4.01 pm): I move—


That the bill be now read a third time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Long Title

 **Hon. LE DONALDSON** (Bundaberg—ALP) (Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries) (4.01 pm): I move—

That the long title of the bill be agreed to.


Question put—That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

HOSPITAL AND HEALTH BOARDS (SAFE NURSE-TO-PATIENT AND MIDWIFE-TO-PATIENT RATIOS) AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 1 December 2015 (see p. 2976).

Second Reading

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (4.02 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

As the largest clinical workforce in the Queensland health system, nurses and midwives play a critical role in ensuring the effective delivery of patient centred health care for all Queenslanders. Nurses and midwives have demonstrated their capacity to respond to the increasing demand for high-quality health services. They do this day after day in dynamic and complex environments and in the face of constant challenges posed by a growing and ageing population with increasingly complex health needs.

This afternoon, on International Nurses Day, I welcome to the gallery of the Legislative Assembly many of those outstanding nurses who have come to observe the debate on this important bill before the House. Queensland nurses and midwives deserve our ongoing commitment and support. That is why the Palaszczuk government has made it a priority to implement our Nursing Guarantee and Refresh Nursing election commitments in order to build a strong, well-supported and sustainable nursing and midwifery workforce and a health system that empowers them to practise their professions to the highest possible standards with genuine job satisfaction.

The bill before the House delivers on our election commitment to legislate for nurse-to-patient ratios and workload provisions. I thank the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee for its consideration of the bill and, in particular, Madam Deputy Speaker, I acknowledge you for the outstanding work that you have done as chair of the committee. I also thank those individuals and organisations who made submissions to inform the committee's deliberations.

As I have said, today is International Nurses Day and the theme for this year is Nurses: a force for change: improving health systems' resilience. Our nurses and midwives truly are a force for change. As I noted when introducing the bill last December, they had been instrumental in advocating for this legislation and have played a critical and ongoing role in informing its development. On behalf of the Queensland government, I express my thanks and that of the government to the Queensland Nurses' Union for its commitment to this legislation and, more recently, for its contribution to the work of the committee through its written submission and appearance at public hearings.

Trade unions and other industrial organisations that represent working men and women in this state are regularly and routinely subjected to what could only be described as abuse, denigration and vilification in this House by members of the Liberal National Party opposition. The bill before the House is testament to the thoughtful and vigorous advocacy of the Queensland Nurses' Union and the thousands of QNU members who work throughout Queensland. I also acknowledge and thank those clinical nurses and midwives who gave of their valuable time to attend the committee's public hearings in order to share their experiences and concerns. In doing so, they provided the committee with practical, real-world evidence as to why this legislation is vital to ensuring a better and more resilient health system in Queensland for the patients who rely on it and for those who work in it.

As a result of feedback provided during the committee's public hearings, there is a particular aspect of the bill that I believe would benefit from further clarification. For that reason, I advise the House that I will be moving an amendment during the consideration in detail to make it clear that only those nurses or midwives who directly provide patient care may be counted in ratios.

The committee tabled its report on the bill on 29 April 2016. The committee agreed as a whole on the significant contribution that all nurses and midwives across Queensland make to the health and wellbeing of the community. It also supported adequate nurse staffing levels and acknowledged that inadequate staffing can result in adverse outcomes. Very regrettably, the Liberal National Party members of the committee—those members being at the time of the committee report the members for Buderim, Moggill and Mudgeeraba—were unable to recommend to this House that the bill be passed. The committee's report notes that government members strongly support the intent of the bill and considered that it should be passed. I thank Madam Deputy Speaker, the member for Thuringowa and the member for Greenslopes for their informed advocacy for this legislation.

The committee report also notes that the then non-government members—being the members for Buderim, Moggill and Mudgeeraba—cannot support the bill in its current form owing to concerns regarding fixed minimum ratios. The Liberal National Party opposition has circulated amendments to the bill, which it will move during the consideration in detail. Among other things, these amendments seek to remove minimum ratios from the legislative framework. Instead, the opposition proposes that the bill require hospital and health services to use the business planning framework to determine the number of nurses and midwives to be engaged in delivering a health service. Rather than explain now why a ratios bill without ratios will not work, I will explain the reasons that these amendments are fatally flawed during my reply.

There is compelling international and Australian research evidence supporting the benefits of ratios for patients, staff and health services. During its Brisbane public hearing into the bill, the committee heard from Professor Christine Duffield, who is a Professor of Nursing and Health Services Management at the University of Technology, Sydney and at Edith Cowan University and who is one of Australia's leading researchers on nurse staffing issues. Professor Duffield said—

The research, both in this country and internationally, is absolutely on the same page. There is no doubt that nurse-to-patient ratios improve patient outcomes. That is really a bit of a no-brainer. There is no question about it.

Following on from Professor Duffield's neat summation, I would like to share with the House a sample of the research evidence regarding nurse staffing and nurse-to-patient ratios. Some of the first major studies were conducted in the United States. In 2002, the *New England Journal of Medicine* published the results of a 1997 study of over 2.6 million patients admitted to 799 hospitals across 11 states. This study found that there was a statistically significant relationship between increased

registered nurse hours per patient day and a reduction in the incidence of urinary tract infection and upper gastrointestinal bleeding. An average, an additional hour of registered nurse time resulted in a 3.6 per cent reduction in urinary tract infection and a 5.2 per cent reduction in gastrointestinal bleeding.

Similarly, there was a relationship between a higher proportion of registered nurses and a reduction in urinary tract infection, hospital acquired pneumonia, shock and cardiac arrest. The study also found that a very significant increase in registered nurse hours per patient day had an effect on decreasing patients' length of stay. In the same year, 2002, a study was published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* which had looked at over 232,000 patients and 184 nurses in 168 hospitals in Pennsylvania. The results of the study revealed that each additional patient per nurse was associated with a seven per cent increase in the likelihood of a patient dying within 30 days of admission and a seven per cent increase in the odds of failure to rescue. 'Failure to rescue' is a term used to refer to a patient death resulting from a treatable complication.

In 2007 the *International Journal of Nursing Studies* published a United Kingdom study which began in 1999 and looked at patient outcomes in 30 hospital trusts in the National Health Service. The results found that patients in the hospitals with the highest patient-to-nurse ratios—that is, hospitals with the least number of nurses to care for patients—had a 26 per cent higher patient mortality. A further United States study published in 2012 looked at 1.2 million patients in 665 hospitals with 39,000 nurses across four states. The study found that having less nurses for patient care increases the odds of patient deaths and failure to rescue, while higher percentages of qualified nurses decreases those odds. The study found that a 10 per cent increase in qualified nurses decreases the odds of patients dying by about four per cent.

The most significant research undertaken internationally was undertaken in 2009 and published in the *Lancet* in 2014. Funded by the European Commission, the research project, known as RN4CAST, was a consortium of 15 partners in 11 European countries that examined a range of hospital environmental factors and their impact on patient safety. The study found that hospitals in which nurses cared for fewer patients each had significantly lower mortality than hospitals in which nurses cared for more patients. In particular, analysis of 300 hospitals in nine countries showed that an increase in nurses' workloads by one patient increases the likelihood of in-patient hospital mortality by seven per cent.

Finally, there is also evidence from Australia regarding nursing staff numbers and patient outcomes. For example, a study published in 2015 looked at all patients admitted to a large acute care hospital in Western Australia between October 2004 and November 2006. This study found that there was a link between the number of understaffed shifts that a patient was exposed to and whether the patient suffered an adverse event. Adverse events include surgical wound infection, urinary tract infection, pressure injury, upper gastrointestinal bleeding, pneumonia, deep vein thrombosis, psychological and metabolic derangement and sepsis. There were increased adverse events when there were fewer nurses to care for patients.

The research evidence has also shown that there are two critical elements in nurse staffing that are required to deliver high-quality nursing care to patients: the right number of staff and the correct skill mix of staff. By skill mix I mean the proportion of registered nurses to other nursing staff. This bill establishes a legislative framework that delivers both the right number of staff and the correct skill mix. It enables minimum nurse-to-patient and midwife-to-patient ratios to be prescribed via a regulation known as a nursing and midwifery regulation. The ratios will set the minimum number of nursing staff that a hospital and health service must provide on a prescribed ward during a morning, afternoon or night shift. In effect, the ratios will operate as a minimum staffing level for the provisions of quality care. The bill provides the flexibility for ratios to be prescribed by stated hospital and health services, by stated facilities or parts of facilities, at stated times and in stated circumstances. This will enable ratios to be gradually implemented in hospital and health services in a phased manner from 1 July 2016.

The government has endorsed ratios of one nurse to every four patients for morning and afternoon shifts and one nurse to every seven patients for a night shift. These ratios have been informed by international research and consultation with key stakeholders and aligned with the staffing levels required in similar types of wards in public hospitals in Victoria and New South Wales. The ratios will apply initially to acute medical wards in 28 hospitals, acute surgical wards in 24 hospitals and acute mental health wards in two hospitals. These facilities and wards have been chosen based on their similar and high level of patient acuity.

In addition to ensuring minimum staffing levels through the application of ratios, hospital and health services will be required to ensure that prescribed wards are staffed with an appropriate number and skill mix of nursing staff to meet the clinical service demands of those wards. This will be achieved by incorporating key elements of the Queensland Health business planning framework into a standard. The business planning framework, also known as the BPF, is an industrially mandated planning tool which was developed collaboratively by Queensland Health and the Queensland Nurses' Union. It was first published in 2001 and it is periodically reviewed and updated. The BPF is used by hospital and health services to calculate the appropriate nursing and midwifery hours and skill mix of staff required to manage clinical service demands and provide an appropriate professional and safe standard of service. The standard will be made by the chief executive of the Department of Health and the bill provides that the chief executive's power to make the standard may not be delegated. The standard will be binding on hospital and health services in respect of those hospital wards to which ratios apply. On all other wards, hospital and health services will continue to be required to apply the BPF as mandated under existing industrial arrangements.


To recap, the minimum ratios and the standard will work in conjunction with each other and with the professional judgement of nursing managers to ensure that prescribed wards are staffed with the right number and skill mix of nursing staff. From time to time there may be extenuating circumstances that temporarily affect a hospital and health service's ability to comply with the minimum ratios for a particular facility or ward. For example, it may be experiencing difficulty in recruiting nursing staff. That is why the bill includes the flexibility for the minister to grant a temporary exemption from compliance with a nursing and midwifery regulation for a period of up to three months with the option to extend an exemption for a further three months if required.

The bill also contains data collection and reporting requirements that will assist in managing compliance with the legislation and provide public transparency regarding nurse staffing levels in hospital and health services. For prescribed facilities and wards, hospital and health services will be required to provide data on their compliance with minimum ratios and the nursing and midwifery standard. Non-prescribed facilities and wards will be required to provide data on their compliance with the business planning framework. These requirements will enable hospitals' nursing and midwifery resource management performance to be monitored and analysed and any areas of concern to be identified and addressed.

Compliance will also be supported by an industrially mandated escalation process outlined in the award covering nurses and midwives employed by Queensland Health. This process enables a nurse who identifies a workload issue on a ward to raise their concerns and seek resolution on the issue.

I mentioned earlier that there is an extensive body of international research regarding nurse staffing issues. Queensland will be making a valuable addition to this research through a comprehensive and independent evaluation of the legislation. The evaluation will be conducted by the world leader in research on nurse staffing issues, the University of Pennsylvania, in collaboration with the Queensland University of Technology. The research team, led by world renowned expert Professor Linda Aiken, will assess the impacts of the legislation in terms of its outcomes for nurses, patients and the Queensland public health system as a whole. In addition to providing valuable data on the outcomes of the legislation, the evaluation project also provides an exciting opportunity for significant transfer of skills and benefits to local research institutions while creating relationships and potential for further collaborative work for the benefit of Queenslanders.

Through this legislation, patients can be assured that they will receive a transparent and reliable level of service from the state's public health system and nurses can be assured of more manageable and safer workloads and increased job satisfaction. On this special day, International Nurses Day, I consider that there could be no finer demonstration by this parliament of its solidarity and support for our nurses and midwives than by passing this bill. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (4.19 pm): It is my pleasure to rise to speak to the Hospital and Health Boards (Safe Nurse-to-Patient and Midwife-to-Patient Ratios) Amendment Bill 2015. As the newly minted shadow minister for health, I call on the minister to adhere to some statements that he made in his address-in-reply speech in December 2015, when he called on all of us in this place to be generous and big hearted. I look forward to that, given that this is a significant area of policy that I have had to get across. I also thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, as the chair of the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee.

As the minister said, we support quality individualised safe nursing care. Today I will refer extensively to the committee report. Page 21 of the report states—

The Committee acknowledges—
and I think all members do—

that adverse patient outcomes can be caused by inadequate nurse staffing levels. The Committee recognises that nurses on the whole want to provide good quality, professional and ethical care to patients.

I do not think anyone would disagree with that. Page 4 of the report states—

The Committee as a whole could agree on the significant contribution that all nurses across Queensland make to the health and wellbeing of the community. The Committee supports adequate nurse staffing levels and acknowledges that inadequate staffing can result in adverse outcomes.

I agree with that statement, as do the members of the committee and, indeed, all members of the House, especially on International Nurses Day. We understand and acknowledge the very valuable efforts made by nurses and midwives in our hospitals. The minister has referred to this bill being about ratios and that that is an election commitment of the government. However, we on this the side of the House cannot support a bill that will mandate a prescriptive statewide ratio that will result in a one-size-fits-all approach. There are a number of reasons we cannot support the bill that I will outline over the course of my speech.

One of the most significant reasons we cannot support the bill is that we believe hospital and health services should have autonomy, just as schools in different regions have autonomy. From my former portfolio of education, I know that a one-size-fits-all approach is inappropriate when it comes to education. We do not think that the cape and Coolangatta face the same demands, whether for students or for patients. For that reason, as I indicated, we will not support this bill

We cannot support the bill because the research is not there. The committee report states that only one Australian jurisdiction has mandated specific ratios. In another part of the world, the most recent jurisdiction to bring in a ratio has not done it along the lines outlined in this bill. As a dental surgeon, I know that what we do should be based on research and data. It should not be based on an election commitment. Whilst it is worthy to honour an election commitment, it is not right to do so if there is no research to base it upon.

Mr Power: It is based on research.

Mr LANGBROEK: I take the interjection from the member for Logan, who says that it is based on research. The committee's report clearly indicates that it is not. If members opposite want to say that it fits as it was an election commitment, of course they can fashion that argument, but we reject it. Certainly I reject it. The contents of the committee report show that this is just payback for the Queensland Nurses' Union, which has said this is what it wants. However, the ratio is not proved by data. In fact, only subsequent to the passing of the bill, should it pass, will the government institute a research process to analyse the effects of the ratio. We have already said that we will not support the bill and I will go into further detail about that.

Health care is rapidly changing due to advances in technology, ward design and layout, innovation and the education of our healthcare professionals. However, mandating by way of regulation and legislation ignores those changes and the complexities and realities of existing hospital staffing strategies. The bill has four fundamental flaws that I will address. Firstly, this government has failed to articulate a clear case for the need for change to existing quality care staffing strategies. Secondly, there is a lack of evidence to support the Charlotte Street approach to nurse-patient ratios and how that will demonstrably improve patient outcomes. Thirdly, there is a lack of measures that will determine the efficacy of the bill. Lastly, I will outline the approach that should be adopted or maintained in the business planning framework, which goes to the heart of the amendment and the explanatory notes to it, which I have circulated.

I note the minister's snide remark about a bill about ratios also containing something that means the ratios will not be applied. Currently, the business planning framework is an industrial instrument and through our amendment we are seeking to make it a legislated instrument. That is a reflection of the fact that it has worked well in Queensland since 2000 or 2001, which is also stated in the committee report. We do not have a problem with saying that the business planning framework, a bit like the LCCs in schools, is where people at the frontline work together with nurse unit managers and senior executives. It is not just saying that the ratio has to be applied as currently prescribed in the bill; there are other considerations that the business planning framework should take into consideration.

I acknowledge the former shadow minister, the member for Caloundra, who has done a lot of preparation and work on this bill. Certainly he has been of great assistance to me in my preparation for today. The minister acknowledged the member for Nudgee as the chair of the health committee. Also on that committee are a doctor, the member for Moggill; two nurses, the member for Mudgeeraba and the member for Greenslopes; a paramedic, the member for Thuringowa; and the member for Buderim. I acknowledge the staff of the committee. The research director, Deb Jeffery, was a member of the research staff of the Public Accounts Committee on which I served during the 51st and 52nd parliaments. I acknowledge the work of all staff, including the technical secretariat.

I came into the role of shadow minister just a couple of days ago. This committee report has enabled me to prepare for this speech, which shows me how well the committee system is bedding down in the parliament. There is a real sense that all members want to improve legislation when it comes to the House and make recommendations through amendments. The committee system gives us an overview on a bill. In the past, the explanatory notes to a bill may not have done that as adequately. I commend the changes that have come with our committee system. It is still being bedded down, but this committee report is a significant example of how we are progressing. We do not have an upper house, which has been canvassed recently during the significant debate into four-year terms. The committee system, through its ongoing progress and development, and as demonstrated through reports such as the health committee's report No. 18, is a great way for members of parliament to assess a bill and make a contribution during the debate. When I first came to this House in the 51st parliament, I would listen to some older serving members who, having looked at the title of the bill, would speak about anything to do with that title. However, having such a committee report allows members to be far more specific in their contributions.

As I have already acknowledged, the committee report notes that the committee as a whole agreed on the significant contribution that all nurses across Queensland make to the health and wellbeing of the community. I acknowledge that on International Nurses Day. I endorse that comment. I pay tribute to the hard work and dedication of all of the healthcare professionals in Queensland. The committee supports adequate nurse staffing levels and acknowledges that inadequate staffing can result in adverse outcomes. There was no clear evidence on the need to change the existing business planning framework as the approach to determine adequate staffing levels. The minister seems to align mandatory nurse-to-patient ratios to a perceived imbalance between patient needs and the number of nurses on an acute ward at any one time. This bill does not address the different levels of complexity and nursing needs among patients in a given unit. Creating a single set of nurse-to-patient staffing ratios could create a situation in which some patients receive more nursing time and others less care. That could lead to a lower quality of care for some patients but uniformly higher costs.

The Private Hospitals Association Queensland, in its submission to the committee, referred to a comprehensive literature review conducted in part by the Center for Nursing Research at the University of California at Davis. It noted—

We found no evidence to justify specific nurse-to-patient ratios in acute care hospitals, especially ratios that are not adjusted for case mix and skill mix.

Similarly, Blakeman Hodge et al in their study found—

Primarily no empirical evidence supports the specific numbers assigned through mandatory ratios with better patient outcomes.

Donaldson Bolton et al concluded—

There has been little evidence that specific nurse-to-patient staffing ratios improve safety or quality. For example, a study of California hospitals before and after the imposition of mandatory ratios demonstrated an increase in costs but no improvement in quality of care.

Therefore, I can only conclude that the case for change has been driven by what I have already mentioned—that is, as well as the need to improve outcomes for patients, a payback for support at the last election campaign. As we have already heard from the member for Brisbane Central, it was the Queensland Nurses' Union that employed her during the time of the previous parliament when she was out of a job. We know the significant support that was given by the Nurses' Union. This bill today is a payback to them.

As I mentioned in the beginning of my contribution, a lack of evidence is the second reason that we will not be supporting the bill. I take members back to the Private Hospitals Association Queensland submission to the committee. They contend—

With the exception of Victoria and California, other countries and jurisdictions which have implemented or are seeking to legislate safe staffing measures have moved away from mandated minimum ratios in favour of mandatory staffing plans. Such plans are generally accompanied by a requirement for some form of disclosure or public reporting.

The PHAQ state that after an extensive international literature search, whilst there is certainly a significant body of evidence to suggest that professional nurse staffing is a critical component of quality patient care and decreased patient mortality and morbidity, the research falls short of recommending any optimal minimum ratios or prescribed skill mix—in fact, quite the contrary as the following extract from the literature highlights. It states—

Nurse staffing ratios have a relationship with reductions in hospital-related mortality in most published studies. However, lack of a published evaluation of intentional change in RN staffing from some initial value to some lower patient-RN staffing value such as 5:1 or 4:1 limits conclusions on increasing nurse staffing ratios as a patient safety strategy. The concern remains that mortality is not reduced by increased nurse staffing but by something the nurses do.

In support of advocacy to introduce mandated minimum ratios of one nurse to four patients for medical and surgical units, proponents have frequently made reference to a study by Aiken et al entitled *Hospital Nurse Staffing and Patient Mortality, Nurse Burnout and Job Satisfaction*, which investigated the relationships between staffing levels at 168 Pennsylvania hospitals in 1999 and mortality rates of selected surgical patients. However the manner in which the results of this study have often been quoted may inadvertently mislead the reader regarding the actual study findings.

There are several weaknesses in these studies, as well as other studies, evaluating the relationship between nursing workload and patient care quality. The nurse-to-patient staffing ratios used by both Needleman's team and Aiken's team are hospital averages, not individual, nursing unit-level measures. There is no basis in these two studies for generalizing to any particular nursing unit or individual patient.

Furthermore, the measure of patient death in the select surgical patients may not be a direct measure of general, inpatient, nursing quality. It is equally likely that the surgeon or surgical environment influenced the patient's outcome. We must also be cautious in generalizing the findings of these two studies from data collected in the late 1990's to current hospital conditions.

The available evidence does not support the establishment of specific nurse-to-patient staffing ratios at this time; and the extant literature contradicts the legislative efforts endorsed by those seeking mandatory, nurse-to-patient staffing ratios.

I note that the minimum nurse-to-patient ratio in California from 2015 is at least one nurse to five patients in medical and surgical units. It makes one question the significant difference between the requirements of patients in California and here in Queensland with one to four being the ratio mentioned here.

The third issue I mentioned at the start of my contribution was the lack of measures that will determine the efficacy of the bill. Prior to the last election we saw the QNU putting around fliers saying 'Ratios save lives'. We are yet to see from this minister or this government what the mandated ratios will achieve. The stated intent of this bill is to improve patient safety. PHAQ recommends that the focus of reporting should be on recognised nursing and patient sensitive indicators as outlined in their submission.

I note from the committee report that it was only after the submissions were made that the department said that research would be done. At page 35 of the committee report at 3.7 headed 'Monitoring and review', it states—

Subsequent to the public briefing, Queensland Health announced that the University of Pennsylvania, in partnership with the Queensland University of Technology, would assess the impacts of introducing legislated minimum nurse-to-patient ratios in Queensland's public health system in July 2016.

That is welcomed. There is no doubt that the QNU has applauded the appointment of Dr Aiken. It says that the research team will be led by Dr Linda Aiken and Dr Matthew McHugh. Prior to this non-government members had expressed concern about the data modelling that had been used to create the nurse-to-patient ratios and the number of nurses needed to implement ratios created by the bill.

The department conceded there was a need to refine the data modelling in order to apply it to a range of scenarios. That is again where the non-government members raised the costings associated with implementing the provisions of the bill which, as I understand it, have been estimated at \$25.9 million. The costings have been drawn from a variety of assumptions which would cast doubt on the presumed \$25.9 million cost.

I think it is important that any evaluation report be made publicly available and tabled in the parliament. The sort of data that is going to be reported on and the sort of data that is going to be recorded are very important issues. The assessment of this monitoring and review process will be imperative. It seems that the government has the cart before the horse—having a review and doing monitoring after the bill has been passed as opposed to seeing what the evidence is before bringing in a specific ratio. There are concerns about why the government and the department have said that they are going to have a monitoring and review process only after the bill is passed.

What measures will be put in place to determine what improved outcomes will be achieved for patients? They could include patient satisfaction and complaints, falls, pressure injuries, medication administration errors, hospital acquired infections, response to deterioration, nursing staff turnover, absenteeism and agency usage. Additionally, if a hospital cannot meet the ratio I note that the minister has mentioned that exemptions will be given at times in regional Queensland or in particular cases where there may be problems with recruiting. We need to make sure that we do not see bed closures, reduced access or diminished services. Should those things be monitored as well then of course they should be reported.

At estimates last year, the member for Caloundra, along with the member for Mudgeeraba, went to great lengths to ascertain the current staffing numbers and ratios in some of Queensland's hospital and health services. The CEOs of the Townsville Hospital and Health Service, the Cairns HHS and Metro North were all asked to advise the committee what the nurse-to-patient ratio is at their respective hospitals for acute patients across the seven days of the week, morning, afternoon and evening and the various levels of acute patients. Interestingly, none could give an answer, but they could detail the use of the business planning framework and detail how it provided for safe levels of patient care across their institutions. That is why we have had an amendment prepared.

As I said, the BPF was originally published in 2001. It has been periodically reviewed and updated in consultation with key stakeholders. That is why we believe it should not just be an industrial instrument. We are past EB8. We are awaiting a new EB. That was mentioned today in question time. There is no reason the BPF could not be part of a legislative instrument and not just an industrial instrument.

The BPF sets out the methodology to calculate the nursing and midwifery hours required to provide an appropriate, professional and safe standard of health service. Factors taken into account when determining these hours include the number of patients, including the total number of patients on the ward on each shift and activity such as patient discharges, admissions and transfers; the level of intensity of all patients and nature of the care to be delivered on each shift; skill mix and level of experience of staff; the need for special or intensive equipment; and the architecture and geography of the ward. The BPF approach aids in establishing staffing levels that are flexible and account for changes across each shift. It is enshrined in the nurses EB8 and provides no further changes than to continue to review its implementation across the state.

I want to refer to a couple of other specific issues in the committee report. I am concerned that on page 2 of the committee report at 'Consultation on the Bill' the committee noted that representatives from 12 hospital and health services and the Queensland Nurses' Union provided the department with advice and support on the development of the bill. In a written briefing to the committee, the department reported, 'While stakeholders proposed a range of amendments to the suite of draft legislation, most were generally supportive of mandated ratios.' It mentions that the Private Hospitals Association of Queensland and the Friendly Society Private Hospital oppose the proposal to legislate for ratios but noted that mandated ratios are not proposed for the private sector in the legislation.

The concern is that, given that there was significant consultation with 12 hospital and health services and the Queensland Nurses' Union, no documents or submissions in relation to the consultation were provided to the committee. The department indicated it would take the question on notice when committee members asked for some of that information about the submissions. The question was taken on notice and the director-general's approval would be sought for the release of the documents, but the department did not provide the working documents. I think in the interests of transparency and accountability that is fairly interesting and is a condemnation of this in terms of the information that should be coming out. If there is nothing to hide, why wouldn't that consultation information be made available to committee members?

The non-government members questioned whether the bill would meet its stated objectives given the scarcity of research into a minimum fixed ratio. I have referred to some of the data that questions the minimum fixed ratio being an issue in other jurisdictions. The bill stipulates a fixed minimum ratio across 28 public hospitals in Queensland and has been referred to in public hearings in relation to the bill.

Non-government members believe, as I have already said, that the business planning framework formula has not been shown to be ineffective and no evidence has been provided to establish, clinically, a need for a fixed minimum ratio. We do support change based on evidence, but we cannot support the fixed minimum as is the intention of the government to implement if the bill is passed.

I have mentioned the BPF. I do believe that the business planning framework attempts to achieve a balance between service demand and the supply of nursing resources required to meet the identified demand. The Queensland Nurses' Union and Queensland Health developed the BPF collaboratively and published the original version in 2001. The BPF is completed at the ward level, driven by the nurse or midwife unit manager, in consultation with other specialties and disciplines. An internal and external environmental analysis is undertaken within the service profile, which considers things such as relevant legislation, policy and the economic environment.

It is interesting to look at other jurisdictions. I have mentioned California. In the United States they have a complex nurse-to-patient ratio. Wales is the most recent jurisdiction to introduce minimum staffing levels. I note that that legislation was introduced in 2014 into the National Assembly for Wales. It became law on 21 March 2016. It does not have a ratio as prescribed under this bill. I will quote again from page 10 of the committee report, which states—

With regard to the method of calculation of minimum nurse staffing levels:

- (1) *When calculating a nurse staffing level, a designated person must—*
 - (a) *exercise professional judgement, and*
 - (b) *take into account each of the following—*
 - (i) *the average ratio of nurses to patients appropriate to provide care to patients ...*
 - (ii) *the extent to which patients' well-being is known to be particularly sensitive to the provision of care by a nurse.*
- (2) *A designated person may calculate different nurse staffing levels—*
 - (a) *in relation to different periods of time;*
 - (b) *depending on the conditions in which care is provided by a nurse.*

The simple provision in Wales, the most recent jurisdiction to bring in minimum nurse staffing levels, is that that act does not mandate a specific minimum nurse-to-patient ratio. Yet here in Queensland there is a very specific number. That is why we have said that we have concerns with that specific number.

Victoria has had industrially mandated nurse-to-patient ratios from 2000. No other Australian jurisdiction including New South Wales has legislated minimum nurse staffing levels. I note that they have had industrially mandated nurse-to-patient ratios in New South Wales from 2010. In Western Australia, nurse staffing levels are managed through applying the nursing hours per patient day, the NHPPD, model. Importantly, even Queensland Health have acknowledged that a higher number of nurses relative to the number of patients has a positive impact on patient outcomes. We acknowledge that. We accept that. The only area of dispute is regarding what the optimal staffing levels are. That is why we have indicated our position today.

The department advised that the bill covers two components: the nurse-to-patient ratio and the standard. The standard will allow for the BPF to prescribe the specific skill mix of nurses based on the acuity of patients. That is the autonomy principle that I have explained before. Even though there might be a class size ratio in schools, we leave that up to principals and teachers who know their own community, just as we would leave it up to nurses and nurse unit managers or maternity unit managers to work out with their senior executives whether the mix of patients and the mix of conditions affecting those patients means that a simple ratio is what would be covered in all circumstances. We just do not accept that that is actually the case.

I have made very clear our position on this bill. I note that it is not covering private hospitals. I do want to mention what the Private Hospitals Association Queensland, which do not support mandated minimum staffing levels, had to say. They think it is inappropriate given the patient care type. They state—

The proposed minimum ratios are the same for all surgical and medical wards and yet as noted in the example above, patient care type is critical in terms of being able to assess patient acuity accurately and the skill mix necessary to deliver appropriate care. Nurse Managers need to accurately assess the type of work on the ward and how much of it must be done by an RN—

registered nurse—

or EN—


enrolled nurse—

and how much an Assistant in Nursing (AIN) /Patient Care Assistant (PCA) may be able to do.

We do note, and I have acknowledged, the importance of the skill mix, the experience of nurses and the impact of nurse staffing levels on patient outcomes. Again, adequate nurse staffing levels are always going to be supported.

I note that today on International Nurses Day the minister has had a go at me about what happened under our term of government. There were 1,100 more nurses under the LNP government when we left than when we began. The minister can tweet all he likes about what happened under the previous government. We did focus on front-line services. We do not support the fixed minimum ratios as proposed by the government. We do believe that a uniform, statewide ratio would burden smaller community hospitals as they often have lower severity patients—they do not try the same procedures that major teaching hospitals and tertiary hospitals do. Yet they would be required to staff at the same level as the larger teaching hospitals.

In their submission, the committee report noted that, although there is a significant body of evidence indicating that professional nurse staffing is a critical component of quality patient care, as I have mentioned a number of times today, the research does not recommend any optimal minimum ratios or prescribed skill mix.

 **Ms LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (4.49 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Hospital and Health Boards (Safe Nurse-to-Patient and Midwife-to-Patient Ratios) Amendment Bill 2015. It is a pleasure to speak in support of this bill, particularly today on International Nurses Day. I wish every nurse across Queensland, particularly the one who sits beside me in the chamber, the member for Greenslopes, and the most handsome RN around, my husband, a very happy International Nurses Day. Nurses do an extraordinary job keeping our communities safe and we are tremendously grateful. I acknowledge the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services for his stewardship and championing of this bill. I cannot put too fine a point on the fact that this bill signals a historic milestone in patient healthcare delivery in Queensland.

At the last election this government made a commitment to legislate in our first term for safe nurse-to-patient ratios to ensure fair workloads and quality health care, and this bill delivers on that commitment. The bill establishes the legislative framework to enable minimum nurse-to-patient and midwife-to-patient ratios and workload provisions to be mandated in Queensland public sector health service facilities. It provides a head of power to enable minimum nurse-to-patient and midwife-to-patient ratios and requirements relating to the nursing and midwifery skill mix to be prescribed by a regulation known as the Nursing and Midwifery Regulation. It provides flexibility for ratios to be prescribed by stated hospital and health services, by stated facilities or parts of facilities, at stated times and in stated circumstances. The regulation prescribes ratios of one nurse or midwife to every four patients for morning and afternoon shifts and one nurse or midwife to every seven patients for a night shift. I stress that this does not impose a prescriptive ratio about how many nurses you can have in emergent situations—a one-size-fits-all approach as outlined by the member for Surfers Paradise. It does not impinge on their autonomy. It sets a safe minimum floor to ensure patient safety.

The regulation prescribes the Queensland public sector hospitals and acute wards within those hospitals to which ratios are proposed to apply in a phased manner from 1 July 2016. Nearly all of the major facilities in Queensland will be covered. It is estimated that an additional 250 nurses will be needed to meet ratios across Queensland on a full-time-equivalent basis which is on top of an additional \$212 million over four years for 4,000 graduate nurses and up to 400 nurse navigators.

International research over the past 20 years in over 32 countries strongly supports that safe nurse-to-patient ratios lead to significant improvements in patient outcomes. Research in such pre-eminent journals as the *Australian Health Review*, *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, *Journal of the American Medical Association*, *American Journal of Public Health*, *Journal of Nursing Administration*, *Medical Care* and the *New England Journal of Medicine* have found compelling evidence of the relationship between nurse staffing, patient outcomes and quality care. The evidence shows that a higher number of nurses relative to the number of patients has a positive impact on patient outcomes such as length of hospital stay and inpatient mortality. Nurses with increased patient workloads have a reduced time for patient contact which negatively impacts quality of care. Insufficient time to provide patient care leads to important tasks such as wound care, the administration of pain relief, hygiene and patient education delayed or undone.

Research findings on the impact of nurse staffing levels on patient outcomes include that nursing hours per patient day and skill mix can significantly reduce the rate of mortality, cardiac arrest, upper gastrointestinal bleed, length of stay and urinary tract infections, as the minister outlined in his address.

Rates of pneumonia can be decreased by 11 per cent with a 10 per cent increase in the proportion of hours worked by a registered nurse. Adding one additional full-time-equivalent registered nurse each day can reduce the risk of patient mortality and adverse patient outcomes.

Staffing levels directly affect emotional exhaustion which is correlated with patient falls, medication errors and hospital acquired infections. Here is the clincher: each additional patient added to a nurse's workload is associated with a seven per cent increase in the likelihood of death within 30 days of admission. The benefits of mandating a minimum nurse-to-patient ratio go beyond improved nurse and patient outcomes. Some may seek to argue that mandating minimum safe ratios imposes an unacceptable cost in the form of additional staff. The research indicates that ratios save not only lives but also money. Professor Di Twigg, Dean of the School of Nursing and Midwifery at Edith Cowan University, provided the committee with a paper titled 'The economic benefits of increased levels of nursing care in the hospital setting' published in the *Journal of Advanced Nursing* in 2013. Professor Twigg's paper refers to a longitudinal study investigating the economic impact of increased nursing hours of care on health outcomes in adult teaching hospitals in her home state of Western Australia. A key finding of that study was that increased nursing hours per patient day were cost effective when compared with threshold interventions commonly accepted in Australia. Said differently, having adequate staff saves money as it decreases the incidence of failure-to-rescue events and the incidence of surgical wound infection, pulmonary failure, pneumonia et cetera, all of which present a significant cost to the healthcare system, not to mention the human cost of such events.

A number of studies also demonstrated that patient length of hospital stay decreases with increased nurse staffing levels and higher proportions of registered nurses. Evidence also indicates appropriate staffing numbers benefit the nursing workforce by reducing work related injuries, absenteeism and turnover, and increasing job satisfaction.

Currently, ratios are not legislatively mandated in Queensland. Instead, public sector health facilities utilise the Queensland Health Business Planning Framework, or BPF, to determine appropriate staffing levels. The BPF sets out the methodology to assist a hospital and health service to calculate the nursing and midwifery hours required to provide an appropriate professional and safe standard of health service. The BPF is industrially mandated under the nurses and midwives certified agreement.

The BPF attempts to achieve a balance between service demand and the supply of nursing resources required to meet identified demand. Evidence received by the committee during the inquiry from the Queensland Nurses' Union indicated that nurses are experiencing issues with how the tool is being applied. Nurses at the hearing conveyed frustration at financial considerations overriding requirements for adequate staffing numbers to safely staff wards. Further, some people consider the BPF to be optional even though it is industrially mandated, making the point that the guarantee of the minimum ratio and the application of the BPF in conjunction with that would resolve this issue.

The submission received from Professor Di Twigg went further to say 'the Queensland government's resolution to legislate and regulate nurse-to-patient ratios increases the likelihood of safe staffing levels being adhered to and Australian Council on Healthcare Standards accreditation being achieved in hospital and health services.' Nurse-to-patient and midwife-to-patient ratios have been in place in Victoria under an enterprise bargaining framework since 2000. In October 2015 the Victorian government legislated to mandate minimum ratios, which came into effect in December 2015. Similar to the Queensland proposed position, the ratios apply only to public health facilities.

While many overseas jurisdictions have introduced minimum nurse-to-patient ratios, no other Australian jurisdiction has legislated minimum nurse staffing levels. I am proud to be a member of a Labor government that is at the forefront of safe nursing workplace policy in this regard in the country. You cannot lead from the back. This is about putting patient safety first.

While I looked first to the evidence, it was the human stories of the effect on nurses of letting down patients due to inadequate nurse-to-patient staffing levels which told the real story during our bill inquiry. The committee sought written submissions, held a public departmental briefing, undertook a broadscale literature review, travelled to Perth and Melbourne to consider their comparative provisions and, most importantly, held public hearings in Brisbane, Cairns, Townsville and Gladstone. What we heard from nurse after nurse after nurse is that nurses currently carry highly variable, inconsistent and unpredictable workloads. As a result, nurses are experiencing frustration and disillusionment at not being able to provide the quality of care that patients require and deserve; increased sick leave, burnout and stress leave as a result of fatigue caused by workload; and that many nurses, even recent graduates, are leaving the profession due to these concerns.

The QNU in its submission reported that the main effects of unmanageable workloads, according to their members—and there are 53,000 of them—include a lack of time to comprehensively complete patient care, poor motivation and staff morale, increased levels of stress, fatigue and burnout, high error rate when making clinical decisions, and difficulty in fully complying with protocols and procedures. Their testimony was not new to me. As I have said before, I am married to a registered nurse. Many of the pressures, concerns and personal struggles that nurses shared with the committee are those things that I hear about at the end of a long day or night when you get home and share the highs and lows of the day with your partner.

I am not proud to admit that prior to this inquiry I unintentionally dismissed many of those frustrations as the normal ones experienced in the daily pressures of any job, but it is far more than that. As the QNU so eloquently said in their submission when talking about nurses—

They no longer feel able to deliver the quality of care they know they are capable of providing because the necessary staffing numbers and skill mix are not available. This is the source of significant ethical distress for our members.


We all feel pressures and frustrations in our daily jobs, but for nurses and those in the caring professions the impact of these are far more personal. Nurses cannot evade the responsibility of an increasing workload, such as turning patients away or providing a reduced level of service. They are the 'end of the line' as such when it comes to the flow-on effects of financial and human resource constraints, taking on increasing workloads to accommodate an increasing patient population, increasing patient acuity and a lack of mandated minimum staffing levels.

This legislation is about putting patient safety first and it is about the people who look after them. For patients, it is part of our commitment to ensuring that our public hospitals provide safe, quality health care and the best possible health outcomes. For our hardworking nurses and midwives, this legislation will empower them to deliver safe nursing and midwifery services. This bill provides an opportunity to work in a bipartisan way. It is about patient safety and quality of care—both should be above politics. My question to all members of this House is: why would you not support it?

I would like to thank those individuals and organisations who lodged written submissions and appeared at the committee's public hearings, many of whom are registered nurses and midwives. I would like to thank the QNU for their comprehensive evidence based submission to the committee, for their testimony and hearings and for their strong advocacy on behalf of Queensland nurses and midwives. I would like to acknowledge the assistance provided by the Department of Health, the Queensland Parliamentary Library and Research Service, Hansard, the Scrutiny of Legislation secretariat staff and the committee secretariat. I would like to thank all of my fellow committee members for their contributions to this inquiry. While I was disappointed that we could not agree on a recommendation that the bill should be passed, the committee was able to agree on the contents of the report.

I would like to make special mention of the contribution of my colleague the member for Greenslopes. His experience as a registered nurse of 25 years and his passion for health economics and evidence based research was of significant assistance to me as chair of the committee and to the committee's report. His deep and abiding respect of the profession of nursing was clearly evident throughout our committee hearings. For him, this bill is no doubt personal.

This government made a commitment at the last election to legislate in our first term for safe nurse-to-patient ratios to ensure fair workloads and quality health care, and this bill delivers on that commitment. I congratulate the Premier and the Minister for Health on their leadership and on this historic bill for the Queensland healthcare system. This legislation is about putting patient safety first and it is about the people who look after them, so I am supporting this bill for every patient who will benefit, for my husband, for the member for Greenslopes, for every nurse who sat in front of the inquiry or made a submission and for every nurse in the gallery today, in my electorate and across Queensland. Ratios save lives. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (5.03 pm): I rise to address the Hospital and Health Boards (Safe Nurse-to-Patient and Midwife-to-Patient Ratios) Amendment Bill 2015. I also want to take this opportunity to recognise all nurses on International Nurses Day—all of those nurses who work across various healthcare environments in our hospitals, in general practices and in our residential aged-care facilities and community nurses as well.

I am strongly committed to ensuring the highest standards of safety and quality for patients in our health system. I appreciate firsthand the important contribution and value of our nursing staff in the delivery of health care. There is no doubt that having appropriately skilled and trained staff allocated in accordance with the needs of individual patients is of paramount importance to the delivery of quality

outcomes for patients. What I am opposed to is legislatively prescribed nurse-to-patient and midwife-to-patient ratios that do not reflect the need for flexibility and clinical judgement in response to the patient care environment and the changing needs of patients. This bill is yet another example of this government's union driven policy agenda based on selective use of research rather than an objective analysis of available research and genuine consideration of integrated workforce strategies that enhance patient outcomes.

Mandatory minimum ratios are a blunt stick approach to staffing which do not recognise allocation of staffing based on patient acuity, the individual patient's acute condition and comorbidities, and the patient's continuum of care needs. There are very good reasons as to why outside of California in the United States and Victoria in Australia there is not widespread adoption of ratios internationally, with a more common approach being requirements for mandatory, unit specific staffing plans with accountability requirements, including public reporting. Blanket application of ratios ignores environment and contextual considerations, experience of staff, individual specialty related considerations, the physical layout of wards, available information technology in different hospitals and family needs. The bill as drafted has no reference to an integrated approach to recognising and addressing all of these factors in improving care safety and quality. As a former executive director of medical services and a deputy chief medical officer, I have had firsthand experience of seeing this in the acute care environment.

The Hospital and Health Boards (Safe Nurse-to-Patient and Midwife-to-Patient Ratios) Amendment Bill 2015 in its current form seeks to insert requirements into the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011 to make a regulation and a standard. Unlike the transparent approach in the Victorian legislation, there is little to no detail provided in the primary legislation, with the detail on ratios identified in the draft Hospital and Health Boards Amendment Regulation 2016.

Notwithstanding my opposition to legislatively prescribed staffing levels, the Victorian model at least provides for some flexibility not evidenced in the union driven policy being considered by us today. Sections 15 to 31 of the Victorian legislation—Safe Patient Care (Nurse to Patient and Midwife to Patient Ratios) Act 2015—recognises that there are differences between tertiary referral hospitals and other hospitals, with the identification of hospital levels and specialty units with differing staffing ratios required for these. The Victorian legislation in sections 32 to 36 also allows for application of a ratio to a ward rather than specific patient allocation so staffing is allocated according to patient need and consideration of alternative staff model trials. The Queensland approach as drafted provides for no flexibility.

Section 30B of the draft Queensland Hospital and Health Boards Amendment Regulation as written lists 28 hospitals and proposes a blanket, inflexible ratio of one to four for morning and afternoon shifts and one to seven for night duty for all medical and surgical wards without consideration to the patient care type or acuity. While evidence and my own personal and professional experience supports that patient safety is affected by staffing, including having suitably trained and skilled staff, there is no robust evidence that supports a specific staffing ratio. The *Guidance on safe nurse staffing levels in the UK*, which was developed by the Royal College of Nursing in the United Kingdom following significant clinical event related reviews, identifies—

A ratio of eight or more patients per RN is associated with patient care on a ward ... being compromised by short staffing ...

The Victorian model identifies both service location and shift variations. For example, level 3 hospitals have ratios of one to five for the morning shift, one to six for the afternoon shift and one to 10 for the night shift, compared to a tertiary referral hospital, such as the Royal Melbourne Hospital, that has one to four for morning and afternoon shifts and one to eight for night duty. There has been no suggestion or evidence that these staffing levels are adversely impacting on care outcomes. My own experience of care delivery has been that there are times when patients with acute clinical need have led to one-on-one care, with knowledge of the clinical experience of nursing staff considered in providing optimum care. There is a complete lack of clarity in the draft bill and regulation that allows for such flexing of staffing according to changing clinical need or unexpected variations in care requirements in a clinical unit.

The explanatory notes identify that the cost of implementing the proposed mandated ratios will be \$29.5 million in the first year and that this will be covered from within an existing budgetary allocation. It is extraordinary that those opposite seek to propose to allocate this level of expenditure to nurse and midwife ratios and argue this is based on patient safety without providing evidence of current safety and quality performance baseline and workforce data or identifying targeted improvements with accountability measures for delivery of improved safety outcomes.


While the stated purpose of the bill is to ensure patient safety and the delivery of high-quality health services, proposed section 138F requires reporting on compliance with the prescribed ratios with no reference to requirements to demonstrate improvements in outcomes for patients against well-recognised, nursing-sensitive indicators such as pressure areas, falls, the timely delivery of medications and hospital acquired infections.

Submissions on the draft bill raised concerns regarding unintended consequences of the inflexible approach proposed to nurse-to-patient ratios. Consequences such as surgical cancellations, unit closures and transfer of patients within a hospital or to another hospital were raised. When allocating staff, the complex care needs of patients should be the primary focus of nurse managers. This bill imposes a mandated inflexible ratio to the considerations when rostering. There is no clarity in the draft Hospital and Health Boards (Safe Nurse-to-Patient and Midwife-to-Patient Ratios) Amendment Bill 2015 to help with this and no penalty provisions are identified. While proposed section 138C allows for the minister to grant by written notice a temporary exemption, this does not address the day-to-day fluctuations that occur in all clinical services and provides no details on when such an exemption is required or for what period of noncompliance. What happens when staff are off the ward supporting a patient undergoing a procedure or when there is unexpected sick leave and the ward is full?

Along with accountability for improved outcomes for nurse-sensitive indicators, the impact of this legislation including the cost impact and any unintended consequences should be publicly reported. Having sufficient nurses with the right skills in the right place should be the priority focus of all good governments while promoting responsive, safe, efficient, effective and appropriate care. Safe, quality care of patients within our health system should be supported by evidence based staffing practices with the best match of patient need and nurse competencies. This requires receptiveness to different approaches to staffing rather than using a blunt stick such as this poor public policy and associated legislation drafted by those opposite. An approach such as that being considered in the United States with the bipartisan Registered Nurse Safe Staffing Act, which requires the establishment of a committee with 55 per cent direct care nurse representation to create nursing plans for each unit, recognises that direct care nurses working closely with managers are best equipped to determine the staffing level for their patients—not legislators prescribing this—an approach that recognises educational and clinical experience, evidence based practice and the complexity of patient needs.

I oppose the prescription of mandatory ratios that do not reflect the allocation of nursing resources to patient need. This bill is another example of a narrow approach to what is a complex issue. I do not support this bill in its current form as it will not achieve the true desired outcome for both nurses and patients of our Queensland hospital system. Unfortunately, much of the Palaszczuk Labor government's approach to complex issues is far too simplistic and fundamentally flawed. However, I am pleased to note that there will be ongoing data evaluation as well as a monitoring and review process, but in my view this should have been prospective rather than retrospective. I am also very sceptical with respect to the government's proposed costings.

As the now former deputy chair of the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee, I acknowledge my fellow committee members and in particular the member for Mudgeeraba, who has over 35 years of clinical experience in the nursing field, for her valuable contribution in assessing this legislation. I would also like to acknowledge the work that was undertaken by the department and those who provided submissions in evaluating this legislation. In conclusion, I would also like to thank the technical scrutiny staff for their evaluation and for all those who supported the committee.

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (5.15 pm): I absolutely support the Hospital and Health Boards (Safe Nurse-to-Patient and Midwife-to-Patient Ratios) Amendment Bill. Ratios will save lives. It is that simple. Today on International Nurses Day I reflect on almost three decades of being a nurse. I pay tribute to all my nursing colleagues and to the midwives who bring us into the world and keep our mums safe. They had their day last week, and they deserve it. I would also like to acknowledge my many colleagues in the gallery and I thank them for coming this evening.

What does it mean to be a nurse? It is not about the technical skills, the clinical knowledge or the sometimes dramatic events of a work day that make for good TV. It is about taking responsibility to care for another human being no matter what their situation. Like all nurses and midwives, I have cared for a diverse array of people. I have looked after the rich and famous. I have cared for a homeless woman. I have cared for people who have tried and failed to kill themselves. I have cared for initiated Indigenous elders, children with leukaemia, people who have committed terrible crimes and so many other people. Like all nurses and midwives, my calling does not allow me to judge who I care for, just that I care—caring enough to want people to get better, not sick again; caring enough to try to stop people getting

sick in the first place; and caring enough to be honest with someone and stay with them when there is no hope of recovery. Nurses and midwives do this not because they are caring for friends or family or someone they know, not because a nurse or a midwife will gain anything personally beyond a wage. Our profession is the essence of all that is good about humanity: people caring deeply about other people for no reason other than we know it is instinctively the right thing to do.

I am a third generation nurse and I am proud to be a nurse. My grandmother was a psych nurse at Sandy Gallop. My mother was a nursing student at the Mater, sadly lost to the profession at a time when nurses were not allowed to continue if they got married. My sister was also a nurse and a midwife and is now working with people with addiction problems in the Northern Territory. I have seen much change in my time as a nurse. Evidence based practice is now the norm. Nothing is more refreshing for me than to see young nurses talking about what the evidence says and discussing passionately with doctors and allied health professionals, contesting patient care based on a body of evidence but always based on deep concern for patients. I have seen massively improved outcomes in areas such as heart disease and stroke. I have seen significant improvements in the areas of cancer. I have been surrounded by nurses who have gradually and consistently improved their skills and their knowledge. I have seen vastly improved workplace health and safety practices. I think back to the eighties, when I first started, watching young men dying of HIV while we could not get the basic protective equipment that we needed. All of that has changed. Lifting equipment is now standard in hospitals, protecting our backs and, more importantly, our patients.

What has not changed is our workloads. Technology has changed the way we care for people, but we are dealing with patients who are sicker and have much more complex needs. What I am talking about tonight is a monumental change and an achievement for patient care for nurses, for midwives and for our entire community—a change that will deal with workloads. I am not rising to speak on my own behalf; I speak on behalf of the countless great nurses with whom I have worked who have inspired me, supported me, taught me and comforted me. I speak on behalf of the midwives and the student nurses. I speak on behalf of those nurses in emergency, the paediatric nurses, the medical/surgical nurses, the critical care nurses, the rehab nurses, the psych nurses and our entire profession wherever they may be working to promote and restore health. Of course, I also speak as a proud member of the QNU. I also speak on behalf of the most important nurse in my life, my wife, Susan. Like all oncology nurses, she is special. Mostly, I speak on behalf of the patients for whom nurses and midwives care because they are the people whom this legislation will benefit.

The QNU and nurses have been advocating for this for decades. This is only the fourth jurisdiction to implement this and Queenslanders should be rightly proud. This legislation is focused only on certain nurses and midwives in acute care settings in public hospitals. I have nothing but the deepest respect for all of my nursing and midwifery colleagues in every setting. I hope that this is the start of achieving real action on workloads for all nurses.

Let me describe a routine morning shift without ratios for nurses in an area that will be covered by this legislation. They will arrive at work never really knowing how many patients they might have or how sick they might be. They have just under an hour or so to assess their patients, check their emergency equipment and develop a work plan. Before that hour is up, they always start assisting with feeding, dressing, showering, toileting, cleaning teeth, checking observations and giving medications. They also have to think about managing IV fluids and drugs and catheters. Keeping patients free from pain is very high on their priority lists and some of their patients are going to need controlled drugs. Then they will have to find another nurse, take them away from what they are doing, check and administer the drugs and, of course, they will then return the favour.

After that first hour the doctors, allied health professionals and wardies start arriving to take patients away for various tests and procedures, and then the nursing team leaders start coming around to advise which patients are being discharged. As soon as you discharge that patient, the next patient is coming in and needing admission. You do not have time to muck about, and you certainly do not have time to do what you really want to do, what your patients need you to do, and that is just spend some time providing human care, so you just work that in around everything else. Do not forget about the student that you probably have with you who you are trying to educate as you go.

By midmorning it is time for checking blood sugar levels, squeezing in dressings, walking patients, educating patients and of course getting people ready for lunch. Making sure that people get adequate nutrition at lunchtime is a huge job. Then, like clockwork, everyone wants to go to the toilet again and everyone needs pain relief again. Then you have to write your notes and get ready for handover to the next shift, and of course this is all on a day when it goes to plan.

Let us talk about what commonly happens every day for every nurse: a patient deteriorates and needs a rapid response call; a patient has a fall; a patient is called to theatre with no notice; a new admission arrives with a pressure sore; a patient becomes aggressive because they have an undetected urinary tract infection that is causing delirium; someone needs a blood transfusion; an IV cannula falls out so you have to put that back in before you can give the blood transfusion; someone has a stroke; someone has chest pain; someone has no urine output; a patient needs education because they have been told they are going home and they have to be out in half an hour; a patient is told that their condition is terminal. What do you do first? What do you deal with?

What I am really trying to convey here is that nurses and midwives are really, really busy and it does not matter what shift you are on. It was not surprising that the nurses we spoke to in Brisbane, Gladstone, Townsville and Cairns shared stories with us that sounded like that typical day. They told us of people burning out and leaving the profession because they cannot do the things they have to do to fulfil their professional and ethical obligations. We know that patient education is key to keeping patients from returning to hospitals. I asked a midwife about this. She talked about what she would like to do to teach a new mum how to settle and feed a baby and how important those things are in the first few hours and days to establish patterns which research tells us have huge impacts on people for life. She said she struggled to do any discharge planning on some shifts because nurses are just stretched too far.

I spoke to some nurses about skin care and how each day they would like to fully assess and document each patient's skincare needs. They would like to teach older people how to use moisturiser and cushioning to reduce the risk of skin tears. They would like to monitor fluid balance and remind people to drink water and to change position regularly to avoid pressure sores because we know that skin tears and pressure sores have massive impacts on patients, their families and our health budget. All of those things take time, and every time a nurse or a midwife is stretched too far something is not done—something that might be small to begin with but will have a massive impact on patients. Nursing is not about glory; it is about the small things, because the small things matter. If you miss one set of obs because you have 10 patients, that patient could be in trouble. The research tells us that just one skin assessment, urinalysis, bladder scan, blood sugar level or bowel assessment not done can have massive impacts on the patient.

It is sad that we could not reach consensus as a committee. The research could not have been clearer: ratios save lives. Loads of studies, in loads of hospitals, in loads of countries, looking at loads of nurse-sensitive indicators, indicate that each additional patient added to a nurse's or midwife's workload increases the risk that a patient will suffer a nurse-sensitive adverse outcome. What does that mean in 'plainspeak'? If a nurse has to look after 10 patients your chances of falling over, becoming constipated, developing a pressure sore, becoming delirious or developing pneumonia all increase—not because the nurses are bad at their job: just because there are not enough of them. If we reduce that to four patients, then your chances of having one of those things happen decrease dramatically, and all of those are bad things. Patients can, and do, die from those conditions.


The non-government committee members will contend that more than just ratios contribute to safe patient outcomes. I agree, and so does Professor Duffield from the UTS and Edith Cowan universities. Professor Duffield talked about the importance of skills mix and leadership, but she said that the starting point is ratios. If you do not have the ratios, you cannot achieve anything else. The non-government members wanted to talk about costs. Ratios will cost money but we should not lose sight of the benefits: fewer falls, fewer skin tears, less constipation and less pneumonia. These are all immensely beneficial to the patient and to the budget bottom line. Ratios improve staff retention and quality. Nurses and midwives who stay on the job longer build a culture that develops and nurtures new nurses and improves quality patient care. Nurses and midwives who have the resources to care for patients in a manner that their professional judgement tells them is required are more satisfied, and when nurses are satisfied they stay in the job. Again referring to Professor Duffield's testimony, each time we replace a nurse it costs close to \$50,000. Yes, there are costs, but there are enormous benefits. As any health economist will tell you, benefits and costs should not just be measured in terms of dollars. We are talking about people here. We have to look at quality of life and we have to take that into account.

I would like to thank the chair, the member for Nudgee, who again did an excellent job on this bill, as she does on all our bills and inquiries. I would like to thank the member for Thuringowa and the member for Buderim. I would like to thank the member for Moggill and the member for Mudgeeraba for their contribution and their reliance on their health backgrounds. It is sad to see all of them leaving the committee. I would like to thank the minister, and I would particularly like to thank the Premier. I would

like to acknowledge her great leadership for carrying not just this important piece of legislation forward, but for implementing all of the other important nursing related policies. I am truly proud to be a member of this Palaszczuk government. I would like to thank the many, many nurses who gave their time. Some travelled great distances to give us their real stories of what life is like now and what life will be like if our ratios are implemented. I would like to thank Beth Mohle and all the members of the QNU who have worked so hard for this outcome.

I described a typical day for a nurse. Ms Carlton, a clinical nurse from the Mareeba Hospital, described her day at the hearing we held in Cairns. I asked her about the difficult decisions that nurses and midwives have to make about what to do first. Who has the greatest need? What is more important: pain relief, toileting, patient education, checking observations or comforting someone who has found out they have a terminal illness? They are all important. I asked her if those decisions would be made easier with ratios, and she responded that she would not need to make those decisions because she would have enough time for each patient at the end of each day.

That is what Ms Carlton wants, that is what I want, that is what every nurse and midwife wants, that is what patients want and that is what this legislation delivers. Ratios will not just save lives: they will improve lives. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (5.28 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Hospital and Health Boards (Safe Nurse-to-Patient and Midwife-to-Patient Ratios) Amendment Bill 2015. This bill establishes a legislative framework for particular nursing and midwifery staff numbers and mandatory nurse-to-patient and midwife-to-patient ratios and workload provisions in public sector health service facilities. As a former deputy chair and member of the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee which considered this bill, I have reservations about the bill in its current form.

There can be no doubt that nurses in our private and public sector hospitals do an outstanding job, and it is vitally important that as a parliament we support our nurses and ensure that their workload is manageable. As members are aware, today is International Nurses Day. Today is an opportunity to take a moment to thank our nurses throughout this state for the outstanding job that they do in often exceptional circumstances.

In my maiden speech in this place I reflected on the role nursing had played in my life. I said—
The health system is very close to my heart.

...

I am still a registered nurse in Queensland.

And I still am. That still holds true, 7½ years later. I have always been a vocal advocate for health issues and particularly for the future of nursing. In my maiden speech I vowed to represent nurses in parliament. I said—

I am particularly delighted that I will be able to provide to this place that vocal and credible representation that nurses are so rightly demanding. I will ensure that this most trusted and dedicated profession gets the acknowledgement it deserves.

Since this time I have been proud to stand up for nurses in this place and provide a unique view on issues facing the nursing profession, whether it be staffing numbers, culture, bullying and intimidation, safety or the conditions they face every day on the job. Nurses not only provide specialist advice and treatment to Queenslanders in need but also provide them with the care and understanding they deserve.

Just as nurses care for us, Queenslanders rightfully expect their government and their parliament to care for nurses. It was disappointing, though, to see the Minister for Health neglect to acknowledge me as a registered nurse during his statement earlier today. Nor did he invite me, as the only registered nurse on the opposition benches, to his International Nurses Day reception this morning.

As a registered nurse I know that the nature of this job is incredibly demanding. Often as a nurse you go through your shift without a break as you work around the clock to ensure the continued health and wellbeing of your patients. Unfortunately, there can be no certainty that a legislative requirement to fix nurse-to-patient and midwife-to-patient ratios is necessary to achieve what we set out to do—that is, deliver better outcomes for nurses and better health outcomes for patients.

This is an area where research is scant, with no universal agreement that nurse-to-patient and midwife-to-patient ratios will deliver better health outcomes. As I have visited hospitals throughout this state, including accompanying staff as they completed shifts at Gold Coast University Hospital and

Robina Hospital last year, not one nurse thought nurse-to-patient or midwife-to-patient ratios imposed by legislation would allow for greater care for patients or ease their burden. No nurse that I spoke to thought it was a panacea.

I am disappointed that, in a hasty attempt to appease the Queensland Nurses' Union, this Labor government has chosen to introduce this piece of legislation with insufficient evidence to support the need for it. In Queensland public hospitals, some form of these ratios already exists through a formula contained in *Business planning framework: nursing resources*, which is industrially mandated under the Nurses and Midwives (Queensland Health) Certified Agreement 2012.

As we consider this bill today, it is important to note that this business planning framework has not been proven ineffective. At the public briefing officers from Queensland Health advised—

The BPF sets out the workload management methodology for calculating the nursing and midwifery hours required to provide an appropriate, professional and safe standard of health service. In practice, the BPF is underpinned by adherence to nursing and midwifery professional college standards and the application of good clinical judgement in determining the appropriate nursing and midwifery staffing levels and skill mix to meet service demand.

As such, under the BPF we already have a regime whereby we can determine the staffing levels and skill mixes needed to meet service demand without a legislative provision for nurse-to-patient and midwife-to-patient ratios.

Throughout the committee's consideration of this bill, which took us through regional Queensland in an effort to broaden our consultation, I raised a number of additional concerns about the introduction of this legislation and how it would impact on the nursing profession and their ability to care for Queenslanders. In particular, I expressed concern about data modelling used to create nurse-to-patient ratios and the number of nurses need to implement ratios created by the bill. In turn, the department conceded that there was a need to refine the data modelling in order to apply it to a range of scenarios. In our public briefing from departmental officers I asked Dr Fleming, the acting chief nursing and midwifery officer, about the data modelling used in this bill. I said—

You said initially that 250 nurses would be needed to implement the ratio but that you are going to have to do further data modelling. So the truth is that you do not yet actually know how many new nurses you need.

Dr Fleming replied—

In terms of saying, 'Do we have a final number that will absolutely say that every scenario will be covered?', I take your point. It is a complex issue that we do need to refine and understand in the data modelling to give you a range of options and scenarios. It will be unlikely in any data modelling scenario that we come up and say, 'The answer is X.' It will depend a lot on the scenarios: the occupancy of hospitals, the acuity of hospitals, those sorts of things.

Through my questioning it became clear to non-government members of the committee that, despite assurances that 250 nurses would be needed to implement the ratio, in reality there is no concrete data modelling that will effectively conclude the precise number of nurses needed to implement the provisions of this bill. This unclear data modelling has cost implications for the implementation of this bill. I went on to raise concerns with the department that their costings were drawn from a variety of assumptions which could cast doubt on the presumed \$25.9 million cost. In our public hearing I said—

So we do not have a cost of implementation of this policy?

Dr Fleming replied—

I think the preliminary data modelling identified 250 nurses so that gave, I think, the costing of around \$25.9 million. As I said, once we do further modelling or refinement of the data modelling that costing will also be refined.

I then asked what assumptions were used in determining the cost of the bill's implementation. Dr Fleming advised—

The assumptions were based on the wards that were identified as acute medical and surgical wards. They were based on the legislation that identifies which wards would be included; they were based on occupancy of the acute hospital surgery and medical wards.

I then asked Dr Wakefield, the deputy director-general, to confirm that the cost is based on the implementation in particular hospitals identified by the department, like those in Atherton, Bundaberg and Caboolture. Dr Wakefield responded 'Correct.' I then sought clarification, asking, 'If you have to expand that, then it is going to cost more.' Dr Wakefield responded, 'That is correct.'

What we have therefore seen is an estimated cost associated with this bill that could blow out as a result of what appears to be insufficient or ineffective data modelling. As a consequence, the implementation of this bill could far exceed the \$25.9 million estimated by the department.

Later in the public hearing I raised concerns about the apparently broad scope of the consultation for the bill which was conducted by the department. In my questions for departmental officers I noted that no documents or submissions in relation to the consultation had been provided to the committee. The department indicated that it would take the question on notice and seek the director-general's approval for the release of the documents. The department to date has not provided the working documents.

At our public hearing in Gladstone I also raised the issue of recruitment in regional areas of nurses and midwives which may prevent the effective implementation of nurse-to-patient and midwife-to-patient ratios. In particular I raised the culture of bullying and intimidation within Queensland Health as a key factor in recruitment difficulties of nurses and midwives in rural and regional areas. My concerns were noted by Mr Lawson, the nursing unit manager, who in turn reflected on the notion that there is a culture of bullying and intimidation and a focus on money in Queensland Health. Mr Lawson noted issues surrounding recruitment are 'endemic across the whole of regional Queensland'. He said—

When you get outside the south-east corner that is the reality; however, I think there are other issues at the forefront here. It is a poor culture. Culture is the basis of everything and if we are not respecting our health professionals, whether it is nurses, doctors, midwives or allied health, we are not going to attract them. Some of the reasons why Central Queensland fail to fill and attract vacancies is because of the culture that exists.


He later reflected—

... the culture is bullying and intimidating and the culture is about money. The culture is not about patient safety; it is about money.

At our public hearing in Cairns I again raised the issue of a culture of bullying and intimidation within Queensland Health and how this could affect recruitment of nurses and midwives during the implementation of the bill.

In closing, it appears that there are significant limitations when it comes to the implementation of this bill, and a lack of consideration has been given. The Labor government is introducing a piece of legislation to create mandatory nurse-to-patient and midwife-to-patient ratios when the workload management methodology for calculating nursing and midwifery hours required to provide quality health care is already contained in the business planning framework.

Through our committee consultations we have also seen issues arising in relation to incomplete data modelling, potentially unknown implementation costs, a lack of evidence of consultation, the difficulty in recruiting more nurses and an associated culture of bullying and intimidation within Queensland Health. I remain seriously concerned about the issues I have outlined arising from this bill's introduction which remain unaddressed, and I do not believe that ratios are the panacea sold to nurses by the QNU.

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (5.38 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Hospital and Health Boards (Safe Nurse-to-Patient and Midwife-to-Patient Ratios) Amendment Bill 2015. As a fellow health professional, I am very proud to be part of this in our parliament today. We are making history.

Patient safety in all of our many health services across this state is vital and paramount. The Queensland public rightly have an expectation that when their loved one is in hospital the very best medical and nursing care is demonstrated and applied. As members of this government, we are therefore entrusted to ensure that we do everything in our capacity to get the balance right when it comes to safe nurse-patient ratios. I would go further to say that we also have an obligation to the Queensland public and to the thousands of nurses—those dedicated souls—who work tirelessly and professionally. I know they want us in the parliament to get the balance right to ensure patient care and patient safety remain paramount throughout our broad and challenging health service.

How appropriate it is that we debate this bill in this House on International Nurses Day? I must take a moment to not only recognise the fantastic nurses who are watching this live streamed debate in the House but also acknowledge the many nurses, some of whom have travelled from my home town in Townsville, in the public gallery and to simply say thank you. Thank you to our state's nurses for your care, compassion and dedication to your profession. As a fellow health professional, I have had the pleasure of working with some of you over the years—as a paramedic I handed over many a patient to nurses—and you each have my and our government's absolute respect for your individual contributions to our health services.

I commend the health minister not only for bringing this bill before the House but also for restoring the 1,800 nurse and midwife positions lost under the former LNP government. His department should be commended. It has worked tirelessly to ensure the Palaszczuk government's commitment in the

nursing guarantee policy through our legislative framework enables safe nurse-to-patient ratios and workload provisions to be mandated in our public health service facilities. I also want to acknowledge the work of our committee, our secretariat, our outstanding chair, the member for Nudgee, and all of my fellow committee members, some of whom bring extensive experience in nursing, ambulance or medicine. I speak particularly of my fellow committee member the member for Greenslopes, Joe Kelly, who is a registered nurse. The member for Moggill through his work in the AMA, must also see the importance of what we are doing here today. I also acknowledge the member for Mudgeeraba with her years of nursing experience. Surely both those non-government members can see the importance of what we are doing here today and can look beyond that exterior view that this is an ideological argument about cost. Yes, there is cost. We are spending \$200 million to ensure that 4,000 nurse graduates and 400 nurse navigators are put in place over the next four years, but it is about getting the balance right. We will miss those fellow committee members who bring that clinical experience to the table. I am not for a second saying that the member for Caloundra does not bring experience or an understanding of the health system—he certainly does—but you cannot buy the years of clinical experience.

The committee travelled to learn from different states such as Western Australia and Victoria, both of which gave positive submissions to the nurse-to-patient ratio bill that we are introducing in Queensland. I note that the evidence from our interactions across Queensland did not differ from the other states we spoke to. I also note with interest the various submissions and draw the member for Moggill's attention in the hope of seeking bipartisan support to submission No. 5 from the Australian College for Emergency Medicine where it stated that it has a vital interest in ensuring the highest standards of care are maintained for all patients across Australia. Whilst its comments are in relation to emergency departments, it notes nurse-patient ratios are dependent upon many factors, including patient acuity, which of course is also seen in surgical and medical wards throughout our hospitals—the very areas where we are ensuring nurse-patient ratios are aimed at getting the balance right. Earlier today the member for Surfers Paradise asked what this will achieve. Patient flow may well be eased due to the substantial body of evidence through extensive research that clearly demonstrates that a reduced length of stay for patients in our hospitals is due to improved nurse-patient ratios. I love evidence based research because you cannot dispute the facts.

That significant and extensive research that I speak of has been undertaken over the last 20 years in over 32 countries and has shown that a high number of nurses relative to the number of patients has a positive impact on patient outcomes including decreased length of stays, which has clear economic benefits to our health system, and reduced patient mortality, which is very important. As I stated earlier, these studies also demonstrate improved patient safety. Even better for our nursing staff through the collection of evidence, there are reduced work related injuries and absenteeism and improved morale in our broad health sector. Conversely, in the UK the National Health Service identified the negative effects of decreased nursing staff. An example of this is the 2013 Francis report which identified poor clinical care following staff level reductions and more broadly the 2013 Keogh review which found that inadequate nurse staffing levels related to higher mortality rates. This of course is a very telling fact and we need to ensure that we get that balance right in Queensland when it comes to safe nurse-patient ratios.

More recently a 2015 South Korean study reviewed the effects of nurse staffing on patient mortality. This published study's research was undertaken across 14 hospitals involving over 1,000 nurses and 75,000 patients. The average workload for nurses in South Korea is about twice as many as the average workload for nurses in the United States. The findings of this study confirmed that a lower number of nurses relative to patients is associated with a higher patient mortality rate. In the United States the state of California enacted minimum nurse staff requirements in legislation in 2004 and over the next 11 years another 13 states followed suit. In 2009 research was undertaken to highlight the difference that mandated minimum nurse-patient ratios had made regarding patient and staff outcomes. That research showed that nurses are less likely to suffer burnout and are likely to stay in their jobs as a result of the legislation and nurses are less likely to report dissatisfaction with their jobs. Currently, we know that ratios are not mandated in Queensland. Instead, notational roles are determined in public sector health facilities through the application of the Queensland Health Business Planning Framework, or BPF, which is industrially mandated as part of the Queensland nurses' certified agreement. Our government has endorsed minimum ratios of one nurse to every four patients on morning and afternoon shifts and one nurse to seven patients on night shift when it is expected that the workload is reduced due to patients resting.

Broad consultation was conducted by our health committee including our travel to other states where we met with health department representatives in WA and Victoria which have implemented nurse-patient ratios. The Queensland Nurses' Union, the AMA, the QWU, the Together union and

private health sector organisations submitted their views. I want to end with the Queensland Nurses' Union submission, because it sums it up absolutely beautifully through the following quote from renowned researcher Professor Linda Aiken when she said—


The primary function of nurses is to provide early surveillance and to detect problems that could lead to death and other complications. If there aren't enough nurses at the bedside with visual contact with patients, nurses don't have a chance of making those decisions.

After listening to many nurses on the Queensland leg of our consultation—and I note that we did not hear one person speak against the bill—the clear and concise message was that patient care comes first and foremost for nurses throughout our public healthcare system.

During our consultation, the clear desire of nurses to do more for their patients was demonstrated and repeated by nurses throughout the regions and in our metropolitan centres. They wished that they had more time to engage, educate—that is to prevent readmission—and told of their patients apologising to them for attending to simple matters, as they felt guilty in requesting a nurse for a particular reason knowing that nursing staff were overworked. The nurses spoke of fatigue and stress, of being overworked where there can be up to a dozen patients to one or two nurses, and simply feeling like they have not achieved their best for their patients during their shift. Of course, that affects greatly the morale of nurses in an understandably negative way. The nurses we spoke to articulated the feeling of not just wanting to return to the next shift to cop it all over again. They are tired and they have had enough. They only want for their patients. In Townsville, the nurses' clear compassion and caring nature was tangible when a nurse broke down for not being able to be with a mother and her newborn owing to the many others in the ward. As a government we understand this. As a government, we can change this situation by legislating safe nurse-patient ratios in Queensland public health service areas.

As a previously paid healthcare worker in the Queensland Ambulance Service, I pay my utmost respect to the nurses who each day across Queensland in their thousands put on their uniforms and go about their profession of nursing the injured, the newborns, the elderly, and the medical trauma patients in our hospitals. Each and every one of those nurses—from the Gold Coast to the tip of Australia—are to be commended for their dedication to their profession of nursing. They are our true community champions.

I hope that all my fellow members on both sides of the House join with me in acknowledging their outstanding commitment and contribution to our broader health sector. I thank them. I wholeheartedly commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr DICKSON** (Buderim—LNP) (5.51 pm): I rise to speak to the Hospital and Health Boards (Safe Nurse-to-Patient and Midwife-to-Patient Ratios) Amendment Bill 2015. At the outset, I acknowledge the nurses and midwives in Queensland who do an excellent job in providing health care to all Queenslanders. It would be fair to say that, at several points in their lives, all members of this House would have had an interaction with nurses or midwives. These interactions come at a time when we are most often under duress. To be able to rely on well-trained, hardworking nurses or midwives in Queensland is nothing short of a blessing.

The objective of this bill is to establish a legislative framework to ensure safe nursing and midwifery staff numbers and improve patient outcomes through mandating nurse-to-patient and midwife-to-patient ratios and workload provisions in public sector health service facilities. Currently, these ratios are not mandated through legislation in Queensland. Instead, the public sector health facilities use Queensland Health's business planning framework—the BPF—to determine the appropriate nursing and midwifery staff levels to safely meet service requirements. This industrially mandated framework aims to achieve a balance between health service demands and supplying the nurse resources to meet that demand.

As noted in the committee's report, the BPF sets out the methodology to assist a hospital and health service to calculate the nursing and midwifery hours that are required to provide an appropriate, professional and safe standard of health service. Factors taken into account when determining these hours include activity, complexity, performance targets, technology, physical layout and environment of the work area, workforce supply, service quality, and patient and staff safety. As a former member of the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee, I note the impact of current nurse staffing levels on patient outcomes.

The committee considers that patients should be provided with a level of care delivered in a manner that restores health, does not result in adverse effects and minimises the risk of readmission. The committee also acknowledged that adverse patient outcomes can be caused by inadequate


nursing staffing levels and recognised that nurses on a whole want to provide good-quality professional and ethical care to their patients. In addition to patient outcomes, it must also be recognised that nurse staffing levels affect the work environment. The committee noted the inappropriate nurse staffing levels lead to nurse burnout, stress at not being able to provide quality care, an inability to meet the basic needs of patients, and overtime required to complete paperwork and the observation of preventable complications.

Although the objective of the bill may be worthy, I believe that there is no need to legislate to allow Labor to go on a \$25.9 million recruitment drive for its union mates to implement an election policy that simply came down to more nurses. Surely, the existing framework can be utilised to achieve any improvements that are required. I am concerned that mandated nurse-to-patient ratios do not take into account acuity, do not take into account that the more complex and acute a patient's care, the more nursing resources will be required.

The government has not adequately explained how it came up with the ratio, nor has it provided any data to prove the effectiveness of what this legislation contains. Instead, we have seen from the health minister a policy based on union boss demands and not real clinical evidence. There is no acknowledgement that this model of dictating a nurse-patient ratio limits the ability of individual hospitals to allocate their nurses according to patient need and acuity.

This bill seems to be another example of Labor changing the health system back to the centralised control, ignoring the facts that local hospital and health boards have the knowledge and a more thorough clinical understanding of each individual community's needs. Although I acknowledge the critical role of nurses and midwives in ensuring positive health outcomes for Queenslanders and although I acknowledge the importance of adequate nurse staffing levels, I cannot support this bill in its current form.

I would like to thank the members of the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee with whom I worked over the past number of months. I think we did an outstanding job. On many issues we came together to deliver what I believe were great outcomes for Queensland. But on this issue, I cannot support this bill.

 **Ms BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (5.56 pm): I rise today to speak in support of the Hospital and Health Boards (Safe Nurse-to-Patient and Midwife-to-Patient Ratios) Amendment Bill 2015. At the last election, the Palaszczuk Labor government made a commitment to the people of Queensland that we would legislate for safe ratios and workload provisions to ensure better patient safety and better quality health care for Queenslanders. All of the research indicates that a higher ratio of nurses or midwives to patients can lower mortality. Through minimum ratios, patients will benefit from improved quality of care and improved patient safety. The statistics highlight the benefits of nurse-to-patient ratios, such as reduced readmission rates, reduced post-operative mortality rates and greater patient satisfaction. Research shows us that ratios benefit the workforce, too, with better recruitment and retention rates, better staff satisfaction and better workforce sustainability.

Over the years I have been a part of this debate in four different capacities: firstly, as the daughter of a nurse; secondly, as a representative of health workers; thirdly, as a patient; and, lastly, as I find myself here today as a legislator. There is little doubt in my mind that being a nurse or a midwife is one of the toughest jobs going. For me, proof of that is that you never come across a nurse who is not as tough as nails. One of the strongest nurses I know is my mum. She met the challenge of raising four kids and putting herself through university as a mature age student to achieve her dream of caring for others. I am certain that it was a challenge for her and a perpetual struggle, because, as one of those four kids, I recall giving her no end of grief. I have seen her career in nursing through her eyes: a career of joy and sorrow, challenge and opportunity, moments of triumph and tragedy, a career of giving. There was no shortage of shop talk around the family dinner table and we were desensitised pretty quickly to the content of the conversation. That was okay by me, because the shop talk around the table meant that Mum was there at the table. Anyone who has a nurse in their family would appreciate how precious that is.


The second capacity in which I have encountered this debate is around the negotiation tables with employers and nurses. For decades nurses and midwives have needed to negotiate for better standards in the workplace to deliver better care. Sitting around the negotiation table with employers in the private aged care space and workforce representatives makes you no stranger to these arguments. I am acutely aware that as far as midwives and nurses have come on this journey, it is not far enough. The people of Queensland deserve better. The nurses and midwives of Queensland deserve better. I

have heard the arguments of those opposite around not being convinced that ratios are needed, that good faith, good will and good governance should get nurses and midwives far enough. Not for a single second do I agree.

Debate, on motion of Ms Boyd, adjourned.

APPOINTMENT

Panel of Temporary Speakers

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, consequent upon the appointment of the member for Burleigh as an opposition spokesman, in accordance with standing order 11, I advise that I have discharged the member from the Panel of Temporary Speakers and appointed the member for Gregory to the panel. Welcome, member for Gregory. We look forward to your rulings.

MOTION

Mining Industry

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (6.01 pm): I move—

That this House:

1. rejects the comments by Labor's federal climate change spokesman that 'I don't think there's a realistic prospect of new coalmines starting up in Australia in the foreseeable future', and
2. unequivocally supports Adani's Carmichael project as a major jobs driver in this state.

We all know that those opposite are completely divided on this issue. It is incredible to think in this day and age that the federal climate change spokesperson could say that there would be no place in Australia for any new coalmines. The state Labor government is always talking about wanting jobs and investment. This morning in the House those opposite were talking about economic development. The state Minister for Mines has said that he is supportive of the mining industry. I look forward to the Minister for Mines coming into this chamber tonight and supporting our motion. If there is one thing that we need in Queensland it is certainly investment, development and jobs that will flow through from much needed developments.

The Adani Carmichael project needs to be kickstarted. There is no other way of saying it. This is a project that would have been approved a long time ago were it not for the Labor government pandering to the Greens for their voting preferences.

Mr Cripps interjected.

Ms Jones interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Hinchinbrook and Minister for Education, I urge you not to have a debate. You are disrupting the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I do appreciate the assistance from the shadow minister for natural resources and mines and I am sure that he will give a great contribution to this debate. It is incredible that we have a Minister for Environment here in Queensland who so openly goes against his cabinet colleague, the Minister for Mines. Today in the House we heard that the Minister for Mines supports mining. That is nice to hear because we are a resources state. Yet his colleague, the Minister for Environment, has gone to his local Labor branch in Mount Coot-tha where they have passed a resolution, not against mining but against the Adani development.

Mr Costigan: What does that tell you? It's a flip-flop!

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: This is an absolute flip-flop—I do take the interjection—given that the Adani project will create thousands of jobs, inject billions of dollars into the Queensland economy and generate millions of dollars in royalties. It seems that the LNP are the only people in this House who understand the potential of this project and what it can do to unleash Queensland. The member for Southern Downs has just been over to India to see the Adani people. They are asking for our clean and green coal.

Government members interjected.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Clean and green coal—I will say it again!


Mr Hinchliffe interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Leader of the House, we do not need your interjections or you will be warned. Government members, I would urge you to allow the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to speak in silence.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: We understand that our Queensland coal, which is clean and green, has lower emissions.

Mr Langbroek: It's better than Victoria's.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Absolutely. Our coal is way better than Victoria's. It is good to see the LNP's interest in this project. That is why the member for Southern Downs, who is fair dinkum about jobs and development in Queensland, went to India and looked at the benefits this project will bring to Queensland. It was absolutely fantastic. It was all systems go for this Carmichael mine when we left government 14 months ago and unfortunately as we sit here tonight still nothing is happening.

 **Mr STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (6.06 pm): This government supports the Adani project. We have supported this project from the beginning and we will continue to support it. During the state election campaign the LNP members erected two shipping containers, one on top of the other, to form a big billboard. In fact, it was so big it almost needed its own postcode. The billboard that they placed a poster on said that a vote for Labor would cost 2,000 Adani jobs for the people of Townsville. It was pure scaremongering. How did that work out for the LNP members in the area of Townsville at that time? Members can join the dots. The people of Townsville are smarter than the LNP took them for. We support the jobs that Adani will bring and provide to the people of North Queensland and the economic development that will stem directly from this project and from the opening up of the Galilee Basin.

This government has clearly demonstrated its commitment to North Queensland and to ensuring continued employment and job creation for the benefit of North Queenslanders in general. We have worked hard to ensure not just that the Adani project can go ahead but also that there is a pipeline of projects to support employment in North Queensland. Recently the Minister for State Development announced that the Coordinator-General had granted prescribed project status to the \$1.4 billion Dugald River zinc project. This project is not just a resource project; it will see the construction of a processing plant, maintenance workshop and will involve road, rail and port logistics for export from Townsville, the hub of Northern Australia. Construction of the 622-kilometre pipeline between Tennant Creek and Mount Isa is expected to start in the second quarter of 2017. This project will create up to 600 jobs and will have flow-on effects from businesses throughout the Northern Territory and Queensland.


Another initiative that this government has to bolster infrastructure development and jobs is the Building our Regions program. The first round of the Building our Regions program saw more than \$5.4 million worth of infrastructure committed to North-West Queensland and included funding for projects as varied as the construction of new optic fibre links and upgrades to cattle saleyards.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Pause the clock. Member for Townsville, I apologise. There is too much discussion in the chamber. Member for Caloundra, if you have not finished you may like to take your conversation outside. That also applies to government members.

Mr STEWART: With everything this government has going on in North Queensland, I ask: what is the federal government doing to support economic growth in the region? We have a federal government that will not commit to providing funds for the Townsville stadium. Townsville is a community that sorely needs jobs and opportunities. That project would provide a vital economic injection and would kickstart growth and deliver much needed jobs.

I also point out the lack of federal support for Queensland's bid to build patrol boats in Cairns. Cairns is another region that needs jobs and the loss of that bid was hugely disappointing. There is still an opportunity for Cairns to continue as a major maintenance, repair and overhaul hub for the existing Royal Australian Navy vessels, including Armidale class patrol boats, hydrographic vessels and the new yet to be built offshore patrol vessels. This ongoing through-life support and sustainment, including deep maintenance, for the Pacific patrol boats is valued at \$400 million over the life of the boats, which is up to 30 years. Can members imagine the employment possibilities with that? Through the Department of State Development, the Queensland government will work with North Queensland shipyards and Ports North to investigate what additional steps need to be taken to advance this project.

It is clear that this government supports the continued growth and development of North Queensland and has demonstrated, through its support of resource projects and major infrastructure initiatives, that it is hugely supportive of North Queensland in general. The Queensland government is committed to ensuring the Adani project is clear and continuing for the people of North Queensland, who can be assured that we are doing everything we can to support growth and jobs in our region.

 **Mr COSTIGAN** (Whitsunday—LNP) (6.11 pm): After hearing from the member for Townsville, I am delighted to rise to speak in support of the motion, particularly as that member has just pumped up his own tyres, as well as, no doubt, those of his colleagues along the Ross River, the member for Mundingburra and the member for Thuringowa. I say that because, from my observations in coming to Townsville in my role as shadow assistant minister for North Queensland, I know we have three classic examples of government members of parliament who are frozen at the wheel. Months and months have gone by since the election of the Palaszczuk Labor government. How long has it taken and how much pressure from the LNP opposition has there been before we finally saw the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines press the go button on the mining lease for the Carmichael mine? While towns such as Bowen and Proserpine struggle and cities such as Cairns, Townsville and Mackay struggle, we wait with bated breath for those secondary approvals for power and—

Mr Millar: And Clermont.

Mr COSTIGAN: And Clermont. I take the interjection from my good friend the member for Gregory. We cannot forget the great town of Clermont, given its close proximity to the Moray Downs cattle station where the Carmichael coalmine is proposed. That is a \$16 billion project and we have 16 billion reasons to get behind it, make it happen and open up the Galilee Basin. Can members imagine what would have happened if, back in the late 1960s and the early 1970s under the former Bjelke-Petersen government, we had seen the dragging of the chain in relation to the Bowen Basin? Towns such as Clermont, Middlemount, Dysart, Moranbah, Glendon—and on we go—would not have come to fruition. We would not have seen the development of the Goonyella to Hay Point railway which commenced in November 1969, the opening up of Hay Point or the opening up of Abbot Point.


What of the people of Bowen? I know that the member for Burdekin has made countless trips down the Bruce Highway. I have relatives and friends in Bowen and they have never seen it so bad. That is reverberating right across North and Central Queensland. In terms of tonnage, 53 per cent of Queensland's exports come out of ports in the region that I represent. That is 154 million tonnes of coal. We have coal by the truckload and by the shipload, and the world wants it. Yet we see a divisive Australian Labor Party that does not know where it is going with this. It is controlled by the green element. We cannot forget that nine of them are in this House because of Greens preferences. People are struggling. It is all well and good to sit back in Mount Coot-tha and sip on a latte, but what about the people who are on the bones of their your-know-what in Herbert Street, Bowen? The minister has been there. He has his lattes at Le Sorelle. I know he loves it there. But do members know what? The people do not love the position of the government, because it continues to drag its feet!

The comments from the federal Labor spokesperson on climate change are appalling. They are an insult to the people of regional and rural Queensland. We need these projects. We need the Carmichael project to fire up and we need the development of the Galilee Basin. Central and North Queensland communities are crying out for that project. We have been waiting and waiting and waiting. But what do we see from the member for Mackay, for example? Let us go back to the last state election. What happened after it? Fair is fair: congratulations to the Labor member for Mackay for winning. Later, she was famously photographed with members of the Mackay Conservation Group, which has been jamming advocates in relation to the development of the Carmichael mine and the development of the Galilee Basin. She is in bed with the local tree huggers. That was publicised locally. I love koalas and I love trees, but my constituents and the people of Central and North Queensland need jobs. We need investment. We need economic growth.

At the moment, we do not have a government that is asleep at the wheel. We do not have a government that is frozen at the wheel. We have a government that is in a coma. There are a couple of medical professionals in the House. Maybe the member for Moggill could skip across the chamber and get their hearts restarted. I do not know what needs to be done before we are blue in the face. In summary, it goes without saying that I am a great advocate of the development of the Galilee Basin. I find the comments from the federal shadow minister for climate change utterly disgraceful.

Mr Hinchliffe: What's their name?

Mr COSTIGAN: Neville Nobody comes to mind, like a lot of people on that side of the chamber. I support the motion unashamedly, because we need the jobs.

 **Mr PEARCE** (Mirani—ALP) (6.16 pm): I rise to support the Palaszczuk government and the Adani Carmichael project. Not only does the government support the Adani Carmichael project; it also supports the sustainable development of the Galilee Basin, it supports existing mines and it supports those mines that are coming online. The Palaszczuk government has been working hard to grow the economy, reduce the unemployment legacy of the LNP and support hardworking Queenslanders by providing them with jobs.

On 3 April in Mackay, I stood with the Premier, the Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines, and my colleague the member for Mackay to announce the grant of the Carmichael mining lease. It was a long time coming, but now people have something in their hands that allows them to go to the banks and say, 'This is what we have and now you can think about lending us the money that we need to go forward.' That happened after the granting of the environmental authority by the Department of Environment and Heritage and Protection and following careful consideration by the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines for the granting of the mining lease. About 140 conditions will ensure the protection of local environment values, landholders, the interests of traditional owners and the Great Barrier Reef.

The minister should be commended for the manner in which he has handled the granting of this mining lease and for ignoring the irresponsible calls from those opposite to fast-track the approval process. The recklessness of such a claim is difficult to comprehend. This government was not going to jeopardise the approval of the mine by taking shortcuts. In fact, the LNP members in Central Queensland—the federal member for Dawson, Mr George Christensen; the federal member for Capricornia, Ms Michelle Landry; and the member for Whitsunday, Jason Costigan—are not doing the right thing by the people in that part of the state. They are trying their hardest to be all things to all people but are creating more false expectations across the community than is necessary at this time. There is no need to create false expectations. When you go out into the community—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr PEARCE: Keep talking. Here we go: old jabber mouth over there. We see classy pictures on social media. We see comments that are inaccurate and tell potential small business investors that the mine will be kicking on soon. Those who are struggling to survive are waiting in hope that the mine will start up. We see inaccurate statements and a muddying of the waters. This is a blatant attempt at political point scoring. It is not the right way to go about it. You have to start thinking about those people out there who are really struggling.

Mr Costigan interjected.

Mr PEARCE: You are putting up false hopes. You talk about being frozen at the wheel. I think you are standing in stuff that is pretty deep and you are going to have trouble moving on.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Mirani, can I bring you back to topic, please.

Mr PEARCE: There remain a number of conditions that have to be dealt with. They will be progressively dealt with. Funding of the project is one of the things that we have to wait on in order to be certain. Before anybody takes a real interest in a small business they have to know that the mine is actually going to happen. They have to know the rail line is going to go in.

You people said that the Queensland taxpayers will pay for it. No way should the Queensland taxpayers be paying for this. It is the company that has to prove what it can do.

An opposition member interjected.

Mr PEARCE: You have opened your mouth again, and what has fallen in? It is probably the stuff you are standing in. The Carmichael mine will deliver over 5,000 jobs during construction.


Mr SPEAKER: Member for Mirani, I would urge you not to use the word 'you'. I would urge members of the opposition not to provoke the member for Mirani.

Mr PEARCE: I accept your comments. It is really sad that they keep picking on me all the time.

Mr SPEAKER: Can you come back to the topic, please.

Mr PEARCE: If I did not have you up there, Mr Speaker, I do not know how I would get on. I think I would be in a lot of trouble.

Let us not underestimate the economic contribution that the resources sector provides to the state of Queensland. The Queensland Resources Council estimates that the resources sector in Queensland contributed over \$64 billion last financial year. If we get this mine going, if we get Adani operating, if we get jobs on the port, if we get jobs at the mine, the economy of Central Queensland and Queensland as a whole will benefit and we can move forward.

 **Mr CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (6.22 pm): This Butler character who represents those opposite at the federal level on the issue of climate change is a sceptic. He is sceptical about the contribution of the coal sector to Queensland and Australia's economic future. This afternoon I went about an exercise of trying to locate a few facts about this issue. Mr Butler's vision for the future of us all huddled around the solar panel weaving baskets just does not ring true for me in relation to the future of Central and Northern Queensland.

I have a document from the Australian government's Bureau of Resource and Energy Economics. This is a 2014 document. It says in part—

Black coal, which includes both thermal and metallurgical coal, is projected to remain Australia's dominant energy export, increasing by around 54 per cent from 2014-15 to 2049-50. The projected annual growth rate of 1.2 per cent is built on expectations that global demand for coal will continue to increase in the period to 2049-50 as a result of increased demand for electricity and steel-making raw materials, particularly in emerging market economies in Asia.

That is important for the wording of the member for Nanango's motion that she has moved tonight. The next document is from the Australian Department of Industry and Science. It in part says—

Energy markets are evolving with government policies and technological advancements supporting rapid growth in renewable energy capacity. What is often overlooked is that even in recent years the use of fossil fuels has grown by even more in aggregate terms than renewables. Many OECD countries have already delivered on commitments to reduce their use of coal and oil, but this has been more than offset by higher consumption in highly populated emerging economies such as China, India and South-East Asia.

Many emerging economies are still investing in coal-fired electricity generation to ensure reliable, low-cost electricity access to support their industrial expansion and growing populations. While the focus of energy and coal market analysis in the past decade has been on China, India is now emerging as a key consumer. India's thermal coal imports have increased from almost zero in the 1990s to having it overtake Japan as the world's second largest importer in 2013.

The next document is from the International Energy Agency. I am willing to concede that this report is more pessimistic about the future global demand for coal. It does say in part, relevant to the motion moved by the member for Nanango—

India is the only major economy with strong coal growth. The Indian government has ambitious plans to provide full electricity access to the 240 million people still without it and to expand the manufacturing sector, where coal is the lowest-cost base load option. While India has an ambiguous and accelerating renewable investment programme, the scale of the electricity need is such that new coal investments and further growth in coal consumption are inevitable. Key ASEAN countries are in a very similar position: energy access and poverty reduction ambitions drive coal investments in Indonesia, Vietnam and the Philippines.

Last but not least, I have a domestic document from Queensland, which says—


Coal provides around 30% of global primary energy needs, generates over 40% of the world's electricity and is used in the production of 70% of the world's steel. Presently, there are 63 countries worldwide actively constructing or expanding coal-fired power generation capacity.

Demand for Queensland coal remains strong, with exports reaching a record new high of approximately 216.7 million tonnes (Mt), a 3.9% increase on 2013-14, valued at an estimated \$23.5 billion for 2014-15 ...

...

There is high demand for Queensland's coking and thermal coals, which are low in ash and sulphur. Queensland's production and exports are expected to rise over the medium to long term based on significant local and foreign investment in new coal mining projects proposed for the Galilee and Surat basins.

These are the facts. My presentation has not been as passionate as the member for Whitsunday's contribution earlier, but it does put to bed completely the ridiculous statement by Mr Butler, the representative of the members opposite at a federal level. They are completely out of touch with the future of global coal demand and supply. Queensland has a very important role to play in that. Today the Minister for Energy led the way by investing \$31 million in Callide B, a coal-fired power station in Queensland.

 **Hon. AJ LYNHAM** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (6.27 pm): I rise to speak in support of the motion. The comments of the federal environment, climate change and water spokesperson are not an attack on the coal industry. What he says, in his view, is that he does not see new mines opening in the foreseeable future. That is a

conclusion many might reach when we consider the challenging circumstances the coal industry currently faces. I am not concerned about my colleague's conclusion. It seems to escape those opposite that we approved the mine. I approved this mine, not them.

Mr Cripps interjected.

Dr LYNHAM: I take the interjection from the member for Hinchinbrook. In relation to the member for Whitsunday's contribution, next time please turn the microphone on—it was just a little difficult to hear him! He said we took too long. With their reckless approval pattern over there, we would spend years in court. What we did was carefully consider all of the evidence before us before we made those approvals.

The member for Nanango said that for them it was all systems go. When they were in government, there was nothing sorted on the port and there was no agreement on native title in the adjacent area of infrastructure for the mining development. In fact, I recall that they were talking about extinguishment of native title over there. Over here we were talking about an agreement, an ILUA, which was signed in Maryborough on 16 April. That is vastly different. You can see the difference in approvals. On our side we gave careful consideration to the evidence and the approval process followed. We support Adani and we gave careful consideration to native title issues, resulting in an agreement, versus extinguishment of native title by those opposite. Also, we are protecting the Caley Valley Wetlands. They would have destroyed the Caley Valley Wetlands. And who knows where the dredge spoil would have ended up!

I agree with my colleague the member for Hinchinbrook that there will be a transitional increase in coal consumption in the future, but we are moving to a renewable energy future. There is no doubt about that. India and China are also moving towards a renewable energy future. I trust that the entire world will move towards a renewable energy future. In India, in fact, they are building ultra-critical reactors, and there is a 30 per cent reduction in carbon emissions when those thermal power stations utilise Australian and Queensland thermal coal.

The Palaszczuk government supports the sustainable development of our mineral and petroleum resources for the jobs and economic development they offer to our state. As I said, there is no doubt that renewable energy will be our future. However, as the climate change discussion paper released by my cabinet colleague this week notes, during the global transition from coal there will continue to be demand for coal for power generation and steel production. We must not forget that 75 per cent of the coal exported by Queensland by both value and volume is high-quality metallurgical coal.

We support sustainable mining development. We know that with the right hands at the tiller economic growth, jobs, environmental protection and climate change management can coexist, but it takes this side of the House to see that they can coexist. Queensland has a strong export coal industry that generates millions of dollars in royalties and that funds social infrastructure.

The LNP went to India; the ALP went to the Galilee Basin. They spoke; we acted. They whinged; we approved. Balance can be achieved. Jobs and environmental protection can and will be achieved hand in hand under a Palaszczuk Labor government.


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

Resolved in the affirmative under standing order 106.

Sitting suspended from 6.37 pm to 7.40 pm.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Coal Workers, Lung Disease

 **Hon. AJ LYNHAM** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (7.40 pm): I wish to advise the House that unfortunately another Queensland coal worker has been diagnosed with coal workers' pneumoconiosis. A 55-year-old underground miner from Central Queensland has been confirmed as having this disease. The miner has worked underground for 28 years, mainly in Queensland. The worker's condition was diagnosed after an X-ray offered by his employer to all employees late last year when cases began emerging. This takes the number of confirmed cases to seven. This underlines the importance of the five-point action plan I announced in January to help identify and prevent coal workers' pneumoconiosis.


It is critical that government, industry and unions continue our work together to tackle the re-emergence of this disease. I continue to expect full, frank and considered advice from the Coal Mining Safety and Health Advisory Committee of union, employer and departmental representatives. I commit here again in this House to take whatever action is required to protect the health and safety of our coalminers, and I would urge any coalminer with health concerns to see their GP.

HOSPITAL AND HEALTH BOARDS (SAFE NURSE-TO-PATIENT AND MIDWIFE-TO-PATIENT RATIOS) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading


Resumed from p. 1859, on motion of Mr Dick—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Ms BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (7.42 pm), continuing: I have heard the arguments from those opposite about not being concerned that ratios are needed; that good faith, goodwill and good governance should get nurses and midwives far enough, and not for a single second do I agree. Over the last decade I have sat for years in negotiations with private providers where nurses did not get good quality, safe working practices that they deserved because, as long as you do not have a commitment to legislated mandated ratios and workload provisions, good faith, goodwill and good governance frankly do not amount to much during a nurse's or midwife's shift.

Being a patient gives you another perspective. Being sick, incapacitated or confined to a hospital bed leaves you with an immense sense of vulnerability. This is only surpassed when you push a buzzer and what seems like an eternity passes by. These reforms are good not only for nurses but also for patients. Fewer demands on nurses and midwives will enable improved quality of care for Queenslanders which is what they deserve in their time of injury and illness.

Lastly, as a legislator I find myself in a privileged position to be not only an advocate for this change but also able to deliver on it for safer standards, for better workplaces for nurses and midwives and, in turn, better care for patients. I am in the privileged position to be able to finally legislate for nurse-to-patient ratios in acute wards in public hospitals. One of the defining moments crystallising my decision to run as a candidate for the Queensland Labor Party came about sitting in a hospital meeting room as the Newman government cuts drove down into the public health system. This is true Labor policy in its finest traditions. Our public health system is focused on patient safety. Quality care is driven by professional commitment and not funding targets. Queenslanders deserve nothing less. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (7.44 pm): I rise tonight to make a contribution to the bill before the House. On 22 April this year I attended a memorial vigil with the minister at Anzac Square for nurses who had acted in various conflict areas in Australia's history. We both heard some very moving speeches about what they had done and what they had gone through.

On Anzac Day I met a nurse in Caloundra who had nursed in the Second World War, in Palestine and Borneo, and she related to me some of the tales that she had gone through saying to me she could recall the faces of the young men she had treated all those years ago. No-one in this chamber for any second doubts the nature of the nursing or the good they do—not just in theatres of war but also throughout the state and this country. We heard a lot of speeches tonight based upon the passion that nurses bring to care, and they are right: they do. They bring a great deal of passion, comfort, security and love to patients and patients' families as they provide treatment and care to so many.

That comment having been made, passion is fine but making clinical decisions based upon a passionate response is not the way clinical outcomes should be determined. Clinical outcomes should be determined upon the evidence that substantiates changes being made and, more importantly, what those changes are. That is the question tonight. The government has moved to mandate a minimum requirement of ratio one to four, one to four and one to seven. What the government has not been able to achieve since the bill was introduced into the House in December last year is how that ratio was fixed. What is the clinical evidence that substantiates in Queensland and acute hospitals—26 acute hospital wards, both surgical and medical across the state—why that ratio is required?

If we consider other jurisdictions, particularly in America, it is quite telling. A number of jurisdictions have put in place a nurse-patient ratio principle. In December 2015 the American Nurses Association gave a very quick overview of the nurse-patient ratio system in the States. Fourteen states

address the issue of nurse staffing in hospitals. Seven states require staffing committees to put in place plans and staffing policy. They go to the hospital and the nurses and they say to the nurses, 'We need you as a staffing committee to outline to us what you are going to do to treat patients with the relevant ratio.' They go to the individuals who are going to provide the service. California is the only state that has mandated a minimum requirement in regard to nurse-patient ratios in America. Minnesota has a chief nursing officer to develop a core staffing plan—again going to the individual nurses on the ward on the floor of the hospital to come up with what they require in those circumstances. Five states in America require a form of disclosure and public reporting. Only one state in America has anything close to what we are being asked to discuss and put in place here tonight. All other states either have a committee comprised of nurses that work in the hospitals to come up with what that ratio should be and a number require that to be reported on a regular basis.

In this state we have a ratio, and that ratio is worked out on a day-by-day basis on the business planning framework, or the BPF. That framework works on the principle that individual hospitals and individual nurses, doctors, CEOs, NUMs and the like come together and formulate, based upon a historical basis and the basis of what they know or suspect will occur during the day, what the nurse-patient ratio should be for that particular hospital. Again, it gets back to the nurse on the floor giving the advice to other nurses and the hierarchy in the hospitals as to what the nurse-patient ratio should be. That is how it should be. It should not be imposed by a government or by a union. It should be taken up by the nurses themselves and the people who know on a daily basis what takes place in Atherton, Cairns, Townsville and the like.

I asked a series of questions of the health minister to try to dig out what information the government has in relation to the hospitals this is to apply to if the bill is passed. In December 2015, I asked for information about the average length of patient stay, the mortality rates post operation, the infection rates and the readmission rates within 28 days for the surgical and medical wards for the 26 hospitals detailed in the regulation tabled on the same day. I thought that information would be critical to understand the basis to move forward from to establish the ratios we have been asked to put in place. I was advised that it would be extensive and onerous for Queensland Health staff to gather together that information. That might be right, but my point is that the information should have been readily available in some format to put in place the train of thought and processes to come up with the ratios of one to four, one to four and one to seven. In my opinion, and I ask the House to agree with me, it is not onerous to find out that information in the context that the government is asking us to put in place a ratio tonight.

I also asked the minister a question in February this year in regard to information on the 10 National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards for the 26 hospitals referred to in the regulation. Those standards cover medication safety, clinical handover, blood and blood products, preventing and managing pressure injuries, and recognising and responding to deterioration in the acute health care of a patient. Again, the government could not provide that information. Yes, it is onerous but I would have thought it would have been pivotal to know those two cohorts of information when we are putting in place a ratio. If we do not know the basis from which we are beginning, how do we calculate the ratio that the government is asking us to agree to? No-one in this House denies that the issue of a ratio is important, but my point is that the government has to substantiate why the ratio exists in the current format. If the evidence does not exist, the government cannot ask us to support the principles and proposals they are asking us to support.

The committee report referred to the briefings and public hearings. In the public hearing on 17 February 2016, Dr Fleming, the acting chief nursing and midwifery officer, was asked what assumptions were used in the modelling that was undertaken. She said—


The assumptions were based on the wards that were identified as acute medical and surgical wards. They were based on the legislation that identifies which wards would be included; they were based on occupancy of the acute hospital surgery and medical wards.

Occupancy is not a criteria. It is the acuity of a patient. It is the training of the nurse and the understanding of the issues. It is the question of the technology. It is a question of patient flow. It is not based upon occupancy. Occupancy is the last thing you would look at when you are formulating a nurse-patient ratio. The acuity of a patient is most important.

On the wards in these hospitals are nurse unit managers, educators, clinical nurse specialists and shift coordinators—all of them are RNs. There is one further problem: there is no legal definition of a surgical or medical ward. There is no legal requirement of how many people will fit into a surgical or

medical ward. There is in fact no legal requirement that a ward be termed a surgical or medical ward. A ward's name can be changed, and that change could theoretically upset entirely the principle behind this nurse-patient ratio. Patients could be moved from a surgical ward into a ward that is given a new name to avoid the nurse-patient ratio. This bill does not deal with the matters. It is a sham bill and we cannot—

(Time expired)

 **Ms FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (7.54 pm): I rise to support wholeheartedly the Hospital and Health Boards (Safe Nurse-to-Patient and Midwife-to-Patient Ratios) Amendment Bill 2015. I would like to wish all the nurses in the gallery a happy International Nurses Day. I grew up with nurses. My nanna was a nurse, as was my mum, my Aunty Joan, my Aunty Marie, my cousin Jill, my cousin Janet and my sister Su. By the time I was five, I felt like I was an honorary nurse. I grew up thinking that was the universe because that is all we ever talked about in my house. As I grew older, I realised that everybody loves nurses. Who does not love a nurse? They are hardworking, they are caring and they are here to look after us.

However, when Campbell Newman was elected, I realised that in fact there were a number of people, including the new opposition leader, who actually did not like nurses because Campbell Newman sacked 4,000 nurses. As I was getting more and more into the election campaign, I realised that in fact terrible things were happening to nursing staff. I was doorknocking and I was hearing about nurses having to work double shifts and sometimes triple shifts and they were afraid to say anything about it in case they lost their jobs. I was talking to nurses who were worried that they could not do the very thing they were employed to do—that is, look after their patients—because there just were not enough nurses.


I was talking to nurses who felt so disrespected by the way they were treated; they were tired, and they were suffering and bowed down. I remember being at an event on Anzac Day two years ago when I found myself suddenly surrounded by nurses who were talking to me about how they had never felt so badly treated in their entire lives. It made me very, very sad and it made me feel passionate about being a part of this government that would bring back care and respect for nurses. Who fights with nurses? Who does this to nurses? Here we are today on what is one of the proudest days for a lot of us and we are fulfilling the election commitment that was made by Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk.

In my health region of metro south, there are 6,457 nurses. For them and for the other nurses across this state, this bill will now deliver three very important things. It will deliver minimum nurse-to-patient ratios as a proven tool for delivering safer workloads for nurses and improving patient outcomes. It will deliver nurse navigators, and I know that my region will get five nurse navigators to help patients with complex needs navigate their way through the system. It will employ 350 new nursing graduates in my region to cater for the ageing workforce in the nursing system.

This is a wonderful thing for nurses. It recognises that there is an evidence base to make sure there is patient safety and to make sure they can look after people in the best way. We know that this results in a shorter length of stay and lower rates of shock and cardiac arrest. That is why I cannot understand what the opposition is talking about when they talk about their worry about costs because clearly there are savings to the health system. Even if they did not believe in anything else, those savings are really quite significant.

To those nurses everywhere who were sacked, or whose friends were sacked, or who have had to work in the most difficult circumstances, or who suffered an indignity as a result of the Campbell Newman government, I say that this bill is for you and you can finally be shown the respect you deserve. I would like to thank the Queensland Nurses' Union, which is the most wonderful advocate for their members. I thank the committee chair and its members, particularly Mr Joe Kelly, the member for Greenslopes, who is a wonderful advocate for his profession. I thank the minister, who I know is so passionate. I had a group of nurses talking to me the other day about how he has reintroduced positivity. They feel like there is a vision for their future. I also thank the Premier, who is also so obviously passionate about this.

I do have to correct some figures that I used in my speech. It was 4,000 Health employees who were, in fact, sacked and 1,800 nurses and midwives. It is a wonderful day. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (7.59 pm): I rise to proudly support the Hospital and Health Boards (Safe Nurse-to-Patient and Midwife-to-Patient Ratios) Amendment Bill 2015. This bill amends the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011 and enables the government to legislate a nurse-to-patient ratio. The nurse-to-patient ratio is the minimum number of nurses or midwives working on a particular ward, unit or department in relation to the number of patients they care for.

What is a nurse? By definition, a nurse is a person who is trained to give care to people who are sick and injured. Nurses are our No. 1 most trusted profession. I am proud to say that the nurse is the most trusted profession. Politicians are rated 49th out of 50 on the list of trusted professions. However, I believe that after this legislation passes our credibility will have climbed.

I grew up with a mighty woman—a nurse—my mum. My mum has said that being a nurse is about finding the need within a community and trying to fix it. My mum started her career as a Red Cross nurse. In 1959 she moved to Brisbane hospital, now the Royal Brisbane & Women's Hospital, to do her training. She worked and studied hard. There were never enough staff to meet the needs of patients. My mother worked in wards of up to 50 patients with a ratio of up to eight patients to one nurse. She said supplies were thin and there was never enough staff to tend the needs of every patient.

I can recall growing up that my mum had one of those nurse's caps and then she got a stripe. We were so proud of our mum when she got the stripe. Then she got two and then three stripes. Then she received one of the sister's caps and got a red stripe on that. We were so proud of our mum. They asked her to be a matron, but my mum always wanted to just be the nurse; she did not want to be the boss, so she stayed as a nurse and she delivered hundreds of babies in her time.


Under this legislation nurses will have a more manageable, safer workload with ratios of four nurses to one patient during the day and seven patients to one nurse during the night. The bill will also see an additional 250 nurses employed across Queensland. My daughter was an enrolled nurse at the Charters Towers Eventide aged-care facility and then she moved on to the Townsville general hospital, where she has been working as an RN in surgical ward 3. All the nurses and management fight over her because she is so popular. I had to add that.

Nurses and midwives play a crucial role in delivering safe, high-quality care. In contributing to the debate tonight hopefully we can provide a safer environment for those in need and for nurses like my daughter. Establishing and maintaining a safe workload has been a long-term priority for nurses and midwives. There are currently no laws governing how many patients can be safely allocated to a single nurse. The absence of such laws can result in nurses and midwives having an unsafe workload and a reduction in patient safety. The Queensland Nurses' Union have been lobbying for a safer ratio for our nurses and midwives, and tonight I stand with them. I admire their dedication, their determination, their passion and their will to see a better nurse-to-patient ratio. This is a really big win for them. I know what it is like to fight hard for years to get something. This is a good night for the Queensland Nurses' Union and a good night for all of us here.

An incident having occurred in the public gallery—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Elmes): Order! Can I caution people in the public gallery that applause is not tolerated and you will remain silent.

Mr KNUTH: I would like to thank all the nurses and midwives for their hard work including my mum and my daughter. I wish them all a happy International Nurses Day.

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade and Investment) (8.04 pm): I rise to make a contribution in support of the second reading debate on the Hospital and Health Boards (Safe Nurse-to-Patient and Midwife-to-Patient Ratios) Amendment Bill 2015. From the outset I commend the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services for bringing this important bill into the parliament and for essentially giving life to an election commitment that the Queensland Labor Party made to nurses right throughout this state at the last election to introduce safe nurse-to-patient ratios. The nurse-to-patient ratios and the midwife-to-patient ratios not only drive better public health outcomes for all Queenslanders; they actually drive better workplace health and safety outcomes for nurses themselves.


Today on International Nurses Day I sent a text message to my favourite nurse in the whole wide world, my sister. She has been a nurse for very many years and does an extraordinary job in the intensive care unit in one of our major public hospitals. My sister was called to the profession of nursing after witnessing the very sad decline of my father's health over very many years. It was the exceptional care that my father received during this time, particularly from nursing staff, which called her to this

profession. She has had, and will continue to have, a very fulfilling career in nursing. It is a profession that she loves. She loves giving back to people even though on occasion it is incredibly hard, gruelling and sometimes abusive, but she loves what she does and she loves taking care of people.

Her story is only one of literally thousands of stories throughout Queensland of men and women who are called to this profession to ensure that those people in their time of need are looked after. As someone who has perhaps consumed my fair share—or maybe more than my fair share—of health services throughout the tertiary health system, I know from a personal perspective how critical it is that we have happy, healthy nurses in our hospitals, ensuring that patients are happy and healthy and get out the door as confidently and as quickly as possible, and this legislation seeks to do exactly that.

The thing that I am most proud about in terms of this legislation is that this is a rock-solid example of where the Australian Labor Party together with a trade union and front-line workers have come together to guarantee a significant reform in terms of health policy in this state. When those opposite vilify the trade union movement, I want them to remember tonight the thousands of nurses throughout Queensland and their industrial organisation, the Queensland Nurses' Union, who fought so hard to make sure that this policy was adopted by the Australian Labor Party at the last election and that we followed through in bringing it to the parliament tonight. I want those opposite to remember that the trade union movement is full of hundreds of thousands of Australians who every day get out of bed, put on their uniform and go and do their job so that Australians and Queenslanders get through their day, whether they are injured, sick, learning or in the workplace constructing the offices, the homes and the places in which we live, work and play. I want those opposite to remember that the trade union movement has played a critical role in driving industrial policy, social policy and here tonight incredibly important health policy for Queenslanders. I want them to remember that.

I conclude by acknowledging Joe Kelly, the member for Greenslopes, who is a member of the Queensland Nurses' Union and a fierce advocate for nurses in Queensland. I also acknowledge the Queensland Nurses' Union, who are headquartered in my electorate. My electorate has quite a number of health facilities with large tertiary hospitals where they employ a lot of nurses and a lot of nurses work locally, and I know how important this legislation is to them. In terms of the Queensland Nurses' Union, they are a union that is powered by the force of women on a mission to do good, and I think you see the evidence of that here tonight. Because of their campaigning, because of their fierce intellect and because they are prepared to think about everybody and not just themselves, they have brought about significant social health policy reform here in Queensland and they are to be commended. I do want to again commend the health minister and also the Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk, who in opposition was quite a fierce advocate of this policy. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr PEGG** (Stretton—ALP) (8.11 pm): I commence by thanking all nurses in our community on International Nurses Day. The member for Greenslopes did a fantastic job of conveying the challenges that nurses face in a typical working day. I know that there are many nurses in the gallery this evening, and I thank them all. Earlier today the senior school captains and acting principal from Stretton State College visited parliament, and it was very heartening to know that one of the school captains, Mikaela, intends to study nursing next year. It is a very worthy vocation and it is fantastic to see that one of our talented young people in the electorate of Stretton is aspiring to become a nurse in the future.

The Palaszczuk government made an election commitment to legislate for safe ratios and workload provisions to ensure better patient safety and better quality health care, and I am very, very pleased to speak in favour of the Hospital and Health Boards (Safe Nurse-to-Patient and Midwife-to-Patient Ratios) Amendment Bill 2015, which will ensure that the delivery of health services in Queensland is safe and efficient. This bill should be seen as part of Labor's longstanding commitment over the last decade to deliver better health services to Queensland. I am very proud to be part of a government that is following the Labor tradition of improving health services to enhance the conditions of care for those most in need. I also want to congratulate the Minister for Health for his all hard work in this particular area.

The objective of the bill is to establish a legislative framework to ensure safe nursing and midwifery staff numbers and improved patient outcomes through mandating nurse-to-patient and midwife-to-patient ratios and workload provisions in public sector health service facilities. There is clear research evidence which indicates that the number of nurses and midwives on a shift plays a pivotal role in patient safety and the quality of health services being delivered. Inadequate nursing numbers result in general patient care procedures being neglected. A higher per cent of nurses or midwives to patients reduces these adverse outcomes for patients by lowering patient mortality, preventing adverse events, decreasing the length of stay in hospital and reducing work related injuries, absenteeism and turnover. One registered nurse can decrease patient mortality by 10 per cent.

We want to implement this legislation for mandated nurse-to-patient and midwife-to-patient ratios and workload provisions in the state's public health facilities. When implemented it will enhance safe patient outcomes and ensure that resourcing is matched to patients' needs. The ratios will set the minimum nursing and midwifery numbers required to appropriately and safely manage service requirements. Their legislated use within the public sector will further support existing nursing and midwifery workload management frameworks and processes such as the Queensland Health *Business planning framework: nursing resources* along with professional college standards and good clinical judgement.

The positive effects of this legislation are twofold: firstly, it ensures a safer environment for patients; and secondly, it provides an environment which enables the most effective service delivery by nurses and midwives to their patients. The benefit to patients of minimum ratios are the improvement of patient safety and the quality of care. In turn this reduces readmission rates and post-operative mortality rates. Minimum ratios also provide safer workloads for the front-line public sector nursing and midwifery workforce which improves recruitment and retention, staff satisfaction and greater workforce sustainability.

There was a great example about California in the committee report, and it has also been mentioned by a number of speakers. I note that the member for Caloundra dismissed California. He said that it was only one state. Of course he is forgetting that California is the 'Golden State'. It is the most populated state in the United States, and of course the state of California had a very infamous governor: Arnold Schwarzenegger. It is an interesting case study for those opposite, who have so far spoken against this bill, to have a look at what happened when the Terminator took on the nurses of California.

I want to enlighten those opposite about what happened. The Terminator came in as governor and started a year-long legal battle with the state's Nurses' Union over a state law that required more nurses in hospitals. Governor Schwarzenegger opposed the law, which mandated that California's hospitals raise hospital staffing ratios. He in fact went so far as to issue an emergency declaration which blocked the new ratios. Of course the nurses fought back and the people of California fought back. There was a court fight. The California Nurses Association staged more than 100 public demonstrations against the Terminator. What did the Terminator do? Of course he initially dismissed the nurses' protests against his emergency declaration as the work of 'special interests', but he was later forced to dodge the placard-carrying nurses at public appearances and the Terminator ended up having to take rear entrances to buildings. Rose Ann DeMoro, executive director of the nurses association, said—

Everyone said you can't fight with this guy.

...

If you look at how the campaign escalated, what started as a campaign to reduce nurses in hospitals turned into a statewide war. What we have here is a situation where the Terminator had beaten the predator. He had been Mr Freeze; he had been Conan the Barbarian. Then he fought against the nurses, and the nurses and the people of California won.


That is a very important lesson for those opposite, because there has been a lot of 'hasta la vista' being whispered and even said out loud by those opposite recently. Last week those opposite said 'hasta la vista' to the member for Surfers Paradise, and that is why he is sitting over there. Then the member for Clayfield came in and he said 'hasta la vista' to the member for Mermaid Beach, and that is why the member for Mermaid Beach is sitting over there. There is a lot of 'hasta la vista' being said amongst those opposite but I am sure the member for Surfers Paradise, at least in his quieter moments, says, 'I'll be back.' Many of those opposite no doubt have the view that he will not be back. He might say, 'I'll be back', but he will not be saying, 'I'm back.'

I say to those opposite that if you continue to oppose sensible evidence based reforms that support our hardworking nurses and benefit the health and safety of the people of Queensland, it will be 'hasta la vista' to you as well. Take the lesson from California and take the lesson from the Terminator—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Elmes): Order! The member for Stretton will resume his seat. You will direct your comments through the chair and you will stay somewhat close to the business of the bill.

Mr PEGG: As I was saying, this bill is a very positive step in our healthcare system towards ensuring health and safety for both patients and the nurses and midwives that provide healthcare services. For patients it will deliver the best possible outcomes and ensure their safety, and for nurses and midwives a safe staffing level will empower them to deliver efficient healthcare services. This is an

election commitment that was made by the Palaszczuk government. We are committed to seeing it through so that public hospitals can be provided with safe and quality healthcare delivery. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Hon. G GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (8.19 pm): Tonight it is with great pride that I rise to speak in support of this bill. There are few moments in a political career where you can honestly feel very proud that you are making a real difference on an historic day. I cannot think of a better time than International Nurses Day to support this bill in relation to nurse-to-patient and midwife-to-patient ratios because this bill acknowledges the crucial role that nurses and midwives play in delivering safe, high-quality health care for all Queenslanders.

There are currently no laws in Queensland governing how many patients can safely be allocated to a single nurse or a midwife. There is irrefutable evidence that staffing numbers, skill mix and the work environment directly affect the safety and quality performance of health services. There is no available evidence to suggest ratios do not improve patient safety. Subject to the passage of this bill, Queensland will join Victoria as the only other state in this great nation to take the important step of legislating nurse-to-patient and midwife-to-patient ratios. This bill came about through significant efforts of the Queensland Nurses' Union and its members, and I will acknowledge them later in my speech because, without the efforts of nurses combining together and coming together in unison, this would not become law in this state. We are delivering on an election commitment of the Palaszczuk government to legislate for nurse-to-patient and midwife-to-patient ratios in its first term of government and we are delivering on that promise.

I believe that nurses are some of the hardest working women and men that I have met. Before I was re-elected last year I had the proud honour of working for the Queensland Nurses' Union and I take this opportunity to say that they have been some of the best members that I have had the privilege to represent and work for. The staff and my colleagues and the council of the Nurses' Union are some of the hardest working, best unionists that I have met not only in Queensland but also in Australia and that is why it is often very hard to sit in this House and hear the union-bashing diatribe that comes from those opposite all too often.

Nurses work hard every day. They care for patients every day, but this legislation is about giving something back to the nurses. It is about recognising that, in order for them to do their job to the standard that they want to do their job, the business planning framework has not delivered exactly what nurses have needed to make the job that they do better each and every day. The legislated minimum nurse-to-patient ratio and midwife-to-patient ratio will be used in conjunction with the BPF and will provide the robustness required by nurses and midwives to plan for, meet and evaluate the outcome of this service. Ultimately, the combination of the BPF and ratios will allow those staff at the coalface to adjust the number of patients allocated to a nurse or midwife above the stipulated ratio in accordance with variables such as patient activity and acuity and other relevant factors so that the safeguards are there in order to deliver the best outcome for the hardworking nurses in our public hospitals throughout this great state.

We started this journey together and it is a very proud moment for me to be able to be in this House representing those wonderful members who are in the gallery and to represent those working in the hospitals out there tonight who cannot be here and speak in favour of this bill, and it will be a tremendous honour when the vote comes to vote in favour of ratios for every one of our hardworking nurses. I also like the fact that we will have an ability to evaluate this. We are going to have an independent evaluation process in relation to it and we have an exceptional team that will do that.


Let me make a couple of acknowledgements. There are few women in this world that you can respect any more than the Secretary of the Queensland Nurses' Union, Beth Mohle. She is an outstanding unionist, an absolutely remarkable nurse and an absolutely remarkable woman who knows her trade better than most people that I know, and I congratulate her on behalf of this parliament for the fantastic job that she does each and every day. She is ably aided by Sandra Eales, the assistant secretary. There are members of the council in the gallery, QNU staff and member nurses and midwives and I salute you all. Today I was asked questions about bargaining and our agreement and all of that, and I got up and said just how proud I was to have worked at the QNU. It was a moment in my life that I will never forget, just like the historic moment in this House tonight that I will also never forget.

This is long overdue. This is a small thing that we can do to say thank you to each and every one of you and those who are working hard in the hospitals right now. I do not have any relatives or sisters or aunts or uncles or mothers or fathers who are nurses. We just do not have them in our family for

some reason, but what I do know is that if any one of us in this House gets sick and if any one of us needs help and if anyone needs to be nursed back to care we can rely on every single person in that gallery and every person who is out there working hard tonight.

I also congratulate the Premier, because it was her foresight and it was her understanding of this issue that brought this to fruition. She understood perfectly what nurses and midwives needed, and it was her brilliant and outstanding understanding of the issues that brought this to where it is. My good friend the Minister for Health has brought this into the House, and I congratulate him as well. I know that it is also a proud moment for my colleague the member for Greenslopes—a very proud nurse who spoke so eloquently tonight.


It is, as I said, time to give back. This side will always support nurses and midwives. This side will not sack nurses and midwives. This side will make sure that we have adequate nurses in our hospitals and that we will acknowledge the hard work that they do every single day. It is time to give back. I say that good old union chant: what do we want? Ratios! When do we want them? Now! It is a proud moment for us to vote for it. Ratios save lives. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (8.27 pm): I will be very brief because I am eager to see this vote brought on so that this can be introduced into law as soon as possible, but there are some things I want to say. I am not going to try to articulate the arguments in support of this bill or what it seeks to achieve. I believe that has been done very well by my parliamentary colleagues and of course the Minister for Health. However, I have heard some arguments from the other side that the rationale has not been made out. It is not that complicated: if you reduce the ratio of patients to nurses then you are going to get greater care. It is that simple, and that is what this bill seeks to do.

I wanted to rise and speak briefly tonight because in 2014, when I put myself forward in the Redcliffe by-election, I met many wonderful nurses. I was referred to by the other side as a liar when I said that nurses had been sacked. I was told that they all went voluntarily, that they all left QHealth because they wanted to and they went happily. In fact, those were the words of the LNP candidate at the time who said she was a nurse. She stood there and said that people voluntarily left, but time and time again I met those nurses and I heard their stories and how sad they were about losing their jobs. They did not go because they wanted to. They had fears of finding of another job and had concerns, especially those who were mums and single mums, about whether they were going to have to move and potentially move out of Queensland to find alternative work.

Tonight I stand here on their behalf to say thank you. I promised that if I were elected I would come into this House and fight for them and, under the leadership of Anastacia Palaszczuk in opposition, I did. We were a small group, but we were a loud group. We took up the fight. Then we had the great pleasure to form government and we continued that fight. I thank the Premier for her leadership. I thank the Minister for Health for his leadership. I also acknowledge the member for Greenslopes and his passion.

I also want to mention Beth Mohle from the Queensland Nurses' Union. I thank Beth for her strong advocacy for her members and the great work that she has done as well as her organisers, her staff, her delegates, her members and all of those nurses and midwives, not just today because it is International Nurses Day but for every day that they get up and go to work. They put themselves out there. They are compassionate. Being a nurse is about safety, it is about the care of others—ourselves and our loved ones. Today is an opportunity to say thank you and to say that the Palaszczuk government truly values what nurses do. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (8.30 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Hospital and Health Boards (Safe Nurse-to-Patient and Midwife-to-Patient Ratios) Amendment Bill 2015. This bill is a major election commitment of my government. At the outset, it gives me great pride to stand in this House tonight to implement an election commitment that we took to the people of Queensland and which the people of Queensland supported.

Before I go to the heart of what this bill is about, I want to thank a few people. I think it is important that we look at where we have come from, to learn the history to know where we have progressed from. First of all, I want to thank Beth Mohle for all of her hard work. Beth was a tireless champion of this cause. I worked with her over the three years that we were in opposition. At the outset, let me say that they were a tough three years. Those members who shared the opposition benches with me and who are now part of this government listened to the people of Queensland. We stood up for the people of Queensland. We said that there was a better way and we are delivering on that better way.

I spoke to a sole nurse out at Morven, who told me that taking away that crucial service in a small regional community would have a huge impact on the families who lived in that small town, that they would have to pack up and move because that nurse was not in that town. Tonight, I listened to Moira's story, who told us that she had been a nurse for 30 years and was sacked by the former Newman-Nicholls government. Now, she is back in employment—and aren't we lucky to have her back! Aren't we lucky!

I remember meeting with nurses in Townsville who could not understand why they lost their jobs. They were living in a community that they loved. They were raising a family they loved. Then one day out of nowhere, when everyone was told before the election of the Newman government that they had nothing to fear, 14,000 jobs were lost in this state—14,000 families, 14,000 people. Let us not forget that. These are people we are talking about: 1,800 nurses and midwives across the state. That had an absolutely devastating impact not only on them personally but also on their families and their communities. I heard these stories everywhere I went, whether it was to the Gold Coast, Cairns, Townsville, Rockhampton or out west to Mount Isa. We travelled the length and breadth of the state listening to what people had to say—'How can you axe nurses?' 'How can you cut nurses out of our hospital system?' 'How can they possibly do it?' We worked with the nurses. We listened to them.

I want to pay tribute to Beth, Sally and all the other nurses. I pay tribute to the nurses, the midwives, our new nurse graduates and our trainees who are at the universities at the moment. I thank them for coming in tonight to show their support. It means a lot. This is the people's house. They are welcome here and I thank them very much for their presence here. It means a lot to every single member of the government.

I want to thank my staff, Angela MacDonagh and Greg Fowler, who worked very hard on this policy when we were in opposition. I want to thank Grace Grace, who was at the Nurses' Union and who worked with us. I also want to thank the member for Bundamba and all of my team in those opposition days who listened and put the evidence together.


I heard the member for Caloundra saying, 'There is no evidence.' This policy is evidence based. It is best practice and that is what we are implementing tonight. There is no better historic day on which to implement this legislation than International Nurses Day. I want to thank my health minister. Cameron has been driving the implementation of this policy. He has been working around the clock, because I said to him, 'This is our No. 1 priority in health'—to restore our front-line health services and to put in place nurse-to-patient ratios. Tonight, I want to pay tribute to all of the nurses and midwives in our state no matter where they work—in the public hospital system, in the private hospital system, in aged care, or visiting people who are living at home by themselves and who need support and care. I thank them very much for everything they do.

We know that there is nothing more important in this state than having a job. That is why we made a very firm commitment to implement 4,000 new nurse graduate positions. Why did we do that? Because I do not want young people or mature age people going through an educational institution and coming out at the end with no hope or no opportunity. I want them to have a job. I do not want them going to New South Wales or Victoria; I want them to have the opportunity to stay in Queensland and to give their professional care in Queensland. I am very proud that we are implementing this policy.

Recently, my grandmother had a stroke. It caught everyone off guard. We had celebrated her 91st birthday and three days later she had a stroke in the early hours of the morning. I remember going to the hospital and seeing the care and attention that she was given. My grandmother then went into rehabilitation and now she is in a nursing home. She lived in her own home until she was 91, all by herself. She was cooking, cleaning—doing everything. She was very active. The care that my grandmother received was outstanding. I cannot put into words the degree of care and attention she received. No-one else was more important in that hospital than my grandmother. But that is the way the nurses are with every patient. It does not matter where you come from, it does not matter what your background is, nursing is about putting people first. That is what a Labor government does. A Labor government supports our people throughout our state.

This is an historic day. Queensland becomes only the fourth jurisdiction to implement nurse-to-patient ratios in the world. Many people in this House will remember this moment for many years to come. In conclusion, once again, I thank everybody who has worked tirelessly on this bill. I also want to pay tribute to our public servants. A lot of time and effort has been spent in putting this bill together and doing the consultation. We on this side of the House value public servants.

I have made a commitment and I reiterate it tonight: my government will restore front-line services in this state. That is what the people of Queensland expect. It is a very humbling experience to be here. I thank the nurses and midwives very much for all of the work that they do right throughout our state. I will never forget their passion and commitment. I will not forget the tears that I shed with people who told me their personal stories or the stress that people went through when they lost their jobs. I was there with them. I walked with them. Today we restore their dignity and the dignity that puts patients front and centre. On behalf of the government, I thank nurses for everything that they do. God bless.

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (8.40 pm), in reply: It is my very pleasant duty and privilege to speak in reply to address some of the issues raised during the debate and to summarise the debate this afternoon and this evening. I thank all members for their contributions to the debate and particularly those members who have today shown their commitment to improving outcomes for nurses and patients by speaking in support of this important bill.

This House is privileged to have so many members who have worked as healthcare professionals or who are the partners or families of healthcare professionals. One of the themes that ran through the debate tonight was the number of people who have been touched by nursing, either because of a professional commitment they made or because of the human connection they have with a family member who has served in the profession of nursing. I put myself in that group and I acknowledge my mother, who worked for many years as a nurse and a midwife. I acknowledge all of the midwives in Queensland. One of the themes tonight was not just the human connection that nurses make every day and the work that they do but also the human connections we feel in our own families because of the connections with family members and friends who work in the great profession of nursing.

Nurses have been instrumental in advocating for this legislation. Central to that advocacy has been the Queensland Nurses' Union. I add my thanks and appreciation to the leadership and advocacy of the Queensland Nurses' Union: president Sally-Anne Jones; secretary Beth Mohle; and assistant secretary Sandra Eales. Since my appointment about 15 months ago it has been my privilege to work with them as the Minister for Health. This moment would not have arrived without their dedication to developing an appropriate legislative framework to implement nurse-to-patient ratios. I acknowledge their contribution. I acknowledge the members of the Australian Labor Party in this parliament who worked so hard in opposition, in particular the Premier. I acknowledge and thank her for her fortitude, her courage and her commitment during those hard years in opposition to bring this moment to pass. I join with the Premier too in acknowledging the member for Bundamba and her work during the period she served as the shadow minister for health.

As the largest clinical workforce in the health system and at the epicentre of hospital activity, nurses are uniquely placed to advise on where improvements can be made. Nursing is not just a profession; it is a vocation and, as we heard from the member for Greenslopes and others, a very human one. Patients are at the centre of everything that nurses do. Patient care is more than just providing nursing care to support treatment for a particular illness or injury; it is holistic and it involves caring for the whole patient. The complexity of care in our hospitals has grown dramatically over the past decade due to an increasing population, chronic diseases such as diabetes and obesity and more complex medical and surgical treatments. This has increased the intensity of nursing care required to support patients.

The member for Greenslopes, himself a nurse, reminded us that every time a nurse or midwife is stretched too far something is not done. Our nurses are concerned that their workloads do not give them enough time to provide all of their patients with the individual attention that they need. They are also concerned that patients are reluctant to ask questions or seek their help or reassurance when they see that nurses are busy. This increases the risk of adverse incidents if, in an attempt to lessen the load on nurses, well-meaning patients try to help themselves or do not immediately alert nurses to important issues such as if they are starting to feel unwell. Our nurses have told us of their concerns for the future sustainability of the nursing workforce if their workload issues are not addressed, and we have listened. The legislative framework proposed by this bill ensures patients will continue to receive compassionate, professional care in Queensland's public health system. Our nurses can be assured of more manageable workloads and increased job satisfaction.

I would like to turn now to some of the points made during the debate, particularly those made by members of the opposition. Professor Christine Duffield commented, regarding research evidence for ratios, 'There is no doubt that nurse-to-patient ratios improve patient outcomes. That is really a bit of a no-brainer.' Frankly, this debate should have been a no-brainer. Despite the summary of evidence

I provided of the studies conducted globally in this area, the opposition steadfastly maintains there is no evidence to justify the application of specific ratios. It has become obvious that the opposition has failed to understand the basics of this bill, particularly the relationship between the minimum ratios applied by the bill and the business planning framework, or the BPF, as applied through the proposed standard. As Dr John Wakefield, deputy director of the Clinical Excellence Division of the Department of Health explained to the committee during its inquiry, the ratios operate as a safety net. Skill mix and the appropriate balance of staff on a ward are determined by the diligent application of the standard. To describe this legislation as a one-size-fits-all approach, as the member for Surfers Paradise did, confirms that members opposite do not understand the bill. Working together, minimum ratios and the standard will ensure appropriate staffing levels that take into account the complexities of patient activity and acuity on different wards and in different hospital and health services.

A lot has been said today about research. All research studies have limitations. No study is perfect. However, when taken together the significant body of research in this area clearly demonstrates the benefit of having the right ratio of nurses to patients. The bill achieves this through the application of the standard and by ensuring a minimum staffing floor. The member for Moggill and other LNP members referred to Dr Aiken's work, suggesting her research project should have been conducted before the legislation was proposed. We do not need more research. As I have described, there are many studies demonstrating the benefits of having more nurses and having appropriate nurse-to-patient ratios. The aim of Dr Aiken's work is to gather comprehensive data on nurse staffing to evaluate the legislation in the Queensland context. As part of the evaluation, Dr Aiken will gather data before the legislation commences to develop a baseline. The baseline will create a picture of our starting point so that the impact of the legislation can be accurately assessed at the end of 2017. Evaluation, by definition, must occur after something has happened.

The member for Mudgeeraba claims that the department did not furnish the committee with documents used in the consultation regarding the legislation. I am advised that the director-general did, in fact, give a full written summary of the consultation. It is not feasible to capture every conversation, every email and every single ancillary document, nor is it fair on the committee secretariat to have to work through all of that material.

The member for Surfers Paradise indicated that the legislation would undermine the autonomy of hospital and health services. I welcome the member for Surfers Paradise to the portfolio and acknowledge that it is the Labor Party that has over successive years—in fact, decades—introduced autonomous health authorities and services in this state. The 1923 Hospitals Act passed by the Theodore Labor government and the 1936 Hospitals Act passed by the William Forgan Smith Labor government reaffirmed the independence of hospital boards. It was the government of the former National Party member for Surfers Paradise, Rob Borbidge, that removed autonomous health services when they were converted to administrative units in the Department of Health. It was the Bligh Labor government that brought back autonomous health services by the passage of the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011. It is the Labor Party that cultivates independent autonomous health services; it is the party of the member for Surfers Paradise that stops it.

As I foreshadowed in my second reading speech, I will be moving amendments during consideration in detail to make clear that only those nurses or midwives who directly provide patient care may be counted in ratios. The member for Surfers Paradise has also circulated amendments to the bill. The net effect of the amendments proposed by the member for Surfers Paradise is to preserve the status quo, that is, staffing arrangements on wards would continue to be determined by the business planning framework. Legislation is not required to achieve this. The BPF is already an industrially mandated instrument. The member for Surfers Paradise professes to support 'quality, individualised, safe nursing care'. He has moved amendments to this bill in the hope that somewhere someone will mistake these amendments as evidence that the LNP supports nurses and midwives. Those amendments simply do not.

The reality is that the LNP has moved amendments designed to block the important reforms contained in the bill and preserve the status quo. They are blocking the reforms because they fail to understand the relationship between minimum safe ratios and the requirement for health and hospital services to comply with the standard proposed in the bill. As I have already said, the application of the standard, not the ratios, will determine how hospital and health services calculate nursing and midwifery hours, decide skill mix and meet service demands on prescribed wards. The application of the standard, not the ratios, gives hospital and health services the flexibility to respond to the complexities experienced in different wards. Patient acuity and activity varies between wards and hospital and health

services. The application of the standard takes account of that. When made, the standard will enshrine the methodology contained in the BPF in a legislative framework comprising the bill, the regulation and the standard. I repeat: minimum ratios act as a safety net. They operate together with the requirements of the standard to ensure a minimum number of nurses or midwives will be present on prescribed wards.

The amendment circulated by the member for Surfers Paradise demonstrates that the LNP has no concept of how to draft effective and enforceable legislation. While the BPF is an essential tool in workforce planning, it is not expressed in terms that can be applied or readily enforced through legislation. More importantly, the BPF is the product of an agreement between the Department of Health, hospital and health services and the Queensland Nurses' Union. It can be amended without reference to parliament. Given the member for Surfers Paradise's criticism of the 'Charlotte Street approach'—as if such a thing even existed—it is ironic that he would be the architect of a legislative framework that places Charlotte Street at the heart of workforce planning. By contrast, our bill ensures changes to the workforce planning framework enshrined in the standard will be the subject of appropriate parliamentary scrutiny.

In summary, I again thank the members of the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee and their staff for their consideration of the bill. In particular, I thank the chair of the committee, the member for Nudgee, Leanne Linard, for her outstanding work. I thank all of the stakeholders who contributed to the committee inquiry. I note the member for Thuringowa's comments about the positive feedback received during the committee's extensive consultations, both here in Queensland and interstate.

I join with the Premier in acknowledging the staff of the Department of Health who have been so critical and instrumental in the development of this bill. The staff of hospital and health services and the Department of Health are often the subject of criticism. I can only commend them for the work that they have done. In particular, I acknowledge Dr Natalie Spearing, Frances Peart, Shane Hawes, Juliet Graham, Jacqui Thompson and Elizabeth Callaghan from the Clinical Excellence Division and David Harmer, Loretta Carr and Alessandra Atkinson from one of the best legislative policy units in government. I thank Mark Davey, Francis Price, Dr Frances Hughes and Dr Lesley Fleming, who are no longer with the department but who nevertheless also made a significant contribution to this bill and the implementation of the government's important nursing election commitments. I commend the bill to the House.

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

AYES, 44:

ALP, 41—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Byrne, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Donaldson, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Hinchliffe, Howard, Jones, Kelly, King, Lauga, Linard, Lynham, Madden, Miles, Miller, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pease, Pegg, Power, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Stewart, Trad, Whiting, Williams.

KAP, 2—Katter, Knuth.

INDEPENDENT, 1—Pyne.

NOES, 39:

LNP, 39—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Costigan, Cramp, Cripps, Davis, Dickson, Elmes, Emerson, Frecklington, Hart, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Mander, McArdle, McEachan, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, Perrett, Powell, Rickuss, Robinson, Rowan, Seeney, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Walker, Watts, Weir.

Pair: Pitt, Crandon.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read a second time.

An incident having occurred in the public gallery—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! To the people in the gallery, I am sorry but that is not appropriate. If you want to make a noise or comment, you can leave the gallery.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 3, as read, agreed to.

Mr SPEAKER: I note that member for Surfers Paradise's amendment No. 1 proposes to omit clause 4, thus the member should oppose the clause.

Clause 4, as read, agreed to.

Clause 5—



Mr LANGBROEK (8.59 pm): I move the following amendments—

2 Clause 5 (Insertion of new pt 6, div 4)

Page 4, lines 17 to 20—

omit, insert—

Division 4 Nursing and midwifery workload management

3 Clause 5 (Insertion of new pt 6, div 4)

Page 4, after line 22—

insert—

business planning framework means the document called the ‘Business planning framework: a tool for nursing workload management’ published by the department and amended from time to time under section 138D.

chief nursing and midwifery officer means a person appointed as a health executive in the department whose functions include providing advisory services on matters relating to nursing and midwifery.

4 Clause 5 (Insertion of new pt 6, div 4)

Page 5, lines 12 to 17—

omit.

5 Clause 5 (Insertion of new pt 6, div 4)

Page 5, line 18 to page 9, line 9—

omit, insert—

138B Requirement to use business planning framework

A Service must use the business planning framework to determine the number of nurses and midwives to be engaged in delivering a health service.

138C Report on use of business planning framework

(1) Within 40 business days after the end of each half-year, a Service must give the chief executive a report about the Service’s compliance with the business planning framework for the half-year that includes the information prescribed by regulation.

(2) In this section—

half-year means—

(a) a period from 1 January to 30 June; or

(b) a period from 1 July to 31 December.

138D Review and amendment of business planning framework

(1) The chief nursing and midwifery officer must review the business planning framework—

(a) for the first review—within 2 years after the commencement; and

(b) for subsequent reviews—within 2 years after the previous review.

(2) After reviewing the business planning framework, the chief nursing and midwifery officer—

(a) must prepare a report on the review; and

(b) may make the amendments considered appropriate to the business planning framework.

(3) The chief nursing and midwifery officer must—

(a) publish a copy of the report on the department’s website; and

(b) if the business planning framework is amended as a result of the review—

(i) publish the amended business planning framework on the department’s website; and

(ii) give a copy of the amended business planning framework to each Service.

138E Committee for review

(1) The chief executive must establish a committee to assist the chief nursing and midwifery officer review the business planning framework.

- (2) The committee must consist of—
 - (a) the chief nursing and midwifery officer as chairperson; and
 - (b) 6 other members appointed by the chief executive.
- (3) In deciding to appoint a person as a member of the committee, the chief executive must consult with the chief nursing and midwifery officer.
- (4) Also, the chief executive may appoint a person to the committee only if the person is appropriately qualified.
- (5) A person appointed to the committee is entitled to be paid the remuneration and allowances decided by the Governor in Council.
- (6) The chief nursing and midwifery officer may decide how the committee is to operate.

I table the explanatory notes to my amendments.

Tabled paper: Hospital and Health Boards (Safe Nurse-to-Patient and Midwife-to-Patient Ratios) Amendment Bill 2015, explanatory notes to Mr John-Paul Langbroek's amendments [694].

This is the crux of the issue that we have been discussing through the second reading debate. Currently, the business planning framework is an industrial arrangement and we propose to put it into legislation. The minister has just said that he believes that means that we do not understand the bill. This is important, because the fixed minimum ratio that is proposed in the bill is what we on this side of the House oppose. Whilst there has been a lot of research into whether a higher nurse-to-patient ratio is a good thing for patient outcomes—we acknowledge that—there is a scarcity of research data into the fixed minimum ratio. The committee found that through its investigation into the bill. The government and the department have acknowledged that, if the bill is successful, there will be monitoring through an international expert. While we are happy to see that happen, we have a tool, an industrial instrument, which has lapsed as part of EB8. It is currently being negotiated. This morning we asked the member for Brisbane Central, the Minister for Industrial Relations, about the progress of the ongoing enterprise bargain. All we got this morning was a diatribe about what had happened and the continuing misrepresentation about the number of nurses who were employed under the LNP government. Today, we have continual misrepresentations. The answer is that there were 1,042 more nurses after the 2012 to 2015 parliament, not 1,300 fewer because they were sacked by us. There were 1,042 more. I put that figure on the record. The important issue is that the business planning framework—

Ms Bates interjected.

Mr LANGBROEK: That is all we hear—propaganda. I take that interjection from the member for Mudgeeraba. We have heard it again tonight from a conga line of ministers opposite. They were trying to imply that on this side of House we do not support patient care and we do not support nurses. That is outrageous. It is completely inappropriate. They are playing to the show upstairs. They are repaying the support that they got during the election campaign.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members! There is no need to shout, member for Chatsworth. If you want to speak you will have an opportunity to speak at the appropriate time and in the appropriate manner.

Mr LANGBROEK: What we are seeing from those opposite is a tugging at the heartstrings inappropriately. This is from a Premier who says that she wants to bring Queenslanders together. She is trying to suggest that that side of the parliament that gave us the Tahitian prince and the payroll—

Government members interjected.

Mr LANGBROEK: It is true. It is that side of the parliament that gave us the Tahitian prince. It is that side of the parliament that gave us the Health payroll debacle. We did not see the Nurses' Union come out then in the way they subsequently have on this issue—standing up for nurses who were either not being paid at all, not being paid on time, or not being paid the correct pay. That was under the watch of many of those opposite.

We will not be lectured to by that side about whether we care for nurses or whether we have nurses amongst our own—we do, both in the parliament and as members of our party. We are not going to cop that. They can do that in this forum. I know that Queenslanders want us to be working together for the benefit of all Queenslanders, not dividing us as this Premier, this government and these ministers are seeking to do.

That is why we have proposed that this current industrial instrument should be made a legislative instrument. Amendments Nos 2 to 5 outline very clearly how this will be carried out. There would be a review and amendment of the business planning framework. The people who would be on this panel would be the chief executive, a committee comprising the chief nursing and midwifery officer as chairperson and six other members appointed by the chief executive. There should be adequate consultation—as often happens in schools through the LCC, the local consultative committee. That is what happened in education. The business planning framework is something that should be in legislation. That is what we are proposing with these amendments.

We are proposing that it does not just take into account a fixed minimum ratio, but takes into account such issues as the number of patients, including the total number on the ward on each shift, and activities such as patient discharges, admissions and transfers. I cannot believe that if a person is doing an afternoon shift in Cooktown and they have four or five people in the ward that that is necessarily the same as being in a cardiac ward at the Prince Charles Hospital on a Tuesday afternoon.

The business planning framework will allow for those particular considerations about patients and allow more flexibility. It will allow experts to work together. It will consider the level of intensity of all patients, the nature of the care to be delivered on each shift, the skill mix and level of experience of staff, the need for special or intensive equipment, the architecture and geography of the ward. The BPF approach adds in establishing staffing levels that are flexible and accounts for changes across each shift.

As we showed in government, we on this side of the House believe, whether it is in health or education, in autonomy. We believe that many of our senior nurses and midwives and senior executives in hospitals across the state—that is, in the over 120 hospitals we have—can work together to make sure that whatever is appropriate for their circumstance they can do. They should not have a fixed minimum ratio that is decided from Charlotte Street. That is the basis of these amendments.

Tonight we have heard some disgraceful contributions such as that from the member for Stretton. Before dinner we had the member for Townsville. We had them gloating about the situation the government currently finds itself in. I warn those opposite that gloating about the situation they are in is not appropriate and the people of Queensland will mark them down heavily for it at some future stage.

That is why we have moved these amendments. We think that this is an appropriate instrument that has been in Queensland since 2000-01. It was brought in by a Labor government. It is currently part of an industrial instrument and it should be part of legislative arrangements. That is why I commend these amendments to the House.

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Caloundra, I urge members to please not provoke the speaker. I think the important thing is that we get through to the vote and then we can move on.

Mr McARDLE: I rise to speak in support of the amendment moved by the member for Surfers Paradise. I make it very clear that this debate revolves around the government proving that they have the clinical knowledge and evidence to establish the ratio—one to four, one to four, one to seven. They have not done so on any level. The member for Mudgeeraba and I requested that the government establish evidence in relation to basic clinical outcomes. It could not do it. The government could not convince this side of the House that this ratio was based upon clinical evidence and clinical outcomes. They cannot then turn around and say to this side of the House when they have not done that that they are right.

What we have put in place in the amendments is a continuation of the current regime. What that does is ask the nurses in hospitals at Cairns, Townsville, Mackay and Rockhampton to conduct their wards as they know they should, based upon historical knowledge of the area, the patients, the outcomes and the concerns. To take that away from nursing staff is a backward step. To allow it to sit within a union or a government or a Charlotte Street office is a backward step. Nurses should be empowered at the local level, as hospital boards are, to make determinations that affect their patients, unless clinical evidence is established to the contrary. That has not happened.

These amendments put at the head the chief nurse and midwifery officer. The chief nurse and midwifery officer of this state is the person charged under the amendment to put in place a review, change the BPF and then put that model into practice—again, the one person in the state who has the knowledge, in conjunction with other nurses on the ground, to make the determination. These amendments put the current regime into law, as opposed to a grab for the headlines and a grab for

QNU backing in the election campaign. They are based on clinical outcomes and nurses locally being charged to continue with what they do best—work with patients, work with the community and work for better outcomes for Queensland.

These amendments are focusing on those who really know what happens in our hospitals every day of the week at Cairns, Townsville, Rockhampton and Mackay. They are the people who should be calling the shots, just as local police do, as local teachers do, as local doctors do, as independent public schools do. They focus on what they know best and work for outcomes for local patients in local regions.

Mr KELLY: I rise to oppose the amendments. To me it equals maintaining the status quo. The evidence of Professor Duffield based on years of experience could not have been clearer in relation to the evidence to support ratios. While we sit in this place arguing back and forth about who did what to whom, I look at the clock and I think about what the nurses on shift right now are doing. I think about those nurses—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Members of the opposition, I have already tried to indicate that I would like everyone to allow the speakers to be heard in silence so that we can move on. I urge members not to try to provoke the speaker. Let the speakers make their contribution.

Mr KELLY: They will not provoke me. Those nurses are checking blood sugar levels. They are handing out pain relief. They are out there toileting people. They are helping each other. I know what those nurses would want. They do not want the status quo; they want ratios. The member for Caloundra wants to talk about empowering nurses. If he is serious about empowering nurses then he would give them a safe patient-to-nurse ratio.

Mr DICK: I rise to speak in opposition to these amendments because these amendments do no more than duplicate the business planning framework. That is all they do in legislation. Unlike the intent of the bill, the amendments will achieve very little in terms of addressing concerns about patient safety and nursing workloads beyond what already exists. The amendments entirely remove the key concept at the very heart of the legislation—the setting of mandatory minimum ratios. Those members opposite do not understand putting in a floor—minimum ratios to apply. The concepts are instead replaced with a mandate for all hospital and health services to use the BPF, which is already industrially mandated under the Nurses and Midwives (Queensland Health) Certified Agreement (EB8) 2012.

The explanatory notes failed to acknowledge that these amendments breach fundamental legislative principles in that mandating the use of the BPF, an external document, does not have sufficient regard to the institution of parliament. I know it is the member for Surfers Paradise's first week on the job, but I do need to point out something in the explanatory notes. They are only 3½ pages long. Under the heading 'Consistency with fundamental legislative principles', the explanatory notes state—

These amendments are generally consistent with the fundamental legislative principles. Any inconsistencies with fundamental legislative principles occur in the context of balancing fundamental legislative principles with a competing policy objective of preventing or minimising harm caused by smoking.

That is what they have bothered to write in their explanatory notes. Of course, they have just done a cut and paste from their private member's bill on smoking earlier in the year. No wonder the member for Caloundra is on the back bench. No wonder they shunted him off and sacked him from being the shadow minister for health. That is embarrassing. It is frankly embarrassing that they cannot read 3½ pages and bring them properly into the parliament of Queensland when they argue against a very substantive, complex and technical reform to Queensland. It demolishes the proposed amendments that those members opposite are proposing.

The BPF stands on its own. It is something that has been worked on over many years including with the Queensland Nurses' Union. It has been periodically reviewed and published. That will happen again. A revised fifth edition is currently being consulted on. All of this has been achieved. The party that wants to reduce red tape wants to set up another committee of review. They talk about Charlotte Street control. Their proposal establishes yet another bureaucratic committee to review the business planning framework. It is not appropriate. It should not be in the bill and it should be opposed by all members of the House.

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

Mr SPEAKER: Members, I propose that all future divisions will be of one minute's duration, so I urge all members to remain in the chamber.

AYES, 39:

LNP, 39—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Costigan, Cramp, Cripps, Davis, Dickson, Elmes, Emerson, Frecklington, Hart, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Mander, McArdle, McEachan, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, Perrett, Powell, Rickuss, Robinson, Rowan, Seene, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Walker, Watts, Weir.

NOES, 44:

ALP, 41—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Byrne, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Donaldson, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Hinchliffe, Howard, Jones, Kelly, King, Lauga, Linard, Lynham, Madden, Miles, Miller, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pease, Pegg, Power, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Stewart, Trad, Whiting, Williams.

KAP, 2—Katter, Knuth.

INDEPENDENT, 1—Pyne.

Pair: Pitt, Crandon.

Resolved in the negative.

Non-government amendments (Mr Langbroek) negatived.



Mr DICK: I move the following amendment—

1 Clause 5 (Insertion of new pt 6, div 4)

Page 6, lines 8 to 14—

omit, insert—

- (3) For this section, a nurse or midwife is taken to be engaged in delivering a health service only if directly involved in providing care to 1 or more of the patients receiving the service.

I table the explanatory notes to my amendment.

Tabled paper: Hospital and Health Boards (Safe Nurse-to-Patient and Midwife-to-Patient Ratios) Amendment Bill 2015, explanatory notes to Hon. Cameron Dick's amendments [\[695\]](#).

Amendment No. 1 amends new section 138B to clarify that, for the purposes of calculating a ratio, a nurse or midwife may be included only if directly involved in providing care to one or more patients in a ward. This amendment ensures the new section will operate to achieve the government's policy intent, which is that a nurse or midwife must be allocated a patient load in order to be counted in a ratio. This responds to government members' concerns to ensure that only those nurses or midwives involved in direct patient care are counted when determining whether ratios have been met and that the broader legislative framework takes account of the lower workload adopted by nurse positions such as a nurse and midwife unit manager.

Mr McARDLE: In relation to the amendment, this goes, in essence, to the crux of how the nurse-patient ratio was to work. That is, the nurse-patient ratio of one to four, one to four and one to seven was outside of the other RNs on the ward—the NUM, the coordinator, the educator and the like. This is, to say the least, sloppy drafting because this goes to the very core of how this nurse-patient ratio could have been subverted by people who wanted to do so. What could have happened was a NUM or an educator could have been counted in the nurse-patient ratio of one to four. That was not the intent the government wanted to achieve, but that is the outcome this clause would have resulted in because of the poor, sloppy drafting of the Minister for Health. It could have undone the whole nurse-patient ratio, and that lies at the feet of the Minister for Health because he could not get the drafting right on a core element of the bill.

Amendment agreed to.



Mr LANGBROEK: I move the following amendment—

6 Clause 5 (Insertion of new pt 6, div 4)

Page 9, lines 21 to 23—

omit, insert—

- (4) A requirement under this section is in addition to a requirement under section 138C.

The crux of what I was presenting in this amendment was in the previous amendments, so I do not intend to speak to these.

Non-government amendment (Mr Langbroek) negatived.

Clause 5, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 6—



Mr LANGBROEK (9.25 pm): I move the following amendment—

7 Clause 6 (Amendment of s 279 (Delegation by Minister))

Page 9, lines 24 to 29—

omit, insert—

6 Insertion of new pt 13, div 7

Part 13—

insert—

Division 7 Transitional provision for Hospital and Health Boards (Safe Nurse-to-Patient and Midwife-to-Patient Ratios) Amendment Act 2015

330 First half-year report

Despite section 138C, the first report under that section must—

- (a) be given within 40 business days after the end of 31 December 2016; and
- (b) relate to the period starting on the commencement and ending on 31 December 2016.

Non-government amendment (Mr Langbroek) negatived.

Clause 6, as read, agreed to.

Clause 7—



Mr LANGBROEK (9.26 pm): I move the following amendments—

8 Clause 7 (Amendment of sch 2 (Dictionary))

Page 10, after line 3—

insert—

business planning framework, for part 6, division 4, see section 138A.

chief nursing and midwifery officer, for part 6, division 4, see section 138A.

9 Clause 7 (Amendment of sch 2 (Dictionary))

Page 10, lines 6 to 10—

omit.

Again, these are consequential amendments.

Non-government amendments (Mr Langbroek) negatived.

Clause 7, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading



Hon. CR DICK (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (9.26 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. CR DICK (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (9.26 pm): I move—

That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

Question put—That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (9.27 pm): I move—

That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 9.30 am on Tuesday, 24 May 2016.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.


Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (9.27 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Chatsworth Electorate, Anzac Day


 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (9.28 pm): Just over two weeks ago thousands of Australians from across the country woke in the early hours of the morning to attend local Anzac Day services. In my great seat of Chatsworth, unfortunately I do not have a local RSL. However, I am fortunate to have an amazing school—Camp Hill State Infants and Primary School—which organises an incredible service to commemorate our living and fallen soldiers. This Anzac Day service is becoming well renowned throughout my electorate. This school takes it upon themselves each year to organise a march along Old Cleveland Road, which is closed off for the service from the Camp Hill Hotel to the Camp Hill Infants and Primary School grounds, which on average more than 2,500 locals attend.

This is my fourth year attending the service. Each year, without exception, I am still struck by the impressive discipline of the students and the hard work put in by the teachers, the parents and, most importantly, their principal, the incredible Mrs Deborah Driver. I was again privileged this year to be invited to lay a wreath and to pay homage to those service men and women who served our great country and fought to maintain our freedom and liberty.

I also had the honour of attending services at Gumdale State School and Tingalpa State School on the Friday before Anzac Day. These schools put on equally beautiful and dignified services, with representatives from the Wynnum RSL who spoke to students of the sacrifice of our esteemed Anzacs. I was particularly impressed with a former student of Gumdale State School, who did a wonderful job at playing the *Last Post* for the service. This is no easy feat and she did it with incredible poise, respect and skill. In the days following Anzac Day itself, I also attended a very moving parade at Mayfield Primary School, which also honoured our heroes splendidly.

Finally, over the past two weeks I have visited each of my local schools and donated to the school library a beautiful book titled *Victoria Cross Heroes of World War One*, written by Robert Hamilton. I hope the students have the opportunity to read and learn more about the Australian and New Zealand diggers who fought bravely for our great countries. Indeed, it is my humble opinion that Anzac Day is becoming more and more revered over time, judging by the increasing number of people attending commemorative services. This contrasts to when I was growing up as a primary school student in the 1970s as the Vietnam War tended to polarise Australian society. Thankfully, though, over the last few decades, the passage of time has mellowed societal attitudes combined with the school education system placing a renewed emphasis on the importance of this most solemn of public days. I am incredibly proud of all of the primary schools in the Chatsworth electorate that performed Anzac Day services for 2016. Lest we forget.

Condamine Electorate, Local Shows


 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (9.32 pm): Local shows are a very important part of the social fabric of rural and regional communities. They provide an opportunity to showcase our local produce, the small business sector, schools and not-for-profit community organisations to a wide audience.

In April this year I had the honour of opening the 146th Dalby and District Annual Show. The Dalby show was the last of the six local shows held in the electorate of Condamine each year. I attended each six shows respectively: Clifton, Bell, Pittsworth, Oakey, Toowoomba and Dalby. It was very pleasing to observe an increase in the number of entries and attendance at several of these events in 2016. Over the past decade there has been a significant decline in gate takings and entries at many local shows throughout regional Queensland.

Without the volunteers who work tirelessly, dedicating their time to ensure that each show runs smoothly, local shows would not happen. Dalby show president Frank Chiverton and treasurer Rob Parsons both remarked upon the number of volunteers who took a week off their paid employment to help get everything ready for their two-day show. This commitment is both admirable and commendable, particularly in a small community. Each time I meet with a member of a show society executive, a common thread runs through our interactions—the pride they take in their showgrounds, their community and the achievements they have made. It is my hope that this long tradition of local shows will be well supported for many years to come.

Lastly, I would like to congratulate Ms Annie Fulton. Annie recently won the Miss Dalby Showgirl and Charity Princess titles for the Dalby & District Show Society. Not long after Annie recovered from the excitement of winning her local show title she was crowned Miss Darling Downs Showgirl and Miss Popularity at the Toowoomba Royal Show. Annie competed against 14 other Miss Showgirls from the region for the coveted title. To be voted Miss Personality by your peers is a wonderful achievement. I met Annie at the Dalby show and was impressed with her vibrant personality and welcoming nature. Her interest in her community was refreshing. Annie will serve as ambassador for the Darling Downs for the next five months before the state Miss Showgirl finals held in August in Brisbane at the Royal Queensland Show, an event I will be endeavouring to attend. I would like to take this opportunity to wish Annie good luck in her quest for the Queensland Miss Showgirl title and encourage the Darling Downs community to support her in every way possible.

Glass House Electorate

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (9.35 pm): It is indeed an honour to be serving the people of Glass House for a third term. I have to admit that I am still as excited today as I was on that first day, particularly when we deliver yet another project for the fantastic and wonderful people of the electorate of Glass House. I would like to spend a couple of minutes tonight reflecting on three such projects that through hard work, a lot of persistence and a lot of community support we have been able to deliver in the last couple of months.


First of all, I would like to talk about Maleny-Kenilworth Road. It has been a very tiresome project to try to bring about. I will start by saying we are long way from having finished it. Just before Easter I was contacted again by the people of Conondale and Cambroon—in particular, Mr Ian Fleiter. I spent an hour with Mr Ian Fleiter just before Easter. Whilst I cannot condone the actions of him and his fellow residents that occurred the following day, I can certainly appreciate the frustration that led to them blockading Maleny-Kenilworth Road. When it looks like it does, you can certainly understand—there is a 50-centimetre difference between the middle of the road and the bottom of the potholes.

Through getting on with it, and possibly through their action, we have now been able to deliver that upgrade—sealed edges on the side of the road, something they have been long waiting for. It does not stop. We need \$5.5 million to properly upgrade the road to make sure that we have double lanes so that the people of Conondale and Kenilworth in particular, and all of those tourists who come up to visit the wonderful Sunshine Coast hinterland, can travel safely on that road.

Another project is the Maleny Queensland Police Service station. That is now moving out to Macadamia Drive. Construction has started on that. When I was first elected, one of the first things I was asked to do was get more police for the Maleny district. During our term in government we increased the number of police from two to four and possibly we are now even at five. However, they could not reside in their current premises, so it was not long before we needed to get a new station underway. Construction has now started. We are very excited about that because it will also house a brand-new QGAP office and serve, I hope, not only Maleny but also the far broader Blackall Range area.

Finally this evening, whilst work continues at the Reed Street intersection at Glass House Mountains on Steve Irwin Way, construction has also started on the installation of lights at Bowen Road and Steve Irwin Way just down the road. This has unfortunately been the site of far too many deaths. Certainly, with the increasing number of accidents on the Bruce Highway and the increasing use of the Steve Irwin Way as an alternative route, too many of my residents get logjammed into their communities and cannot get out. These lights at Reed Street and Bowen Road will certainly assist not only my residents but also all visitors to the wonderful Glass House electorate. Again, these lights are the outcome of hard work, persistence and great community support.


Bundaberg Electorate, Endeavour Foundation

 **Hon. LE DONALDSON** (Bundaberg—ALP) (Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries) (9.38 pm): I am pleased to inform the House of the wonderful Mother's Day flowers our Bundaberg Endeavour Foundation produces for our region's mothers every May. I want to thank the very busy Endeavour Foundation staff for personally looking after my order of posies for mothers in local nursing homes in Bundaberg for Mother's Day. This was the second year I had the pleasure to supply flowers to all of those amazing women in nursing homes in my electorate and supporting the wonderful service the Endeavour Foundation provides in Bundaberg.

For the last 20 years the Endeavour Foundation has been selling chrysanthemum bunches in the lead-up to Mother's Day right across Bundaberg, North and South Burnett and even as far away as Brisbane, Toowoomba, Rockhampton and Gladstone. In each of the past 20 years this work has been done by the Endeavour Foundation's hardworking staff and the many volunteers who work side by side with the foundation's clients.

This year the foundation sold around 4,000 bunches, with an estimated turnover of approximately \$40,000. The money raised from this endeavour provides much needed funds to allow them to continue the delivery of its learning, lifestyle and disability programs to its clients with disabilities. During my visit to the foundation I spoke with some of the foundation's staff as well as with some of the workers with disability who were working to supply the flowers this Mother's Day. Each time I heard the same message: the enjoyment of being able to grow, pick and bunch these flowers brings excitement, joy and a sense of satisfaction to everyone involved. To see the smiles every time I visit always lifts my spirits.

Hughes, Mr J

 **Mr CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (9.41 pm): Early Tuesday evening, 10 May 2016, the owner and editor of the *Tully Times*, John Hughes, passed away. John's death was sudden. He was aged only 61 years, and his passing has been a terrible shock to the local community and the Tully district. John was an active, engaged member of our community. The *Tully Times* is an institution in the Tully district. Everyone reads it to find out what is going on. It is a privately owned independent newspaper which stands apart from the News Corp and Fairfax print media giants. It has always had a reputation for straight-talking, uncompromising journalism. It has always run stories about issues not covered by other newspapers.

John had worked at country newspapers for many years such as the *Parkes Champion-Post* in New South Wales, the *Longreach Leader* here in Queensland and finally the *Tully Times*. John Hughes came to Tully over a decade ago, first to edit the newspaper and then purchasing it in December 2005. For more than a decade he delivered to the local community a robust, thought-provoking local newspaper and he was proud of it. He invested in Tully, firstly in the *Tully Times*, and then in other businesses.

John Hughes was an unrelenting advocate for the local community. He certainly used the *Tully Times* to further this advocacy. It is no secret that on more than one occasion John used his newspaper to provide his readers with a full and frank assessment of my position on certain issues when it differed from his own. While this situation was not always to my benefit, the community has never been under any misunderstandings about John's unvarnished opinion.


John Hughes had determination and he donated his time generously. He was the driving force behind Tully's Golden Gumboot Festival. He was a strong supporter for many years of Tully's Chamber of Commerce, paid a lot of attention to the activities of the Tully Support Centre and was a passionate supporter of the Tully Tigers Rugby League football club, which is my old club. His coverage of games in the *Tully Times*, both home and away, has always been appreciated by Tigers supporters.

One of the initiatives that John was very involved in was the *Tully Times* Read to Me Day, a stand-alone literacy program that encourages youth to read books, which is supported by the local community very strongly and supported prominently through the pages of the *Tully Times*. I admired this project greatly because I share John's passion for the written and spoken word. I think this is because both of us rely heavily on the Queen's English in our chosen professions.

John employed local people and he gave young journalists a go at the *Tully Times*. John gave great service to the community through his coverage of the impact on the community of Cyclone Larry in 2006 and Cyclone Yasi in 2011. He championed the issues facing our local major industries in the Tully district: the sugar industry, the banana industry and the tourism industry.

I offer my condolences to John's family and to the staff of the *Tully Times*. I acknowledge his legacy as an independent journalist and his contribution to the Tully community.

Inspiring Women's Awards

 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (9.43 pm): I rise tonight to speak about a fantastic event that was recently held in Gladstone which is now in its second year: the Inspiring Women's Awards. The Gladstone Women's Health Centre hosted the awards, which are an opportunity to shine a spotlight on some inspiring local women in our community. It was a proud moment for me, with my daughter Taylor nominated in the inspiring young women's award category for her dedicated and incredible fitness journey.


The inspiring young woman of the year was awarded to 15-year-old Delaney Burke. As a former Calliope State School vice-captain, and more recently a Chanel College middle year school leader, Delaney thrives in her leadership roles, encouraging others to be a positive role model. This year 10 student has excelled in her academic studies, especially English, where she has come first for the past two years and which she channels into her love for debating and public speaking. Delaney is one busy young woman, finding time for singing, piano and speech and drama classes. Delaney is most comfortable and happy on the stage. Performing arts are her passion and she loves every minute of it.

Sharradean Stringer took out the award for inspiring woman of the year. Sharradean is a supervisor at the Roseberry Community Services centre and Roseberry House youth shelter. She arrives every day to work pumped and motivated. It is safe to say that Sharradean loves her job and is humbled by this award, believing that not only does she get to be surrounded by strong, supportive work colleagues but also every day she gets to go to work and fight for a child or a young person's rights—rights which Sharradean says include the right to have a safe place and a bed; to have food in their belly; to engage in education and employment; to have clothes to wear and access to free sanitary items; to have a voice; and, most importantly, to be listened to. In her spare time Sharradean campaigns for many worthwhile causes, including not putting children in adult prisons and sharing dignity.

There was also another very important award which I had the absolute honour to present on the morning, and that was for the heroic woman of the year. This award was presented to a woman from the community who could not be publicly named for legal, cultural or private reasons. A private ceremony was held later in her honour. The heroic woman of the year has endured significant hardship and turmoil in her life, going on to be an advocate and a strength for other women in our community.

It was a fantastic event again this year and it was great to be in a room filled with inspirational women celebrating their achievements, their courage and their success. I congratulate all the nominees and award winners. I also acknowledge the Gladstone Women's Health Centre once again for the fantastic work they do in our community of Gladstone to help women along their journey in life.

Local Procurement Policy


 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (9.46 pm): I rise tonight to talk about local procurement policies and the punishing effect they are having on bush towns. On the weekend I had a phone call from stalwart quintessential western town resident Joey Bakhsh from Cloncurry, who rang me very distressed. Joey is an OAM. He spent most of his years—many years—on the railways and in the auxiliary fire service. He is a pillar of Cloncurry. He rang me very distressed because progressively over the years he has seen more and more of the contracts in Cloncurry going to out-of-town larger contractors.

In this age of compliance, the bar is just becoming too high for many of these local contractors, who are collectively in most cases the most reliable, cost-effective and efficient operators. More importantly, they make up the fabric of those towns. When they miss out on that work it has devastating effects on the towns. The fact that these people are more efficient was endorsed empirically by the NDRRA day labour trials, which showed savings of \$160 million to the taxpayers of Queensland in the context of roadworks. Locals know where the gravel pits are. People live locally, so they are not paying travel costs. They can do deals with other local contractors. Things can just happen. You do not have as many hiccups and things can be done, but that does not always show up on the department's desk when they are awarding these tenders.

I know there are challenges about these procurement policies, but we have to acknowledge that there is a real problem and the job can be done better by a smaller contractor who is locally based. It is important work to the community, but it is an important saving to the taxpayer. We have a real problem because, while some of these guys do not have the compliance, they will do a safer and more reliable job. The fact that they do not have a piece of paper to protect them is a false economy and we assume

a false level of safety. It would be a great thing for taxpayers if the bar were lowered and we accepted some risk with these operations. There will be failures in some cases, but the net benefit to the taxpayer has been proven. It is so desperately important to these bush towns, because in this age of compliance the problem will become more acute. It is definitely a growing problem affecting bush towns, and it is really distressing people in many towns because they can see that as a policy it is killing our towns. This needs to be addressed.

Helem Yumba; Centenary of Anzac Precinct


 **Mrs LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (9.49 pm): Local Aboriginal leaders and elders play an important role in our community, and I believe it is important for me as a local member to work closely with elders. It was fabulous to have the opportunity to talk at length recently with the elders at Helem Yumba. Helem Yumba, a Central Queensland healing centre, is a community organisation in Rockhampton which offers support and counselling services for individuals and families at risk of domestic and family violence. I spoke with the elders about the health, education, ending discrimination and how we can work together to improve the lives of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. I say thank you to Caroline, Rhonda, Richard and all of the staff who facilitated the meeting and to everyone who attended. I look forward to working with them into the future.

One of the things the elders and I did discuss is how we as a community can better honour, respect and remember the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women who served and those who have made the extreme sacrifice for our country. I am proud that there are plans to honour the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women who have served at the Emu Park Centenary of Anzac Precinct. Only by personalising war and giving names to those 45,000 Australians killed on the Western Front in World War I can we truly understand its terrible cost and then hopefully all work together towards creating a more peaceful world.

On the Anzac weekend I helped open the Centenary of Anzac Precinct gatehouse project at Emu Park, a project that helps tell those stories of Australians who served and died in war and on operational service. The entire Centenary of Anzac precinct is a prime example of community partnerships in action and I thank the funding partners for their contribution. I am so proud to have been involved in this partnership and to deliver the vision of the late Ross Coulter, a magnificent memorial for local people and visitors to quietly reflect on the great sacrifice of Australians who served and died in war and on operational service.

The Centenary of Anzac Precinct encompasses the true spirit of Anzac with its qualities of courage, mateship and sacrifice and continues to have meaning and relevance for our sense of national identity. I congratulate and thank everyone who has played a role in bringing this project to fruition, including President of RSL Emu Park Sub Branch, Mr Ron Robinson, and all of the members of the Emu Park RSL; Livingstone Shire Council; President of Pioneer Fitzroy Highlands RSL District, Mr Barry Vains; Mr Phil Luzzi; Ms Colleen Williams and the team and board at Bendigo Community Bank; Mr Dennis Ratcliffe and all of the Emu Park Lions; the wife of the late Ross Coulter, Mrs Kath Coulter; the Rockhampton Rotary Club; Mr Noel Gardener; Mr Scott Nicolas, Alexander Builders; Bill Gannon; Alderson & Associates Landscape Architects; Mr Noel Brady; Mr Mark Edmiston and Ms Michelle Black. Without these partnerships, this beautiful memorial precinct would not exist. Everyone who visits the precinct speaks about its beauty and how it inspires sombre reflection. I invite all of the members of parliament to visit the precinct sometime.

Agnes Water, Maritime Incident

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (9.52 pm): I stand proud in the House tonight as I represent the best electorate in Queensland. Last night I was reminded of just how privileged I am to call the Burnett electorate home. Yesterday afternoon the Agnes Water/1770 community was struck by a disaster following a fire which broke out on a popular tourist vessel *The Spirit of 1770*. Thankfully, all 42 passengers and four crew who were on board the vessel were brought home safely. It is a miracle that no-one was injured.


Tonight I wish to pay tribute and thank everyone who was involved in the swift and safe rescue of those 46 caught up in this horrific event. Out of the tragedy, the township of Agnes Water and surrounding districts have shown incredible community spirit. The rescue was an enormous team effort by all involved including the Queensland Police Service and Ambulance Service, volunteer marine rescue crews and CareFlight, not to mention the volunteers who also participated. It was not just the trained emergency crews for whom we are thankful today. Right there beside our trained crews, every citizen dove in to support the rescue efforts including the likes of a number of local charter boat operators, cafe staff and other selfless individuals.

Terrified, shocked, exhausted and cold, passengers and crew caught up in the ordeal arrived onshore last night to the comfort and the arms of the locals. Staff from the 1770 Marina Cafe were on hand until late last night offering passengers something to eat and a drink, the warmth of a blanket and other comforts and to console those in need of what was surely a traumatic experience. We acknowledge 1770 LARC! Tours and Sandra and Michael Price from Deepwater Laundry Services for offering at no cost to wash all of the blankets and clothes that were donated to the passengers from locals last night. Our thoughts are with the owners and operators of the 1770 Lady Musgrave tours in this traumatic time.

However, the community compassion did not stop there. I am told that local hotels and other individuals from the township offered passengers accommodation for the night while they rested up and recovered. I also want to take a moment to thank the hospital staff, particularly those working in Bundaberg Hospital's emergency ward, who worked around the clock to assess passengers and provide them with warm blankets and fresh clothes. I commend the entire community for banding together to assist right up until late last night to ensure that each and every passenger was supported throughout the ordeal. It is also important that I thank the Minister for Police and Emergency Services for last night keeping me up to date with timely situational reports. It was very reassuring to know that we were all working together for a great outcome.

Our community spirit is well and truly alive in the Burnett. Of course, this weekend I will be travelling to Agnes Water to share with the Rotary Club their charter night to be held this Saturday night in the community hall. I wish all the people in the Rotary Club all the success as they forge a new club in the Agnes Water/1770 area. Again, I pay tribute to the community in this traumatic time of the disaster that occurred yesterday.

Woodridge Electorate

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (9.54 pm): I want to share with the House extracts from a letter I recently received from one of the students in year 6A at St Paul's Catholic Primary School in Woodridge. With the support of their teacher, Ms Katherine Anderson, all of the students in year 6A recently wrote to me before visiting Parliament House on Monday of this week. This young man's family moved from an African country to Australia and to Logan when he was four. His mother is still in Africa, but as he wrote, 'she is starving to death because they have barely no food to eat and no water to drink'. He said that when he left Africa—

We wanted to bring my sister along but she died at the age of 19. Our country is in war and more and more people die each day and no-one takes any notice. My recommendation is that we help these countries out of poverty and into happiness. It is our moral duty.

As I have said previously, the electorate of Woodridge is one of the most multicultural electorates in Australia. We have people from all around the world, many of whom have come to Australia seeking a better life and people who are prepared to work very hard to get ahead. Quite a few of them arrive in Australia broken and hurt. In many instances they have escaped horrific conditions in their home country. Unfortunately, the young man who wrote to me is not the only one in my electorate with similar circumstances. I was very pleased as a consequence to be able to open the Logan offices of the Queensland Program of Assistance to Survivors of Torture and Trauma on 22 April. For over 20 years now QPASTT has been helping new arrivals in Australia who have survived torture back in their home countries. They do extraordinary work, often under difficult circumstances.

In the same spirit I was delighted to be able to announce that the Palaszczuk government would be providing \$100,000 to support the establishment of a community mental health hub in Logan. Some migrants who settle in Logan have come from severe circumstances, as I have said, in their home country and some face ongoing mental health issues. However, mental health issues are not only confined to new migrants. The Logan mental health hub is being set up in partnership with Relationships Australia and the hub, in turn, will work with local community groups to identify and help those people whose mental health is at risk. This is an initiative led by the Queensland Mental Health Commission that I am pleased to support and I will watch closely. Mental health and wellbeing underpins the development of flourishing individuals, families and communities. Our government is very keen to support community organisations which are out there trying to help people live better lives.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 9.57 pm.

ATTENDANCE

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